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AXIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

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Abstract

The problem of the nexus between the authentic Christian values and the day-by-day more desacralized contemporary world is one very delicate, almost unfathomable. In the realm of science we can hardly talk about a general theory of values (axiology), because since the nineteenth century that seemed to elude (to say the least) the relationship between facts (scientific ones) and values (social, cultural etc.), as had pulled an alarm, at the beginning of the twentieth century, German phenomenologist Edmund Husserl. On the other hand, European education not only the contemporary one seems to ignore (directly or indirectly) Christian values, from the moment religion has turned from a discipline of objective interest to one of particular or subjective interest. Science and, consequently, scientific research are losing sight of what has traditionally been the ultimate human goal: the authentic values that define man, constitute him in the space of his very existence, as a being created “in the image of God”. Viewed at the level of the finality and content, religious education reveals a set of values that are in congeniality with the teaching of Christian faith. The Church, theandric institution that guarantees the condition of homo axiologicus freely proposes values and does not impose them. Therefore we consider that it is imperative to reaffirm the great importance both to the Church, as basic institution of society and to religious education in axiological-imbued formation of today young people equally from Romanian and European society.

Keywords: axiology; phenomenology; religious education; scientific research; facts; values;

1. INTRODUCTION

In a world increasingly alienated from authentic Christian values, the problem of connecting them both to education in general, and scientific research, in particular, is one unfortunately entered into evanescence. A whole range of types or education systems, some of the most allogeneic kind, which have begun to be prized even in Romania (e.g. Waldorf Alternative Education) are proposed, systems that retain little of the specificity of thought and morality that shaped the civilization and culture of the old continent: *Christian education*.

But no further than that, education in Romania, and not only, despite the presence of the *religious education class*, shows blatant ignorance of the Christian values system, as, for example, was

seen and theorized by Jan Comenius, François Fénelon or Pestalozzi (Dorin Oprea, 2012). Complementary to modern and especially contemporary European pedagogy, often theft by its authentic Christian mark, the *scientific research*, in its turn, feels the same lack; moreover, from the 18th to the 19th century onward, it seemed to elude the relation between (scientific) *facts* and *values* (social and not only), which threw it into a real “crisis”, as the great German philosopher Edmund Husserl called it, towards the end of life.

That is why in the present study we will attempt to detail these coordinates of the act of scientific research in relation to Christian religious education, the only one truly capable of configuring society in axiological perspective, because it proposes a divine inspirational pattern, residing in Him who is “the Way, the Truth and the Life” (cf. John 14: 6).

2. THE CRISIS OF MODERN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Axiology (Greek *axia* – value, *logos* - theory) represents the philosophical study of values, especially in the fields of ethics, religion and aesthetics. A *theory of value* aims at showing which things in the world are good, desirable and important. Such theories seek to answer a practical question, rather than a purely theoretical one, since concluding that a state of affairs is good is to have a basis for acting in such a way that it would be accomplished or – if there exists already – be maintained. In the context of moral philosophy, the central question is the relationship between the moral justice of certain actions, such as telling the truth and the non-moral value of certain states, such as happiness. For a *teleologist*, an action is fair or just if and only if it is a means for an accepted non-moral good, while for the *deontologist* there are actions that are valuable in themselves. (Anthony Flew, 1999, 353)

Reflections on value are numerous, especially in the modern period. Thus, Immanuel Kant may be considered the first thinker to lay the foundations of the philosophy of values and culture, developing the principle of autonomy and differentiation in culture. The concept of value – for the German philosopher – is closely related to the analysis of validity in the sphere of theoretical, of the normative and aesthetic creation.

