

Fr Daniel Sysoiev murdered in Moscow



Fr Daniel Sysoiev (1974-2009), a well-known missionary and rector of the parish of the Holy Apostle Thomas, was murdered by unknown assailants in Moscow on the night of 19/20 November 2009. Eternal Memory!

My shock is great this morning, as I knew Fr Daniel personally and greatly respected him as one of the foremost young missionaries of our time.

Sources in Moscow say that an unknown assailant killed Fr Daniel. He was shot in the head and chest and his assistant, Vladimir Strelbitskaya, was seriously wounded. The most probable reason for the murder of Fr Daniel was his missionary activities among Non-Orthodox. 'Recently, he had received numerous death threats from extremist organisations. On several occasions, Fr Daniel had appealed for protection to the Federal Security Service', said one source. According to this source, Fr Daniel said that he had received phone calls from unknown people and had received an e-mail with the threat 'to cut his guts out'. 'Fr Daniel received the latest threat in early October. A stranger phoned him and said that he was sentenced to death'.

A most articulate theologian, Fr Daniel engaged in constant debate with extremist Muslims. Fr Daniel was the author of *Marriage to a Muslim* and *The Orthodox Response to Islam*. Another source said that neo-pagans could also have killed the priest. The source said that neo-pagan groups are primarily made up of young people, mostly unbelievers. He also said that neo-pagans had earlier set off a bomb in a church, also on the south side of Moscow.

Fr Daniel was 35 years old. His wife and three children survive him. May God give them strength and comfort them in this great trial.

Fr Andrew