

<https://doi.org/10.26520/icoana.2022.15.8.24-33>

THE ORTHODOX DIASPORA: ANALYSIS, NUANCE AND REDEFINITION*

TRANSLATED BY THE AUTHORS IN ENGLISH

Răzvan BRUDIU¹, Alexandru CIUCURESCU²,

¹ Deacon, lecturer at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology of the „1 Decembrie 1918”
University of Alba-Iulia, Romania, "1 Decembrie 1918" University, Alba-Iulia,

² Doctoral student of theology at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology of the „Babeș-Bolyai”

University of Cluj-Napoca,

ROMANIA

Email: razvanbrudiu@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The reasons why a diaspora appears are similar throughout human history. People are ontologically the same, and the social, cultural, and religious context in which these great migrations take place is often similar. We can identify distinct elements and mutual lessons that help us to understand these events much better, to prevent them by noticing the causes in time, and to learn from these lessons of past and present history. The present study focuses, on the one hand, on the effects that the phenomenon of migration has had on the Orthodox diaspora, especially given the religious and social impact of life that today's Orthodox have among foreigners, being far from their national, religious and cultural center. The diaspora is essentially experiencing a revitalization of the faith in a foreign country and among people professing foreign beliefs. Thus, in the Church, all nationalist nostalgia should be overcome, because the Church is a foreshadowing of the Kingdom, where there is neither Greek nor Jew [...] because we are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:28). Thus, wherever we live, we are always in the "diaspora", even within the boundaries drawn by our forerunners, in the land they inhabited. On the other hand, the present research also deals with the issue of mixed marriages. The issue urged the Orthodox to look beyond the canonical perspective of impediments to marriage and to focus on more urgent issues that require attention, namely the liturgical, pastoral and ecumenical aspects of mixed marriages. However, given the ethnic and cultural diversity in which the Orthodox Church carries out its mission in the world today, we should not be surprised that each Orthodox Church has applied and continues to apply the principles of canonical eikonomia and akribeia to mixed marriages in a non-unitary manner.

Keywords: Orthodox diaspora; mixed marriages; jurisdiction-territory; ethnophyletism; eikonomia, akribeia;

* This study is a translation by the authors in English. For the first version of this study in Romanian, with the same title, see *Diaspora ortodoxă: analiză, nuanțare și redefinire*, in *Altarul Reîntregirii*, No. 3/2021, ISSN 1584-8051; ISSN online 2457-9394, which was updated and with translated by authors English.

1. THE ROMANIAN “EXILE” – HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS

The twentieth and twenty-first centuries have dealt with large waves of migration for economic reasons that have provided the basis for the creation of modern diasporas or added members to communities around the world, from pre-existing diasporas. Moreover, the concepts of “permanent” and “temporary” tend to mix or, at the very least, become imprecise in the globalized world where people can always change their countries of residence and take up new professional positions. Most of the old diasporas were also originally made up of communities that migrated for economic reasons¹.

The Orthodox Diaspora in general and the Romanian Diaspora in particular, were not born from an explicit call of God. Regarding the chronology of the Romanian “exile”, it manifests itself as a relatively late phenomenon and was born from economic reasons (at the beginning of the 20th century, the chase for gold or the gold rush in the United States), political (in the middle of the 20th century, the installation of the Eastern European communist concentration system), and at the same time the diaspora is a trend, a fashion (see the recent Syrian exodus). We also recall that both after the December 1989 Revolution and after Romania's adherence to the European Union (2007), the number of Romanians abroad has increased considerably, with unofficial estimates speaking of approximately five million Romanians in the diaspora. After the events of the late twentieth century, Europe volatilized its borders, fluidized its populations, betting on the most versatile model in all respects, emphatically calling it “inclusive policy”.

