

Mosaic of Virgin Mary Orans installed in Romania's National Cathedral ahead of Dormition Feast



Ahead of the great feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God, the mosaic depicting the Virgin Mary Orans has been installed in the narthex of Romania's National Cathedral. In this image, the Most Holy Theotokos is shown with her hands raised and palms open, with the Child Jesus depicted on her chest — a symbol of the Incarnation.

“This image is very ancient, with origins in early Christian art and is often found in Byzantine mosaics and frescoes. It portrays the Mother of God as the Intercessor — the icon is an image of the praying Church and of the Mother of God's intercession for the world,” explained Daniel Codrescu, the coordinator of the mosaic artwork at the National Cathedral, in a Facebook post.

A famous example is the “Virgin Mary Orans” in the altar apse of Hagia Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv (11th century), also known as the “Unbreakable Wall,” because it symbolises the protection and defence of the city and the faithful, the church painter further noted.

The mosaic painting team at the National Cathedral is working intensively to decorate as much surface area as possible before the cathedral's consecration on October 26, 2025, when Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew will once again be in Bucharest, as he was for the consecration of the altar during the Centennial of Romania's 1918 Great Union.

The artists have set themselves a target of 360 square meters per month, but they often exceed it, said Patriarchal Counsellor Father Nicolae Crîngaşu, the coordinator of the cathedral's construction works.

Photo: Daniel Codrescu

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