

ICOANA CREDINȚEI
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Printed with the blessing of
His Eminence
† NIFON,
Archbishop and Metropolitan of Târgoviște



Number 15, Year 8, January 2022
Ideas Forum International Academic and Scientific Association
Târgoviște, Romania

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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY SCIENTIFIC
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Icoana Credinței. International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research is a journal, published and promoted at international level by Ideas Forum International Academic and Scientific Association (IFIASA), with the Faculty of Orthodox Theology and Education Sciences, “Valahia” University, Târgoviște, Romania.

Web: <http://revistaicoanacredintei.com>

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Graphic designer: Marin BUGIULESCU

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Preface

The 15th issue year 2022 of *Icoana Credinței (Icon of Faith)*, *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research (IFIJISR)* encompasses a group of articles on various themes, dedicated to the areas of Theology and Christian life.

The commencing paper: *THE HISTORY OF THE THEOLOGY AS RESTORATION OF THE MAN FOR A POSTMODERN CULTURE: THE VISION OF FATHER PROFESSOR DUMITRU STĂNILOAE*, by Fr. Prof. PhD. MIHAI HIMCINSCHI, present the theological thinking of Father Dumitru Stăniloae. With such a courageous initiative of an organic synthesis between history and theology, Father Dumitru Stăniloae consolidated the Church's faith when facing the danger of the Bolshevik atheism during World War Two by promoting the idea of restoration of history, of the creation, and the man through Jesus Christ. The subsequent paper, signed by Assoc. Prof. PhD Fr. Anton SAVELOVICI, bears the title: *CONFESSING FAITH BEYOND THE COMMUNIST BARS*. The confrontation between good and evil, in the 20th century, had frightening proportions. Through a twisted logic, ideologically and “scientifically” reasoned, there have been destroyed spiritually, morally, socially and economically the destinies of many people, ethnicities and countries. The next paper belonging to Fr. PhD. Răzvan BRUDIU and PhD. Student Alexandru CIUCURESCU is *THE ORTHODOX DIASPORA: ANALYSIS, NUANCE AND REDEFINITION*. 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.

Prof. Ph.D Giovanni FAZIO and Prof. Rosanna CALLIPARI, signs the paper: *THEOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION REVISIT THE SHROUD IMAGE FORMATION BY RADIATIVE PROCESSES*. For some decades several scientists have claimed the formation of the Shroud body image by the radiative hypotheses. These proposals have as a start the emission, by the corpse wrapped in the burial linen, of proton or electromagnetic radiation with the wavelengths of the far ultraviolet. Paulo Nuno MARTINS signs the paper *GUADALUPE AND SOME PERSPECTIVES OF THE SACRED IMAGE: AN ESSAY*, whose central idea is the sacred image of the Virgin of Guadalupe that appeared in the tilma of the “seer” Juan Diego. The content of the “Message of Guadalupe” received by Juan Diego is also addressed. Prof. PhD. Gheorghe F. ANGHELESCU, signs the paper: *THE DISTINCTION UNCREATED-CREATED WITH SAINT ATHANASIUS THE GREAT AND ITS ROLE IN THE REJECTION OF ARIUS' HERESY*. Saint Athanasius the Great polemicized with the Greek-Roman world on topics related to the world's eternity and origin. For the Church Father and Teacher coming from Alexandria, this topic was intimately related to the crucial message of the Christian faith: the taking on of the human nature by the Divine Logos. Lastly, Fr. Prof. PhD. Adrian D. COVAN, signs the dogmatic paper: *THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND HIS LOGOS – THE PERFECT MODEL OF INTERSUBJECTIVE COMMUNICATION*. The lovely mystery of the Holy Trinity, impossible to understand for the human mind, is a paradigm for human life.

Therefore, the content of the current issue is a good invitation to reading researches on specific themes presented in the journal book. *Icon of Faith- International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research* lends expression to competent voices of researches from different countries worldwide in order to promote an excellent scientific community interested in a dynamic Christian tradition and culture, open for a constructive dialogue.

January 2022

Editor Prof. PhD. Marian BUGIULESCU

THE HISTORY OF THE THEOLOGY AS RESTORATION OF THE MAN FOR A POSTMODERN CULTURE: THE VISION OF FATHER PROFESSOR DUMITRU STĂNILOAE

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ABSTRACT

The man's deification, or the restoration of human nature, historically fallen under the slavery of the sin and the death; it is not possible except through the embodied Son of God, at the fulfilment of time (Gal. 4: 4). In this demarche, history plays a positive role, for the man is born in it. Namely, the man becomes a historical personality, and also in history continues the sanctifying dynamism of the ecclesiastic life. History is not a prison – in an Origenistic sense –, which the man struggles to escape from, for the man has Christ, the God-Man and the Man-God, Who opens to the believers the perspective of eternity through the history's gate. With such a courageous initiative of an organic synthesis between history and theology, Father Dumitru Stăniloae consolidated the Church's faith when facing the danger of the Bolshevik atheism during World War Two by promoting the idea of restoration of history, of the creation, and the man through Jesus Christ.

Keywords: Church; deification; history; mission; preaching; salvation;

INTRODUCTION

Published at Sibiu, in full swing of World War Two, the book of Father Dumitru Stăniloae, entitled *Jesus Christ or the Restoration of the Man* (Sibiu, 1443), constitutes for the postmodern society too, a Christological challenge in a very well determined historical frame. The Church's mission, as a historical extension of the Kingdom of God, has a direct and immediate purpose the struggle against the historical spreading of the evil within the human society, and that is why the contrary state of the ones who lack their faith it is, actually, a state of deep resistance against the Church's Head: our Lord Jesus Christ (Luka 2:34). Before the Embodiment, though God did not abandon the world of the corruption, of the sin, and the death (Hebr. 1: 1-2), the history of humanity opened itself to the divine Revelation, in stages, in order the man to want and to progressively know the soteriological ascension. That is why one can affirm that history is the beginning of the gradual Revelation, and the end of history is the beginning of the consummate Revelation. The history is the interval between A and Ω (Apoc. 21: 6), Christ being the beginning of the creation's history, as One through Whom *all the things were created* (Creed, art. 2), but also *the end of this age* (Mt. 24: 3), namely the end of the historical time. By being Himself these, there is no historical person on earth, since the old Adam to the end of the ages, capable of equaling Christ's historical dignity and of comprising between the Revelation's limits (starting with the first day of the creation and to the second coming of the Lord Christ), *to fill up the time*,¹ to embrace the history with his arms like Christ did on Golgotha's Cross.

1. THE HISTORY OF THE THEOLOGY AS RESTORATION OF OF FATHER PROFESSOR DUMITRU STĂNILĂE

As Son of God the Father, like Word or Logos, as the paternal Rationality or Wisdom, He makes Himself the *door* which the Revelation enters the created world through, in the same time with the history's existence, *through Him* – as Saint John the Evangelist affirms (Jn. 1: 3) – all the things came to existence as they are. As embodied Son of God, He makes Himself into the *door* the history and the time – by being compressed – they enter the eternity (Jn. 10: 7). The Pauline term is that of the *fulfilment of the time* (Gal. 4: 4), and this expression does not mean *an established term* on the line of a formal, unqualified time. It means the general state of the soul, filled with the conditions for receiving the integral Revelation; only consequently, that moment is also an *established term*. If this expression had meant a purely and established term, then it would have been legitimate the question: what God has established this term so late?²

The one who enters this door of salvation, by dying and resurrecting with Christ at Baptism, will enter the eschatological door of the Kingdom as ones who are called *gods* according to the grace (Ps. 81: 1 and 6). From here, it turns up that the Church, through its missionary activity, has a responsibility not only for the events that unveils *hic et nunc* but also for the events following to occur in Eschaton. "The influence of the present eschatology on us is not to get us out of history, by calling us to withdraw, as through a reflux, from the historical life, in its bosom, in a contemplation state. It is a mistake to withdraw ourselves from within the historical life."³ The purpose of preparing the future belongs to the apostolic Church, too, even if these are now fulfilled in part, and the other will be fulfilled *face to face* (I Cor. 13: 12). The eschatology is related to the paschal joy of everybody's and together resurrection, for the whole humankind has had a shared history since Adam, and so it will be to the end of the time. *The postponing of the personal Resurrection until the end of times and the universal judgment means a confirmation of the history's value, of the joint compound in which each man has a mission. We will be judged by being shown the effects of our deeds to the end of history.*⁴ By starting with the missionary involvement in contemporaneity and keeping the eternal perspective, the Church imprints the human being with the seal of the true meaning of human existence: the Christian identity. Moreover, for this identity has been brought by the Son of God made man and shared to the people within Church through the Holy Mysteries, through the Christian identity, the world's history received the seal of an authentic Christ-centrism, without which the Church would remain forever sunk in the autonomy of a pure temporal Aryanism. The proof of the pure and anthropocentric historical immanent is offered by Luke's text of the Lord's Resurrection, from Chapter 24, verses 13-25. The two disciples, Luke and Cleophas, were not able to surpass the historical events of Jesus of Nazareth: His beautiful deeds, His arrest, His crucifixion, and His death in the time of Pontius Pilate. Here, according to their mind and the limited claims of a history disrobed of the cloak of the Resurrection and the eternal life, it would have had everything to come to an end because a human person enters history by birth and exits the history by death. By receiving the Revelation through the Holy Mysteries, the apostles on the road to Emmaus surpassed the narrow limits of an autonomous, egotistic, and limited history of some stories, which quickly could have become myths over centuries, in order to deceive and to disorient the human spirit.

Through His Resurrection from the dead, the Savior does not exclude history, but he assumes history in a comprehensive and transfigured manner, with all its problems, unrests, and shortcomings. *The Resurrected Jesus Christ clothes in His resurrected reality*

increasingly larger parts of the historical mankind, being contemporary to the mankind's unfolding as Church."⁵ The Church's mission asks us, laypeople and servants, equally, the same thing. According to Christ's model, we cannot remain impassive to the events taking place nigh to us, starting with the poor and the sick people of the society and ending with the high world governing. The *non-combat* attitude towards the things taking place in the history of the contemporary world is not from God, but it is a mode of spiritual neutrality that we tacitly approve through, and which we tacitly uphold through, the evil facts of daily history. We cannot agree on this state of spiritual neutrality because neither the devil is neutral from a spiritual point of view. The Christian missionary attitude cannot answer but YES to the positive things, namely the godlike ones, and NO to the negative, evil, and degrading for society and coming from the devil things (Mt. 5: 37).

History is not a string of inter-human actions and challenges, and the neutrality towards their problems can translate into the indifferentism towards the godlike and persona Model which our Savior proved and which he let to be fulfilled by us (Mt. 25: 45) as mutual aid brought to the ones who are contemporary to our history.

*I must participate as a factor in history by seriously noticing its problems. The man does not appear to us as an individual detached from any connections with others. The man is part of a society, and his hardships, joys, and problems are caused and upheld by this society, which has itself - on each moment - its content of concrete preoccupations..., in order to establish certain organizing conditions of the collectivity from a given time. Behold how your quality as a propagator of the Revelations makes you being a factor of history.*⁶

God, through Jesus Christ, descends within history as a consummate factor of the Revelation. Through the mission, the Christian becomes at their turn factor of propagating this godlike unveiling, through a historical involvement as *action*, and as *effect* through exiting the narrow frame of the history in an eternal, meta-historical vision. History is the inter-human *me-you* relationship a dyad, but *meta-history* is the relation and *me-you-Him* triad. God, like *Him*, elevates us too – like *me* and *you* –, from the purely contextual and limited environment of the time and of the space, through a relation of communion in love, and not through some external constraint, for God assists us by grace in our actions with our fellow humans, based on the agreement our human and free will.

*By answering the appeal of our fellow human, experienced in the second person, we continue the history and, at the same time, the creation. The history, in its living core, is an unaltered continuation of the creation.*⁷

Only within an autonomous and exclusivist history are human actions and inter-personal relations considered *ad se*, and, unrelated to an extra-worldly rule (canon), they can appear as self-sufficient. However, they also risk being the cause of some passionate initiatives and impulses, which cannot stop by themselves, their initiators reckoning themselves as substitutes to Godhead.

2. CHURCH FUSION BETWEEN TIME AND ETERNITY

The Church is the fusion between time and eternity. The Church is the place which the Ascended Christ reached the history within, through the work of the Holy Ghost within Church. That is why the Church's mission within the world it has been, it is, and it will be, a historical act too, since the Holy Apostles to the end of time, but also a meta-historical acts. Through this intervention, the Savior manifests His permanent interest in all the human persons from all the history's époques.

Even before God made Himself man, there was a specific connection of the history with God, and a certain closeness of Him to history and a continual remaining in this closeness. However, by the fact that Jesus Christ, even after His Ascent, has remained God in human nature, His bond with history must be more intimate. Furthermore, that part of the history, which stays in this more intimate bond with Him, unveils itself; thus, it is the Church by constituting some history's core. Within Church, the conscience of Christ's presence is alive. The Church is the believers' community from each time with Christ.⁸

The propagation of the faith is contextual, taking heed to time and space. The apostolic mission is unique in its content but diverse in its forms of implementation and permanently exposed to a double orientation: horizontal and vertical. Its dimension remains anchored on a horizontal and exclusivist plan, *the history will entirely be sinful, and, as there is no possible exit from it, there is no revelation towards the clean and sinless doing. History still is the necessary environment within which, in the present conditions, the Revelation is being made known to the people. The man who participates in the horizontal history receives the Revelation, but, outside this participation, nobody can reach the Revelation.⁹*

Unlike the Protestant doctrine of a purely horizontal perspective on mission and history, Orthodox spirituality looks more attentively at the vertical arm of the Holy Cross. From there, it comes *every good gift and every perfect gift* (James 1: 17) through the human nature of the One crucified on it. There is no consummate Revelation outside the divine-human Person of the Savior Christ and outside His Church whose Head He is. Being in the helplessness of full horizontality, Protestantism has slipped in the predestination doctrine, which is a uniformity doctrine of all chosen by God (Rom. 8: 29) and which is in another history, outside the current history, some history or world parallel to the ones who were not, are not and will not be *chosen*.

