



# Hungarian American Coalition

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## ***Message from the Hungarian American Coalition to Rev. László Tőkés on the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Romanian Revolution***

Hungarian Americans well remember the astonishment we felt hearing the news from Romania in mid-December, 1989! Our hopes for freedom soared when we first learned of the young Hungarian Reformed minister in Timisoara (Temesvár) who risked his and his family's life to defy church eviction orders by the dictator Ceausescu. Hour by hour we followed the news, how his courageous stand resulted in an unprecedented demonstration of solidarity, as first, his parishioners, then, thousands of fellow Timisoara citizens – of all nationalities and ethnicities formed a human chain to protect this remarkable man, the Rev. László Tőkés. And, when attacked by the Securitate and army, how that crowd launched an anti-government protest, that soon spread all over Romania. From the courage of one man, the entire country caught on fire. Within a week, the Ceausescu regime fell!

Since the heady days of freedom's promise in Romania, much has changed, yet many serious challenges remain. Nevertheless, Rev. Tőkés has remained true to his principles during the past 20 difficult years. First, during his service as Bishop of the Hungarian Reformed Church, and more recently, as a Member of the European Parliament, he has consistently fought for true democratization in Romania, for the respect of human and minority rights of the historic Hungarian community, and for full disclosure of the crimes of communism.

Last May in Washington, D.C., the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation honored Rev. Tőkés with the Truman-Reagan Freedom Award for his "life-long commitment to promoting freedom and democracy and opposing communism and tyranny." Upon accepting this prestigious award, Rev. Tőkés commented on the deep irony that while he is honored thousands of miles from his homeland, to this day no Romanian government has recognized his role in the 1989 Romanian Revolution!

On behalf of the Hungarian American Coalition, we send Rev. Tőkés and those gathered in Timisoara on this historic anniversary our heartfelt thanks and our highest esteem for being a living example of commitment to truth.

We hope, that in the Spirit of Timisoara, all Romanians will soon be able to recognize and honor the principles characterize László Tőkés's life of service.