The Romanian diaspora has developed exponentially, with the perspective of creating a life in a “country where milk and honey flow”. The newly formed communities also founded new parish communities, with new accommodations and responses. The psychological background of affective memory (longing for home and for those at home) was the most common context encountered in the Romanian Orthodox Diaspora. The birth of new parishes, of new dioceses was only the natural consequence. Welfare has not solved the deep problems of the alienated, and the immaterial soul cannot obtain fulfillment through material goods.

In the diaspora, the way to make religious identity visible is a way of survival. Most Romanian Orthodox communities celebrate services in Catholic or Protestant churches. Thus, for the development of a specific Orthodox environment, the respective communities resort to various forms of arranging the liturgical space. Over time, some (unorthodox) host communities began to accept the statues of saints or mobile iconostasis. The presence of these new cultic elements led to a certain hybridization of the space of the host church. This way of hybridization is also seen in the fact that the Orthodox clergy mention at the end of the Holy Mass not only the patron saints of the community, but also the patron saints of the host church, at least those from the first Christian millennium. In the vision of Professor Octavian Mihoc, this form of liturgical hybridization should not necessarily be seen as syncretism, but it invites a deeper reflection on how to interact between liturgical acts and liturgical spaces.

Bishop Ignatius of Huși, who lived for a time in the diaspora and knows its pulse, reminds us that the Church is the first and probably the only institution that holds, consistently and rectilinearly, everything that represents the concept of Romanian identity for those who went into the diaspora. The hierarch states that the Church is concerned with

¹ Panagoula DIAMANTI-KARANOU, *The Relationship between Homeland and Diaspora: The Case of Greece and the Greek American community*, Northeastern University Boston, Massachusetts, April 2015, p. 26.

the spiritual life of all Romanians who are alienated and who are far from their loved ones. Therefore, the Church takes care of their faith, their identity, and their hope².

The man in the diaspora who acquired the desired thing he was looking for, was fulfilled only after finding out that certain Someone Who fulfilled his wish. The Church offered support in finding that One. However, things did not always work out. The mission of the Church is often challenged by collateral matters. That is, its faithful resonate more intensely with commemorative activities or, in other words, activities that link them to home and to those far away. These plasticizations of affective memory do not, as a rule, succeed in connecting man impeccably with God, but only in defining the diaspora, especially on ethnic grounds. The modern paradigm of the diaspora is not based on the call by *Someone*, but on the mirage towards *something*. However, the Church is the most appropriate framework for the ontological definition of the man in the diaspora.

2. MIXED MARRIAGES IN THE DIASPORIC ORTHODOX COMMUNITIES

In the last thirty years, approximately four million Romanian Orthodox have emigrated to Western European countries. The Romanian Orthodox Church managed to adapt its mission and pastorate to the new reality, and starting from the two existing dioceses, in America and Western Europe, it organized five other dioceses. All these Romanian Orthodox believers live in a predominantly Catholic or Protestant religious context, often leading to the establishment of mixed families³.

In the 1960s, Orthodox Christians in the United States believed that a mixed marriage was not such an important issue. When Antiochian Orthodox Metropolitan Anthony Bashir of North America wrote to his compatriot, diplomat Charles Malik, about the state of the Antiochian Orthodoxy in North America, the hierarch acknowledged that such mixed marriages were a reality, but an easy one to control. Bashir estimated that in 1965 he officiated marriages in about 80 churches with about 32,000 believers and only very rarely mixed marriages took place. Marriages between the Orthodox and the Heterodox accounted for no more than 15% of all marriages that took place, but in the end, the metropolitan recalled that most, if not all, were converted to Orthodoxy⁴.

Today, however, no official representative of the Orthodox Church can write or speak with maximum certainty on this subject. The world in which the Orthodox Christians in general, and the Romanian Orthodox in particular, find themselves, positions them in front of provocative dilemmas. Several studies and analyses show that in the first decade of the 21st century, nearly half of marriages in the United States were between people of different faiths (that is, Christians marrying non-Christians). Moreover, the trend is growing and, from about 19% of all marriages between people of different faiths in the 1960s, it reaches 39% of all marriages by 2010. One in five marriages is between people of different faiths nowadays, being comprised by Christians who marry unaffiliated Christians. In 2007, Father George Tsetsis observed an increasing number of mixed marriages and urged the Orthodox to look beyond the canonical perspective of marriage impediments and to focus on much more

² †EPISCOPUL IGNATIE, *Maladia ideologiei și terapia Adevărului*, Huși, Edit. Horeb, 2020, p. 36.

