

**His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel
of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate**

Archpastor, leader, teacher, and faithful steward—Your Eminence, you have inspired the Church through your tireless service and loving support of those in need. Your ministry exemplifies St. Paul’s call to proclaim scripture, to preach, and to teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Tim 4:13).

Born to faithful parents, your childhood years at St. Michael the Archangel Romanian Greek Catholic Church formed in you a desire to serve the Lord as a priest. Having completed your theological studies at St. Procopius College in Illinois and at the Gregorian University in Rome, you were ordained to the diaconate and to the priesthood in 1966, and in 1967 you returned to serve as the assistant priest at your home parish.

Called by the spirituality, theology, and mission of the Church, you were received into the ranks of the clergy of the Orthodox Church in 1968. For several years you lived as a member of a small monastic community at the Vatra Românească in Michigan, until you were called back to parish ministry at Holy Cross Church in Hermitage, Pennsylvania. In 1980, you received the Lesser Schema, were elevated to the rank of archimandrite, and consecrated to the episcopacy as bishop of Dearborn Heights.

As beloved archpastor and spiritual father, you have served as confessor to the sisterhood of Holy Transfiguration Monastery, in Ellwood City, and you were instrumental in the founding of an inter-Orthodox women’s association in the Hermitage area. Obeying God’s command to care for those in need, you organized the “Help for Romania Fund,” and you co-founded the “Help the Children of Romania” project. Leading by example, your humanitarian efforts in post-communist Romania have inspired many faithful to sacrificially care for their brothers and sisters both here in the US and abroad.

As a tireless advocate for theological education, you have written articles, you have served as spiritual advisor to Orthodox youth and have regularly taught at summer youth camps. Serving as a member of the Episcopate’s late vocations program and serving as episcopal moderator for the Pastoral Life Ministries Unit, you have steadfastly supported the education and formation of successive generations of leaders in the Church. Your commitment to theological education is evident in the two generous endowments you have established through St. Vladimir’s Seminary: one, in honor of your parents, Joseph and Vera Popp, which supports seminarians preparing for ordination, and the other endowment that supports women monastics in their theological studies.

Therefore, it is the distinct honor and privilege of the Board of Trustees and the Faculty of St. Vladimir’s Seminary, by unanimous decision and by the power vested in them by the Board of Regents of the State of New York, to bestow upon Your Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel, archbishop of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate, the degree of Doctor of Divinity (D.D.), *honoris causa*.