



**THE ASSOCIATION OF ROMANIAN ORTHODOX LADIES AUXILIARY**

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***Memorandum — Mother's Day and Woman's Day***

*March 2017*

*“She has done for Me what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial.*

*Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this*

*woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her” Mark 14, 8-9*

Reverend Fathers,

Beloved sisters and brothers in Christ,

These are the words that were said by our Savior Jesus Christ about Mary, Lazarus' sister, after she anointed His feet with nard and wiped them with the hair of her head. Through this, as Christian women, we also receive the commandment to preach His Gospel. The weeks of the Lent are a call to meditation and abstinence. The feast of Annunciation, that is right in their middle, acknowledges the joy of the woman's role in Christ's Church.

All the Christians have the duty to know and to deepen through living the truths of the faith. But because we live “in the world, though we are not from the world,” as the Lord said, because of our weakness, we forget this duty and let ourselves be influenced by the opinions and the customs of this world. Through this memorandum AROLA fulfills its duty to bring into the light of the Truth the secular celebrations of Mother's Day and Woman's Day that were adopted by many of the members of the Church.

In the Church, the Feast day is a sacred time when the faithful, commemorating an event from the history of our salvation or evoking the life of a saint, partake actively from the gifts of God and enter communion with that particular person. To a Christian, the Feast day is a time which avails the eternal union with God and His saints.

Although the world excluded God from its midst, people still maintain the sense of sacred when sign into law "holy days" for themselves. Thus, we witness how contemporary societies adopt a variety of national and international days of celebration: Mother's Day, Father's Day, the Earth Day, Labour Day,



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etc. These are reasons for common cohesiveness and reflection on certain important aspects in the history of a community or on certain general-human values and also, an opportunity to distract attention from the fundamental religious truths of Orthodoxy by celebrating in contrasting ways with the Christian spirituality.

Woman's Day was imposed to the Romanians a few decades ago by the atheist communist regime, trying to emphasize the importance of women in the process of building "the new man of the socialist era". The celebration was full of festivity and self sufficiency specific to the period, its ghost is still following us. After 1989, having the freedom to recover the national and Christian values, Romanian society has demonstrated difficulty in making the connection with these values, because the communist period has decimated an entire generation of intellectuals, who would have been able to create a bridge from today's society to the one that preceded World War II.

Thus, without its living memory, Romanians looked for solutions: either by saving the traditions and national values through church, or by molding the new ones, stemming from communist ideas or borrowed from other cultures (mainly western cultures,) onto the Romanian core. Romanian people living abroad go through a more acute crisis, as they are in direct contact with the society of the adoptive country.

We, confessing ourselves as active members of the Romanian Orthodox Church, are trying to **retrieve the deeply Christian and Romanian significance of honoring the Mother and the Woman in our Church** and the millennial ancestral wisdom and discretion of the Romanians to honor their mothers.

Jesus Christ Himself has honored his Mother, the Virgin Mary, who humbly accepted to work together with God in the salvation of man, receiving the Son to incarnate from her. He thus shows that the central vocation of a woman is to become a mother and to be a close collaborator of God in building the world. But more than that, Jesus shows that He honors more those who "keep the word and obey Him." And He calls them "mother and brothers," showing that He cherishes more "spiritual motherhood" - the birth of Christ / transforming our souls and life according to His image, by following His commandments - that is to become a saint as Christ is following His example and through Him.



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Following the word of God, the Romanian Orthodox Church, always treasured the maternity that not just gives birth, nurtures and raises, but especially, through the Christian education, makes "new" the image of man after the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. From this point of view, the spiritual paternity of the holy fathers equals with absolute maternity.

In this context, the Romanian Orthodox Christian honors the Virgin Mary as Eve's offspring through whom a new humanity is born, the one united with God through His Son, which is no longer enslaved by evil and death. He appreciates each woman that, following the example of the Virgin Mary, diligently fulfills her vocation as a mother, giving birth to Christ, through self-sacrifice and education, into the hearts of children and peers. But by this permanent honor to motherhood, the Romanian Christian never underestimated the paternity ( fatherhood). Therefore, they are valued permanently through respect and obedience; this respect is beautifully expressed in the habit of kissing the hand of grandparents, or of the parents on the day that the child marries and leaves the family home. Their honoring remains discrete in the same way the self-sacrifice and almsgiving is kept discreetly in the Church.

On the International Women's Day there are no mentions nor of holiness, nor of the Christian woman's virtues, but the product of the modern secular education, the humanism without Christ, is celebrated. It is cultivated the worshiping of man and entertainment in partying, consumerism and eroticism. Thus, it also violates the order of Lent. In other words, in the center of March 8 is celebrated old Eve, the one that is separated and opposed to Christ.

That is why **we recommend that in our Metropolis's parishes the feast of the Mother to be linked to the Feast of the Annunciation**, and not March 8.

Also, the **Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women** (the third Sunday after Pascha) keeps the Holy Tradition of the Church by honoring them as witnesses of the Resurrection of the Lord. In doing that **the Church shows appreciation to all who can give birth towards the everlasting life by confessing Jesus Christ**, and not only in this mortal life.

**The Church honors the Christian Woman** not only on the Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women, but during the whole ecclesiastical year, honoring all the women Saints from its calendar — virgins, mothers, grandmothers, who build themselves and others after the Immortal Image of Christ — and conferring her a special place in its deacony (ministry).



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As portrayed above, there is no need for an additional day to celebrate mothers or women. What we truly need is to recognize their merits every time we celebrate Virgin Mary or the Saints and honor their effort and contributions to the foundation of our communities.

The Church does not prohibit observing the celebration of Mother's Day and Woman's Day, rather advises to celebrate with awareness: **be alert that the celebration of women and mothers does not get polluted by practices outside of the Orthodox Church spirit.** AROLA urges all women and mothers of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of the Americas to rediscover their calling before God and renew their commitment to the sons of God in Church.

With humbleness, we wish you a period of fasting of great spiritual fulfillment.

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