³ Patriciu VLAICU, „Biserica Ortodoxă în fața problematicei căsătoriilor mixte”, in *Studii Teologice*, 1/2012, p. 167.

⁴ Anthony ROEBER, *Mixed Marriages. An Orthodox History*, New York, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2018, p. 11.

pressing issues that require attention, namely, the liturgical, pastoral and ecumenical aspects of mixed marriages⁵.

The life of married Christians is linked to the shared faith in Jesus Christ. Without this common belief, the purpose of marriage is imperfect. The lack of a common Christian faith raises the question of whether such marriages fully reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church (cf. Ephesians 5:21-32). Achieving this image in married life requires that spouses experience and share Christ's love for the Church, as well as the Church's submission to Christ. However, the continuation of marriages between Orthodox people and unbelievers, before conversion to the faith by one of the spouses, is allowed in exceptional cases, based on the text of 1 Corinthians 7:12-14. Under these conditions, the Orthodox spouse is allowed to receive the respective matrimonial communion, which is here a sign of acceptance of the Church. According to the Orthodox canonical tradition, permission to continue such marriages is considered an exercise of *iconomia* based on the scriptural text mentioned above. The same source does not consider this exception as a general principle for Orthodox members regarding marriage with unbaptized spouses⁶. The Pauline passage (1 Corinthians 7:12-14) recalls the context in which marriage was dependent on the Jewish and pagan society, but the same text does not fully assure us that the apostles encouraged mixed marriages as a means of mission. Thus, St. Paul understood the relationship between life in Christ and freedom from the constraints of the law, demonstrating, on the one hand, that the mission of the Church is to work the faith through love and understanding, but on the other hand, it urges Christians to avoid pagan marriages (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:14)⁷. The Pauline text is formulated as an exhortation, affirming marriage as a crowning towards salvation, and marriage to a non-Christian can be an obstacle in this work of faith.

The Romanian Orthodox Church, considering the pastoral-missionary realities present in society, regulated this type of marriage through a normative act within the *Regulation for the ecclesiastical relations of the Romanian Orthodox clergy with heterodox Christians* (article 4/1881) which offered the possibility of blessing a such marriages⁸. Even if there is no official document for the canonical and procedural classification of mixed marriages, with the appearance of the *Rules of Procedure of Disciplinary and Courts*, it was stipulated by a normative act (Article 47/1950) the possibility of granting the exemption⁹. Also, in 2015, the Romanian Patriarchate developed a new document entitled the *Regulation of canonical disciplinary authorities and courts of the Romanian Orthodox Church* (art. 29, paragraph 8), which does not explicitly mention the issue of mixed marriages, mentioning only the fact that before the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony, the clergyman must make sure that the bride and groom and the godparents fulfill the canonical and legal provisions. The footnote to this paragraph mentions the canons according to which the Sacrament of Matrimony may or may not be performed (Canon 72 of Trullo, 14 IV Ecumenical, 10 Laodicea, 23 John the Baptist). In the same paragraph, an additional canon

⁵ George TSETIS, *The Pastoral Dimension of Mixed Marriages*, Athens, 2007, p. 599-611. We mention that the English version of this text is available at: http://www.apostoliki-diakonia.gr/en_main/catehism/theologia_zoi/themata.asp?cat=poim&contents=contents.asp&main=SK_texts&file=4.htm (accessed on 16.03.2021).

