

National Cathedral to host first Divine Liturgy of 2026 during international Orthodox youth gathering



The National Cathedral will reopen its doors to worshippers during the International Meeting of Orthodox Youth (ITO 2026), which will take place in Bucharest from 31 August to 3 September.

According to a statement from the Romanian Patriarchate's Press Office, the National Cathedral will host several liturgical services and conferences next week. On Thursday, 3 September, the Cathedral will celebrate the year's first Divine Liturgy. The service will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, and worshippers will be admitted subject to available capacity.

On the other days of the International Meeting of Orthodox Youth, members of the public will have access only to the National Cathedral esplanade. Screens will be installed there so they can follow the services and conferences taking place inside.

Ten years ago, the first Divine Liturgy on the National Cathedral site was celebrated during the 2016 International Meeting of Orthodox Youth in Bucharest.

Thanksgiving service on 1 September

The programme at the National Cathedral will begin on Tuesday, 1 September, with

a thanksgiving service marking the beginning of the Church Year at 10:00 a.m., followed by the official opening of ITO 2026 at 10:30 a.m.

Later that day, Andreea Ogăraru and physician Radu Țincu will give a conference entitled Youth and the Family in Today's Society, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

On Wednesday, 2 September, Bishop Macarie of Northern Europe will deliver a spiritual conference entitled Youth and the Church in the Orthodox Diaspora: Pastoral Experience in Northern Europe, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

This will be followed by a presentation of the St Elijah the Tishbite Youth Activity Centre project. From 8:30 p.m., worshippers can take part in the Procession of Lights, which will begin at the National Cathedral and conclude at the historic Patriarchal Cathedral.

Around 2,400 young people in Bucharest

Image not found or type unknown



ITO 2026 will bring together around 2,400 young people aged 16 to 35 from Romania, the Romanian diaspora, and other countries for four days.

This year's visual identity draws inspiration from the mosaics of the National Cathedral and sculptor Constantin Brâncuși's Endless Column.

According to its designers, each element of the visual identity can be seen both as a mosaic piece, referencing the National Cathedral's artwork, and as a recurring motif resembling the Endless Column, a symbol of eternal life.

The International Meeting of Orthodox Youth was launched in 2014. Previous editions have been hosted by Baia Mare, Cluj-Napoca, Bucharest, Iași, Sibiu, Craiova and Timișoara.

Photo: Basilica.ro / Mircea Florescu

basilica.ro