Here leads the exclusivism of the horizontal history in which the human persons are successive and monotonous points, but perfectly identical, without hierarchy and diversity of gifts or qualities. No wonder the communist collectivist system, based on a total uniformity of people, has been generated in this space of the Reformation and then generalized – but also rejected as unsatisfactory by the Eastern Orthodox spirituality of the 20th century.

Through the cosmic Church where God reveals Himself, the world offers to the human spirit purgative possibility bases on an ascetic, successive, linear trajectory ascension and in the rhythm of the epektasis.

History has the mission of a bosom in which it descends, and it conveys the Revelation. There is no incompatibility between it and the Revelation, but neither is there an identity. History does not save us, but we can be saved within history. He strives in the history's frame to faithfully accomplish his legal duties by being a good father, an honest merchant, a worthy clerk; without being saved by these deeds, he does not commit evil; on the opposite, he is an instrument for preaching God.¹⁰

Christ's Gospel is being fulfilled within history, and not outside it so that all the ones who do evangelize mission in the world conjugate the new law to the old habit of the sin, for the last one, through free and conscious assuming, to abandon the corruption and to achieve straightening. The Gospel and the world are not two locked up realities to one another, but interacting in a theandric manner; the last one discovers its true sense and direction. When achieved consequently to a good mission and an efficient evangelization, the faith helps us in our historical elevation, as in the process of spiritual education and guiding, towards the target of the true communion with the Holy Trinity, in His Kingdom. The absence of this spiritual dynamism is a sign that God is not present, and neither works He in my life, in the

life of the community with I am living in, and therefore He is not present either in the history live by me. In the historical process of personal salvation, we equally need the horizontal relationship with our fellow humans, and also, it is needed help from God on the vertical plane of the transcendent. There is no authentic relation outside history. God descends within history in order to announce us the Gospel, to suffer, to die, and to resurrect for us. The Church does not listen to the news or to a message which does not descend within history. Our Savior is not only a man, but He also is not an angel, and neither is He a demon. He is not quite God alone, but He is God-Man, a Hypostasis in two natures, Who saves the world's decayed sinful history only on this way: a Person in two natures Who united unmixed, unchanged, undivided, two plans of the existence: the heaven and the world, God with the man, the eternity with the history.

Saint Apostle Paul condemns the lack of intersection of the two plans, the divine plan and the earthly/historical plan, in the context of his mission Galatia by showing, on the one hand, that his message is not strictly historical, namely that his message does not come from a simple historical person from the Tarsus of Cilice, *Apostle and not a commoner* (Gal. 1: 1), and on the other hand, he condemns any message which has not historical involvement and which is claimed as angelic Gospel: *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed* (Gal. 1: 8), This is because the angels are not historical persons; namely, they are not born with a body, for they are spiritual beings, mainly because they were created before the historical time of the created world (Gen. 1: 1). Although they can descend into history if God's eternal plan allows them to do this, as in the case of angelophanies, but not through an *ad se* message, a message integrally received from God and integrally conveyed to the people.

Through the won involvement in the good proceeding of the society and my fellow humans, I will actively participate, at my turn, to the collaboration and the involvement of God in the world's history, to the world's progress if I do good, or to the world's regresses if I promote the evil, for not everything that takes place in history is qualitatively good. The missionary propagation of the faith accomplishes history's purpose. If I do the good, the quality of the human being improves for good the *ethic strengthens the ontological*.

*History makes us for eternity responsible for one another, and this forces us to take care of our descendants by conveying them the faith. A more serious purpose and a graver meaning could not be attributed to history as a whole, but this one made solidary, on a reason of responsibility and gratitude, the entire humankind forever and ever.*¹¹

God intervened in history until He came into history, on successive and logical stages, through intermediaries. Some of them were the prophets, who had a well-determined double role, namely that of intermediating the historical bond of the man with God, and also of preparing the history, in our case the history of the Old Testament, in order to receive, to become aware of, and respectively to accept the Savior within the history's limits. The state of human nature outside its centre of complete unity – Who is the embodied God – is that of the lack of identity, subjectivity, and godlike imprint. It is a state non-conform to the purpose which it has been created for and *the man is therefore in an abnormal state before his rebirth through the Christian faith. We call it the state of nature, only because there has not been born, within him, the subject. However, this state is unnatural if we bear in mind the target for which the man has been destined. One can ascertain that the man in which the communion has not been born is not in the automated state of the animals but a state of perversion and evilness.*¹² The Christian identity achieved in the history of each individual's salvation, it is by excellence the gate that opens to the human nature the perspective of the

communion and the interpersonal relations, it is that one that metamorphoses the individual in a person, the egotism in an atmosphere of communion in love, the depressive isolation and the loneliness in craving for communitarian life. The absence of the Christian identity equals the lack of spiritual power, of the will of fighting for the high and natural ideals of the personal-human dimension.

*The Embodiment of the Son of God was for God to come in maximum closeness to the man and give, through substitutive sufferance, that satisfaction of the moral order to produce in the people's souls the necessary repercussions for their total restoration.*¹³

Correctly said, if out of His love for the world God makes Himself man (Jn. 3: 16), the world's history while waiting for the Embodiment, it opens itself in a dilatation conform to nature and the purpose of this one, it turns out that the history, though submitted to its temporality, it is an expression of the eternal love of God and it is called, through its answer given to the godlike love, to enter the eternity through the sanctification and through the consummation of its events which take place in time.

The history is not *crucified* through the coming of the Son of God at Embodiment. However, it is called, as the Holy Apostles were, to a theandric work, to willingly accepting the soteriological work in time and not contrary to the time, for the historical time too, at its turn, God has created it with the possibility of perceiving the presence of the Embodied God, as Person. God does not enslave history, but he liberates the history from sin by consummating the existences born and which die during history. As an eternal new anticipated world, Christ does not come to kill by abolishing the history of autonomous humankind – as a secularized society thinks.

Through His death and Resurrection, He makes possible the history outside a fear that a historical entity ends its existence at its death. He makes us understand that the historical end of a creature, endowed with rationality or not, is not the same with its entering in nothingness, for the nothingness does not belong to history and neither to eternity, and that is why it does not have any rationality. Not Christ defiled the history by His presence, as the unbelievers think, but the people defiled the history with their full of hatred and sinful deeds (Gen. 3: 6; 4: 9, 15). Christ restores the history, the existence, and the created being, by deifying him on the measure of his positive will through the rational entities who agree and understand the final purpose of their existence.

*He accepted to make Himself as us, for us, who, due to our lack of will, broke our being. He made this to bring again to existence what reached outside the existence. He is God, the One begotten, Who, by comprising in Himself everything, He has established His tent amongst us.*¹⁴ The history or the humankind salvation history, as the environment of divine Revelation, experienced logical and necessary stages for the man to know these stages and want their content as a surrogate of the communion with God before His Embodiment. So it was given, in time, the Law of the Old Testament and the harsh messages of the Prophets. But, *the time under the reign of the Law was not uniform. However, it has a development. Correctly said, it was not the time, but it was humanity. This is for the time is not an empty scheme in which the man's deeds and states of his soul are ordered in, as the objects in space, but it is the chaining of these states and deeds itself. Furthermore, because the total of a man's life is determined and determines one of the other people, the complexity of the human states and deeds, namely the time, becomes different on each step, collaborating with the countless immanent influences with mysterious transcendental causes.*¹⁵ If the world's history, from a theological point of view, is born since the Revelation, and we become an environment of its propagation, and the restless proof of

waiting for *the fullness of time* (Gal. 4: 4), it will find its fullness since the Embodiment to Ascent, its tangential meeting point with the eternity which can be experienced *in and through* Church. Here the historical time meets eternity.

Philosophy speculates the formal – or even *empty* – aspect of the time,¹⁶ Alternatively, the contradiction between time and eternity; for Christians, time is filled up with the presence of Christ in the world through the Church (Mt. 28: 20). Between time and eternity, there is compatibility for the time God created, and it is not a product of the sin, though, the sin as the virtue too, both of them are committed within the world, namely in the world's historical time. "For the human existence which lives in time fell into sin, the time became for it a means of punishment."¹⁷

The Church is the visible, temporal side, and therefore historical, of a Kingdom to come at the historical end of this world. The Revelation's stages unfolded on the history's stages; they do not fade through the Resurrection and the Lord's Ascent to the heavens. The Revelation is a closed up process. It started in Eden, and it ended with the death of the last Apostle. The Orthodoxy does not accept the open character of the Revelation, in the sense that the Revelation's content could be completed, but consequently to monastic and mystic life, under the obedience to the Church, the Christian soul can know in time, in grace, and in epektasis time, the continuously new nuances of the same Revelation, since Pentecost to the Second Coming, not as substance, but as form (Mt. 19: 28).

*Without getting out of time as creational form, but by elevating us above the sinful living of the time (above the animal state, above egotism, above rush, and about fear) – and this we can do only by faith -, we can enter the connection with His reality. He is eternally the same, but not impassive, and not far from us. The reality irradiated out of Him by clothing up the ones who believe; it composes His Church. The Church is not only a whole composed of all those who believe in Him, but it is also a reality that envelops them by having Him as the centre. The Church is a temporal-supra-temporal whole.*¹⁸

The Church is the place where is being preserved intact the Revelation in history. If God created the time, and therefore the history, to be efficient in the fight against the sin that entered the history – and so the entire world–God established a suitable frame for undefiled storing and using His unveiling. That is why the Church is founded in time, at Pentecost, right to sanctify the world and the world's history. Through the Church, the Revelation happened in a precise moment of history, which has a permanent presence as a temporal moment it belongs to the past. God spoke in a given moment, but within Church, He always utters the exact words. Due to the Church, the Revelation is not stolen by the time's torrents and taken into the past, but it continuously remains present, as a godlike act, for within Church God too remains present.¹⁹

As a visible historical act of founding the Kingdom of God on earth, Pentecost symbolically addresses world history through the presence of the twelve nations of the world, all faiths, and the ancient world's cultures. The preaching was by mouth. God unveiled Himself in history, to the chosen ones, through a message directly transmitted as communion experience. The whole history is in itself an experimental message which circulated initially by mouth. The Prophets, the Holy Apostles, and the Holy Fathers wrote only a part of the experienced history they had with the Holy Trinity, each one according to his power of understanding and recording in writing, into the Holy Ghost. Saint Evangelist Luke is an example in this sense. In the prologue to His Gospel, he specifies that: *Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to outline in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning*

were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed. (Lk. 1: 1-4). The history of the Christian Revelation does not exclude the plurality of the sources but their validity. The *Acts*, the first story of the Christian Church, written by Saint Evangelist Luke, is upheld by the same methods of researching the history and the spiritual truth as in the case of the Gospel, having the same recipient (Acts 1: 1). Unlike the traditions of the lay history: *The Holy Tradition is a permanent presence of the unchangeable God in time and history. If the will of God had not presented itself as the same, we would have lacked vital support of our faith in Him. God is not visibly present with all the generations, with the whole history, except in the form of the Tradition. As the unveiling of God in time, the Revelation itself cannot be shared with the people outside Tradition. The Tradition is the eternal new in the river of the relentless passing of the time. Only as Tradition, a gesture of God, by touching a specific moment of the history, it touches the entire history, and it is efficient upon all the following times.*²⁰

Father Dumitru Stăniloae sees in the history of human nature's restoration the main support of Eastern theology and spirituality. Spirituality is the interpenetration between theology and life, between information and the empirical living of the received teaching. The Church sees dogmas and history as a complementary binomial, and that is why God does not simply show Himself in the history of the secular world, but only to His saints who live in this historical frame. The Church, since Pentecost, is a historical reality that enters the orbit of the world, and in this route, it illuminates through its dogma, from generation to generation, the whole of humankind.

Thereby, it is not only an internal struggle with the sin and with the temptations but by its preaching through Tradition,²¹ It permanently enters the conflict with the things, with the events, and with the historical personalities from outside itself, just in order to restore them ontologically, to sanctify them, to deify them, for all of them to find through it their purpose which they have been created for, namely brought from inexistence to existence, in a well-defined frame, and not as purely fictive or illusory entities.

The world and the man are not the products of a simple happening but of an event wanted by God. The theology of history is a permanent dialogue between man and God. On the one hand, God reveals Himself in history; on the other hand, man strives to understand Him, know His will, and fulfil it. With this effort, the man spiritually transforms the strict content of the Revelation and places it in each stage of the world development in a concrete historical context. This way, The Holy Tradition was generated and continues its dynamics until the end of times.

*It multiplies, and it orients depending on the needs and issues of each period... it is the reaction of the changeable history to the unchangeable word, the infinite gift from God.*²²

In a complete sense, the assuming of the historical humanity took place at Resurrection. Embodied in space and time, the Son of God establishes a beginning to His historical knowledge, but through Resurrection, the Church, by working its mission in time, proposes the transfiguration of this knowledge.

There is no transfiguration of the world's history without Resurrection, but until this restoration, the theological conscience must be historical because if it is not historical, it will not be universal either. Alternatively, the Resurrection is the transfiguration of all the historical realities in and through Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

As a theologian, Father Dumitru Stăniloae has this sensitiveness for history, for he has a clear ecclesiastical conscience. Only in history, the Church proves to be a reality aiming and upholding the restoration of the nature opacified by sin and its openness towards eternity. The Church is plenary only in history, and it is destined to history. Since Pentecost, all the Church's dogmas and canons have been historical events. Without his history, the Christendom remains simple humanistic morals.