One of the most prominent thinkers on the theory of values is Eduard Spranger (1882-1963), who will lay the foundations for the *pedagogy of culture*. According to Spranger, the «self», as a subjective spirit, relates to the objective spirit, and man becomes man by assimilating the objective culture. The “life” of culture comprises two aspects: the creation of superindividuals and the creation of values. It is done primarily by transforming objective values into subjective ones. Education has as its ultimate goal – in the author's opinion – the unleashing in the subject of the normative, autonomous spirit that acts as an internal imperative, urging the human being to stand in the service of the spiritual values. (Constantin Cucoş, 2002, 183)

German philosopher Max Scheler (†1928) states that to the values belongs through an *a priori* necessity “the fact of being given through a kind of «consciousness of something», namely through affective perception; but values are given by the sense of value, not simply by knowing the values [...]. Values form a proper domain of objects between which relations and particular correlations take place and which, by their nature of value qualities, can be inferior or superior. It is therefore possible to establish between these values an order and a hierarchy, totally independent of the presence of a world of goods through which they manifest themselves, as well as of the historical changes of this world. This order and this hierarchy must be given in an «a priori» experience. (Max Scheler, 1916; 272, 10)

In his turn, the renowned German metaphysician Nicolai Hartmann (†1950) asserts: “Values are independent of consciousness. Consciousness can sense or lose sight of value, but it cannot produce it, it cannot «put» it. Because of this character of value, we can support the thesis that values have an existence in themselves (Ansichsein). Knowing the value is a true knowledge of being. From this point of view, it stands in the same line with any theoretical knowledge. The object of value knowledge is an autonomous entity like space relations in geometrical knowledge.” (Nicolai Hartmann, 2004, 134-135)

On the other side, speaking of the origin of morality, Fr. Nietzsche (1844-1900) believes that: “price-setting, measuring values, inventing equivalences, changing – all of these has so much concerned man's oldest thinking that, in a sense, it has become the *thinking* itself. Here sprang the oldest form of

cleverness, the presupposed first branch of human pride, the sense of human' superiority against the other animals. Possibly that the German word itself *Mensch* expresses this very own love affair: man designates himself as a being that measures the values, utilizes and measures them; he had designated himself as «valorizing-in-itself animal»". (Friedrich Nietzsche, 1993, 65-66)

In the profile literature, the value was conceived under at least three theoretical aspects: transcendentalism, subjectivism and axiological objectivism. The transcendental movement places the value in a transcendent, over-individual and everlasting space, in a horizon of eternal validity, detached from any empirical contingency.

Thus, for Neokantian thinker Heinrich Rickert (†1936) the value means overcoming, transcendence; it is not in opposition with non-value, but with existence. For this philosopher the value does not exist, it is worth it. Denying an existing leads to nonexistent, and denying a value leads us to non-value, even though it exists. An individual can articulate eternal values with existence through cultural values. Max Scheler admits the existence of two worlds: that of things and the one of values. Things are value-bearing, but they do not identify with axiological qualities. The value is independent of the substantial bearer, of the good that incorporates it; before the beautiful objects, there is the beauty itself. Value does not depend on moral or aesthetic experience, but is a condition of this experience. Not values, but only our knowledge of them is relative. (Constantin Cucoş, 2002, 184)

The *subjectivist* position denies any transcendent dimension of the will, desire, and preference. The value applies wherever there is a rupture of indifference, of equality of things. The value is found "in the natural opposition that we establish between the fundamental and the accessory, principal and secondary, meaningful and insignificant, essential and accidental, justifiable and unjustifiable." (Constantin Cucoş, 2002, 184). Axiological objectivism states that value is a quality inherent in things. The quality, for pragmatists, is given by the utility and by the use of things. For Emile Durkheim, for example, values are objective because they are imperative and are imperative because they are social. (Émile Durkheim, 1980, 96)

On the other hand, along with the phenomenon of education, there is another expression of human culture, namely *scientific research*. As it is known, science has been concerned only with a causal scrutiny of the surrounding reality since its very beginnings, its interrogations gravitating around questions of the sort: "how?", "in what way?" But the understanding of the world and its mechanisms of existence is not limited only to a causal, empirical explanation of things, because explaining the universe does not mean exclusively to find some ultimate principles that we can regard as absolutely non-contradictory. These principles must be values which would impose upon the human spirit, values through which one is to legitimize all the constructions of the mind, in which we are to believe and which we consider to be something objective, independent of us. The need for knowledge makes us believe in the existence of postulated values that are necessary for the scientific explanation of reality. But man tends to know these values and determine them within the limits of possibilities.