⁶ Patrick VISCUSO / Kristopher L. WILLUMSEN, „Marriage between Christians and Non-Christians: Orthodox and Roman Catholic Perspectives”, in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 31:3-4, Summer-Fall 1994, p. 272.

⁷ Patriciu VLAICU, „Biserica Ortodoxă în fața problematicei...”, p. 169.

⁸ Ioan COZMA, „Căsătoriile mixte în teoria și practica Bisericii Ortodoxe”, in *Altarul Reîntregirii*, 2/2010, p. 163-164.

⁹ In this sense, see: *** *Legiurile Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, București, 1953.

appears, the others being the same from the note in paragraph 8, namely Canon 31 Laodicea¹⁰. Both in the *Statute for the organization and functioning of the Romanian Orthodox Church* (2008), article 88, letter (r), and in the *Statute for the organization and functioning of the Romanian Orthodox Church* (republished in 2020), article 88, paragraph 23, it is mentioned that the local bishop grants ecclesiastical exemptions for marriage and remarriage to lay believers, within the limits of the canonical provisions.

Regarding the dispensation, the hierarch may refuse to grant it if he observes that there is a danger that the Orthodox spouse or children may be determined to turn to the heterodox faith of the other spouse. The bishop must also consider when granting the dispensation, the status of the heterodox husband, namely whether they have been married before. If, for example, the Orthodox spouse is at their first marriage and the heterodox spouse at the second marriage, the Sacrament of Matrimony will be ordered for those who marry for the first time; if the heterodox husband is at their first marriage, and the Orthodox one at the second or third marriage, the specific ordinance mentioned in the Euchologion will be performed for those who marry the second or third time. We remind the fact that in the latter case, for the validity of the marriage, the Orthodox spouse, in addition to the civil divorce, must obtain from the bishop also the religious divorce¹¹.

3. PASTORAL AND MISSIONARY CHALLENGES FOR THE ORTHODOX DIASPORIC COMMUNITIES

The different types of migration and the growth of diasporic communities inevitably lead to a new perception of reality and space. Multiple linguistic, cultural, religious, and ethnic identities are condensed and represented at the local level. All this creates a new paradigm of relationship, inter-dependence, co-assumption, and co-responsibility of different social and religious factors. Octavian Mihoc warns about the increase in the number of members of diasporic communities who do not come directly from the country of origin, but from other European countries, as is the case of many Romanian Orthodox communities in Western European countries, which gives rise to a special community profile whose members not only come from different Romanian cultural spaces, but also bring with them a European cultural accumulation and a multiple citizenships. Those transnational and cross-cultural dynamics renew the problem of space and its capacity to create new frameworks in which said dynamics can take place¹².

First, the phrase Orthodox Diaspora covers a sociological and historical reality: the migration of Orthodox populations to non-traditionally Orthodox countries, the formation of national diasporas in host countries, the potential emergence of a larger religious diaspora, gathered around the Orthodox faith as a feature of these ethnic migrants. Second, the Orthodox Diaspora contains theological substance: the diaspora, originally a religious concept marked by Judaism, is used to describe the structure and sacramental life of Orthodox religious institutions outside their traditional territories, thus touching on Orthodox ecclesiology and canonical organization¹³.

¹⁰ *** *Regulamentul autorităților canonic disciplinare și al instanțelor de judecată ale Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, București, Institutul Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă Publishing House, 2015, p. 41.

¹¹ Ioan COZMA, „Căsătoriile mixte în teoria...”, p. 164-165.

¹² Octavian MIHOC, „Identitatea religioasă ca narațiune în spații...”, p. 166-167.

¹³ Maria HÄMMERLI, „Orthodox diaspora? A sociological and theological problematisation of a stock phrase”, in *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 10, 2-3 (2010), p. 98.

