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## **Romania: Easter celebrations allowed with the faithful. Message from Archbishop Perca**

In 2020, Easter was celebrated without the faithful in the churches behind closed doors, but this year the Roman Catholics of Romania will be allowed to attend Easter services at church, provided they respect the protective measures in place: social distancing and the use of masks. Having listened to religious representatives, the Romanian government has indeed decided to allow free movement until 2am, on the night from 3 to 4 April, for Roman Catholics attending Easter Vigil Mass. The same exemption will be granted on the night when Orthodox Easter is celebrated in early May. Romania is in partial lockdown due to the pandemic, and the latest measures taken by the government restrict the free movement of citizens in the evening, especially on weekends. Free movement is generally allowed until 10pm, except in high-infection-rate areas where Romanians must be at home at 8pm on weekdays and 6pm on weekends. Since all Roman Catholic cathedrals in Romania are located in the red zones, this year, too, the faithful would have had to follow the Easter services online or on TV, had the government not granted a derogation. “For us, Christians, the central and essential message of Easter remains unchanged. Regardless of what restrictions may be in place, the same good news will resound: Christ is risen!”, Mgr. Aurel Percă, Metropolitan Archbishop of Bucharest and President of the Romanian Bishops’ Conference, wrote in his Easter pastoral letter.

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