

His Eminence Metropolitan Nicolae Condrea

1. Biographic Details

His Eminence Metropolitan Nicolae was born in the city of Constanța on April 15, 1967, to his parents Nicolae and Victoria, both now asleep in the Lord. He attended elementary school in his native city between 1973 and 1981. He attended the first two years of high school at the Mathematics & Physics High School in Constanța, after which he transferred to the Meteorology High School in Bucharest, where he obtained his baccalaureate in 1985. After he graduated from high school, he did his mandatory military service in 1985-1986.

Feeling the call toward the priesthood and the monastic vocation growing stronger and stronger, he decided to answer this call and follow this vocation. In 1988 he was admitted to the Andrei Șaguna Orthodox Faculty of Theology in Sibiu, which at that time was the only school to admit high school graduates. After four successful years he defended his degree in theology with the dissertation, “The Eucharistic Ecclesiology of Metropolitan John Zizioulas.” Starting in May 1993, having successfully passed the doctoral entrance examination, Fr. Nicolae attended doctoral classes until 1994 under the supervision of his adviser, the V. Rev. Fr. Prof. Dr. Ilie Moldovan; during that time, he wrote the following seminar papers:

- 1) The Collective Unconscious in C.G. Jung’s Works, Seen from the Point of View of Orthodox Moral Theology.
- 2) Self-Cognition according to the Ladder of St. John of Sinai.
- 3) The Sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the faithful according to St. Cyril of Alexandria.

Between 1992 and 1994 he taught Religion in Bucharest, where he had moved after high school.

In 1994 he received a scholarship to the Marc Bloch University in Strasbourg, where he attended the Faculty of Catholic Theology and finished a graduate degree in June 1995. Between 1995 and 2001 he attended doctoral classes at the same Faculty where, on November 10, 2001, he defended his Ph.D. dissertation entitled “Matters of Psychology in the Works of Evagrius Ponticus” and obtained the degree of Doctor in Theology. During his years of study, in order to combine theory and practice, study and priestly ministry, he decided to enter the clergy and was ordained in the spring of 1997 first as a deacon, then as a celibate priest, by His Eminence Metropolitan Serafim of Germany and Central Europe, with whose benediction he then established and served the parish of the Nativity of the Lord in Stuttgart, Germany. Thus, his missionary activity among Romanians from Stuttgart and its environs combined serving God with serving people. In the same time period, Fr. Nicolae was the representative of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the Dialogue Committee for European Integration of the Conference of European Churches (Brussels). After receiving the prestigious academic title at the end of his graduate studies, Fr. Nicolae returned to Romania where, on December 18, 2001, he took his monastic vows at the Radu Vodă Monastery in Bucharest. From then until he came to America he was patriarchal secretary.

2 His Election, Ordination and Enthronement

The priests and lay delegates of the Special Electoral Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada, convened on March 9, 2002, at the Holy Trinity parish in Troy, Michigan, elected Fr. Nicolae Condrea for the vacant throne of Archbishop. Thus ended a process which had lasted many years, having begun with the retirement and then the falling asleep of His Eminence Archbishop Victorin. His Eminence Teofan, Metropolitan of Oltenia, and then His Eminence Iosif, of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of Western and Southern Europe, had in turn

been locum tenens of the Archbishop's throne. The Special Electoral Committee proposed two names, the Rev. Protosinghelos Nicolae Condrea, and the Rev. Hieromonk Ioan Casian Tunaru, to the Eparchial Council assembled in September 2001, and the Council approved the work of the Committee and recommended the convocation of the Special Electoral Congress for the election of the Archbishop. The Congress was led by His Eminence Metropolitan Iosif. After several rounds of voting, the 109 delegates elected Fr. Nicolae Condrea. At its meeting of March 13, 2002, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church unanimously validated the election, and conferred on Fr. Nicolae the rank of Archimandrite.