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- [1] "In the sense of *filled up* time, we understand that there is requires a certain development, a certain accumulation of experience from the mankind's part, until it reached to suffer because of the state of non-communion it is in report with God, and to keenly desire that state of communion and to ascertain the insufficiency of the law, namely of the own powers in order to accomplish it." Dumitru Stăniloae, *Iisus Hristos sau restaurarea omului* (Craiova: Omniscope, 1993), 102.
- [2] Ibid., 102.
- [3] Ibid., 358.
- [4] Ibid.
- [5] Ibid., 392.
- [6] Ibid., 32-33.
- [7] Ibid., 34.
- [8] Ibid., 374.
- [9] Ibid., 37.
- [10] Ibid., 42.
- [11] Ibid., 43.
- [12] Ibid., 90.
- [13] Ibid., 92
- [14] St. Grigorie de Nyssa, *Despre viața lui Moise*, trad. Dumitru Stăniloae, col. "Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești", vol. XXIX (Bucharest: Institutul Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1982), 78.
- [15] Stăniloae, *Iisus Hristos*, 101.
- [16] "Jesus, by resurrecting, he reestablished, by restoring a new content of life, the full time. Better said, He brought the time to the consummation which the time was craving for. The reality of the Resurrected Christ is the *new time*, namely not a non-temporal eternity or a supra-temporal eternity radically distanced from this world, but a time reached at its consummation, a filled up time. From here it turns up that we, clothed up in our time, we have a capacity of getting closer to the sphere which the Resurrected Christ is in. And the fact of the Resurrection by being a continuous present, of full temporality, and therefore in connection with our time, the permanent co-temporality with Christ is possible. Jesus isn't in an eternity without connections with the time, and the fact of His resurrection it isn't exclusively in a past point of the time." Ibid., 337.
- [17] Ibid., 377.
- [18] Ibid., 378.
- [19] Ibid., 387.
- [20] Ibid., 390.
- [21] "The Tradition is the eternity in time, the sole form of eternity which doesn't annul the time, but it fructifies it." Ibid.
- [22] Ibid., 391.

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CONFESSING FAITH BEYOND THE COMMUNIST BARS

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ABSTRACT

The confrontation between good and evil, in the 20th century, had frightening proportions. Through a twisted logic, ideologically and “scientifically” reasoned, there have been destroyed spiritually, morally, socially and economically the destinies of many people, ethnicities and countries. For some people the psychical and physical salvation from the terror of the materialistic-atheist utopia was assuming a spiritual life.

Keywords: political prisoner; confessor; God; Church;

1. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TERROR AND PUNISHMENT OF “THE NATION’S ENEMIES”

For the Romanian people, almost half of the 20th century represented an inner and outer fight between keeping their identity and faith and joining a materialistic, totalitarian system which wanted to erase any trace of Christian faith on Romanian land. The communist regime tried to break the man from his communion with the transcendent, with the eternity, with the holiness given by the faith in God, in order to obey him to the materialistic, ephemeral ideology. It was intended a re-education of the Romanian people in the spirit of the “new man”¹, meaning an obedient man, without a self-opinion or initiative, a “brain washed” man. “The new man” had to deny his homeland, his family to worship a regime which, in the future, will make him happy. It was intended to replace the Christian faith with a materialistic-atheist ideology. The communist political agenda required egalitarianism, giving up private property in favor of the community. What may seem an ideal way of living, actually represented a way through which communists could accede to power and establish the monopoly for a long period of time. Communism was desired to be, beyond political ideals, a new religion in front of which all had to bow down, to prostrate, being the last, the only one and the supreme ideology. The Romanian people didn’t stay indifferent to this forced imposition of the atheist ideology, but sought to remain worthy and strong in his faith and spiritual identity inherited from his ancestors, even if this meant freedom deprivation, agony, torture, breaking families apart.

“From Nero to Stalin, the antichristian persecution made millions of martyrs all over the world. The „superiority” of communism however, consisted not only in the fact that followed murdering the Christians (cause killing them frees them from torture and makes martyrs), but to kill the faith itself from their mind and heart, to replace it, through terror, the

¹ About the renewal of man Saint Paul the Apostle speaks, but with a spiritual connotation. “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” (*Ephesians* 4:22-24).

materialistic abomination of desolation. The plan applies systematically and in the long run, at individual and country level...thrown decades in killing dungeons, shot in the mountains or deported in death camps in Siberia, Romanians suffered for their faith in God and in Christian purpose of this nations.”².

The spiritual search of the human, his hunger and thirst after God’s justice couldn’t be stopped by the communist ideology promoters, who saw its opponents like some heretics, enemies who have to be abolished, exterminated, for their refusal of re-education in the spirit of the “the new man”. An entire state apparatus was created to impose the Stalinist system: the political police – the Security, the main pawn in supervising and fulfilling the socialist-atheist mission, various informers, instigators, and opportunists, who became the spy shadows of other people: at work, in the family, at school, in the same building, in the church, at the syndicate. The party members, brave collaborators of the Romanian Socialist state, benefited from privileges for their involvement in re-educating the people after the Stalinist model. The ones who refused to adhere to principles contrary to the national identity were considered “enemies of the nation”, “bandits”, and along with their descendants became second-hand citizens, without free men rights or intellectual formation rights. These ones came from all society, whether they were simple peasants who refused to give up on their lands and farm animals, or burghers, labelled as “enemies of the people” and obeyed to the imperialist-capitalist ideas. According to the communist political program, the intellectuality had to be abolished for its ideas contrary to the ruling party and for its sympathy for others political parties; being replaced only with the ones obeyed to the regime.

A big challenge for the communist regime was represented by the category of the Church servants, as these preached the joy of faith in the eternal and living God, and the communists badly wanted to abolish any divinity idea from people’s hearts. People’s affection for the ancestral heritage determined them to resist in front of the red giant who spread powerful in Romania. No matter what political regime was, installed in Bucharest, the Romanian Orthodox Church servants, as well as those of other cults or faiths were always fallowed. The attitude of the political people varied³.

For all the opponents of the communist regime death institutions were established through which it was intended to exterminate all that was Romanian, intellectual, and Christian. Through For the Security, founded in 1948 through the 221 Decree⁴, revenge was wanted for the disobedience of the opponents to the communist ideas, its basements becoming harsh torture places. This had as a declared purpose maintaining and strengthening the system by annihilating any dissidence against the line imposed by the communist leadership. The seen image of this institution was prison and work colony. In Romania 160

² Matei Marin, *Fericiți cei prigoșiți. Martiri ai temnițelor românești*, Editura Bonifaciu, București, 2008, p. 5.

³ A collection of unique documents, which shows the evolution of the Romanian Orthodox Church and its servants was published, în 2001, in Bucharest, under the banner of the Romanian Academy, at the National Institute for the study of totalitarianism, entitled: *The Romanian Orthodox Church under the communist regime. 1945-1958*, signed by Cristina Păiușan, Radu Ciuceanu. The volume incorporates the full text of the documents (informative reports) made up by the Safety of the State, and from august 1948 by the General Direction of the Security of the Nation.

⁴ As a result of the decision of the Council of Ministers, no. 1.274/27.08.1948, the Presidium of the Grand National Gathering of the Romanian Popular Republic emitted the decree no. 221/28.08.1948 to start-up and organize the General Direction of the Security of the Nation. The decree contains 8 articles, forbidden for publishing. As a Minister of Internal Business signed Teohari Georgescu.

prisons functioned through which 2 million political prisoners⁵ passed through, of which three hundred thousand were killed. Locations of human degradation dungeons were at: Suceava, Pitești⁶, Târgu Ocna, Târgșor, Brașov, Ocnele Mari, Peninsula. Each prison had a special destination: (1) to exterminate the political and intellectual elite (Sighet, Râmnicu Sărat, Galați, Aiud, Craiova, Brașov, Oradea); (2) labor camps (Canalul Dunăre-Marea Neagră, Peninsula, Poarta Albă, Salcia, Periprava, Constanța, Midia, Capul Midia, Cernavodă); (3) work colonies (Balta Brăilei); (4) for triage and transit (Jilava, Văcărești); (5) for investigation (Rahova, Malmaison, Uranus); (6) pentru women (Mărgineni, Mislea, Miercurea Ciuc, Dumbrăveni, Târgșor); (7) for juveniles (Târgșor, Mărgineni, Cluj); (8) for hospitalisation (Târgu Ocna, Văcărești).

The confessions of the political prisoners describe acts of brutal torture which go from psychological pressures to cruel beatings, agonizing, nearly to death, the human rights being severely violated⁷. The Security, through torture wanted to obtain from the blamed one the confirmation of his guilt. The simulacrum of the investigation, was actually an already written script where the interrogators were playing their pre-arranged roles. Physical torture and especially the psychical one, had as a purpose inducing terror so the defendant gave up easily, to betray himself, to accept all the false accusations and, of course to accuse all the people suspected by the regime as “enemies of the nation”. In the archives of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party there is a document, dated to 01.11.1967, which mentions “improper methods” used by the Security’s investigators, before the year 1964. The methods have been classified in four categories, therefore: (1) the beating, extended malnutrition and torture, in order to obtain accusing statements; (2) the moral pressure to compel the codefendants to declare what has been dictated to them; (3) the falsification of some testimonies given by the codefendants and using forgery letters in order to obtain the admission of some actions; (4) elaborating some testimonies in the absence of the codefendants or writing down some false answers, which the codefendants were forced to sign⁸. The torture started during the investigation was also continued in the prison, the ones found guilty for conspiracy against the social orders being sentenced to heavy years in prison in a severe system. The kicks in sensitive body parts, crushing the nails, pulling out the hair, feet beating with a whip, wooden objects or rubber, beating using a shovel, crucifying were among the most used dehumanization methods of the political prisoners. In the compounds and working colonies starvation and forced work were practiced, and the non-fulfilment of the work norm, which overcame the human strength, in the conditions that the prisoners received as food a kind of porridge lacking in proteins, attracted severe punishments: beating naked people, hanging them upside down or incarceration. The

⁵ A possible vedemecum of some of those who suffered in the Romanian communist camps is the paperwork of Răzvan Codrescu, *Cartea mărturisitorilor. Pentru o istorie a învrednicirii românești*, Editura Rost, București/Pitești, 2014.

⁶ For what it meant the terror of reeducation from Pitești, on the website www.fenomenulpitesti.ro, a representative bibliographical list can be consulted, divided in three chapters, as it follows: I. General work, II. Special works, III. Articles and studies.

⁷ A document-book that contains the confessions of some ex political prisoners is the volume: *Rugul aprins. Duhovnicii ortodoxiei, sub lespezi, în gherlele comuniste*, Editura Ramida, București, signed by Mihai Rădulescu. Describing many real events from the lives of some prisoners captivates and generates amazement. Many questions come to life, with no answer. How was it possible to occur so many horrible things? Why most of the people were passive? Why people are so ignorant towards this face of history still contemporary to many of us?

⁸ *Comisia prezidențială pentru analiza dictaturii comuniste din România – Raport final*, București, 2006, http://old.presidency.ro/static/ordine/RAPORT_FINAL_CPADCR.pdf (23.10.2017).

political prisoners were often sent to isolation, a dark, narrow, cold room where it was forbidden to sit down, a place of death. The beatings and the humiliations were continued by the cold from the dungeon, the lack of hygiene, the poor diet and medical assistance. The innovations in humiliating and dehumanization the political prisoners in order to form “the new man” led to the horror called “the Pitești phenomenon”. About the re-education from Pitești, the French historian François Furet claims that: “What happened in the Pitești prison between 1949-1952 deserves a special place in the terrifying repertoire of the 20th century’s prison camp’s horrors. The Pitești phenomenon belongs to the same register, but where it comes with a specific feature: the systematic use of torturing the prisoners by other prisoners. The idea belongs to the soviet pedagogue Makarenko (1888-1939), an expert in juvenile delinquency and supporter of re-educating the young prisoners with the help of the old ones, found on the right path, but belonging to the same age group.

Virgil Ierunca tells one of the most horrific de-humanization experience which our era knew. Prisoners tortured with a sadism really extravagant - if sadism can be otherwise - their torturers forcing them to torture back in turn, in order to be contested their victim quality itself. In the last phase of the cycle, the unfortunates are pressured to torture their best friends, as proof of their inner converting.

Everybody was tortured, everybody tortured. The ones that died there and the ones that survived were deprived even by their own unhappiness. Virgil Ierunca had the courage to enter in this hell and to become its historian, for the edification of the future generations”⁹.

1. THE TRIUMPH OF SUFFERING THROUGH FAITH

The communism fight was given especially against the faith in the eternal God, imposing an atheist politic. The communist steamroller closed and abolished many monastic settlements and parishes, some of them with a remarkable historical and cultural value, but it didn’t succeed to bring down the church from within the souls, fact observed among the political prisoners who brought the church in the interior of the thick and cold walls of the dungeons.

If for the modern man, the confessions of the political prisoners about the endured sufferings seem beyond endurance¹⁰, for these the daily torture was transformed in the joy of martyrdom for Christ and for the nation.

Faith, hope in divine reward and the love for God and for the country gave them power to raise above the suffering and to suffer with Christ. As regards the aspect of faith of the political prisoners, these “bandits” that went against the communist ideal, we can distinguish several categories: (1) the practicing Christians, before and during detention, which actually brought their detention; (2) the formal Christians, where ones met in prison the value of Christian living and followed the path of consummation; (3) the non-Christians and the apostate Christians among whom some, impressed by the life and love of the practicing Christians, started to practice frequently their faith in Jesus Christ.

The torturers easily picked their informers among the non-believers, because their power of resistance in front of torture was very low. The despair and the poor living conditions from the prison, decimated the prisoners spiritually and physically¹¹.

⁹ Virgil Ierunca, *Fenomenul Pitești*, Editura Humanitas, București 2013, p. 5.

¹⁰ Dumitru Bacu, *Pitești. Centru de reeducare studențească*, ed a IV-a, Editura Christiana, București, 2011, p. 32.

¹¹ The document-book of memoirs of Ioan Ianolide, *Întoarcerea la Hristos. Document pentru o lume nouă*, ed. a II-a, Editura Bonifaciu, București presents only in a small percentage the hell of perverting the souls. The

Through the intense living of the faith and through the permanent search of being with and in Jesus Christ, the prisoners escaped in transcendent, and the suffering turned into joy, truly feeling freedom. According to Saint Paul the Apostle, “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (*Hebrews* 11:1). Faith is a connection beyond nature of the man with God and it moves him from this fleeting world in the eternal world. Through faith, the man allows God to work in and through him. The definition of faith given by Saint Paul the Apostle can be easily checked by looking at Christ’s confessors from the communist dungeons from Romania. These looked to the heavenly promises, to the unseen richness and wanted them longingly, fact for which they assumed suffering and torture as a path (road) together with Christ on Golgotha Mountain, to taste afterwards the light of Resurrection. Faith has been to these oppressed people the only pillar of support which strengthened them during this fight and helped them not to be afraid of chains and slapping.

