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Patriarch Daniel’s name day honours the prophet who showed that history rests in God’s hands



Romanian Orthodox Patriarch Daniel marks Wednesday the feast of one of his patron saints, the Prophet Daniel, revered in Christian tradition as a witness to the belief that world history rests in God’s hands.

In this context, observers note that Patriarch Daniel has been the principal founder and driving force behind the construction of the National Cathedral, a long-standing national aspiration which he consistently entrusted, in his own words, to God’s providence.

The symbolic edifice, widely admired during the Centennial Year of the Romanian Patriarchate by both supporters and former critics, has come to be seen as a unifying landmark — regarded by many as a sign of work carried out in accordance with divine purpose.

Like the Prophet Daniel, Patriarch Daniel has also been described as a leader of a people dispersed in exile, working to unite Romanians abroad under the pastoral care of the Romanian Orthodox Church by strengthening its institutional presence across the diaspora.

One name, two saints

Patriarch Daniel has previously recounted that, upon entering monastic life, Saint Cleopa of Sihăstria combined his two baptismal names, Dan and Ilie, into the single monastic name Daniel. In a symbolic parallel, Saint Cleopas Ilie himself bore the family name of the Prophet Elijah.

This year, the Patriarch will prayerfully celebrate his name day on Thursday, the feast of Saint Daniel the Hesychast. “We keep these two commemorations as the remembrance of our personal protectors, but also as great intercessors for the Church of Christ,” Patriarch Daniel said in 2021, referring to the two saints whose name he bears.

Brief biography

Patriarch Daniel was born on July 22, 1951, in Dobrești, Timiș County.

Between 1970 and 1974, he studied at the Orthodox Theological Institute in Sibiu, followed by doctoral studies in Bucharest from 1974 to 1976 under the guidance of the renowned theologian Saint Dumitru Stăniloae. He continued his academic training at the universities of Strasbourg and Freiburg im Breisgau, where he defended his doctoral thesis in 1979.

He entered monastic life in 1987 at Sihăstria Monastery in Neamț County.

In 1990, the first year after the fall of communism, he was ordained a bishop and appointed assistant bishop to the Archdiocese of Timișoara. Later that year, he was elected Metropolitan of Moldavia and Bukovina. In 2007, he was elected Archbishop of Bucharest, Metropolitan of Muntenia and Dobruja, and Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Alongside his pastoral and missionary work and the Church’s institutional and physical development, Patriarch Daniel has pursued an extensive academic and teaching career.

A full biography is available online.

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