The ordination and enthronement of the new Archbishop-Elect took place at the 71st Annual Congress of the Archdiocese, hosted by St. John the Baptist parish in Montreal, Canada, July 12 - 14, 2002. His Beatitude Patriarch Teoctist, accompanied by an important delegation of hierarchs, priests, deacons and media representatives, presided over the ceremonies. Included in the sobor of hierarchs who celebrated the Divine Liturgy and the ordination of the newly elected hierarch were His Eminence Sotirios, Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of Canada, His Eminence Theodosius, Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA), Their Eminences Metropolitans Teofan of Oltenia, Serafim of Germany and Northern and Central Europe, and Iosif of Western and Southern Europe, His Eminence Nathaniel, Archbishop of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America under OCA jurisdiction, His Grace Bishop Nicholas of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Detroit, His Grace Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa (OCA), and His Grace Bishop Ioan of Covasna and Harghita. In addition to these were the clergy of the Archdiocese, as well as priests and deacons invited from Romania, and representatives of other Orthodox jurisdictions in North America. The presence of His Beatitude Patriarch Teoctist and of the hierarchs, members of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church and of the sister Orthodox Churches, accentuated the importance of this historic event, which marked the beginning of a new page in the history of the Archdiocese.

Archbishop Nicolae has had a rich pastoral-missionary activity on the American continent. This activity includes primarily pastoral visits to parishes to investigate, encourage and organize their missionary and administrative work. Secondly, this missionary activity includes the participation of His Eminence in Pan-Orthodox and Ecumenical meetings. As a member of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, HE Nicolae regularly attends the meetings of the Holy Synod and of the National Church Assembly.

3. Elevation to the rank of Metropolitan and Enthronement Ceremony

The 80th Archdiocesan Congress, held July 1-3, 2016 at the Holy Resurrection parish in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada adopted historical decisions for the ecclesiastical organization of the Romanian Orthodox in the Americas, as follows:

- a. The establishment of the *Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Canada*
- b. The establishment of the *Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas*, composed of two dioceses: *The Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the United States of America*, and *the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Canada*
- c. Proposal to elevate the Romanian Orthodox Archbishop of the Americas to the dignity of Metropolitan
- d. Nomination of His Grace Bishop Ioan Casian as Diocesan Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Canada

These decisions of the Congress were approved by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church at its meeting of October 28-29, 2016. The ceremony of elevation to the rank of Metropolitan took place on October 30, 2016 at the Patriarchal Cathedral following the Divine Liturgy and officiated by Patriarch Daniel, in the presence of the members of the Holy Synod of the

Romanian Orthodox Church, and of priests and delegates of various parishes from the U.S. and Canada.

The Enthronement Ceremony took place on April 30, 2017 at Sts. Constantine and Helen Cathedral, Chicago, IL after the Divine Liturgy. The Liturgy was celebrated by His Eminence Metropolitan Nifon of Targoviste, Patriarchal Exarch, along with His Eminence Metropolitan Iosif of Western and Southern Europe, His Eminence Metropolitan Nicolae, His Grace Ioan Casian, Bishop Elect of Canada, and six other hierarchs from other Orthodox Churches in the Chicago area and beyond: His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas from the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit, His Grace Bishop Longin from the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of New Gracanica and the Midwest, His Eminence Archbishop Peter of the ROCOR Diocese of the Midwest, His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos from the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago, and His Grace Bishop Anthony of Toledo from the Antiochian Archdiocese. His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago was also in attendance. Besides the hierarchs, priests and parish delegates from the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the United States participated, together with other priests and faithful from the U.S. and Canada.

4. Conferences

- August 5, 2002, Washington, DC – conference organized by the World Council of Churches on the theme: “Beyond September 11. Implications for US Churches and the World.”
- May 5, 2004, the 39th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo; paper on “**Evagrius Ponticus as a Spiritual Source for Modern Psychology.**”
- May 6, 2005, the 40th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo; paper on “**The Sin of Acedia in the Ascetic Theology of Evagrius Ponticus.**”
- April 27, 2006, Washington, Prayer for Peace Conference organized by the St. Egidio Community on the occasion of its 20th anniversary; paper on “**Reflections on Scripture, Spirituality, Humanism.**”
- Dec 7, 2007 – First Edition of the Symposium of Orthodox Spirituality organized by the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese at Union Theological Seminary, New York, theme: ”Transfiguration in Christ”
- Feb 7, 2009 – 2nd edition of the Symposium, Concordia University in Montreal, theme: ”The Cappadocian Fathers: Theology and Spirituality for the 21st Century”
- December 12, 2009, Union Theological Seminary, New York, “The Threefold Love for God, Church and Nation,” Symposium organized by St. Nicholas Romanian Orthodox Church in New York on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the parish and the 100th anniversary of the birth of Fr. Vasile Vasilachi.
- Mar 6, 2010 – 3rd edition of the Symposium, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN, theme: “Nicaea and Constantinople: A Confession of Faith, Witness and Source of Unity”; paper on “**Ousia and Hypostasis in the Creed of Nicaea.**”
- Mar 5, 2011 – 4th edition of the Symposium, Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute of St. Paul University, Ottawa, theme: ”The Sacraments: Ways of Sanctification”
- Mar 17, 2012 – 5th edition of the Symposium, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Seminary, Boston, MA, theme: ”The Sacrament of Holy Anointing and the Care of the Sick”
- April 13, 2013 – 6th edition of the Symposium, Trinity College in Toronto, ON, theme: “The Holy Emperors Constantine and Helen and their Legacy. Christian faith in the new context of

freedom. The Church's transformative dynamic between social responsibility and Christian commitment"

