

SAG TIMISENI MONASTERY-A PLACE OF WORSHIP IN BANAT

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Abstract: *The religious tourist potential from West Region of Romania is based on the following characteristics: revelations of divinities, consecrations of rituals in churches, cathedrals and settlements designed to mystics (monasteries, hermitages). Sag Timiseni Monastery is the foundation of the Metropolitan V. Lazarescu, being considered a place of flowers, preserves an ancient tradition, painting of the eggs on Easter Friday, which sits on grass in form of cross in the courtyard of the monastery for sanctification. Near the egg cross is placed an icon of fresh flowers, all these gifts being offered to those faithful to bring peace and welfare.*

Keywords: *the place of worship, traditions, Sag Timiseni*

INTRODUCTION

Religious tourism in Romania has known a broad development in recent years, the impact of religious cultural tourism on the environment being rather strong, resonating especially in the economic and social fields. Most tourists are attracted by the notoriety of religious, cultural objectives and the special natural landscape.

Sag-Timiseni Monastery is a monastery of nuns, having as abbess of the monastery of the nun Casiana Simon.

It is located just at fifteen kilometers from Timisoara, near a forest at a few kilometers from the Sag village, in an oasis of peace, spirituality, faith and blessing, which many people are looking for.

The road that goes out of the village and passes through the fields is good and it can be made with car, because it is asphalted, so it is an easily accessible road. The access is made from DN 59 Timisoara, to the south-Sag commune (15 km), or by train on the *Timisoara-Timiseni halt*.

And still, as you leave behind the village and the main road and approach on the monastery, you pass by the curve guarded by two crying willows that appear from nowhere in the field, beside which a trout stands up-a first messenger of the monastery-more and more quiet it feels.

The entrance to the monastery is made on a massive carved wooden gate in the style of the peasant gates. The courtyard of the monastery is a garden with alleys, surrounded by building bodies that include cells of the nuns, workshops, library, kitchen, dining room and pilgrimage space, all of which have a clean and neat appearance. It is felt fresh air and the rush of the nearby forest, and in the summer the roses and lilies from the monastery's yard send a delicate perfume. All these make that Sag-Timiseni Monastery to be a valuable objective for Banat cultural heritage

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The purpose of this study is to analyze the potential and importance of Sag Timiseni Monastery as a place of worship from Banat area. In the light of this fact, we will take into account important factors in terms of religious tourism, namely: the history of the place of worship, its position and accessibility, the religious traditions, the arrangement and the material basis necessary for the tourists, as well as the closeness of the monastery servants to the faithful persons.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Sag-Timiseni Monastery is the foundation of Metropolitan Vasile Lazarescu in 1944. It was endowed through the labor of the monasteries' exarch from Banat of that time, Justinian Dalea. At the beginning the religious services were celebrated in the chapel arranged inside the building, which was then disbanded during the communist regime and reorganized by the I.P.S. Metropolitan Nicolae Corneanu.

In 1959, the monastery was closed following the 410 Decree of the communist regime, through many monasteries from Romania were abolished and thousands of monks were forced to leave their homes. After 1959, the Sag Monastery was taken over by the forest detour and served as a living space for workers. Legends say that religious songs were heard inside the monastery, although there were no monks there, and the workers were scared.

Following the persecutions of Banat Metropolitan Nicolae Corneanu, the monastery was re-established in 1968. Between 1968 and 1972 the first church from the monastery was built, the painting being executed by Victor Jurca from Lugoj, and the sanctification of the sanctuary took place on August 29, 1972. This became incomprehensible, because the number of monks and believers who came to work was more and more great.

The services are very beautiful and gracious, many people say they are going out bright from there. And the nun's choir, with their tall and clean voices, with their religious songs with popular influence, makes even the most sensible souls to tear.



Sag Monastery Entrance

Meanwhile, a building has been built in which there is the abbey, the trapeze and a part of cells. The church has the shape of a cross and is divided as follows: an altar, a nave, a closed porch and an open porch, supported in front of two columns of the wall and behind by two other columns framed in the walls of the closed porch. It has a tower with the closed porch that also uses it as a bell tower. The exterior frontages are simple but at the entrance there are three paintings in the mosaic.



Sag-Timiseni Monastery exterior frontage

After the year 1990, a building body was put into use for pilgrim. In the year 2002 began the construction of a larger church and a vast administrative building. In the same year, on May 10, was put the foundation stone of the new church at the Feast of the Healing Spring by HE. Metropolitan Nicolae, the patron saint of the monastery being the Cutting of the Head of St. John the Baptist-Before-the forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ, celebrated on August 29.

The new church was brought on August 29, 2012 by P.S. Vicar Bishop Paisie Lugojanul.



