



THE ASSOCIATION OF ROMANIAN ORTHODOX LADIES AUXILIARIES

Reverend Fathers,
Esteemed Ladies,

In the mission statement of the by-laws of our organization it is mentioned from the beginning: “The general mission of the AROLA shall be:[...]To preserve and perpetuate Orthodox Christian concepts and the Orthodox Christian Family, and through them, to promote the Romanian Orthodox Faith and traditions, in accordance with its doctrines, canons, discipline, divine worship, usages and customs.” In remembrance of this, the new members of the AROLA Executive Committee would like to share with you some aspects regarding the meaning of International Women’s Day and Mother’s Day for the Romanian Orthodox believers.

Because the modern man wants to be celebrated, every month and season we have different celebrations, more or less Christian. Spring starts with a celebration dedicated to women, that, until 2009, was also Mother’s day, on the eight day of March, a day that became rooted in the people’s conscience, without them asking themselves “Why March 8th? What happened on that day?”

For Romanians this is a day chosen arbitrary, but before a great Christian Feast day: the Annunciation. The politics of the atheist regime was a sly one, to overshadow the Christian Feast by having popular celebrations before them and little by little to erase them from people’s memory. This strategy, unfortunately, had success, and all these “false celebrations” still exist, even after the communist regime collapsed. Furthermore, more celebration have been embraced without any connection with the Orthodox Romanian spirituality such as Valentine’s Day or Halloween.

Everyone needs to know the story of March 8th (demagogically named “international”, since it was never celebrated around the world, but only inside ex-communist countries, and in some Marxist parties). In 1910 in Copenhagen, during the International Women's Conference organized by the socialist women, it was proposed to have a celebration of Women's Day. The authoress of the motion was the revolutionary militant, Clara Zetkin (1857-1933).

Why was it chosen March 8th? One of the reasons (and the most cited) was that, on that day in 1857 one of the most demanding demonstrations of working women took place, beginning with a strike of the weavers from New York (brutally repressed by the capitalist authorities of that time). It is important to remember that in the USA and Canada, even with all these strikes, Mother’s Day is not celebrated on March 8th, but the second Sunday of May. Aside from the USA and Canada, there are other countries that celebrate Mother’s Day on a different date. Among those we mention: Australia, South Africa, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Brazil, China, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, the Baltic countries, the countries of South America, the Scandinavian countries. In Romania, however, Father's Day and



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Mother's Day were established six years ago as holidays, through the Parliament's adoption of a bill initiated by the Anti-Discrimination Alliance of All Fathers (TATA). On September 29th, 2009 the law was debated and approved in the Deputies' Chamber. It provides that Mother's Day is celebrated every year on the first Sunday in May and Father's Day on the second Sunday of the same month. Also in May, on the 15th, is celebrated Family's Day. During this contingency, it was forgotten that Romanian Mother's Day has always been the feast of the Annunciation and the Christian Women's Day, the Sunday of the myrrh-bearing women.

We all know how a mother's face lights up the soul of any person who was loved by one, and that person carries special feelings for her throughout their entire life. The model of a mother par excellence is Virgin Mary, in whose arms all those oppressed and burdened find comfort. Every woman finds in her the original image of femininity and maternal affection.

The humankind rehabilitated itself through the Virgin Mary; through her "Let it be" at the Annunciation, the disobedience of the holy order from Eden was corrected. Through the Virgin Mary, the "new Eve", the curse on the humans was lifted, and woman was rehabilitated. The conception of the Divine Child showed the highest vocation of women, that of being mother. Many women today refuse to remember this call to motherhood which entitles them to the great privilege of being "working together and closer to God."

Many women want to be praised and celebrated on the eighth day of March, the "Women's Day" but not all can answer the question: "What is the reason for the celebration?"

Our mission aims to restore the original and true meaning of the "Women's Day" which is, for the Romanian Orthodox Christians, on March 25th, on the feast of Annunciation. This is the true day of mothers, all mothers who conceived life and who labored to preserve it and perfect it.

On the International Woman's Day there is no talk about the holiness or the virtues of a Christian woman, but it is the celebration of the un-Christian humanism, parties, consumerism, and eroticism. Thus they transgress the Lent. In other words, March 8th celebrates the old Eve, the one who broke away and opposes Christ.

We recommend that in the parishes of our Archdiocese Mother's Day should be linked with the Annunciation, and not with March 8.

One of the Holy Fathers of our Church said: "Give me Christian mothers and I will change the face of the world." These portraits of holy mothers are the most cherished treasures in a child's soul. A mother's portrait could be the most tender icon in which God reveals itself.

In the villages, the elderly put their parents' photos next to the icons, not because they worshipped them, but because they wanted them close to the saints to whom they prayed their entire life.



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So what is more proper to celebrate with great joy, March 8th or The Annunciation?

Let's return to our Christian and Romanian traditions, who made our nation last until today, and let's put good seeds in the pure hearts of our children. Our great geographer, the good Christian and patriot Simion Mehedinti said: "A nation and its people is worth as much as they have learned from the Holy Scripture." To paraphrase him, we could say the value of a nation is revealed in the number of Christian mothers.

With piety, wishing you a useful Lent,

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