The problem of world conceptualizing, however, is one dependent of the knowledge of absolute, theoretical and practical values; is a problem of explaining the world in its own way of being, as well as its meaning. But "science", which has as its purpose the explanation of the being and the meaning of the world, is *philosophy* and then *religion* (theology), the latter subsuming the former, making of it a good companion (if not a servant – "ancilla theologiae"). When asking about the meaning of life, we reach *willy-nilly* at the formulating of absolute values, which we want to know as thoroughly as possible. But if the field of *knowledge* extends down to there, beyond that *action* begins, which imposes a new problem: how do we move from the knowledge of value to its realization? As such, the concept of "value" is fundamental to both philosophy and theology. (Petre Andrei, 1945, 13-14)

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is the first lucid spirit to draw a serious alarm on the axiological deficiencies of modern science in his well-known work, "The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology" (1936). The main idea of phenomenological philosophy is to present the world through *consciousness*; without the presence of consciousness, the world has no openness to meaning. That is why he asks us to take care of the research of world consciousness, but for this we must forget or abandon the real, natural world as our attitude towards it. These abandonments do not mean denying the existence of nature, of the surrounding world, but "cleansing" the consciousness of foreign

elements in order to turn consciousness upon itself for the purpose of seeking and discovering the meaning of things. The phenomenological method accomplishes this through Husserlian famous *epoche*, i.e. through *suspension*. Very important to be noticed is the fact that in Greek philosophy *epochē* meant “suspension of judgment”, being a principle sustained initially by the skeptical philosophers of the ancient Greek Academy, who, considering the problem of knowledge as insoluble, proposed that whenever a controversy arises, an attitude of non-involvement must be adopted, in order to obtain the peace of mind in everyday life. The term was resumed in the twentieth century by Husserl, who saw it as a technique rather than the abstractization and examination of essences and which serves to highlight the consciousness itself. (Samuel Mickey, 2008, 57)

Husserl's Europe is the one which, turned on the path of dehumanization, will come to know the Nazi and communist barbarians. It replaced the field measurements with geometry and reshaped a mankind that was no longer a prisoner of empirical, but invested with “infinite tasks”, having as the ideal a world possessed by reason. If there is a crisis, it does exist through a reference to such a goal (*télos*) or project. Without ever doubting the rigor of the benefits of sciences, Husserl emphasizes their responsibility in this disorder. By removing questions about the meaning of existence, sciences perpetuate this defect of Galilean science: the physicalistic objectivism that forgets the world of our life (*Lebenswelt*) in favor of the abstractions of mathematics. Thus, thinking gets instrumentalized, and is emptying from meaning. (Denis Huisman, 2001, 84-85)

Speaking of a new construction in Logic, Husserl links it with the human resignification of science: “The current state of European sciences requires a radical reflection: in principle, they have lost their great trust in themselves, in their absolute significance. Today's modern man no longer sees in science and in the new culture shaped by it the self-objectification of universal reason, like the modern man of Enlightenment”; as we “live, in general, in a world that has become incomprehensible,” we must report “critically and skeptically” to “the scientific culture turned in historically”. (E. Husserl, 2009, 114)

For “only a new way of scientificity can” – according to Husserl – “eliminate the crisis of European humanity”; decisive for the German phenomenologist is that “this scientificity develops in a transcendental conception of the foundation of the meaning of the world's existence.” (P. Jansen, 1976, 29). “The crisis of European human existence has only two ways of escape: either Europe's decline in alienation to its own rational sense of life, the fall in hostility towards spirit and barbarism, or the rebirth of Europe from the spirit of philosophy through heroism of reason, which will eventually overcome rationalism.” (Edmund Husserl, 1997, 8)

