

PROMINENT ASSUMPTIONIST Fr. Daniel Stiernon, A.A. (1923-2015)

Eminent professor, Byzantine scholar, ecumenist

Raoul Richard Stiernon, the second of six children, was born in Auvelais, Belgium, near the city of Namur, but when he was only two years of age his family moved to the Assumptionist parish of Our Lady of the Assumption in the Brussels commune of Woluwe Saint-Lambert. At the beginning of World War II he entered the Assumptionists and made his first vows in 1942 taking the name Daniel. He escaped obligatory work assignment in Germany during the Nazi takeover of Belgium because he was a 'seminarian' and was allowed to pursue his studies of philosophy and his initial theology studies. After the war he went to the Angelicum in Rome to complete these studies (where, by the way, one of his fellow students was a certain Karol Wojtyla).

He was immediately sent to obtain a licentiate in Oriental Studies at the *Pontificio Istituto Orientale* in Rome (1949-1952). Upon graduation Fr. Daniel set out on a long and distinguished teaching career at many universities : the Urbanianum (1952-1966), the Pontifical Latran University (1952-1994), the Augustinianum (1958-1966, 1970-1974); the Catholic Institutes of Lyon and Paris (1958-1967) ; and the Pontifical Institute of « Regina Mundi » in Rome (1969-1995), where he served as dean of the French-speaking program.

Fr. Daniel also served as a member or director of many prestigious academic organizations and journals: director of the French Institute of Byzantine Studies of Paris (1966-1969), member of the Belgian Committee of Byzantine Studies (1971-2010), and member of the Pontifical Committee of Byzantine Studies (1975). He was a member of the French editorial board of the review *Unitas* (1950-1966), a partner in the organization of the French programming for the Week of Christian Unity for Vatican Radio (1955-1965) and a presenter at numerous events for the Week of Christian Unity over the years throughout Italy: Rome, Florence, Parma, Reggio Calabria, Sestri Levante, Cerro Veronese, Salerno, Bari, Gazzada (Varese), Venice, and Viterbo. He assisted Pope John Paul II in the redaction of the Apostolic Letter «Omnium Ecclesiarum matri » in 1987.

He was a member of the Second Vatican Council preparatory commission for the Oriental Churches (1960-1962) and served as a consultant to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, notably on the topic of the lifting of the anathema regarding the Orthodox Church (1054), and a member ofthe Congregation’s Ecumenical Directory (1972-1992).

In addition to writing *Constantinople I (Histoire des conciles œcuméniques, 5*), he contributed over 500 scholarly articles to a wide range of reviews and dictionaries.

Fr. Daniel stood in a long line of outstanding Byzantine scholars in the Congregation. The very night that he died, the former superior general of the Assumption, Fr. Claude Maréchal, who had lived many years with him in Rome, sent this note to this grieving community, « More even than the great researcher, I loved how even-tempered he was, a joyful religious, a committed brother without pretentions. »