From a missionary viewpoint, Orthodoxy's traditional configuration has changed considerably. Orthodoxy has become a polyphonic community, and its missionary area today expresses a great geographical, cultural and cultic diversity. A serious problem related to the Orthodox Diaspora is the jurisdiction; the aspect of the canonical dependence of the communities outside the borders¹⁴. The Orthodox diaspora today is characterized by two tendencies: one that affirms a local Orthodoxy and another that preserves an ethnic one. Apart from a few dioceses in the OCA, the Orthodox dioceses of the West have an ethnic character, which makes it quite difficult to adapt them territorially and limit the hierarchies' jurisdiction. The principle of the administrative organization of the respective Orthodox communities in the dioceses is the jurisdictional one, not the territorial one. Both principles are equally important, but the principle of territoriality is meant to create unity and not fragmentation within the Church. The canonical territory of a local church is a determined geographical territory in which a bishop exercises his ecclesiastical jurisdiction. A hierarch cannot extend his jurisdiction outside his own territory, nor can he intervene in the canonical territory of another diocese¹⁵.

The diaspora does the exact opposite: if a church can generate or create its own diaspora because part of its flock has emigrated, then the bishop can extend his jurisdiction over the territories that host the immigrant population in the name of a different criterion, for example, ethnicity, rather than the traditionally and canonically accepted criterion: territory. We reminded that territorial delimitation is fundamental to Orthodox ecclesiology because it emphasizes the unity of the Church. Bishops mutually recognize each other's episcopate and the fullness of the local churches they preside over. The territorial principle is canonically based on the first and fourth Ecumenical Synods, which condemns the violation of the jurisdiction of bishops (one Church – one Eucharist – one bishop – one territory). The boundaries of the canonical territories of the various local churches have been established since apostolic times, and later by the Ecumenical Councils¹⁶.

St. Paul talks about ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῆ οὐσῆ ἐν Κορίνθῳ (“the Church of God that is in Corinth”, in 1 Corinthians 1:2), which indicates the presence of the integrity of the Church in a specific geographical location. In this sense, M. Hämmerli considers that the official names of churches such as “Russian Orthodox Church”, “Romanian Orthodox Church” are confusing, in the sense that the ethnic determinant creates the impression that the names “Romanian” and “Russian” describe different types of Orthodoxy. The much more correct name would be “The Orthodox Church in Romania”, “The Orthodox Church in Russia”¹⁷.

We know that the western part of Europe was, traditionally speaking, under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome. As he is no longer in communion with the Orthodox Church (officially since the 11th century), his jurisdiction over that territory is no longer recognized by said Church. The national Orthodox Churches, in their desire to respond to the pastoral and missionary needs of their respective communities, created new dioceses in the West and introduced a parallel hierarchy. M. Hämmerli draws attention to the fact that these

¹⁴ †NIFON MIHĂIȚĂ, „Diaspora-o nouă tipologie misionară”, în *Misiologie Ortodoxă*, vol. I, coord. Valer Bel, București, Basilica Publishing House, 2021, p. 221.

¹⁵ Maria HÄMMERLI, „Orthodox diaspora? A sociological and theological problematisation...”, p. 109; Ioan COZMA, „Diaspora Ortodoxă: canonicitate și imperative pastorale”, în *Biserica Ortodoxă și provocările viitorului*, ed. Mihai Himcinschi/Răzvan Brudiu, Cluj-Napoca/Alba Iulia, Presa Universitară Clujeană/Reîntregirea Publishing Houses, 2020, p. 334-335.

¹⁶ Maria HÄMMERLI, „Orthodox diaspora? A sociological and theological problematisation...”, p. 109.