This painful challenge through which the confessors of the 20th century went through proved to be an opportunity for salvation, because “for though in the sight of men they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them” (*Wisdom* 3:4-6). And these, just like the martyrs of the first Christian centuries, had the belief that physical and moral suffering they went through was their path to salvation. This persecution taken by the communist partisans against faith was allowed by God to offer to the Romanian people the chance to shine in the first line in God’s army with faith’s weapons against the ones that wanted to kill God from the Romanian soul. In this regard, father Arsenie Papacioc, one of the well-known confessors of the extermination regime offered by Aiud prison, claims that: “People’s big mistake out in the world is that they cannot stand suffering and that it is the only action, the only preoccupation, the only living against all that is bad under the devil’s patronage. Who runs away from the persecution, runs away from God, claims St. Theodore the Studite. The church needs persecutions, because they wake you up, keep you awake and it’s a fight”¹². The suffering the Romanian people has gone through was God’s gift to raise him up, to show him victorious in front of those who wished to erase him the Christians identity. Humiliation, mockery, the permanent and systematic torture meant to destroy the human being, suffered in the name of justice and of the Christian faith transformed the losers, as they seem to the world, in heavenly heroes, in true conquerors.

The power of enduring in suffering of Christ’s martyrs during communism thrived from the power of the Cross. As our Lord Savior Jesus Christ embraces the cross from love for the human being, triumphing over the sin and death, in the same way, the martyrs accept suffering with love to triumph, through God’s grace, over the enemies of faith. Their patience was God’s gift which was pouring abundantly over those who assumed the cross of the martyrdom for the great Truth, for Jesus Christ, and for the nation as well. For this reason, these unfairly convicted to hard prison and labor for many years often speak about the joy in time of suffering. Father Dimitrie Bejan, another martyr of the 20th century, confesses about the tormenting years from the communist dungeons. “The sufferings from there have transformed hell into joy! It was the cross of joy! Who receives suffering as given

ones who lived the reeducation ”in a state of freedom” cannot understand the terror of reeducation from the dungeons of the political prisoners.

¹² Arsenie Papacioc, *Veșnicia ascunsă într-o clipă*, Editura Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2014, p. 55.

by God himself, the cross of life transforms into joy! The joy of redemption! You can feel such a joy, especially when you suffer unjustly”¹³.

Our Lord Savior Jesus Christ calls over the centuries to those suffering in the name of faith and truth: “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you”. (*Matthew 5:10-12*). This verdict prophesies us that the persecutions against the rightful confessors are an occasion of joy for these, exactly for the heavenly reward that awaits them, that crown of holiness that revealed itself through an angel to the first martyrs of Christianity. Some of the political prisoners of communism have tasted the sweetness and peace of the Heavenly kingdom. Some of the prisoners have reached perfection, even up to forgive and love the torturer. For example, Father Gherasim Iscu, who had God’s grace shining inside of him, “before leaving this world, he made a gesture that showed to everyone present the extend of his holiness. That prisoner, Vasilescu, the torturer from Poarta Albă, has arrived to Târgu Ocna too, with the lungs devoured by tuberculosis. On December 25, 1951, Father Iscu asked to be gotten out of bed and taken to the bedside of Vasilescu, located in the same room. With the greatest Christian love he washed his face, kissed him and offered him forgiveness for his sins. Vasilescu confessed to his victim from the canal and with his tears streaming down his face, received Christ in his body and soul, achieving the peace he needed. Father Gherasim was put back to bed and, at his request, prayers have been read, then he left to God hearing angelic chants.”¹⁴.

2. THE CELL – CHURCH AND HEAVEN

Through the faith in God and the love towards Him, the wickedness of the ones obedient to the communist atheism, couldn’t harm the souls of these martyrs, as they detached from the villain environment, living in the sky, and at the same time they lowered the sky in the darkness of the dungeon. If for the people who condemned these, the prison seemed a narrow, dirty, suffocating space, for the confessors the cell widened and became a space of the divine presence, an infinite sky where they found themselves in front of God. “In our cell it’s God’s heaven”¹⁵, confessed Father Dimitrie Bejan.

The confessions of the persecuted for faith talk about the pure prayer during detention. The sufferings, the deprivation, the humiliation brought them closer to God in humbled prayer. The prayer full of hope in God’s grace transfigured the condemned figure of the sentenced over his own power: starvation, misery, vicious beatings. Thereby, the prisoner watched quietly and peacefully everything that happened to him, thanking God, just like Job in the middle of the trash, because he could suffer all these for the glory of God, being himself like Christ on the wooden cross. About the prayer experienced in the communist dungeons, father Sofian Boghiu confesses: “In prisons we were so well guarded, so constrained, that we could only think of God... The man, usually prays powerfully when he is in trouble. The prisons were also truly some big troubles... The prayers of the imprisoned were received by God; with all the misery, with all the wickedness ordered against the poor prisoners, they all had a serenity and a joy that couldn’t come from

¹³ Dimitrie Bejan, *Bucuriile suferinței – Viața unui preot martir*, Hârlău – Iași, 2002, p. 43.

¹⁴ Fabian Seiche, *Martiri și mărturisitori români din secolul XX. Închisorile comuniste din România*, Editura Agaton Făgăraș, 2010, p. 302.

¹⁵ Dimitrie Bejan, *Bucuriile suferinței...*, p.89.

anywhere but from above, from God. The prayers of the imprisoned were similar to the ones of the Holy Fathers from the wasteland or of the many martyrs burnt at the stake, who, with the fire burning under, were joyful and were thanking God for this sacrifice that they brought to His Holiness”¹⁶. The humbled prayer through which they got closer to God, not only that brought them joy, but helped them to clear their sins, as the feeling of sinfulness became acute in the presence of the Sky, and an excess of tears overflowed washing all the dirt of the sin. The young Valeriu Gafencu, one of those political prisoners for whom prison represented the chance of his spiritual transfiguration and knowledge of God, confesses in one of his letters: “I have times in my prison life when I cried with irrepressible tears, realizing the nothingness of my human nature, the glory of God, love. In these tears I’ve found the greatest happiness I have ever lived”¹⁷. In the pure prayer, the prisoners found God’s most important gift - love, and in its light they learn to love the whole world, including the ones that persecuted them and were their executioners. We can notice once more looking at this new martyrs of the Romanian nation the gestures full of love of our Lord Savior Jesus Christ, Who didn’t ask for the ones who crucified him revenge, but their forgiveness. “I was praying permanently to God and I loved them all”, and in other place he declared in an interview: “I pray for them that God doesn’t count this sin!”, referring not only to the tortionaries, but also to the informers of the Security¹⁸.

The prayer of the martyr-prisoners most of the times combined with free-will or imposed fasting and with mercy. Even if food was lacking in proteins, insufficient, some of the prisoners gave up food during fasting days, offering it to those who didn’t satisfy their hunger or were too weak. Giving up to oneself for the other was an often met practice between the political prisoners.

The prison became through the presence of the arrested priests¹⁹ a bright Church as well, despite the misery, the darkness and the obstacles of the Security. Not infrequently, the prison became a liturgical space, where, whispered, mumbled, the priests performed the Holy Liturgy in the presence of the prisoners. About this, father Arsenie Papacioc tells: “Everyday we used to rehearse the moments of the Holy Liturgy. We had a bowl of water and 300 grams of barley bread. We considered the bowl as a Holy Grail and we went through all the moments of the Holy Liturgy. After that we shared that bread to the prisoners and told them: «I cannot tell you this is the Holy Communion, because there are many elements missing, but that it’s more than communion wafer, that I can say!»”²⁰. Other Holy Sacraments of the Church were committed too, like confession and baptism. Many prisoners, facing the imminence of death and aware of the sinful state, were asking many times to the priests to confess them. As not all of them found themselves in the same cell with a priest, the sacrament of confession was made through the Morse code, knocking in the cell’s pipes. As regards the orthodox baptism for the prisoners belonging to other religions, this was made in secret, very careful, as father Nicolae Steinhardt confesses “from wormy

¹⁶ Mihai Andrei Aldea, „O arătate minunată a Părintelui Sofian de la Antim” în *Din temnițe spre sinaxare*, volul coord. de Danion Vasile, ed. a III-a, Editura Areopag, București, 2013, p. 106.

¹⁷ Ioan Ianolide, *Întoarcerea la Hristos. Document pentru o lume nouă*, ed. a II-a, Editura Bonifaciu, București, 2012, p. 132.

¹⁸ Dimitrie Bejan, *Bucuriile suferinței...*, pp. 94, 141.

¹⁹ A book with clear information regarding over 1000 priests going through the dungeons in the time of communist terror is the work of Vasile Manea, *Preoți ortodocși în închisorile comuniste*, ed. a III-a, Editura Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2004. The list is not final, that’s for sure.

²⁰ Arsenie Papacioc, *Veșnicia ascunsă...*, p. 57.

water and quick spirit”²¹. With all these, the joy of orthodoxy flooded the whole being of the new man, brightened, giving him the gift of love and forgiveness in that austere place. The same father, describing us his condition after baptism, confesses: “more and more frequent happiness assaults rush on me. You would say that each time the besiegers go higher and they strike with more power, with more precision. Therefore is true, it is true that the baptism is a holy mystery, that there are holy mysteries. Otherwise, this happiness that surrounds me, embrace me, dress me, vanquish me, couldn’t be so unimaginably marvelous and whole. Silence. And an absolute lack of care. For everything. And a sweetness. In mouth, in veins, in muscles. Also a resignation, the feeling that I could do everything, the impulse to forgive everyone, a lenient smile, that spread everywhere, not localized on the lips. And a sort of gentle air layer around, an atmosphere resembling that of some childhood books. A feeling of absolute safety”²².

Besides the hidden liturgical life and the daily prayer, the prisoners were having conversations on religious, hesychastic, philosophical, literary, scientific and many more themes, as much as they were allowed by the vigilant eye of the guardian. They were reciting after the Holy Gospels which some of them memorized or they were trying to memorize poems, most of them belonging to the veteran poets of the prisons: Nichifor Crainic²³, Radu Gyr²⁴ and others²⁵. At the same time they were trying to learn foreign languages or enrich their knowledge, using writing with a needle on the walls, on a piece of soap, on belts or the Morse code, to facilitate communication between the cells. These various preoccupations of the prisoners were necessary, because forced inactivity was as frightening as forced work.

The political prisoner’s communion in their love for each other and for God portrays the One Church, unshakeable by the attacks of the enemies. Through this they gained real freedom in God’s grace, even if the chains were more and more tighter. And in this freedom, they were living happened, that reward promised by Our Lord Savior Jesus Christ on the sermon on the mount to those who will endure persecution, disgrace, denigration in His name. “I’m happy, cause if my physical freedom is restricted by human law, in exchange I was given spiritual freedom through the sacrament of love and this spiritual freedom is the most precious gift I could ever win in this world full of vanity. Only to the extent that we serve to God, we serve to the salvation of the nation, to his spiritual renewal”²⁶, said Valeriu Gafencu.

CONCLUSIONS

The political prisoners assumed their sacrificed in the name of Truth, revealing themselves through this as descendants of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the martyrs of the first christian centuries. These contemporary martyrs survived in the communist lion’s den thanks to their unshakable faith in God, the One Who gave them power to endure all.

²¹ Nicolae Steinhardt, *Jurnalul fericitii*, Editura Mănăstirea Rohia, Rohia, 2005, p. 91.

²² Nicolae Steinhardt, *Jurnalul...*, p. 92.

²³ The first two volumes of poems, edited in 1990, under the signature of Nichifor Crainic, came out through the struggle of those from Roza vînturilor Printing House. The titles of the volumes are: *Poezii alese 1914-1944, în selecția autorului și Șoim peste prăpastie. Versuri inedite create în temnițele Aiudului*.

²⁴ A volume of poems, cared by Simona Popa, the daughter of the poet Radu Gyr, was printed at Marineasa Publishing House, at Timișoara, in the year 1992. The title of the volume is *Sângele temniței*Balade*.

²⁵ A volume full of poems, with 71 authors, was published in 2010, at Petru Vodă Monastery, entitled: *Poeți după gratii*.

²⁶ Ioan Ianolide, *Întoarcerea...*, p. 135.

Although the communist leaders and their descendants tried especially by force to remove the faith in the eternal and loving God, all they succeeded was to give the Romanian people saints martyrs, who shine miraculously in God's Kingdom. Through their sacrifice, the faith's enemies were defeated, and the light of victory shines over the Romanian Orthodox Church, which today honors them as heroes who didn't sell their souls in front of the atheist communists.

Faith has been for the political prisoners, sentenced as "enemies of the people", their most powerful weapon in front of the evilness of the torturers. Receiving suffering as a path to Golgotha along with Jesus Christ, they transformed the dungeon's hell into heaven, the torment into joy, starvation into feast from God's grace, cold into heavenly warmth, isolation into ecclesiastical communion, hate into love and forgiveness.

The 20th-century martyrs represent to us, the ones living today, guidelines of steadiness in faith and love towards the nation. Anchoring in God was back then the only viable solution and remains even today to save the identity of our human unity as persons and as a nation.

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THE ORTHODOX DIASPORA: ANALYSIS, NUANCE AND REDEFINITION*

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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 eikonoma and akribeia to mixed marriages in a non-unitary manner.

Keywords: Orthodox diaspora; mixed marriages; jurisdiction-territory; ethnophyletism; eikonoma, 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*, Nr. 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 citizenship. 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 canonice 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 ἐκκλησία 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 lawsuits in order to eliminate them. Following the referral to the European Court of Human

¹⁸ Grégoire PPATHOMAS, „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).

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 Orthodox Metropolis of the two Americas; the Bishopric of Dacia Felix; 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 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-KARANOU, *The Relationship between Homeland and Diaspora: The Case of Greece...*, p. 36; Robin COHEN, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1997.

