

## **Bishop Atanasie of Bogdania elected first Romanian Orthodox Archbishop for the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland**



On Friday, Bishop Atanasie of Bogdania, Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Italy, was elected as the first Romanian Orthodox Archbishop for the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. Bishop Teofil of Iberia, Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Spain and Portugal, was also considered for the role.

During the same session, the Holy Synod also appointed the first Bishop of Ireland and Iceland.

### **First Romanian Archbishop for the United Kingdom**

The newly elected Archbishop, who is 42, has been part of the Romanian Orthodox Church Synod since May 2018. He will be the first to lead the newly established Archdiocese of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, created earlier this year.

Archbishop-elect Atanasie was born on January 17, 1982, in Chişinău, Republic of Moldova, the eldest of two sons of Eugen and Ala Rusnac. He received Romanian citizenship on October 12, 2010.

On December 4, 2008, he took monastic vows, adopting the name Dionysius in honour of Saint Dionysius Exiguus. He was ordained a deacon on January 17, 2009, and then as a priest on April 16, 2009, serving at the Chapel of the Diocesan Centre and the Dormition of the Mother of God Monastery in Rome.

On April 21, 2011, he took final monastic vows at Bivongi Monastery, receiving the name Atanasie in honour of Saint Athanasius the Great. In August 2011, he was elevated to protosyncellus and, in August 2013, to archimandrite.

From 2009 to 2018, he served at the Chapel of the Dormition of the Mother of God at the Eparchial Center in Rome. From February 2011 until his episcopal ordination, he served as Vicar of the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Italy.

On February 15, 2018, he was elected Assistant Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox

Diocese of Italy, with the title Bishop of Bogdania, and was ordained on May 1.

An engineer turned bishop

Archbishop-elect Atanasie originally trained as an engineer. From 2000 to 2005, he studied at the National Institute of Applied Sciences (INSA) in Lyon, France, where he earned a Master's degree in Telecommunications and Networks. He then completed a specialization in IT at MT System in Lyon.

From 2006 to 2010, he studied at the Saint-Serge Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris, earning a degree in pastoral theology in 2010.

He further pursued a Master's degree in Practical Theology (Canon Law) from 2010 to 2012 at the "Andrei Şaguna" Faculty of Theology in Sibiu. His thesis, "Principles of Canonical Theology in the Diaspora, with Special Reference to Italy," reflects his commitment to supporting the Church's mission abroad.

Establishment of New Dioceses in Diaspora

The Archdiocese of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, along with the Diocese of Ireland and Iceland, were formally established on February 29, 2024. Both are now part of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of Western and Southern Europe.

Over one million Romanians reside in the United Kingdom, with 63 parishes, mission outposts, and three monasteries serving the Orthodox community.

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