



THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA  
**THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX EPISCOPATE OF AMERICA**

The Most Reverend Dr. NATHANIEL Popp, Archbishop  
The Right Reverend IRINEU Duvlea, Auxiliary Bishop

*The Episcopate is forced to make the following report public today (January 6, 2017) as a result of misinformation being distributed by some members of the Parish Council of St. Nicholas Parish, Troy, Michigan, related to the suspension and retirement of Rev. Gheorghe Carstea, effective January 1, 2017.*

**A Resume of the Report October 31, 2016, of the  
Spiritual Consistory of the Romanian Orthodox  
Episcopate of America concerning Priest Gheorghe  
Carstea.**

*The Spiritual Consistory met on October 6, 2016 to hear the response of Fr. Gheorghe Carstea to the charges made against him and to consider the available evidence. Members of the Consistory present were: Frs. Ian G Pac-Urar, Ioan Cozma and Gabriel Agoston.*

*The conversation with Fr. Carstea was recorded by the Investigator. At the end of the interview, the President of the Consistory asked Fr. Carstea if he had witnesses to present. Fr. Carstea replied that witnesses were no longer necessary.*

**At the beginning of the interview, Fr. Carstea was asked if he had brought with him the documents required by the Episcopate Chancery in its communications of October 3. Fr. Carstea responded that the files were spread about in various locations, including "the garage and the basement," and that he did not have time to gather them in the three days allotted. He was reminded that, as custodian of the parish archive he should be able to produce these documents upon request. He was then asked to produce the documents by Friday October 14, which he agreed to do. As of Monday October 31, no documents had been produced by Fr. Carstea or any member of St. Nicholas parish.**

**FINDINGS:**

*Having heard Fr. Carstea and considered the available evidence, the Spiritual Consistory offered the following findings:*

**CHARGES SUBSTANTIATED**

*The Consistory found Fr. Carstea guilty of the following charges:*

**1. Violating the Constitution and By-Laws of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. (Încălcarea Constituției și Regulamentului Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române din America)**

The Consistory found that Fr. Carstea on multiple occasions both violated the Constitution and ByLaws, and disobeyed the directives of the ruling Bishop in the matter of parish finances, as described in findings 2 through 12.

**2. Opening and maintaining one or more unauthorized bank accounts to hold parish funds. (Deschiderea și administrarea de conturi bancare în numele parohiei.)**

Fr. Carstea admitted to the Consistory that, during the period from 2010 through 2015, he opened and maintained checking account #108024704 at Flagstar Bank in the name of St. Nicholas Church, that the address for the account was not St. Nicholas Church but instead was Fr. Carstea's home address, and that he personally administered said account without any form of oversight by the duly elected officers of St. Nicholas Church. Further, Fr. Carstea offered no evidence of said account having been authorized by the Parish Council or the Parish Assembly.

**3. Failing to inform the President of Parish Council and the Treasurer of Parish Council of the existence of an account opened and maintained in the name of the parish. (Neinformarea Presedintelui Consiliului Parohial și a casierului parohiei asupra existenței contului și a tranzacțiilor efectuate prin acest cont.)**

At no time during the life of the account were the President or Treasurer informed by Fr. Carstea of the account's existence.

**4. Improperly receiving and expending monies belonging to St. Nicholas parish. (Primirea și expedierea de bani în numele Parohiei Sf. Nicolae.)**

Authority to receive monies belonging to a parish is reserved to the Epitrop (Trustee) of the Parish Council, (ROEA ByLaws Art. IX Sec.54). Expenditure of parish monies is reserved to the Treasurer and President (ROEA ByLaws Art. IX, Sec.44,47). Over the years in the annual clergy conferences, Archbishop Nathaniel has repeatedly admonished clergy against handling parish monies themselves.

Fr. Carstea admitted to the Consistory that he personally received and expended the monies in checking account #108024704 in direct defiance of the Archbishop's admonition and in violation of the ROEA ByLaws.

**5. Failing to provide for the issuance of receipts for monies donated to St. Nicholas parish. (Încasarea unor sume de bani pentru parohie fără eliberarea de chitanțe persoanelor care au făcut donațiile.)**

Fr. Carstea admitted to the Consistory that donors were not given receipts for monies donated to St. Nicholas parish and deposited in checking account #108024704.