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<https://doi.org/10.26520/icoana.2022.15.8.34-41>

THEOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION REVISIT THE SHROUD IMAGE FORMATION BY RADIATIVE PROCESSES

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ABSTRACT

For some decades several scientists have claimed the formation of the Shroud body image by the radiative hypotheses. These proposals have as a start the emission, by the corpse wrapped in the burial linen, of proton or electromagnetic radiation with the wavelengths of the far ultraviolet. From a theological point of view, these hypotheses must be discarded. In fact, the above proposal foresees a transcendental beginning, followed in compliance with the natural laws, hoping to find a result that justifies their initial hypothesis. The Miracles are done only by God, the Omnipotent. Also for Thomas Aquinas, a Doctor of the Church, the Divine intervention is instant. Therefore a description of these transcendental events, step by step, it is impossible. In line with Theology there is also the Ockham's thought. It is not a physical law but a philosophical razor that still enjoys great consideration in the scientific world. Used in the case of Shroud Body Image Formation, the "Ockham's razor" does not agree with the radiative hypotheses. The same occurs with the Religion. In fact, reading The Gospels, The Act of Apostles and The Letter, we must accept the initial absence of image.

Keywords: Shroud; body image formation; protons; UV radiation; theological observation; philosophical razor; Religion;

INTRODUCTION

Due to the authority of some scientists, their ideas and the result obtained regard the Shroud Body Image Formation by radiation, we have decided to revisit the reached conclusion. In fact, never as in these last decades the interaction between radiation and matter (for example, linen) has been present in the minds of many scientists determined to investigate two important characteristics, still unanswered, of the Shroud of Turin: the age of the linen and the mechanism of the Shroud body image formation.

For the first characteristic, the interest is addressed towards the neutrons that are particles devoid of electric charge with mass slightly higher than the one of the protons (Antonacci, 2010; Lind et al., 2010). For the second characteristic, the attention is addressed towards the proton, and electromagnetic radiations (Carter, 1984; Antonacci, 2000 and 2012; Rinaudo, 1993 and 1994; Di Lazzaro et al., 2011 and 2012; Fanti, 2010 and 2011). These

scholars believe, with their attempts, to furnish noticeable results on the two above questions.

In the case of particles, it is hypothesized the breaking of deuterons, present in the corpse, in neutron-proton pairs. The deuteron, symbol ${}^2\text{H}$, is one of the isotopes of the hydrogen with a bond energy of 2.2 MeV. Therefore, this nucleus is stable. Now, because the surface of the corpse was in the same chemical and physical state (Gilbert and Gilbert Jr., 1980; Mottern et al., 1980; Heller and Adler, 1981; Pellicori and Evans, 1981; Schwalbe and Rogers, 1982; Jumper et al., 1984) all the protons must have been emitted with the same energy. So, in the region of body-sheet contact, the protons spend their energy to penetrate the linen until it stops. Differently in the other regions, due to the absorption of a thickness of air, the energy is not sufficient to achieve the same depth of penetration. Therefore, they are not able to reach the result.

In the spectrum of electromagnetic radiation, the choice lies in the far ultraviolet. In fact, with higher λ values there is not sufficient energy to penetrate the linen; with a lower λ value the involved energies would be so great that they could not respect the parameters related to the depth of the Shroud image. So, by a pulsed excimer laser (ArF) that emits radiation with $\lambda = 193$ nm (Di Lazzaro et al., 2011 and 2012), it is possible to obtain a Shroud-like coloring on a piece of linen with the right hue. However, the color does not appear immediately but after, natural (about 1.5 years) or artificial, aging. Therefore, the one obtained, It is a latent coloration. We remember that also on the Shroud of Turin the body image is latent. Other interesting articles that need to be considered are the ones of Fanti (2010 and 2011) where, by corona discharge, a linen is irradiated with ultraviolet radiation and heat. However, as for the protons, also for the ultraviolet radiation it should not be possible to yield, on a linen sheet, an image with all the properties of the one on the Shroud of Turin (Fazio, 2021).

However, here it is necessary to specify that the latency time (a necessary feature to understand the Shroud Body Image formation) cannot be so short because the image should have been noticed by the Apostles. In such a case these last ones, as ancient chronicles, would have written about an extraordinary Image of Jesus Christ on its burial linen. Furthermore, they would have discussed it in meetings with the new Christians. This was not the case. On the other hand, a stochastic process has latency up to several decades (Fazio and Mandaglio, 2012; Fazio et al., 2019). Therefore, the above process would guarantee opportune latency time values, while UV Radiation cannot.

Reading the articles centered on the use of the radiation, it is evident as some scholars have dealt these problems very superficially. In fact, often appear articles on the web that, objectively, create confusion and turmoil in the minds of scholars. However, on this topic, the curiosity is great. So, we have decided to investigate again the radiative models using as tools the Theology together with a philosophical razor, known as “Ockham’s razor”, and Religion.

1. THEOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

When events such as those described in the Introduction are under discussion, Theology must necessarily have a front row set. This is necessary because in our case there are two supernatural phenomena already present at the start of the considered hypotheses (emission of protons or of UV radiation, by a corpse). After, everything that follows takes place in compliance with the laws of the physics and represents the attempt to obtain a Shroud-like coloring on a piece of linen. However, it is opportune to underline that we are

talking of a piece of linen, while in the reality there is a linen sheet (4.41 m length x 1.13 m wide, about 5 m²) where to form a complex image full of features.

We observe that in the initial part of these experiments there is a Miracle; they continue respecting the natural science to demonstrate that the expected extraordinary event (the corpse that emits protons or UV radiation) is a Miracle. It is obvious the reference to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. For us, they believe that during this transcendental event there has been a transfer of energy in the far ultraviolet of the electromagnetic spectrum that has yielded the latent image.

The Miracle is often considered like something strange, or mysterious, or magical. Saint Thomas Aquinas defines the exact nature of this supernatural event. "It is a sensible effect produced by God, which transcends all the forces of nature." In front of such an extraordinary intervention, we remain amazed and unable to understand what has happened. The above event is an effect and only God is the cause. His potency on the nature is absolute. From eternity and for eternity, God has foreseen and willed what He should do in the course of time. He has accordingly instituted the course of things, but at the same time He has preordained in His eternal decree what He should do aside from the regular course of nature (Saint Thomas Aquinas, reprinted in 1952).

We believe God is Eternal and His Omnipotence consists in being able to see all the points of the Universe (also considering that its dimension are increasing) at all times at the same time. Therefore the Divine Intervention (Miracle) can only be instantaneous (Fazio, 2020). God is "The Without Time."

In Lourdes, where many probable supernatural events are analyzed by an International Commission of Scientists, it is possible to find confirmations and to increase our knowledge about this extraordinary event which we call "Miracle" (Anastasi and De Franciscis and, 2021). The above Commission of Scientists (Bureau des Constatations Médicales de Lourdes) is made up of Religious, Agnostic, Atheists and Anticlerical. For these experts, one among the several features for being Miracle is the instantaneousness of healing. For us, who are scholars, the existence of this extraordinary characteristic means that we are facing a Miracle. In fact, the biological modifications that lead to healing occur at infinite speed (Bolzetta, 2018; Guénois and Moriau, 2019). In a time equal to zero, the tissues and the diseased organs return to being functional as they were before.

For physics the maximum speed ($c = 299.792$ km/s) is the one that the photons, particles of light without mass, have. What possesses mass will never be able to reach the speed c value. When this does not occur (in the sense that we observe galaxies moving with velocity v greater than c), it is due to the space-time fabric that expands at speeds faster than light. However, out of about 8.000 requests (all accompanied by analyses and medical opinions, both before and after the healing) only 70 healings are considered Miracles.

Therefore, the Miracles are not prodigies or marvels as they are not extraordinary events, but something incomprehensible to man that remains astounded and unable to understand what has happened. This is a result that physics, chemistry and other sciences will understand neither now nor ever. Differently, prodigies and marvels are in the possibility of the Angels who act respecting the laws of the natural sciences. However, they cannot perform Miracles because these events always exceed natural causes (Saint Thomas Aquinas, reprinted in 1952).

Moreover, we have observed that in the experiments of our concern (those with protons and those with UV radiation, both emitted by a corpse), the attempt to yield a coloration, as it is on the Shroud, is described step by step. This is possible for a natural

process. Impossible for a supernatural event that occurs in a time equal to zero (Fazio, 2020). Therefore, the use of the radiation (of any kind and energy) is not the suitable tool to explain the formation mechanism of the Shroud body image.

2. PHILOSOPHYCAL RAZOR

Now, we investigate the problems of our interest introducing a philosophical razor. It is known as “Ockham razor” and affirms: “when various hypotheses have to be considered for an explanation, the most probable is the one that requires the last number of special assumptions.” The “Ockham’s razor” is not a physical law also if many scientists, starting with Isaac Newton and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, took it into consideration.

William of Ockham was an English (coming from the country of Surrey) Franciscan religious, philosopher and theologian, often in contrast with the Pope. His thesis on the poverty of Christ and the Apostles was considered heretical by the Church. So, Pope Giovanni XXII excommunicated him and he went with the emperor Ludovico. For the above theologian, faith and reason must be separated. In fact, the faith is related to the Transcendent while the reason is of the Immanent (Bayley, 1949; Clark, 1971; McGrade, 1974; Tierney, 1997).

In our case, the one of the Shroud body image formation, we have already rejected the false hypothesis because the multidisciplinary activities of the STURP (Shroud of Turin Research Project) have demonstrated that it is not adequate to support this hypothesis (Jumper et al., 1984). Thus, to understand if the above Image is a natural event or the result of a Miracle, we submit the two hypothesis to the above philosophical razor.

The comparison between the supernatural event and a natural hypothesis favors this last one. In fact, to explain a Miracle it is necessarily to invoke the presence of the Omnipotent. So, such an important assumption furnishes a great probability that the formation mechanism is natural. In fact, for the mechanism natural, the special assumptions have a minor weight. Only when there is the certainty that a rational explanation is absent, we can speak of Miracle. However, we can affirm that in the scientific world the “Ockham’s razor” is held in high regard by a lot of scientists.

As already Aristotle (“Nature operates in the shortest way possible”), also Claudius Ptolemy, authoritative astronomer and mathematician who lived in the 2^o Century AD in Alexandria (Egypt), affirms: “We consider it a good principle to explain phenomena with the simplest possible hypothesis.” As one can see, this idea has traveled the world for many Centuries making a notable contribution to knowledge.

In the case of the Shroud body image formation there are some scholars that believe possible an explanation in the Immanent world. In fact, in scientific literature there are articles that describe a chemical amino-carbonyl reaction: a Maillard Reaction between amine coming by the corpse and sugars present on the linen threads due to the manufacturing procedure (Rogers and Arnoldi, 2003) or a stochastic process triggered by a little quantity of thermal energy. The only energy available in a tomb of the 1^o century (Fazio and Mandaglio, 2011 and 2012; Fazio et al., 2019). The logic tells us that, in the above sepulcher, no other sources of energy could exist. The only one, limited in time, is the one of the corpse wrapped in the burial linen. In fact, this weak energy is emitted up to the thermal equilibrium between the slightly warmer body and the sheet. Therefore, this process occurs with a transfer of a little quantity of thermal energy. This is precisely the right one that may be capable of triggering a stochastic process that after years or decades produces an image. With this state of affairs, the philosophical razor prefers the natural process.

3. RELIGIOUS EVIDENCE

Furthermore, there are other considerations, of religious nature, that must be taking into account before expressing opinion as close as possible to reality. The above considerations can be extracted from the Sacred Scriptures.

The four Evangelists in their Gospels have not written about an image visible on the burial linen of Jesus Christ. Differently, if the image was present, the Apostles would have talked about it. Consequently, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John would have written about this extraordinary event. We can say that they would have done this with immense personal joy and for the usefulness of bringing the Word of Christ to the world. Instead, for what we see in the Sacred Tests (The Gospels, The Acts of the Apostles and The Letter), none of these arguments is present. It is evident that the image on the sheet still wasn't there (New American Bible, 2010).

We believe that the burial linen of the Nazarene has been under the control of the Apostles or trusted people for a long time. For us, such a time is not compatible with the latency that the UV radiation allows. On the contrary, the latency time of a stochastic process (which can be several decades old) agree with the fact that the Apostles have not seen the image on the Shroud.

So, with the help and the certainties of the Sacred Texts, related to the burial linen of Jesus Christ, we deduced that the electromagnetic radiation (in the far ultraviolet) are not able to yield a Body Image as it appears on the Shroud of Turin.

CONCLUSIONS

The ideas that the radiations are able to solve the problem of the Shroud body image formation, it can be discarded. They are suggestive and not without charm, but concretely useless because they are outside Theology and Science. In fact, it is impossible to believe in a corpse that emits proton or electromagnetic radiations in the far ultraviolet spectrum.

Among various ideas, we believe, as it is for investigated scientists in this paper, the image on the Shroud is the one of Jesus Christ (the Nazarene), but we differ in relation to the mechanism of body image formation. We are among the few convinced of a natural mechanism which could be chemical (Rogers and Arnoldi, 2003) or thermal (Fazio et al., 2019) discarding both the Miracle and the fake hypothesis (Rogers and Arnoldi, 2002; Rogers, 2004 and 2005; Fazio and Mandaglio 2011 and 2012; Fazio et al., 2015 and 2019). Recently, we wrote an article to show that Rogers' idea (Rogers, 2008) is no better but not worse than all the others that appear in literature (Fazio and Mandaglio, 2021). Nowadays none of us, even if convinced in good faith, can affirm that his model is decisive. Although, sometimes, we do.

Therefore, because on the Shroud there is the image, yielded naturally, of the Nazarene (Fazio, 2021a), we should investigate alleged transcendental event and new convincing hypothesis of false. For these last ones, it is necessary to remember the work done by the STURP team and, above all, the knowledge produced on the nullity of the false hypotheses (Jumper et al., 1984). For us, it is sufficient their work for the rejection.

Therefore: the Shroud Body Image Formation is natural or transcendental? We known that in the above image there are encoded information on the body-sheet distance. With this result, we could already discard the supernatural event because the Miracle grants to the Natural Science only the possibility to know if such an event there has been. Nothing else.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The first author wishes to remember to the colleagues two Shroud Scholars: Raymond N. Rogers and Yannick Clement. The former was a great Scientist, the latter an Independent Canadian Shroud Researcher. From both, in different ways, he received a lot. He thanks them both.