¹⁷ Maria HÄMMERLI, „Orthodox diaspora? A sociological and theological problematisation...”, p. 109.

real situations created several problems: the first concerns the violation of the principle of territoriality. Autocephalous national churches have extended their jurisdiction beyond their territory, whose limits have been established. In the case of Paris, for example, Orthodox believers have five bishops instead of one. Each has theoretically a different “territory”: their own ethnic “flock”. They recognize each other’s episcopate and do not interfere with the “target population” of the other. However, this weakens the unity of the Orthodox Church to the point of reaching the image of a federation of national churches. Co-territoriality, the coexistence of several local churches in the same geographical location on the same ecclesial territory, is historically linked to confessionalism, which appeared because of the ecclesiastical rupture in the West (the fragmentation of the church after the Reformation). In the case of Orthodoxy, the problems of ecclesiological unity introduced the co-territoriality of different Western jurisdictions. Many accept the administrative separations, arguing that they keep unity through faith and the sacraments. However, this is not enough, precisely because the Eucharist and all the sacraments are territorially incorporated¹⁸.

The second problem concerns ethnophyletism, with jurisdiction being exercised over people with a certain ethnic origin and not over all people in that territory. There is a shift from the single criterion for establishing parishes and dioceses (canonical territorial boundaries) towards ethnicity. Although this ecclesiological deviation is usually attributed to the “diaspora”, it also extends to traditional Orthodox territories. Parallel jurisdictions also exist in the Republic of Moldova (the Moscow Patriarchate and the Romanian Orthodox Church) and Estonia (the Moscow Patriarchate and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople), or, to cite another example, the Romanian Orthodox Church appointing a bishop for the Romanian population living at Romania’s borders in the neighboring Orthodox Serbia¹⁹.

The third problem concerns the diminution or limitation of the universality of the Church: the promotion of the idea that the Orthodox Church, when manifested outside its traditional territories, is “in the diaspora”. The Diaspora presupposes the existence of a center of Orthodoxy, to which an Orthodoxy that does not conform to this principle of centrality would be less Orthodox²⁰.

This is further confirmed by the relationship that the “Mother Churches” have with the western dioceses, archdioceses or metropolises: they maintain the position of power of the “mothers” who do not allow their “daughters” to grow up and become autonomous. However, this idea needs nuances, because the “daughters” are not always mature enough to acquire and manage autonomy so that they can remain at the same time rooted in Tradition and in the experience of the Church²¹.

We will analyze now some concrete situations of the different tensions between secular and religious power. For example, the debates about religious symbols in public spaces in general, and here we mention the case of Italy, where some parents reacted by saying that the presence of crucifixes in schools means excessive indoctrination, leading to

¹⁸ Grégoire PAPATHOMAS, „La relation d'opposition entre Église établie localement et diaspora ecclésiale”, *Contacts*, 210 (2005), 96–132; Maria HÄMMERLI, „Orthodox diaspora? A sociological and theological problematisation...”, p. 110.

¹⁹ Maria HÄMMERLI, „Orthodox diaspora? A sociological and theological problematisation...”, p. 110.

²⁰ In this case, “Orthodoxy” refers to an Orthodox administrative unit, according to which a diocese in the diaspora that does not refer to this center of Orthodoxy would no longer be Orthodox.

²¹ Leonid, KISHKOVSKY, *Orthodoxy in America: Diaspora or Church?*, available at <http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/14/49.aspx#7> (accessed on 12.03.2021).

lawsuits in order to eliminate them. Following the referral to the European Court of Human Rights on the use of religious symbols and, in particular, crucifixes in classrooms in Italian public schools, on March 18, 2011, the Court decided by a majority vote that the presence of crucifixes in classrooms does not violate any article of the European Convention on Human Rights concerning the right to education. Thus, on June 1, 2010, the ECHR communicated the list of states that have officially joined Italy in the mentioned issue: Armenia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Lithuania, Malta, Monaco, San Marino, Romania and Russia. The 10 states mentioned formally requested to have the possibility to present themselves as a third party in the process in which Italy was incriminated and to be able to officially support, at the ECHR, their own observations²².

Another situation concerns processions and various religious services outside the liturgical space of migrant communities. We can recall that in most Western European countries the sound of bells is forbidden (they can only be heard at certain time intervals so as not to disturb or there must be a certain distance from the place of worship to the first line of houses), the prohibition of Good Friday processions or the celebration of the patron saint of a church, the prohibition of sonorization outside the ecclesiastical space etc.

