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## **Romania: Iasi, diocesan phase of cause of beatification of Father Anton Demeter, persecuted by the regime, has ended**

(from Bucharest) The diocesan phase of the cause of beatification and canonisation of Romanian Priest Anton Demeter OFMConv has come to an end. The event will be celebrated next Sunday, 28 November, with a Mass in the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Our Lady Queen of Iași, Romania. The cause was opened in December 2006 due to the fame of holiness of the Franciscan priest, who died in Roman, Romania, on 20 December 2006, aged 81. "We have so many testimonies of people who have known him and who have received graces from the Lord through his prayer and the sufferings he offered to God. Father Demeter had a reputation for holiness which is still alive. Many people flocked to him, lay people and priests alike, asking for advice and prayer", Fr. Alois Moraru, a member of the Historical Commission for the Cause of Beatification, told SIR news agency. Anton Demeter was born in Butea, in the county of Iași, on 17 September 1925. Since childhood, he was attracted by the Franciscan spirituality and attended the Gymnasium of the Friars Minor Conventual. He entered the Franciscan seminary and the novitiate in 1945. In 1949, he was forced to return to his family, for the communist regime had closed down religious orders and Catholic schools. As he will remember later, however, he was ordained a priest on 29 June 1953 in the Cathedral of Alba Iulia, having "kept his vocation alive with strength and hope". Five years later, he was arrested by the Communist regime because of his apostolate and sentenced to 20 years of forced labour. Tortured in prison, he became paralysed. He was graced in 1964 and spent more than forty years in a wheelchair.

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