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GUADALUPE AND SOME PERSPECTIVES OF THE SACRED IMAGE: AN ESSAY

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to address some scientific perspectives of the sacred image of the Virgin of Guadalupe that appeared in the tilma of the “seer” Juan Diego. The content of the “Message of Guadalupe” received by Juan Diego is also addressed. The importance of the several “signs” of this Marian apparition is also discussed in this essay.

Keywords: history of Guadalupe; perspectives of the sacred image; spiritual “signs”;

INTRODUCTION

The history of the Virgin of Guadalupe is connected to the conquest of Aztec civilization by the Spanish army commanded by Hernando Cortes, in Mexico in 1519 [1]. Then, the Spanish performed the difficult task of converting the Aztec culture to Christianity, the European culture. This made the Spanish Emperor, Charles V to appoint Prior Juan Zumárraga as the first Bishop of Mexico City, although he had some difficulty in introducing the European Christian rituals into the Aztec pagan culture. Thus, Bishop Juan Zumárraga prayed to Our Lady¹ in order to help him to overcome this cultural gap. Among the first Mexicans to receive the Christian sacraments was Juan Diego whose native name was Cuauhtlatouac or “Speaking Eagle”. The name of Juan Diego’s wife became Maria Lucia and his uncle became Juan Bernardino after they received the Christian sacraments.

At the beginning of December 1531, during the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, Juan Diego was close to the Aztec pagan temple of Tonantzin, in Tepeyac Hill, where he listened to a beautiful sound from a woman’s voice [2]. Suddenly, he came face to face with a beautiful and bright Lady who introduced herself as the Virgin of Guadalupe². She asked him to build a *teocalli*³ in that place where there was a pagan temple. Juan Diego went to Tenochtitlán (now Mexico City) to inform Bishop Juan Zumárraga of the intention of Our Lady of Guadalupe. At first, when Bishop Zumárraga heard the request of

¹ The history, of Gil Cordero, in Spain and Juan Diego, in Mexico are connected because both are “seers” of the Virgin of Guadalupe. To study this topic, see Caso-Rosendi, Carlos. “The Parable of two Men”, In: *Guadalupe: A River of Light*, 5: 61-68. Front Royal, VA: First Light Press. 2017.

² The name Guadalupe cannot be spelled in the Aztec language, since the letters D and G do not exist in it. Thus, a name phonetically similar to Guadalupe might have been said by the Virgin of Guadalupe. To study this topic, see León-Portilla, Miguel. *Tonantzin Guadalupe*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica. 2006.

³ *Teocalli* means “God-house” and it was a temple of the Aztec people, where they performed their rituals.

Juan Diego, he did not give particular attention to him, having demanded him to show a “sign” from Our Lady of Guadalupe. This made Juan Diego to give up on the Virgin’s request. Meanwhile, in Tolpetlac, Juan Diego took care of his uncle, Juan Bernardino who was suffering from an incurable disease. When he noticed his uncle’s health was getting worse, Juan Diego went to Tlaltelolco to find a priest that would perform the last Sacramental Rites for his uncle. So, he crossed Tepeyac Hill, where the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared to him once again. She said to Juan Diego «...*It is you that I have chosen for this mission...you must go back to the bishop and express once again my great desire to have a temple in this place....Your uncle will not die because his health is being taken care ...*»⁴.

Then, the Virgin of Guadalupe told him to go pick up roses on the top of Tepeyac Hill, and show them to Bishop Juan Zumárraga as a proof of the veracity of the “Message” received from her. Juan Diego met again with Bishop Zumárraga and showed him the roses in his tilma as the “sign” which he requested for at first. Bishop Zumárraga became amazed with the appearance of roses in the middle of Winter [3]. The translator Juan Gonzales and Bishop Ramirez y Fuenleal were also present at Zumárraga’s house, they were also stunned by the appearance of the sacred image of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Juan Diego’s tilma, where she was pregnant with her Divine Son. Currently, the sacred image of the Virgin of Guadalupe is located in the basilica built on Tepeyac Hill, at the outskirts of Mexico City, where there is a spring where water with medicinal properties gushes [4].

1. GUADALUPE AND SOME PERSPECTIVES OF THE SACRED IMAGE

The shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe is visited by millions of pilgrims from all over the world. This made Pope Pius X to declare the Virgin of Guadalupe as the Patroness of Latin America [5]. This essay is a compilation of the several investigations [6] performed specifically on the sacred image of the Virgin of Guadalupe [7] that was printed on Juan Diego’s tilma and connected to the four apparitions on the Tepeyac Hill, the last one took place on December 12, 1531 [8]. The first descriptions of these Marian apparitions are found in the “Nican Mopohua”⁵ [9], and were originally written by Don Antonio Valeriano, in 1545, where some historical events are referred to people.

The sacred image of Our Lady of Guadalupe printed in Juan Diego’s *tilma* was made in ayate fibra and has been studied over time by several experts from different areas of knowledge, whose most relevant perspectives are described in this essay [10]. This sacred image shows the Virgin of Guadalupe’s head tilted to the right with black hair and a tender facial expression with well-defined eyes, nose and lips and hands clasped in front of the chest. She wears a gold robe and a ribbon tied above her womb indicating that she is pregnant. In fact, her body is covered by a blue mantle with stars and tassels reinforcing the pregnancy, while her feet on the moon are supported by an angel [11].

In 1756, Miguel Cabrera [12] declared that «*Juan Diego’s tilma, for more than two centuries, has resisted the natural force of gravity and the weight of the two pieces which it unites and which are themselves made of much heavier and coarser stuff*». In fact, the type of *tilma* used by Juan Diego consisted of two pieces of ayate fiber put together with a cotton thread and usually has a lifespan of twenty years.

⁴ English translation is my responsibility. See Connell, Janice. “Guadalupe, México: Juan Diego, 1531”, In: *Encuentros con Maria*, 1:59-63. Lisboa: Planeta Editora. 2006.

⁵ In English “Nican Mopohua” means “Thus It Is told”. “Nican Motepana” means “Here we present in orderly fashion” and was written by Fernando de Alva, in 1590, who reported several miracles not referred to in “Nican Mopohua”.

In this regard, Fr. Lee [13] said that *«is a cause of legitimate admiration. And the climax of this wonder is the preservation of the delicate colors in all their rich freshness»*. This is because Juan Diego's *tilma*, where is printed the sacred image of Our Lady of Guadalupe has been existing for more than four hundred and fifty years; it does not have a sign of decay, despite having being exposed to the smoke of incense, candles and touch of millions of pilgrims over the centuries.

Furthermore, in 1936, Fritz Hahn [14] also took two fibres of Juan Diego's *tilma* for them to be examined for the Nobel Prize in chemistry, by Richard Kuhn who used a spectrophotometer to analyze them, although he did not match the colors to any kind of pigmentation of animal, vegetal or mineral origin. The painter Ibarra [14] also wrote *«no painter has ever been found capable of sketching or copying Our Lady of Guadalupe...Its singular uniqueness proves the picture to be the invention, not of a human artist, but of the Almighty»*. He defended the sacred characteristic of this portrait. Further investigations carried out in 1946 showed the non-existence of a preliminary drawing underneath and brush strokes on the sacred image while. In 1954 and 1966, Francisco Ribera [14] completed these studies supporting the view that this sacred image was not painted by any human being

In 1929, the photographer Alfonso González [14] discovered the face of a man in the eyes of the Virgin of Guadalupe, while, in 1951, Carlos Salinas [14] also supported this discovery. Furthermore, in 1962, Charles Wahlig and Isabelle [15] detected two more figures in the eyes of the sacred image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and so they argued that this sacred image is a kind of "celestial photograph" of the scene between Bishop Juan Zumárraga and the exhibition of the roses by Juan Diego, who was surrounded by the translator Juan Gonzales and Bishop Ramirez y Fuenleal⁶.

In fact, Wahlig [15] argues that *«Our Lady was actually present in the room, but chose to remain invisible. Instead, in order to give a visible, lasting indication of her presence, she chose to imprint upon Juan Diego's blanket an authentic picture of herself as she stood there watching the scene... It seems from the posture of Juan Diego and the other two that they were not aware of Our Lady's presence. The two appear to be looking at Juan Diego and he, we may assume, is looking at the Bishop»*. This perspective is also supported by Carlos Chávez and Manuel de la Mora [16].

In 1979, this sacred image was also studied using infrared radiation by scientists Philip Callahan and Jody Smith [17] who said that *«no study of a work of art can be considered complete....until the techniques of infrared photography have been utilized. And certainly no valid scientific study is complete without such an analysis...as far as I am concerned, the original picture is miraculous»*, confirming the supernatural nature of this portrait, namely the inexplicable color and gloss preservation over the centuries.

CONCLUSIONS

The sacred image of Our Lady of Guadalupe engraved on Juan Diego's *tilma* is considered to be a treasure for Latin American culture [18] due to its "mysterious" characteristics for contemporary science [19]. In fact, the Gualupan cult of Tepeyac [20] has spread due to the protective action of Our Lady of Guadalupe to Mexican people in several occasions, such as, the cessation of plagues, in 1544 and 1736, and the minimization of the flood damage, in 1629, among others. Also, the occurrence of a spill of nitric acid, in 1791,

⁶Jose Tönsmann was able to define the images of a total of thirteen persons, including the four that had been found previously. To study this topic, see Tönsmann, Jose. *Los ojos de la Virgen de Guadalupe*. Mexico City: Editorial Diana. 1981.

and the explosion of a bomb, in 1921, in this sacred image with no damage on it also support the sacred nature of this portrait [21]. These show the singularity of this sacred image [22].

Some sacred images have appeared throughout the history of religion, such as, the impression of the face of Our Lord during His Passion, in the well-known Shroud of Turin, which has also enigmatic characteristics to which science has not a definitive answer. These two sacred images seek to express in a tangible way the content of the “Message” to the “seers” through its own symbols [23], as a process that creates and assigns a meaningful meaning to the “transcendental occurrence” through which different people and languages are linked together [24]. In fact, some signs of the sacred image of the Virgin of Guadalupe are also presented in the “Woman of the Apocalypse” of St. John: «*a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, ...*»⁷. This shows the timeless symbology of the sacred.

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⁷ See Christian Art Publishers. Holy Bible. 2020. Fr. Miguel Sánchez was the first to identify the Virgin of Guadalupe with the “Woman of the Apocalypse” in his work entitled “Imagen de la Virgen Maria”. Alicante: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes. 2010.

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<https://doi.org/10.26520/icoana.2022.15.8.47-53>

THE DISTINCTION “UNCREATED-CREATED” OF SAINT ATHANASIUS THE GREAT AND ITS ROLE IN THE REJECTION OF THE ARIAN HERESY

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ABSTRACT

In the philosophical-theological context, at the crossroads between the 3rd and the 4th centuries, there were at least two opposite cosmological options that were able to preserve, each in its own way, the simplicity of the Divine Principle: rejecting the concept of the world's eternity or accepting a second grade/inferior principle as its Creator. The first option was taken over by the Church in general, following the path defined by the Apologists. The second one was the traditional view of Hellenistic philosophy. Beside these, a preacher-priest from the Church of Alexandria, Arius – and the people who were on his side for different reasons (most of them on the line of Gnosticism) – separated themselves from the teachings of the Church and started to deny, beginning in 318 A.D., the eternity of the Logos. The cosmological issue raised by Arius was a crucial one in this theological dispute due to the soteriological consequences that flowed from it, alien to the Revelation and the (Baptismal) Creeds of the Church. Yet, faith and piety were only defendable in this historical context with lexical weapons and philosophical arguments. This situation was well understood by Saint Athanasius of Alexandria. He made the first attempt to extract the doctrine about God from its limited, non-Christian philosophical understanding and started to defend both the temporality of the world and the co-eternity of the Logos (as the Second Person of the Holy Trinity) with the Father.

Keywords: Creation; world; Logos; eternity; God's will; time;

INTRODUCTION

Since his early works, before the outbreak of the anti-Arian controversy, Saint Athanasius the Great polemicized with the Greek-Roman thinkers on topics related to the world's origin and its eternity. For the Church Father and Teacher from Alexandria, this topic was intimately related to the crucial message of the Christian faith: the taking on of human nature by the Divine Logos. Indeed, the interpretation of the teaching on salvation, as presented in the treaty *On the Incarnation of the Word* by this Holy Father, was founded on a conception differing from the classical vision of the Hellenic and gnostic philosophy regarding the cosmos.

There was, in the Christian doctrine of Saint Athanasius the Great, a last and radical gap, unsurmountable with the created (human) powers, the one “situated” between the Divine (uncreated) Being and the contingent (created) existence of the world. This approach, expressed with a new, authentically Christian pathos, represented a step forward along the line already drawn by the apologists through the concept “ex nihilo,” revolutionary, yet already obsolete.

1. THE UNCREATED GOD – CREATOR, AND SUSTAINER OF THE CREATION

Two radically different types of existence were delineated in this early period: on the one hand, the God, eternal, unchanging, “immortal” and “incorruptible” in His Being; on the other hand, the flow of beings brought into existence by Him “out of nothing,” which formed the Cosmos, and appeared submitted to change and “corruption,” “mortal,” totally dependent on their Creator. The essential ontological tension was precisely between the divine “ἀφθαρσία” (incorruptibility) and the “φθορά”¹ (corruptibility) of the cosmic flow. Since the entire creation had begun to subsist *at some point* by God's life-giving will, now, in the present post-Edenic state, of “shutdown” to the Creator, the entropic tendency was initiated in the creatures, virtually latent in the very “nature” of all the things created, by the fact that they are inexistent *per se*.

The creatures do not come from an ontological nothingness (coeternal with or created by God), but receive their existence at a certain moment by being brought into existence creatively and being supported into existence by God's *providence* (from Greek, meaning: care, forethought). However, “broken apart” from their existential support by an act contrary to nature, they acquired a life “according to nature,” of non-existence or agony of life, which shows them in the present state intrinsically unstable, fluid, powerless, mortal, submitted to disappearance. Their “new” existence is precarious. If order and stability were present in the world prior to the fall from grace,² they were due to the *pronia* work of its Creator. God is the One Who by His creating Word and by the Spirit of His mouth (Psalm 32: 6) ordered into life and intertwined the entire creation, endowing it with a life-giving divine work, which, the rational beings, weakening it willingly (in a more or less assumed manner) tasted and generated in the universe the tendency to disintegration.³

Indeed, the creatural “nature” is, in quality of God's work, “very good” (*Genesis* 1: 31; “*posse non-mori*” as Blessed Augustine puts it).⁴ Because of free will, however, the creature can opt for growing weaker in love, drifting away, disobeying and going against its Creator; can submit itself to change inclining toward evil and death (understood in its double aspect, spiritual and material), although without the power to pass at some point for good into a state of non-existence/nothingness.