**6. Failing to provide reports and accounting to the parish council and parish assembly of St. Nicholas parish.  
(Neinformarea Consiliului Parohial și a Adunării Generale Parohiale asupra situației contului (intrări-ieșiri) deschis și administrat în numele Parohiei Sf. Nicolae.)**

Fr. Carstea admitted to the Consistory that he provided no reports or accounting for checking account #108024704 to either the Parish Council or the Parish Assembly.

**7. Falsifying the documents of St. Nicholas parish.  
(Falsificarea documentelor oficiale ale Parohiei.)**

Fr. Carstea admitted to the Consistory that he falsified the report of the President of Council to the Parish Assembly for year 2015.

**8. Providing false documents to the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. (Trimiterea de documente falsificate cancelariei Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române din America.)**

Fr. Carstea admitted to the Consistory that he included a fraudulent report of the President of Council in the Annual Report of the parish, which was submitted to the Episcopate.

**9. Falsifying the signature of one or more persons.  
(Falsificarea semnăturilor unor ofițeri ai parohiei.)**

Fr. Carstea admitted to the Consistory that he forged the name of Dr. George Marinescu, President of Council, on the fraudulent report for the year 2015, which was presented to the Parish Assembly and submitted to the Episcopate Chancery.

**FURTHER FINDINGS**

**10. FURTHER, the Consistory found Fr. Gheorghe Carstea guilty of impersonating the President of Parish Council.**

On July 15, 2016 the Consistory's Investigator erroneously dialed Fr Carstea's phone number, intending to speak with Dr. Marinescu. Fr. Carstea answered the phone, and identified himself as Dr. Marinescu to the Investigator. He then proceeded to respond to the Investigator's questions as if he were Dr. Marinescu. The conversation lasted approximately eight minutes. At no time did Fr. Carstea properly identify himself. Fr. Carstea admitted to the Consistory that he impersonated Dr. Marinescu throughout the conversation.

**11. FURTHER, the Consistory found Fr. Gheorghe Carstea guilty of failing to comply with the Episcopate's demand for documents pertaining to St. Nicholas parish, as enumerated in the**

**Chancery's communication of October 3, 2016 and Fr. Carstea's personal assurance of October 6, 2016 to the Spiritual Consistory.**

Although Fr. Carstea insisted that all monies expended from checking account #108024704 were expended properly for the benefit of St. Nicholas parish, he offered no evidence to support his claim. Fr. Carstea told the Consistory that he would submit the required documents to the Chancery by October 14. As of October 31, Fr. Carstea has failed to do so.

**12. FURTHER, the Consistory found Fr. Gheorghe Carstea guilty of negligence in the administration of St. Nicholas parish, specifically in his failure to ensure that parish records are properly preserved "at the Parish Office." ROEA ByLaws Art.IX, Sec. 30 (d).**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Fr. Gheorghe Carstea's actions include: violation of the ByLaws of the ROEA; financial impropriety including probable embezzlement and tax evasion; fraud; forgery; impersonation; and insubordination to the authority of the ruling Bishop.

Generally, the Consistory finds Fr. Carstea in violation of the above mentioned provisions of the ROEA ByLaws, including Article IX, Sec. 18. Additionally Fr. Carstea has transgressed Canon 25 of the Apostolic Canons, which provides that clergy who bear false witness should be deposed.

These actions, each and severally, are violations of the Constitution and ByLaws of the ROEA, the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, the Sacred Canons. It is also likely that Fr. Carstea, by his actions, involved his parish in criminal activity both in the United States and Romania. Any one of Fr. Carstea's actions may constitute cause for deposition from the Holy Priesthood. Taken together they constitute a pattern of disobedience, disregard for the good order of the Church and the civil society, and an attitude of exception from the norms of accountability to authority and to those whose money was entrusted to his care.

**Accordingly, the Consistory referred Fr. Gheorghe Carstea to the Office of the Archbishop for appropriate action, including immediate retirement and suspension. The Consistory also notes that Fr. Carstea also may be subject to criminal prosecution and the possibility of deposition from the Holy Priesthood.**