- March 22, 2014 – 7th edition of the Symposium, Duquesne University of Pittsburgh, PA, theme: "Church as Model of Communion. A Eucharistic Perspective"
- April 16, 2016 - 9th edition of the Symposium, Fordham School of Law, New York, theme: "Youth Religious Education"

5. Meetings with Romanian Bishops from outside Romania

- April 15-20, 2004, Limours, France – headquarters of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia for Western and Southern Europe
- May 10-16, 2005 – Dormition of the Mother of God Monastery, Rives Junction, Michigan, USA
- November 22–25, 2010, Rome – headquarters of the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Italy
- November 7-8, 2016, Limours, France – headquarters of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of Western and Southern Europe

6. Pan-Orthodox Meetings

6.1. Between July 2002 and May 2010, HE Nicolae was a member of the **Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas** (SCOBA) and participated regularly in the its meetings.

6.2. Since May 2010, HE Nicolae has been a member of the **Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America** which in April 2014 became the **Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America**. Since July 2010, HE Nicolae is the chairman of the Committee for Canonical Regional Planning of the Assembly. In this capacity, he took part and made the presentation of the work of the Committee at the following meetings of the Assembly:

- May 26-28, 2010, New York – First Meeting of the Assembly
- May 25-26, 2011, Chicago – Assembly II
- September 10-12, 2012, Chicago – Assembly III
- September 17 – 19, 2013, Chicago – Assembly IV
- September 16 – 18, 2014, Dallas – Assembly V
- September 15 – 17, 2015, Chicago – Assembly VI
- October 4 – 6, 2016, Detroit – Assembly VII

6.3. Liaison Bishop to the IOCC

His Eminence Metropolitan Nicolae is the Liaison Bishop from the Assembly to the IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities), an Agency of the Assembly. In this capacity, HE Nicolae is a member *ex officio* of the Board of Directors and participates regularly in its meetings and other events organized by the IOCC.

6.4. Canadian Conference of Orthodox Bishops

Since 2006, HE Nicolae has been a member of the Canadian Conference of Orthodox Bishops. He participated in all the annual meetings of the Conference between 2006 and 2015.

6.5. Latin American Conference of Orthodox Bishops

As archpastor of the Romanian Orthodox parishes in South America, HE Nicolae is a member of the Latin American Conference of Orthodox Bishops. He participated in the following meetings:

- November 6 – 7, 2012, Caracas, Venezuela.
- January 21 – 23, 2016, Mexico City, Mexico.

6.6. **Holy and Great Synod of the Orthodox Church**, June 18-26, 2016, Crete - HE Nicolae was part of the delegation of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

7. Inter-Christian meetings

7.1. Dialogue with the Catholic Bishops of the U.S.

As a member of SCOBA, HE Nicolae took part in the Pastoral Dialogue between the Orthodox and Catholic Bishops of the U.S. as follows:

- June 21 – 23, 2006 – Washington, DC.
- October 3-5, 2007 – St. Augustine, Florida.

The Dialogue resumed in 2016, HE Nicolae being again part of the group. He participated at the meeting of the Dialogue held in Detroit, Michigan, June 1-2, 2017.

7.2. Dialogue with the Catholic Bishops of Canada

HE Nicolae has been invited to attend the meetings of the Dialogue between Orthodox and Catholic Bishops of Canada. He participated in all the meetings of the group on pastoral subjects between 2009 and 2014 held in Toronto, Ontario.

7.3. February 13–23, 2006, Porto Alegre, Brazil – HE Nicolae took part in the 9th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches as a member of the delegation of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

8. Awards

- February 7, 2004 – The Order for Cultural Merit, rank of Commander, Category G (Religious Groups), conferred by Romanian President Ion Iliescu
- April 24, 2014 – The Order for Cultural Merit, rank of Grand Officer, Category G (Religious Groups), conferred by Romanian President Traian Băsescu.