

## Biography of Priest Elvis Impersonator Antoniu Petrescu alias Don Elvis



My name is Antoniu Petrescu and I was born in Bucarest (Romania) on September 15th. of 1972. I come from a modest family and I found myself on this world the third of four children that composes the "musketeeer team". Ever since I was a child I revealed an particular inclination towards Art and beauty. Music and sports, the pleasure of "beauty" in general, have accompanied and guided me throughout these years of existence becoming my favourite hobbies.

My childhood has relatively been normal. The climate of respect and discipline characterized the family environment as always! For the truth, I was a little restless for my sensibility that I could not carry out to the environment in which I was at times, in a direction that would have satisfied me completely, and also for a choice in life that would have conditioned my life.

Fact is that I changed school more than once and this until I arrived to the Seminar where I achieved the Classic diploma.

I remember with joy and nostalgia the various moments of this passage of my youthful life; they had been years of grace, of human and spiritual growth, years of proof and sufferance at times! The difficulty that emerged in my heart was that to conciliate more and more the life of a normal youth, with it's qualities and flaws, with it's highs and lows, with the radical choice of becoming a Priest in life, with a life with and of Christ. At the age of seventeen I left home to undertake the adventure of the Seminary.

Evidently I did not know what I was going towards but despite all I abandoned myself to the hands of God and I faced the experience with courage. From '91 / '92 eve to mature humanly, I did some activities outside the Seminary. They helped me understand more of myself, to express myself for who I was and not for what others wanted me to be. I started in an association of Dutch Language recovery - Die **StrassenKinder** - reality that still occupyes of the children abandoned to themselves.

It was fantastic because, besides the fact of making new friends, you get to learn another language, to make yourself available to the necessities of these children, I tried to leave a practical mark of Faith that I professed, to pass as Christ, giving others what is most precious in this world: love.

The arrival in Italy is successively to the death of my Father and the experience that I carried out in '92/'93 was of Vocational order at the ERA of Assisi, Italy where, together with other people we reflected about our future. It was in this circumstance that I met the rector of the minor Seminary of Palestrina, near Rome, that after a long period presented me to the Bishop of then Mons.Vittorio Tomassetti which accepted me in the dioceses.

I was sent to study in Anagni at the Papal College Leoniano (together with the University Teresianum of Rome) and this from '93 to '99, year in which I achieved the Licence in Theology with the specialization in Pastoral Ecclesiology.

The years that I lived in the Seminary had been lived in a familiar environment, of brotherhood and love and this thanks especially to the rector of then don Francesco Lambiasi, in the meantime consecrated Bishop, person of great sensibility!

My walk towards Priesthood was contemporary to the studies proposed by the curriculum of the Seminary arriving to be ordered deacon on December 8th. 1998 by the Bishop of Palestrina Mons. Eduardo Davino.

During the years of Diacon I tried to reflect and to deepen the sense, the identity and the mission of the priest in the actual circumstances.

The preparation in sight of the Sacred order is never enough and for how much it is done by the heart, with prayers' intensity, according to the directives of the Pastores dabo Vobis of Pope Giovanni Paolo II, I think that no one of us is adequately ready, prepared and fully worthy of a gift so big!, but as Saint Paul says: "all concurs to the goodness of those that love God" !!!

The gift of becoming Priest was given to me by Bishop of Avezzano, Mons. Lucio Renna, which has welcomed me with love in the dioceses, ordering me priest (presbitero) on December 11th. 2004 in the Cathedral of Avezzano.

## Antoniu Petrescu - The Artist

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Collaborated with different artists of various origins enriching, in this way his musical culture. It's source of inspiration was undoubtedly the figure of Elvis Presley, the unquestioned "The King" that influenced the music and the artists from half a century ago to today. He plays the guitar and the piano, even if he is known as a singer of Gospel music.

He achieved a degree in Theology at the Papal College Leoniano (Agnani), together with the University Teresianum of Rome, with the specialization of Pastoral Ecclesiology.

He is currently carrying out his minister in Avezzano, Italy.

His official website is [www.antoniupetrescu.com](http://www.antoniupetrescu.com)

## The Elvis Priest

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Fr. Antoniu Petrescu, 34, above, is a Romanian who became a priest in Italy in 2004. Today he is a parish priest in Avezzano, in the province of Aquila, Abruzzo. During the day he carries out normal priestly functions; at night he becomes a rock star performing on stage. His great passion is to imitate his idol: Elvis Presley.

Bishop Lucio Angelo Renna of Avezzano gave his permission for Fr. Antoniu to lead this double life. Below, Bishop Renna is pictured ordaining Fr. Antoniu. The Bishop told the priest to be "a brave boy" on stage, but not to forget his pastoral duties.

The new Bishop of the city, Pietro Santoro, also looks favorably at the priest's performances. You can view more photos of Fr.

Antoniu impersonating Elvis in the [album posted by him on his website](#).

The first one is a TV report on the double life of Fr. Antoniu. The second is an interview and performance on the Piazza Grande Show, also on Italian TV.

## Text of the TV report on Fr. Elvis

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**Speaker:** A priest, he is a true priest with a passion for rock. Fr. Antoniu, parish priest in the province of Abruzzo; in the morning Fr. Antoniu celebrates Mass; in the evening he sings the music of Elvis Presley. We meet him do talk about his music.