Saint Athanasius the Great disavowed the notion of “*logoi spermatikoi*,” immanent and inherent in things *per se*, inherited in the Christian theology from the stoic philosophy through Saint Justin the Martyr and the Philosopher, a notion unable to explain God's and man's subjective characters, inducing the idea of a law leading in a deterministic and blind manner the course of the creatures' existence. He states in exchange, based on the content of *Genesis*, that the universe was called into life by a sovereign and all-holding Creator, Who continues to keep it “in existence” by a continual action, yet unnecessary to Himself (free), which takes heed, at the same time, of the free will of the rational creatures.

The fallen man is cause and partaker himself of the “natural” instability of the Cosmos in the present state. By his fallen (human) nature, he shows himself to be, at the same time, “mortal” and “corruptible,” although he could have transcended – had he not sinned – this unstable condition by God's grace and God's will. Even at present, he is offered this possibility as a fruit of the objective salvation offered in Christ. Understanding

¹ G.W.H. Lampe, et al. (ed.), *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford, 1961, pp. 274, 1474.

² Saint Athanasius the Great, *Against the Heathen, Part III*, 38, p. 24; *Four Discourses Against the Arians, Discourse I*, 71, in “NPNF2-04”, p. 387.

³ Saint Athanasius the Great, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, 57, in “NPNF2-04”, p. 67.

⁴ Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, Book XXII, col. “Loeb Classic Library,” vol. 417, p. 376.

deeply this indissoluble relation between the creating work and the redeeming work perfected by the divine Logos (in unseparated unity of being and work with God the Father and the Holy Spirit). Saint Athanasius stands against all such disregard, insinuated by Arianism, of the redeeming work of the embodied Logos (which he considers a new creation and of equal value with the bringing into life “out of nothing” of all that was created).

To reject Arius’ (heretical) philosophical conception, promoted by his supporters – hierarchs and emperors – to the rank of theology, Saint Athanasius the Great underlined emphatically in his writings the “soteriological” function of the embodied Son, situated in inseparable connection with His creation-related function and providence-related function. At the same time, the holy hierarch constantly emphasizes, simultaneously, the transcendence of the Word, starting his entire argumentation from the main presupposition of the divine ontological character of the Logos. The Logos is, in Saint Athanasius the Great’s terms, “the Only-begotten God,” eternally begotten from the Father as from a spring.

This mention indicates the fact that there is an absolute difference between the Logos and all that was created, not just a qualitative difference, as Arius accepted to state, using the distorted syntagm that the Son “was begotten by the Father’s will (in the sense of: was created) before time.” Saint Athanasius makes a clear-cut distinction in the exegesis he makes for the “problematic” verses invoked by his opponents, using two categories of texts from Scripture: some that show the divine character of the unembodied Logos and others that refer to the Logos as assumed by the embodiment of human nature. Therefore, as “the pillar of Orthodoxy,” Archbishop Athanasius states that the Logos is present in the world and takes on a human body, but He is not a creature. However, He is present and working through His divine “powers”. In His “Being,” as such, He is “outside” the world (uncreated).⁵

2. GOD THE WORD “THE CREATOR” – EXISTENCE SINCE ETERNITY

It is true that this distinction between “essence” and “power” is found even with Philo and Plotinus, two great philosophers of Alexandria, and in the Christian literature starting with the apologists and Clement of Alexandria. However, with Saint Athanasius the Great, it acquires a totally new connotation. It is never applied to the relation between God and the Logos, as even the genial Origen had done, imprecisely. Now, with Saint Athanasius the Great, it serves a new purpose: to delimit strictly God’s Being (“internal/ad intra”) and His creative and providence-related manifestation (“ad extra”).

The world, as the bishop of Alexandria shows, owes to God’s good sovereign will its very existence and soars over the abyss of its own vain life and powerlessness, after the fall, only through the divine vivifying grace. But, if the world goes down toward nothingness, it is because of its free fall from the divine protective “arms.” God remains faithful to the world,⁶ as He does not withdraw His gift completely.

To show the lack of foundation of Arius’ affirmations regarding the Son and the name of “divine” attributed to Him, which Arius considered a form of adoption granted to the Logos for the virtuous life of Christ and for the creative power of which He partook by

⁵ Saint Athanasius the Great, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, 17, in “NPNF2-04”, p. 45.

⁶ See, especially, the works: Louis Bouyer, *L’incarnation et l’Eglise - Corps du Christ dans la théologie de Saint Athanase*, Paris, 1943; A. Gaudel, “La théologie du «logos» chez Saint Athanase”, in *Revue des Sciences religieuses*, 11 (1931), pp. 1-26; J.B. Berchem, “Le rôle du Verbe dans l’oeuvre de la création et de la sanctification d’après Saint Athanase”, in *Angelicum*, 1938, pp. 201-232 and 515-558; Régis Bernard, *L’Image de Dieu d’après St. Athanase*, Paris, 1952.

God's will, Saint Athanasius the Great affirms repeatedly that salvation could only have been offered by a Saviour God in nature. At the same time, the creation of the world could not have been so harmoniously and wonderfully (“out of nothing”) realized by the Word of God except if He is Himself begotten from the being of the Father, therefore coeternal with God the Father. Starting from these assumptions, Saint Athanasius the Great showed that the main demarcation line between eternal and temporal is found between Creator and creation, not between God the Father and God the Son as Arius’ followers unfoundedly stated. The Logos is, therefore, not just Creator (endowed with the divine creative work), but also the inseparable Image of the Father, so “true God from true God.” In the creation, He is not just an instrument, but also the ultimate, immediate, and effective cause of the creation, prior not just temporally to it, but also ontologically (as uncreated). His own Being is totally independent from the creation and even of the creative “design” of the world (the divine will). On this point, Saint Athanasius the Great is extremely precise. The basic text is found in *Contra Arianos*, and highlights the following:

But if what the Father works, that the Son works also, and what the Son creates, that is the creation of the Father, and yet the Son be the Father’s work or creature, then either He will work His own self, and will be His own creator (since what the Father works is the Son’s work also), which is absurd and impossible; or, in that He creates and works the things of the Father, He Himself is not a work nor a creature; for else being Himself an efficient cause, He may cause that to be in the case of things caused, which He Himself has become, or rather He may have no power to cause at all. If, as you claim, He has come from nothing, is He able to frame things that are nothing into being? Or if He, bring a creature, creates a creature, the same will be conceivable in the case of every creature relative the power to frame others. And if this pleases you, what is the need of the Word, seeing that things inferior can be brought to be by things superior? Or at all events, everything that is brought to be could have been heard in the beginning God’s words, ‘Become’ an ‘be made,’ and so would have been framed. But this is not so written, nor could it be. For none of the things which are brought to be is an efficient cause, but all things were made through the Word: who would not have wrought all things, was He Himself in the number of the creatures.⁷

3. THE ABSURDITY OF ARIAN COSMOLOGY. ITS FINAL CONSEQUENCES

In brief, the core of Saint Athanasius the Great’s argumentation was this: even supposing that the Father would have never wanted to create the world or a part of it, nevertheless, the Logos/ the Son was together with the Father and the Father in Him since eternity. In fact, Saint Athanasius the Great carefully eliminates all the references applicable to the creation in the description he makes of the intimate relation between the Father and the Son. This was his major and decisive contribution to the Trinitarian theology at the crossroads of the Arian dispute. It gave him the possibility to define clearly the concept of creation.

“*Theologia*” in the sense this word had in the Antiquity, and “*oikonomia*” must be strictly determined and different, although they are not contrary to each other. God as existence in Himself precedes absolutely the acts of His divine will. He (God) is much more

⁷ Saint Athanasius the Great, *Four Discourses Against the Arians, Discourse II*, 21, in “NPNF2-04”, p. 359.

than a perfect Creator. When we call God “Father,” we refer to something much higher than His relation to the created beings:

For if we say that the Father has power and mastery over all things by the Word, and the Son rules the Father’s kingdom, and has the power of all, as His Word, and as the Image of the Father, it is quite plain that neither here is the Son reckoned among that all, nor is God called Almighty and Lord with reference to Him, but to those things which through the Son come to be, and over which He exercises power and mastery through the Word. (...) And, therefore, the Unoriginate is specified not by contrast to the Son, but to the things which through the Son come to be. And excellently: since God is not as things originated, but is their Creator and Framer through the Son. And as the word ‘Unoriginate’ is specified relatively to things originated, so the word ‘Father’ is indicative of the Son. And he who names God Maker and Framer and Unoriginate, regards and apprehends things created and made; and he who calls God Father, thereby conceives and contemplates the Son.⁸

Before God created all things, He existed since eternity as a Father, and everything He creates, He creates it by and together with His Son. For Arius' supporters, absorbed with the affirmation of a God - unique Principle, inherited from Greek philosophy and from the Jewish Henotheism of Alexandria, “Unbegotten” and “Father” are names that define different stages of God’s existence: the first would designate His eternal being, the second, His relationship with the Son, brought into existence by an act of will at a certain moment (anyway, according to the Arian opinion, which keeps changing continually, either in time, or outside of time, but not co-eternal with the divine Principle). The name of Father or Begetter would have been accepted by God, according to Arius, in order to create the world, which could not have supported at creation the divine touch of the “hand” of His glory. From these erroneous speculations, bordering the absurd, Arius and his followers arrived at reducing God’s Being to the Father's personal way of being, “the unbecetting” consequently projecting a subordinatianist vision on the Holy Trinity. The Son, the Only Begotten, was not credited as superior and anterior to the acts of the divine creative will, although this absurd perspective was leading to the conclusion that God the Father is changing, existing a while when He was not a Father, but He became a Father by a volitional act, just like in the logic to which are submitted in the act of procreation the existences from the created world. Saint Athanasius the Great clarifies once again that the personal quality of “being God by nature, Father of His Word,”⁹ belongs to God the Father since eternity, and similarly to the Logos belongs that of being His Son.

Commenting on this passage, Father Dumitru Stăniloae has demonstrated the final consequences of the absurd rationalist vision expressed by Arius. In fact, this was the impasse also realized by Plato in the dialogue *Parmenides* regarding the relation one-multiple and the impossibility to avoid the pantheistic character of the pre-Christian cosmology:

If there is not a Son, as image of God the Father by Whom the creation is brought into existence, the creation comes directly out of God as his image. In this case, the creation is an emanation from God in a pantheistic sense. The so-called God in this case is an essence, from which the world comes out without his wanting it. Everything is submitted in this case to a blind, senseless fatality. Only the distinction between a Son Who is from God’s being, as Father, and between a world created by

⁸ Saint Athanasius the Great, *Four Discourses Against the Arians, Discourse I*, 33, în „NPNF2-04”, p. 325.

⁹ Saint Athanasius the Great, *Four Discourses Against the Arians, Discourse II*, 2, în „NPNF2-04”, p. 349.

*God's will, avoids pantheism, saving God's transcendence from a world unidentified with Him and «not submitted exclusively to some involuntary laws».*¹⁰

To be sure, the Arian distinction of unbegotten (uncreated) God – begotten (created) Son is illogical: “There is no temporal order in the Divine Being.” The names of the Persons of the Holy Trinity denote their very way of being, their manner of holding/partaking of the Divine Being. Saint Athanasius rejects the accusation that the birth of the Son from the Father’s nature would introduce, in God, change or “passion.” The fact of begetting, he considers, is such a natural feature of the Father that, if it was missing, this would mean a diminution of God’s being.¹¹

There are, therefore, two sets of names applicable to God: the ones that refer to His way of being and the ones that designate God’s deeds or actions in relation to the created world. The first concern God in Himself; the others, God in relation to the things “outside” of Himself (the relation with the things created by His will and His council). The erroneous application of these names, in the way Arius had done, led to confusion if not even to absurdity, and, in a final state, to heresy.

CONCLUSION

Athanasius’ distinction between “generation/begetting” and “creation” with all its implications, was acknowledged by the Church of Nicea as Orthodox, even during the time of its author, in the fourth century. Later, Saint Cyril of Alexandria reiterated this fundamental concept, following his predecessor.¹² Indeed, his anti-Arian argumentation was relying a lot on the discourses of Saint Athanasius the Great.¹³ The divine will be associated only with the oikonomia-related things, in the sense of acts of the divine will supposing deliberation.¹⁴ Toward the end of the classical patristic period, in the East, Saint John of Damascus reiterated, in his turn, in his significant work *De fide orthodoxa (An Exposition of the Orthodox Faith)*, this decisive teaching both for cosmology and especially for theology and Christology, solemnly confirming its perenniality.

¹⁰ Pr. Dumitru Stăniloae in Sfântul Atanasie cel Mare, *Scrieri I, Cuvântul al doilea împotriva arienilor*, II, in col. “P.S.B.”, vol. 15, E.I.B.M.B.O.R., București, 1987, p. 232, nota 1.

¹¹ Saint Athanasius the Great, *Four Discourses Against the Arians, Discourse I*, 29, in “NPNF2-04”, p. 325.

¹² Sfântul Chiril al Alexandriei, *Scrieri*, Partea a III-a, *Despre Sfânta Treime*, II, 5, in col. “P.S.B.”, vol. 40, trad., introd. and notes by Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae, E.I.B.M.B.O.R., București, 1985, pp. 67-74.

¹³ Jacques Liébaert, *La doctrine christologique de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie avant la querelle nestorienne*, Lille, 1951, pp. 19-43.

¹⁴ S. Cyrillus Alexandrinus Arhiepiscopus, *Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali Trinitate*, P.G 75, 47D; 48D.