Husserl criticizes the state of affairs in science, philosophy and culture, in which there is an unprecedented crisis. Thus, in science, the crisis unveils a naturalistic attitude that has spawned natural scientism and human scientism. The naturalist spirit prevails in the field of human science, whereby the human being is reduced to the state of object. And Husserl contrasts this naturalistic attitude with one of personalistic type, which he defines as “the attitude we always have when living with each other, talking to each other, shaking hands to each other, or getting in touch with each other in love and hate, in discourse and discussion.” (Edmund Husserl, 1997, 8)

Naturalist attitude is an abstract one. Man is assumed to have two autonomous spheres: subjectivity and objectivity, which led to a domination that divided the world into two. But the crisis is a subjective problem, which has begun with the much blamed *inductive method*, the one that refers to universal meanings. The founder of the inductive method is Francis Bacon († 1626). Bacon is convinced that the development of science based on the use of observation and experiment would turn it into an effective means of dominating nature. Knowledge is based on the collaboration of the intellect with the experience. In order to achieve these objectives, Fr. Bacon aims at establishing of a new method of scientific research: the inductive method. This method relies in the English philosopher's opinion on a set of norms that have not lost their methodological importance today either. He recommends that we should avoid hasty generalizations, because thereby we cannot avoid errors.

This position, however, decrees Husserl, represents a regression and not a progress of science, in which the values of judgment are not placed inside or internalized, and thus the responsibility is removed, considering that through this operation a sense of freedom is attained (Kanchana Mahadevan, 2001).

Husserl rightly believes that at the end of the nineteenth century there was a turning point in the general valorization of the sciences, which does not really concern their scientificity, but the significance they have, in general, for human existence. "From this moment on, modern man has allowed the entire world view (*Weltanschauung*) to be exclusively determined through the perspective of positive sciences, blinded by that *prosperity* he had owed them. Along with this, he turned back indifferently to all questions that in fact have a crucial role for a genuine humanity. The simple factual sciences create simple factual people." (Edmund Husserl, 2011, 23)

Therefore, in this work, a genuine Husserlian spiritual testament, he earnestly drew a signal of alarm about the axiological uncertainty of scientific research, in his famous words: "In the context of our existential crisis, science has nothing to convey to us. It basically excludes those questions that are most ardent for the man of these times of restraint [...]: questions about the meaning or meaninglessness of our entire human existence. [...] As philosophers of the present, we have woken up in the midst of a painful existential contradiction. For we cannot abandon the faith in the possibility of philosophy, understood as a task, thus in the possibility of a universal knowledge. Moreover, as philosophers who take seriously their own mission, we know that we have the vocation of this task." (Edmund Husserl, 2011, 23-24).

In accordance with this scrupulous and rigorous spirit, of what general theory of values (axiology) may be the case in the scientific field, one that even from the nineteenth century seemed to elude the relationship between (scientific) *facts* and (social, cultural, economic, religious, and not only) *values*, one which is not very focused on the ethical or moral aspect of applied scientific research (technology).

Even today science is the dominant knowledge. Contrary to a widespread opinion, the *scientism* that characterized the nineteenth century has not disappeared. The scientific ideology is maintained, but in a somewhat more subtle form. Very suggestive, The French philosopher Pierre Thuillier (†1998) summarized this ideology in three postulates or "articles of faith": 1) science is the only authentic (implicitly the best) knowledge; 2) science is capable of responding to all theoretical problems, provided they are formulated in rational terms; 3) it is legitimate and desirable to be entrusted to scientific experts the concern to solve all human problems, whether it is politics, economy, morality, etc. (Jean-Pierre Lonchamp, 2003, 149). Techno-science gives man extraordinary powers, which have allowed undeniable progress, but which simultaneously create a very dangerous self-destructive capacity. Therefore, more than ever, the need for an ethical refolding is necessary to prevent the transformation of man's discretionary power into a real curse for him. In a world in which all *values* have been relativized or even disputed, the very idea of establishing ethical or legal barriers is sometimes assessed as anachronistic, and more than that, even as an attempt to human freedom. Therefore, under the pressure of events that challenge almost daily the axiological interpretation of scientism and of humanist sciences, it is necessary a reconfiguration or a new approach of the essential problem of ethics bases. This despite the fact that the scientific idea of a science-based morality preserves its partisans: "An ethics that can be revised, founded on the progress of science" (Jean-Pierre Changeux, neuroscientist). In his turn, philosopher Hans Jonas, in his work: *The Imperative of Responsibility* (1979) tries to establish an ethics for the technological civilization. Starting from the threat to human and world, he built a philosophical anthropology, based on a new concept of responsibility extended to the survival of the human species. Beyond the major influences of his reflections on the intellectual fundamentals of ecology, the philosopher has inspired the formulation of rules of value that are generally valid, swiftly assumed by international, Euro-community and national laws such as "taking into account the interests of future generations" and "the precautionary principle" (Mircea Dușu, 2008).

3. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION. AXIOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Education, in general terms, consists of certain cultural and axiological fundamentals, such as: education, as an initiation in the world of values, the personal-educative and educational ideal, and the concrete forms of value education: moral-civic education and moral-religious education.

Following a series of definitions of education over time, we retain their essence: *education* remains a function of the spirit with roots embedded in the most intimate and purest life of mankind of all

ages. It thus contributes to the human being's existence into the spirit; it illuminates its nobility and goes in tune with its path of ascension to the moral fullness, towards true spirituality, and perfection.

Education is a value in itself, if and only if conveys or transmits values, forms man through values (the value content of education), moulds the values creator (stimulates and capitalizes the creative capacities). The very word "education" has a certain amount of value. It only refers to that aid given to the people in order to be able to rise to the authentic existential status of man and to acquire the authentic human nature.

The problem of the educational ideal can only be solved in an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary fashion, appealing to axiology, philosophy and pedagogy of culture, sociology and, last but not least, to *religion*. Through religion, the child is not only linked to the areas of transcendental perfection, but also it is created a predisposition for the ego's insertion into a world of deep values, where life focuses, becomes more ardent, more personal, more authentic. In fact, there is a special relationship between *faith* and *education*, in the sense that education tends to spiritualize whatever divine grace has put into man and also to ennoble him with new values. (Olivia Andrei, 2010, 68)

Unfortunately, the Christian dimension of Europe is nowadays denied, minimized or ignored, especially in the West, where many believe that they are already living in a post-Christian society. But, on the other side, there are many other voices, such as writer Joseph Weiler ("A Christian Europe", 2003), who defends the view that "in the European constitutional context, the reference to God and to Christianity should not be excluded only, but it is even indispensable" (Joseph Weiler, 2003, 53-54).

Unlike scientific research, which is more or less free of values, *religion*, through the education it transmits, proposes an extremely complex set of values, which have set up Europe for almost two millennia but which have a significance more current than ever, even if this seems paradoxical for those who cling today to alien or extraneous values for Christian culture and civilization. If other values – such as political, juridical, ethical, cultural-social, etc. – refers to an empirical reality, to a reality that we find in experience, religious values are a group of values with a specific character because they relate to a supersensitive reality, the domain of religion being a transcendental, supra-empirical one. (Petre Andrei, 1945, 223)

On the other hand, *social* values are of an intellectual, volitional nature, while *religious* values are more emotional and have a contemplative character. This character is revealed by the fact that religious value removes human impulsive desires, departs everything that deviates man from the supreme ideal. "Religious value", said German historian and philosopher W. Dilthey (†1911), "tends to distract everything that is transient, everything that is desired, all that belongs to the senses in the individual human being." (Wilhelm Dilthey, 1908, 44)

Basically, regardless of the values or sets of values we report or refer to, a common constant must be emphasized: their consistency is given by their ability to respond to individual or collective needs (Gheorghe Bunescu, 1998, 23). Determinant in the knowledge of values act prove to be both the set of questions about somebody's person that he formulates or comes in contact with throughout his life, and his ability to recognize them with the help of positive emotional acts, especially through love.

