

A Brief Biography of Blessed Ioan Suciu

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The son of Vasile Suciu, a Greek-Catholic priest, and Maria Coltor, Ioan was born in Blaj (called *Little Rome* in Transylvania), Alba County in Romania on December 3, 1907. He was baptized and chrismated on December 24 of that year. After elementary and high school in Blaj, he passed his final exams in 1925 at Saint Basil the Great High School. He was then sent for further studies to Rome at the Pontifical Greek College. He obtained his doctorate in philosophy in 1927 at *De Propaganda Fide* Athenaeum and his doctorate in theology in 1932 at the *Angelicum* Athenaeum.

Returning to the country, he was appointed professor of religion at the Commercial Boys High School in Blaj, then at the Saint Basil the Great High School. In 1939, he was commissioned to teach some courses at the Theological Academy. A humble, energetic, zealous, excellent preacher, and highly respected, he captured the energies of young people, publishing for them works of great catechetical and pastoral value.

On May 25, 1940, he was appointed auxiliary bishop of Oradea, the consecration taking place on July 20, 1940, shortly before the Vienna Dictate. Remaining in the territory occupied by the Horthyst troops, he carried out an impressive apostolate between 1940 and 1946, despite the difficulties caused by the war and the occupation of the regime.

At the beginning of 1947 he returned to Blaj as apostolic administrator of the Archeparchy of Alba-Iulia and Făgăraș, where he strengthened the zeal of the clergy and of the people through numerous pastoral and spiritual initiatives. It strengthened the faith of the believers, who were beginning to feel the pressure coming from the communist authorities to leave the united Romanian Church (Greek-Catholic) in order to “unify” with the Orthodox Church. Fearing his tremendous popularity, he was arrested twice, in September 1948, during his pastoral visits, carried out even during the assault on the united Romanian Church.

He was arrested for the third time on October 27, 1948, along with the other Greek-Catholic bishops. On May 10, 1949, the Security picked him up from the organized camp at the Căldărușani monastery and took him to Bucharest, to the Interior Ministry. Knowing clearly that he would not renounce his Catholic faith, the Security mistreated him in harsh investigations in an attempt to involve him in a political process. On October 26, 1950, he was transferred to the Sighet extermination prison. Although he suffered from chronic colitis, he did not receive adequate diet or medical care, starving to death in cell #44, on June 27, 1953, surrounded by his brothers in the episcopate. He was buried in the “Cemetery of the Poor” in Sighet, and his grave remains unknown.