They call him Fr. Elvis – the priest we have met - in the morning ... but in the evening he transforms himself into the King of Rock and Roll.

**Fr. Elvis:** I am always a priest, Fr. Antoniu, for the friends who like it, I am also Don Elvis.

**Speaker:** Fr. Antoniu Petrescu priest of Avezzano, a priest who takes care of his parish during the day, in the evening he is a rock star.

**Fr. Elvis:** I am putting on a jacket of the 1960s.

**Speaker:** Here in his church he celebrates Mass, but the true passion of Fr. Antoniu, age 34, is music, as he explains:

**Fr. Elvis:** The Lord gave me a gift, and I don't see why should I bury it.

**Speaker:** In the church he celebrates a wedding, then after he performs at the wedding feast of the spouses. If someone criticizes him, he responds this way:

**Fr. Elvis:** St. Augustine said and repeated that he who sings well prays twice.

## **Text of the interview-performance on the Piazza Grande Show**

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**Speaker:** Welcome again...

Prepare yourselves because we have a very special guest. A very nice person who since childhood had a passion for music, for a particular kind of music: he was always in love with the rock of Elvis Presley. He had sung this music, and then his path took a different direction. He took vows, became a priest. One might think that he would become dedicated to other things, but his love for music didn't stop, as he will show us. So, here is Fr. Antoniu Petrescu, in art Don Elvis.

(He performs the first piece)

**Speaker:** Bravo! Bravo! Thank you, thank you. We also thank the orchestra that accompanied you.

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I would like you to tell us this curious story of a priest ... It is not the story of a priest who becomes a singer, but the story of a singer who becomes a priest and remains a singer. It seems that this love was born in your youth ...

**Fr. Elvis:** Since I was a child I nourished a special affection for Elvis; my parents adored him ... I can say that I was raised with his music and his myth.

**Speaker:** This did not prevent you later from being touched by the priestly vocation.

**Fr. Elvis:** In my years in the seminary, I had to add another dimension to that love.

**Speaker:** Yes, and the music always remained in your heart. But how was it possible for you to reconcile the two things?

**Fr. Elvis:** On the altar I am Fr. Antoniu, on the stage I am always Fr. Antoniu, but I transform myself into Don Elvis, if I may say so, if you prefer...

**Speaker:** Fr. Antoniu does not do this for profit, he performs with non-profit aims. But what do your parishioners and those who know you think of this double life of yours?

**Fr. Elvis:** The majority of people encourage me to go ahead on this road. For my part, I try not to hurt the religious sensibilities of anyone. And I share with them the positive vibrations that I experience when I perform.

**Speaker:** After all, modern music had been in the Church for a while now...

**Fr. Elvis:** Deep down, it is a healthy entertainment.

**Speaker:** Yes, Elvis always sang about love...

Since your faithful are favorable, have your superiors presented any resistance? ... Any who perhaps did not agree? ...

**Fr. Elvis:** My superiors told me to be the brave boy. I believe that their interest is for me not to stray from my pastoral purposes and spiritual way, and that these night performances are not a goal in themselves, but have a goal of evangelization.

**Speaker:** I believe that the youth talk about you in a good way: A priest that loves music and sings well.

But it seems that the Bishop in your place has changed. What about this Bishop, does he also love rock or agree with it?

**Fr. Elvis:** That's right, a new Bishop came. We still haven't had the chance to speak, but I take advantage of this opportunity to thank him for giving me permission to come here.

**Speaker:** We also thank him.

**Fr. Elvis:** So, let's applaud him: (applause).

**Speaker:** In short, with your faithful happy and the permission of your superiors, you continue on this double mission: spiritual and musical.

Now, after having greeted and presented this very special personage, a man who loves his mission and loves his music, let's perform another song...

**Fr. Elvis:** Gladly.

**Speaker:** I remind you that Fr. Antoniu Petrescu, also called Don Elvis, will perform for us another famous song of Elvis...

**Speaker:** Bravo! Bravo! Thank you, Fr. Antoniu. We offer our best wishes for your future. Fr. Antoniu Petrescu, lover of music but also of his work as a priest.

Antoniu Petrescu believes you can worship God and Elvis at the same time: as a Catholic priest and Elvis Presley impersonator, he finds his spiritual inspiration in the late rock legend.

"People ask me 'How can you reconcile Elvis impersonations with your choice of professional work?'" said Petrescu, who puts on his glittery suits and swivels his hips when not working as a parish priest in the Italian town of Avezano.

Interviewed by Reuters on a church visit to the tiny town in southern Italy, the priest said he believes Elvis is an appropriate inspiration for Christian worship because he sang of "love in general."

The 34-year-old's Web site ([www.antonilupetrescu.com](http://www.antonilupetrescu.com)) has two separate entries -- one for the priest, another for the artist, which talks about his "fiery voice" and discography including the singles "Lovin' Arms" and "Reach out to Jesus."

The pop doesn't stop at Elvis: Petrescu also incorporates the lyrics of singers like Celine Dion into his sermons.

Petrescu feels his responsibility as a priest is to "walk this Earth in love for Jesus Christ," a task in which he is inspired by Elvis's "search for spirituality in his own life."