That is why, in the last few decades, pedagogy increasingly emphasizes the need for an *axiological education*, understood as an education through and for authentic values. „Education in axiological perspective means to guide the educational process on the most profitable trajectories in terms of efficiency, to identify or exploit privileged teaching moments, to respond to all searches through the best choices, [...] to act on behalf of an order of priorities.” (Constantin Cucuș, 1996, 181). From the point of view of Christian axiology, *religious values* have an *integrating role*, being a link between different elements and structures to which they imprint the seal of eternity. In this sense, the great philosopher of culture Tudor Vianu expresses: „Religious values are integrative. They integrate, unify, constitute in a solidarity and coherent unit all the values contained in man's consciousness. Through the religious values the bow of arch is raising, one that unites the most distant values, that gathers and shelters the most varied ones. An individual can contain different values, most of them, but their unifying link will be missing as long as religious value is not added to them” (Tudor Vianu, 1998, 117).

Supersensibly *par excellence*, religious values invite man to relate to a superior, eternal reality proven by Jesus Christ as the supreme Value. Based on the right assumed freedom, man can acquire the ability to hierarchize values according to his own aspirations.

Spiritual values derived from religious education are suited to decisively contribute to the formation of a correct view of life, which is a reference to the supreme value, and is required to be understood and appreciated as a unique opportunity for man to seek the way to Truth, Beauty, Holiness, attributes that are shared, eminently, by the Persons of the Holy Trinity. (Ioan Zăgrea, 1985)

Viewed at the level of the finality and content, religious education emphasizes or reveals a set of values that are in deep affinity with the teaching of Christian faith: the *faith* in God's existence and the constant help coming from Him; the *hope* in the victory of Light; the *love*, God's supreme value and definition, manifested in relation to Him and his neighbors; the *courage* to obey divine commandments; the *justice* understood as truth, in the personal and communitarian realm; temperance in terms of interest for material values; the *freedom* gained by the delimitation from non-values; sacred space, sacred time, sacred objects; the supreme model offered by Jesus Christ and the pattern offered by the saints. (Dorin Oprea, 2012, 123-124)

Reporting man to a higher, stable and consistent value plan, such as that of religious values, is necessary and particularly fertile nowadays. According to Louis Lavelle (†1951), life without religion equates to inauthentic life and axiologically decentered existence. There is no value that ultimately does not imply a religious character. „Religion – considers the eminent French philosopher – is the act that transcends anything relative, it finds instead of nothingness this absolute of the act that makes us participate and which absolutizes and valorizes anything relative.” (Louis Lavelle, 1954, 492)

Religious values, points out the same thinker, Lavelle, are the values *par excellence* because:

- all authentic values belong to the faith; the values of faith force us to pass beyond sensitivity, through a pure consent act, the sensitive being a way of accessing to the transcendent;
- Religious values presuppose subordination to a principle that goes beyond us but which has the dignity to regulate and validate our behavior and reasoning; religion is the only instance that man accepts when being judged. Religion is neither residing in sentiment only, nor in thinking alone. It makes the absolute value fall down in the concrete and relative domain. It ensures the permanent communication of the transcendent with the immanent. (Louis Lavelle, 1954, 499)

All this axiological fabric that helps man to reestablish himself in his original human status (“becoming within being” – the famous phrase of Romanian ontologist C. Noica) is explained by the fact that “man bears the world inwardly, spiritually, the way the Creator bears it in His thought and love. Man builds a spiritual universe, an inner life that determines him, defines him. And in his inner world, the spiritual vision grows with every question and answer on beings and things, with every new meaning acquired about the world of God, so immense, so inexhaustible and so it opens to him, and offers itself to him”. (Părintele Galeriu, 1992, 67)

Man is dedicated to the finality, to goals, and values. It is not him who does adapt to the external world, but this fits in accordance with a finality established in his spirit. But religious education builds, besides the knowledge base, due to secular education, something extra: it also takes into account «the why» of life, of the existence, the question of questions. Preparing for the encounter and reporting to the divinity has beneficial repercussions for both understanding and effective reporting to reality (Constantin Cucuș, 2002, 168). For despite the detractors of religion and, implicitly, of religious education, listening to or reporting to a “superhuman court” is undoubtedly beneficial.