The Sag Monastery New Church

The interior of the church is green with blue shades. The saints painted on the walls hold papyrus in their hands with short spiritual teachings that are worth reading. The painting of the church was made in the fresco technique, the Byzantine style, by the painters Constantin and Petronia Dumitrescu-Gherghe.

The Timiseni-Sag Monastery is a special place, an oasis of peace, spirituality, faith and blessing, which many people are looking for. Perhaps this fact is also reflected by the large number of believers who come here especially to Sunday services, at special services and at religious holidays.

An old tradition of more than 70 years is preserved at the Timiseni-Sag Monastery, found at about 15 kilometers from Timisoara. The nuns paint red eggs in Great Friday, which are then divided into the believers, who attend the Easter meal, but also to the poor peoples who come to the monastery.

Every year about 1,000 eggs are prepared. After they were good washed, the eggs were cooked on the stove, in pots filled with red onion leaves. The eggs are drained on a dry surface, and when they cooled a bit, they are "polished" with a cloth soaked in oil. The red egg formworks are taken out of the green grass from the monastery's courtyard, putted in a shape in cross form, and the Jesus Christ icon is placed near, for the priest to sanctify them. The egg cross will remain in the grass until the next day at dawn in order to announce the coming of the Holy Easter holiday. On Sunday, nuns from Sag will wait the believers with eggs, cakes and pasta.

Mother Casiana Simon, the abbess of the Timiseni-Şag Monastery, tells that the eggs are painted red by a natural method.

This tradition of red eggs continues from the crucifixion of our Savior Jesus Christ. Since then, every year, at Easter, eggs are painted in red in memory of this suffering. Another variant of the red eggs was that Mary Magdalene has reddish a basket of eggs and brought them to Pilate, when she asked the body on the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. These eggs are laid on the table on the Easter day, the second and third day and a part is given to the poor who are coming to the monastery.



The cross in shape of eggs

At the Resurrection service from the Timiseni-Sag Monastery, thousands of believers are expected to attend. On the night of the Resurrection, after the holy Easter is taken, the Divine Liturgy continues, until the morning.

Sag-Timiseni Monastery is visited by the believers from the country and abroad, being a place to stop especially for those who cross the border of Romania.

The monastery was considered to be, until the Revolution, the youngest monastery from Romania, says the abbess Casiana Simon, being founded in 1944. Also from this we found out that every day passes the threshold of the monastery believers from the country and abroad, this because of the settlement of the monastery near Timisoara, a city frequented by many foreign tourists.

But it is not only a tourist place, but also a prayer place. Believers who want peace come here and "feel more fulfilled, listen the service, pray, go home more quietly. Most of them come on Sundays and on holidays, but also during the week, especially in the afternoon. A special fact is also happening every second Friday of the month: night-time observation starting with 19:00, meaning all Laudes, starting with Vespers, where the Holy Unction is also included and ends with the Divine Liturgy. Everything ends around 4:00 in the morning. Most believers come in the evening at the unction, and some of them remain at the Divine Liturgy. And the cult of the dead is very developed in this area of the country. Here is usually made requiem in Saturday, in the morning is made the service of the

requiem in the church, and then at trapeze the table. All believers are invited, especially the poor ones, but also the monastery staff and, of course, the workers.

We can see that the number of believers present at the service is increasingly high, the monasteries staff, at the instigation and blessing of the High Priest Nicolae, the Metropolitan of Banat, decided to raise a new church. Along with the church they raised a number of cells near her.



Sag-Timiseni Monastery view

The nuns from Sag – Timiseni have in care a real household. From the harvest on the land of the monastery are feed the animals, some cows and hens, pigs and a horse. They even have a few hives, is deal with them a nun who made a beekeeping course. Everyone has her obedience, everything is in good order. This feeling, you get it entering on the gate of the monastery carved in Maramures style. The well care graveyard, on the left, then the green grass perfect cut, the flowers that invade the windows, the alleys and the walls, everything around quietly prepare you for the prayer.

It can also be said that the Monastery is a place of flowers. At each window, at every door are found flowers.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the analysis of the factors that determine tourism and the tourist traffic, such as the history of the Sag-Timiseni Monastery, its position and accessibility, the traditions that are preserved inside it, we can say that Sag-Timiseni Monastery is the perfect place for practicing religious tourism, because it embraces all the specific objectives that lead to practicing this activity, to self-discovery, meditation and contemplation.

The religious cultural tourism of Sag Timiseni Monastery had social and economic effects on short-term and long-term such as the fact that in time the monastery's own accommodation capacity was developed, the infrastructure was developed, it was promoted the sale of church objects, the ecumenical dialogue was strengthened and Orthodox religion itself through the closeness of church ministers and tourists and supporting for disadvantaged people.

Sag Timiseni Monastery is the perfect place for those who want to get away and find themselves in a holy place without going a long distance, considering the small distance from Timișoara.

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