A new debate emerges between the secular and the religious regarding Orthodox education in public schools. We know that in most European countries the importance of religious education has been recognized at the level of educational policies. The mono-confessional studies or the refusal of the State to include Religion in the National Curriculum, especially in France, encouraged and dynamized the Romanian Orthodox Church to intensify their catechetical activity. Thus, the religious education achieved through catechesis worked in addition to that of the school or was, in fact, the only form of education of the Church. In this sense, we mention a unique project that was born at the initiative of the Romanian Orthodox dioceses in Western Europe, which together with teachers Dorin and Monica Opreș thought of a project to achieve the best possible religious education for Romanian children in the European diaspora²³.

Also, the data of the space in permanent reconfiguration, of multiple citizenship, of religious freedom, etc., highlight the problem of ownership and exclusion or inclusion in space, the problem of rules of organization of said space (including the problem of using the same liturgical space by different denominational communities) and that of the imprint of the state authority that defines and controls the borders between the private and the public space, but also the dynamics of the relationship between the local citizens and those of foreign origin²⁴.

The Romanian Orthodox Church has had this habit and has continued to care for its believers living outside the country, guided by the principle of a dynamic organization of Orthodoxy, in which caring for its own believers must take precedence over any limitation. According to the Statute of the Romanian Orthodox Church published in 2020, the Romanian Patriarchate has the following dioceses outside the country: the Bessarabia Metropolis; the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of Western and Southern Europe; the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of Germany, Central and Northern Europe; the Romanian

²² Teofil TIA, „Preocupare pastorală prioritară și constantă a Bisericii Romano-Catolice din Italia: Predarea Religiei în învățământul public de stat”, in *Religia și Școala. Cercetări pedagogice, studii, analize*, coord. Dorin Opreș, Monica Opreș, București, Didactică și Pedagogică Publishing House, 2011, p. 112-113.

²³ In this sense, see Dorin OPREȘ, Monica OPREȘ, *Curriculum creștin-ortodox pentru școlile parohiale duminicale*, Alba Iulia, Reîntregirea Publishing House, 2010.

²⁴ Octavian MIHOȘ, „Identitatea religioasă ca narațiune în spații...”, p. 167-168.

Orthodox Metropolis of the two Americas; the Bishopric of Dacia Felix; the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Hungary, and the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Australia and New Zealand. We also mention the representations and communities of the Romanian Patriarchate abroad²⁵. In 2009, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church decided to establish in the Romanian Patriarchate the “Sunday of the Romanian migrants”, on the first Sunday after August 15.

CONCLUSIONS

Today, diasporic communities in general, and just so the Romanian Orthodox one, keep in touch with the motherland and other co-national groups that are dispersed around the world by tracking social and political news in real-time, via TV, satellite, web and the internet. They are in virtual contact with family and friends via e-mail, Skype, messages, Facebook, Instagram and other social networking sites.

The cheap cost of telephone calls and international travel compared to the past have increased the frequency and intensity of contact with the motherland, thus strengthening the national identity of the diaspora. Extensive transnational networks of diasporas create a non-territorial state, which, although symbolically and emotionally connected to their national center, has an autonomous existence that may not directly involve the motherland. De-territorialization of social identities is a feature of globalization and allows the coexistence of multiple identities and the syncretism of cultures, a condition that, in fact, leads to the empowerment of identities in the diaspora²⁶.

²⁵ For more details, see Ioan COZMA, „Diaspora Ortodoxă: canonicitate și imperative pastorale...”, p. 341.