If there is a fear of God, it is not depressing, but beneficial; it acts as a power of restraint and control, being precursor or concomitant to moral consciousness. “Human laws are abstractions put into phrases, in words, and have no possibility, whatever their power would be, to pursue man in all his actions. They can only regulate the outside of the human being or very little the inside of him”. (George Bota, 1929, 33). For, as a well-known contemporary educator expresses, God's “eye” is an over-normativity that gives meaning and consistency to human rules.” (Constantin Cucuș, 2002, 169)

4. CONCLUSION

The contemporary world is surprised and sometimes even confused under the influence of the great transformations that take place. These transformations, sometimes occurring beyond the limits of reason, have certainly a cause. Scientific research and its technical outcome have created so many new problems to man that man himself cannot appreciate where things can be stopped, and especially how they can be ordered. Human intelligence gets puzzled with its own creations. New concepts, inventions, products of all kinds radically and unexpectedly changed the whole objective and subjective condition of man. (Ernest Bernea, 2011, 115). And the same great Romanian thinker continues: “The technique has conquered the space – at the human scale it seems almost dismantled – and has «broken» the time. The categories that the old world is based on are completely changed. Man has a space in which he sets up and moves, in which he establishes one of the dimensions of his existence. He cannot last without this basis of space, without a «figure» of him, as built on a mathematical and logical plane, as experienced on a psychological level.

And science and coextensively, scientific research are losing sight of what has traditionally been the ultimate human goal: the authentic values that define man, constitute him and help to reinvent himself in the space of his genuine existence, *qua* being created “in the image of God” (Gen 1:26).

European education not only the contemporary one, but beginning with the Enlightenment, seems to ignore – directly or indirectly – Christian values, from the moment religion turned out from a matter of *objective* interest, into one of private, *subjective* interest.

The Church, the divine-human (theandric) institution that guarantees for the last two millennia the condition of *homo axiologicus* freely proposes values and does not impose them. And freedom is not equated with spiritual unconcern, but with man's ability to choose the values that enrich the life of him and that of human community. “In this sense, the values offered by religious education are extremely necessary, especially in this period of secularization of Romanian society, since they represent an essential spiritual reference for young people and an existential binder among all knowledge acquired through the study of the other disciplines.” (†Daniel, 2010, 7)

Speaking about the fracture or cleavage rose in Europe between, on one hand, traditional values and Christian identity, and on the other hand the humanism and scientism of the last two centuries, St. Nicholas Velimirovich gives expression to this “schizophrenia” as follows: “Had Europe remained Christian, it would have praised Christ, not its culture; the great peoples of Asia and Africa – even if not baptized, but inclined towards spirituality – would have understood and cherished this, for these peoples also praise each one with their faith, with their gods, with the books their faith holds holy: one with the Quran, another with the Vedas, and so on. Therefore, they do not praise the things of their hands, their culture, but what they reckon for themselves, with what they believe as perfect in the world. Only the peoples of Europe praise neither with Christ nor the gospel of Christ, but praise with their dangerous machines and their cheap outcomes, that is, with their culture. The result of this European self-praise with the famous «culture» is the hate of all non-Christian peoples against Christ and Christianity”. (St. Justin Popovich, 2002, 122-123)

In this sense, the great educator Jan Comenius († 1670) expressed the view that the ends of education can only be achieved by reference to Christ's model: “Christians should be trained according to His example, illuminated in spirit, and saints in the diligence of consciousness and strong in deeds (each according to his vocation)” (Jan Amos Comenius, 1970, 43).

That is why we consider absolutely necessary to reaffirm the great importance of the Christian axiology professed by the Church visible, as a basic institution of society, as well as of the religious education in the formation of the personality of today's youth, of the Romanian and European society alike.

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