**To His Holiness Pope Francis**

Vatican City – Csíkszereda (Șumuleu Ciuc)

Your Holiness, Pope Francis,

Living with the exceptional and extraordinary opportunity of the pastoral visit to Romania of Your Holiness scheduled for tomorrow, in the framework of which you are to visit one of the spiritual fortresses of the Hungarian Roman Catholic Church, the ancient pilgrimage site of **Csíksomlyó (Șumuleu Ciuc),** in the evening of the preceding day, members and representatives of the historical churches of the Transylvanian Hungarian national community - Catholics, Reformed, Evangelical and Unitarians – have gathered for a special ecumenical service in **Csíkszereda (Miercurea Ciuc).** The purpose of this meeting is to bring to Your kind attention, as well as to the attention of the international public, through the words of God, the cruel fate of our brothers **István Beke** and **Zoltán Szőcs,** Szekler-Hungarian public leaders, who have been innocently imprisoned. We would also like to express our brotherly solidarity with their families and small children, as well as raise our voices for our brothers’ liberation.

The worshipping community of the ecumenical service held in the Szekler centre of the Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia) Roman Catholic Diocese first and foremost would like to greet You with great respect and heartfelt love, with gratitude to God in our hearts, on your visit to **Transylvania**, the land of traditional religious tolerance, your visit being the first time that the Pope of Rome comes to our region in the course of our history. It is a feeling of great contentment for all Your devotees and all those who look up to you with great respect to finally welcome you here, among us. Considering your predecessor’s, **Beatus John Paul II,** pastoral visit to Transylvania which was thwarted in 1999 because of political reasons, Your visit to the majority Catholic and Greek Catholic – both Hungarian and Romanian – believers in Transylvania is now a way to mend the wrongs of the past. In the brotherly, ecumenical community of our churches, we all greet You with great joy here, in **Szeklerland,** and we consider Your Holiness’ message particularly timely: “I come to you, so we walk together. We walk together when we learn to preserve our roots and families, when we protect the children’s future and that of the person who lives next to us… ”

Keeping in mind the previous beatification of several Hungarian Catholic bishops, and the forthcoming beatification of Romanian hierarchs, as well as the preparation of the beatification process of the late spiritual leader of Transylvania, **Áron Márton**, bishop of Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia), the message is clear: to Your Holiness and to the Vatican, the cause of the confessionary church, whose members suffered and not once assumed martyrdom in the name of Christ and their faith under the atheist-communist dictatorship, is of utmost importance. It is equally clear, that Your consider bringing **justice** and **redemption** to the victims of persecution just as important.

With this in mind, we call Your Holiness’ attention to the discrimination and the violation on the rights of our Hungarian minority churches and our entire Hungarian community, that affect both the individual and our institutions, still persisting today three decades following the fall of the national communist dictatorship.

The European Union has recently repeatedly condemned our country for the worrying developments concerning the **rule of law** and **European values**. Among other matters, this includes the violation of the rights of the one-and-a-half million large Hungarian minority community living in Romania, including the Szeklers. This means, namely, the existence of systemic **anti-Hungarian attitudes** presentthroughoutthecountry**,** one of the most striking examples being the case involving Szekler political prisoners in conceptual lawsuits.

**István Beke and Zoltán Szőcs** were sentenced to five years each, accused of actions they have never committed, of terrorism, in a legally completely unfounded process. Their only sin is that they are Hungarians. Their indictment incriminates the entire Transylvanian Hungarian and Szekler community, and in fact serves to intimidate them and suppress their struggle for their rights.

You Holiness, Pope Francis! We follow as You perpetually raise Your voice for the protection of those **oppressed** and **persecuted** all around the world in Your position as first guardian of Your Church. When we turn to God in our prayers concerning our Transylvanian minority churches and our Hungarian community, we also ask Your Holiness to **plead our cause** with the government and the president of Romania so that we can live as equal citizens of our country enjoying equal rights, without fear and in peace in our homeland.

With the words of the Holy Script, "And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones who cry out to him day and night?" – (Luke 18: 7), we respectfully ask You to help bring justice to our Szekler prisoners so that in the community of our faith, we can together and freely praise our God.

We ask God’s blessing on Your mission in Romania!

"Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat!"

Csíkszereda (Miercurea Ciuc), May 31st, 2019

Ecumenical Worship of Miercurea Ciuc

The Believer Congregation of Christ