²⁶ Panagoula DIAMANTI-KARANOOU, *The Relationship between Homeland and Diaspora: The Case of Greece...*, p. 36; Robin COHEN, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1997.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Cozma, Ioan, „Căsătoriile mixte în teoria și practica Bisericii Ortodoxe”, in *Altarul Reîntregirii*, 2/2010;
- [2] Cozma, Ioan, „Diaspora Ortodoxă: canonicitate și imperative pastorale”, in *Biserica Ortodoxă și provocările viitorului*, ed. Mihai Himcinschi/Răzvan Brudiu, Cluj-Napoca/Alba Iulia, Presa Universitară Clujeană/Reîntregirea Publishing House, 2020, p. 334-335;
- [3] de Wit, Hans, *En la dispersión el texto es patria*, San José, Universidad Bíblica Latinoamericana, 2002;
- [4] Diamanti-Karanou, Panagoula, *The Relationship between Homeland and Diaspora: the Case of Greece and the Greek-American community*, Northeastern University Boston, Massachusetts April, 2015;
- [5] Hämmerli, Maria, „Orthodox diaspora? A sociological and theological problematisation of a stock phrase”, în *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 10, 2-3 (2010);
- [6] †Episcopul Ignatie, *Maladia ideologiei și terapia Adevărului*, Huși, Horeb, Publishing House, 2020;
- [7] Kishkovsky, Leonid, *Orthodoxy in America: Diaspora or Church?*, available at <http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/14/49.aspx#7> (accesed on 12.03.2021).
- [8] *** *Legiurile Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, București, 1953;
- [9] †Nifon Mihăiță, „Diaspora-o nouă tipologie misionară”, in *Misiologie Ortodoxă*, vol. I, coord. Valer Bel, București, Basilica Publishing House, 2021;
- [10] Mihoc, Octavian, „Identitatea religioasă ca narațiune în spații în constantă reconfigurare”, în *Biserica Ortodoxă și provocările viitorului*, ed. Mihai Himcinschi/Răzvan Brudiu, Cluj-Napoca/Alba Iulia, Presa Universitară Clujeană/Reîntregirea Publishing Houses, 2020;
- [11] Augustine, Metropolitan of Germany, Exarch of Central Europe, and the other members of the German Orthodox Episcopal Conference, *Letter to young people about love, sexuality and marriage*, Frankfurt am Main, December 12, 2017, available at <https://basilica.ro/scrisoarea-bisericii-ortodoxe-din-germania-despre-dragoste-sexualitate-si-casatorie-adresata-tinerilor/> (accesed on 12.03.2021);
- [12] Opreș, Dorin, / Opreș, Monica, *Curriculum creștin-ortodox pentru școlile parohiale duminicale*, Alba Iulia, Reîntregirea Publishing House, 2010;
- [13] *** *Regulamentul autorităților canonice disciplinare și al instanțelor de judecată ale Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, București, Institutul Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă Publishing House, 2015;
- [14] Roeber, Anthony, *Mixed Marriages. An Orthodox History*, New York, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2018;
- [15] Arhimandritul SOFRONIE, *Cuvântări duhovnicești*, transl. Rafail (Noica), vol. I, Suceava, Accent Print Publishing House, 2013;
- [16] Tia, Teofil, „Preocupare pastorală prioritară și constantă a Bisericii Romano-Catolice din Italia: Predarea Religiei în învățământul public de stat”, in *Religia și Școala. Cercetări pedagogice, studii, analize*, coord. Dorin Opreș, Monica Opreș, București, Didactică și Pedagogică Publishing House, 2011;
- [17] Tsetsis, George, *The Pastoral Dimension of Mixed Marriages*, Athens, 2007 (the English version of this study is available at http://www.apostoliki-diakonia.gr/en_main/catehism/theologia_zoi/themata.asp?cat=poim&contents=contents.asp&main=S_K_texts&file=4.htm, accessed on 16.03.2021);
- [18] Viscuso, Patrick, / Willumsen, Kristopher L., “Marriage between Christians and Non-Christians: Orthodox and Roman Catholic Perspectives”, in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 31:3-4, Summer-Fall 1994;
- [19] Vlaicu, Patriciu, „Biserica Ortodoxă în fața problematicei căsătoriilor mixte”, in *Studii Teologice*, 1/2012.