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<https://doi.org/10.26520/icoana.2022.15.8.54-63>

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND HIS LOGOS – THE PERFECT MODEL OF INTERSUBJECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

From eternity, The Father, the one Cause and unique ontological and ontogenetical principle of the Holy Trinity, freely and consciously utters Himself, giving birth to His countenance. In this exceptional relationship of being, the Father Himself is One and bears full paternity within Himself, and that is only in relation to His Only Son, who bears full filiation within Himself, but only in relation to the Father. But the Son, in His own turn, is born of the Father, not being passive whatsoever in regard to the course of the act of birth. Thus, freely, and from His endless love, The Father, outside of time, and giving Himself fully, hypostatizes His existence, His to be, in the Son and the Spirikt.

Keywords: Holy Trinity; ontogenesis; monarchy; hypostasis; essence;

INTRODUCTION

The dialogic principle of interpersonal communication is *consummated* plenary between the persons in the Trinity of God. From the very beginning, the confessional paradigm of divine personalism consists of the love-knowledge rapport between God the Father (underived Godhood) and His monogenetic Son. The Fathers of the Church, as authorized interpreters of the word of Scripture, have brought to light the relationship between God the Father and His hypostatic Son, interpreting it as an inexhaustible dialogue of love and self-giving, which unfurls in the boundless *chronology* of the eternity of the One who is forever being.

The German language allows for an essential component from the point of view of communication to be perceived within the notion of Logos. It is the closeness in sound and meaning between *Wort*, word, and *Antwort*, answer. True communication cannot be reduced to one way, but always alternates between giving and receiving, speaking¹ and listening. Such is communication within the Holy Trinity. The Son is the Word of Godly and Fatherly love, but also the Answer of love given back to His Progenitor.

This study wishes to be a sensitive radiography of the Eastern body of ideas concerning the Trinity, thematically and systematically constructed upon the substantial and

¹ „Discourse meets the discourse of the other upon the paths that lead to its object and enter an intense, vivid interaction with it” – Tzvetan TODOROV, *Mikhail Bakhtine: Le principe dialogique (Mikhail Bakhtine: The dialogic principle)*, Seuil Publishing House, Paris, 1981, p. 99.

dialogical relationship of the Divine Logos with the *Αρχή* of Godhood. To put this study together, I have used several research methods, of which I mention: the analytical method, the hermeneutical method, the comparative method, the symbolic method, the historical method, all of this contributing to the interweaving of dogmas, concepts and symbolic imagery appropriate to such a remarkably generous, but also demanding theme such as Christian triadology.

The classical discourse of the Church rejects the modern deduction of theist meanings, to which it opposes the infallible vision of Scripture. As follows, we must remain faithful to the truths revealed in the Holy Scriptures, even though we are using a language with a philosophical resonance.

1. THE PERSONAL-DIALOGIC CHARACTER OF GOD. THE MONARCHY OF THE FATHER AND COMMUNIONAL APPANAGE²

The doctrine regarding the Tri-Unity of God (the three Persons of Godhood) cannot be fully comprehended by man, given that he dwells between limits. The concept is beyond the understanding of our limited mind. Nevertheless, through revelation, God has offered man a considerable *baggage* of information about the Trinity in the Holy Scripture, information that man can and must understand. Although the term *Trinity* is not exposed word-by-word in the pages of The Bible, the Trinity and all it encompasses is nevertheless referred to from *Genesis* to *Revelation*. Starting from the *key notes* of the Biblical corpus, Christian triadology, consecrated from a synodal-ecumenical point of view in the fourth century³, through a high *effort* and *tensions* of the soul, has undergone a fortunate doctrinal evolution, advancing in ecclesiastical *thought*, from the theme of divine substantialism to that of trinitarian personalism. As such, the unity of being, of work and of will in the Holy Trinity is concentrated and accentuated upon the hypostasis of God and the Father, not upon Divine nature⁴.

² The fact that God is love represents the core of His nature or His substance. We are not merely told that God has love or that God loves, but that God is love (*I John 4:16*). God cannot be love if He cannot direct His love toward another person. And for that to be possible, there must be an eternal person toward whom He might direct this love, as God is the only One who is Eternal. Thus, God has to have loved from Eternity, not intrapersonally but interpersonally. The *God* worshipped by the ancient antitrinitarians, and later by Muslims, Jehovah's Witnesses and socinian unitarians, is one entity, and therefore, incomplete. How so? Scripture teaches that God is love and love must have an object! As such, a singular eternal being would not have had anyone to love, before His creation, human beings, that He could love. This would render such a god imperfect, needing created beings to love. As such, from Eternity, „The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand” (*John 3:35*). On Mount Tabor, at the *Transfiguration of The Lord*, God the Father made His love for the Son public: „This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” (*Matthew 17:5*).

³ During the first three century of the history of the Church, as they were explained the teachings on the Holy Trinity, Christians found themselves exposed to the same accusations they brought pagans: that of believing in several divinities, that is, being polytheists. And this is why their symbols of faith, which, in all their different forms, for three centuries, began with the words *Πιστεύομεν ἕνα θεόν* – *Credimus in Deum*, meaning *We believe in God*, and beginning with the fourth century, there is an addition, perhaps unnoticeable, but one which is never omitted afterwards: *Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα θεόν* – *Credimus in unum Deum*, which means *We believe in the One God*.

⁴ There is a difference between the two manners of expressing the mystery of the Trinity of God. As follows, Eastern Fathers begin from the Divine Persons, meaning, from plurality, to reach the unity of nature, whereas

In the personalist *climate* of the Trinity, a primacy of the Father⁵, called *monarchy*, which is based upon the idea that the unity of the Trinity originates from eternity, from the Father. We are referring to an already personalized unity, because „unity is from the Father, to and toward whom the other persons are counted”⁶. The first article of the Niceo-Constantinopolitan Symbol underlines the following faith truth: „I believe in one God the Father Almighty, but „Father Almighty” is not separated from „one God”, but one with it. The comma is not placed after „God”, but after the word „almighty.” The unity of the three persons of the Godhead is given by the fact that the Father is perfectly united with the Son (substantially), as is the Holy Spirit with the Son”⁷. The father is a person-and-eternal-love-relationship and does not exist as a person outside of that relationship. That is why, before anything, the Father cannot be conceived as an *Αρχή* of Godhood, and only after that can a relationship of eternal love be recognized in Him. The Father must be spoken of as the eternal act-of-love-person. Thus, the unity and infinity of God eternally come from unique act that stands under the *crown* of a *relentless* mystery. „The Father, in order to be a Father, cannot be separated from the Son, because the name of the Father means their communion, for neither the One who sends Him, nor the One who brings Him can be separated from one another or lack from one another. Thus, we expand the Monad into a Triad, which cannot be lessened”⁸.

But the situation changes once we refer to trinitarian ontology, because each of Them is found in Their Co-Equals, being One in the Others, as it can be deduced from the intratrinitarian concept of perichoresis. „We do not calculate by composition, starting from one to multiple, by adding, saying one, two, three, or first, second, third (*Isaiah* 44:6). We have not heard of a Second God even today. For, worshipping God of God, we confess the remarkable property of the hypostases and monarchy, without breaking God into a divided multitude”⁹, noted Saint Basil, the Archbishop of Cappadocian Caesarea. Without considering the monarchy of the Father a shallow or obsolete concept, Orthodox theology sees in it an unsuspected spiritual depth, probed through a cataphatic-apophatic synthesis, like that of Father Dumitru Stăniloae, meant to express the antinomy between the One person creating Godhood and the three eternal hypostases, together-beginningless, together-creating and filled with Godhood, but also together-ruling in the Kingdom of Eternal Love. Taking advantage of the monarchy of the Father when it comes to the ruling of human society or the Church is wrong, because it is incongruous with divine revelation. It *erodes*

Latin fathers begin from the unity of divine nature to reach the three hypostases. In other words, „Latins consider personality as a mode of nature; Greeks consider nature as a content of person” (Theodore de Régnon, *Études de théologie positive sur la Sainte Trinité*, I, Paris, 1892, p. 433).

⁵ Eastern theology confesses that the intimacy of the Godly persons is one without mixture. As follows, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one in all regards, with the exception of unbirth, birth and origination. The principle of unity in Godhood is the person of the Father, who eternally gives birth to the Son and originates the Holy Spirit, which is the Source of Godhood – *πηγία θεοτης*.

⁶ Saint Gregory of NAZIANZUS, *Oratio* 42, 16, in Jaques-Paul Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* (abbreviated PG) 36, 477.

⁷ Saint Gregory of NYSSA, *Contra Eunomium*, 1, 42, Migne, PG 45, 464.

⁸ Saint Athanasius of ALEXANDRIA, *De sententia Dionysii*, 16-17, Migne, PG 25, 504 CD-505A.

Christian spirituality and impedes the rapports of genuine brotherhood within the Church that must be extended at the level of the entire society. The personalist-communal direction and the spiritual one, which result from the balance-knowledge *mechanism*, are eliminated through some rapports of a legal nature, of the force-determination type. For this very reason, due to perichoresis, in the *ontic geography* of the Trinity, one cannot speak of the priority of one person to another, not even a priority of the Father. At this level, the Trinity is a communion of equals without a hierarchy, for the unity of the Trinity is neither accomplished through the monarchy of the Father, as a *matrix* of Godly ontogenesis, nor through the link of personal unity in the Holy Spirit (the filioquist manner), but through the perichoresis of eternal love. „The pure character of the divine Subjects entails Their full inter-subjectivity, a term that highlights the positive communion that takes place between the Persons of the Holy Trinity. That is why One God and three Egos are spoken of. The three Subjects do not separate from One Another, One from the conscience of The Others, to reveal Godhood subsisting separately. Through this, the subjectivity of any divine Ego is not narrowed, but widened, encompassing the Others as well in a certain manner. Each lives through the manners of living of the Others, but not as His, but as Theirs.”¹⁰

In the thought of the Cappadocian Fathers, the priority of the Divine Persons to their relationships is not admitted, because in the trinitarian effective, the persons and their properties are similar. However, one must take two essential aspects into consideration. On one hand, we must remember the fact that the divine being is not a glacial single term, but has a strongly relational character, which allows the person to abound in its interior structure. On the other hand, the union between being and person is so profound that Eastern patristic theology states that, in regard to God, when we look for the Person, we see the Being, and when we look for the Being, we see Godliness in all of its three-person *expansion*.

„This understanding of the Trinity, although not denying the unity of being between the Persons, is profoundly personalist and one does not see the inclination to deduce the Persons from being within it. The divine being is only in the Persons, because it is communicated from the Person of the Father. At the origin of everything is a Person Father, not an essence. In the Holy Trinity, the Father is in an eternal act of Self-giving, the Son is in an eternal act of receiving The Father and the Holy Spirit is in an eternal participation in the joy of the Father who gives Himself and the Son who receives Him”¹¹.

The existence of *cleavage* between persons and unity explains the alternance that exists between the Father, as a constitutive factor of Godly existential reality, superior to unity, and divine life, where the Trinity becomes dependent on the immovable unity of its Hypostases. Thus, the Divine Persons do not remain still after the pattern of the divine being, but move, out of love for mankind, through uncreated energies.

⁹ Saint Basil of CAESAREA, *Liber de Spiritu Sancto*, 18, Migne, PG 32, 149.

¹⁰ Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (The Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. I, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1978, p. 207.

¹¹ Idem, *Sfânta Treime creatoarea, mântuitoarea și țința veșnică a tuturor credincioșilor (Holy Trinity, the creator, savior and eternal aim of all believers)*, in *Ortodoxia* nr. 2/1986, pp. 16-17.

On the other hand, Orthodox theology is, in its entirety, a *feast* apart, that evokes the authenticity of the texts of Holy Scriptures, referring to the unmediated presence of the three-personed Godhead in the area of mundane iconomy. Theology, as a *pulse* of church life, conjugates the way of being of Divinity on all its levels (the biblical-exegetical, the patristic, the liturgical, the spiritual-moral): the perfect and eternal Love between Me, You, Him or that *We* that simultaneously encompasses the Unborn, the Born and the Originated.¹² We worship the Father as the Factor of the personal-unitarian life of God, as a Reason for the birth of his Son and as an Originator of the Holy Spirit; as the ultimate, Self-reflecting Subject, but also as a Subject that reflects on other Subjects; Subject of other Subjects, equal to Him in infinity and boundlessness; as eternal Love¹³ which hypostatizes His existence, His *to be* in the Trinity of Persons. The Son as the Whole of the Whole, an utterance of the Father, an utterance of His *thought*.

In Him, the Boundless is united with the bound, and through him, the expression of the beauty of the primordial Countenance comes to His own, to each of our own countenances. And the Holy Spirit, the One who ineffably comes from the Father, as an expression of the Power and Wisdom of God; the same in Himself forever, but unseparated from the Father and the Son. We can define the Trinity as the movement of One who is no longer confined within loneliness, as the love-filled movement of the Father toward the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Trinity is the movement of the Three Persons, who do not separate one from another, one from the existence of the other, but converge in the oneness of Their perfect nature. Concretely, we are part of a *feast* which opens the Mystery of our existence to our profound intuition, but also its ultimate Meaning. Theology is, thus, the celebration of the *leap* from singular to plural, from I to We.

2. GODLY BIRTH – THE ETERNAL EXPRESSION OF THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE FATHER AND THE SON

It is only the understanding of God as a supreme communion of love between the Persons which represent the Trinity of one being and undivided that determines the

¹² „Imagine the Trinity as a pearl which is the same on all sides, and shines through a unique light. If someone breaks the pearl, all of its beauty fades away. It would be the same if you lowered the Son in order to reveal your worship for the Father: the Father would not receive your adoration. The Father is not worshipped through the omission of the worship of the Son, the adoration of the Son is considered to be a worship of the Father. If you lower the Holy Spirit, the Son will not receive your worship. For although the Holy Spirit does not come from the Father in the same manner as the Son does, He is still His Father Himself. We either worship the Trinity in its entirety, or we despise it in its entirety in order to be consequent” (Saint Gregory of NAZIANZUS, *Homilia* 37, 18, Migne, PG 36, 304 AB.)

¹³ „In full love, the persons do not only accept each other, they affirm each other. Divine love is self-efficient. The Father eternally sets the Son into existence through full Self-giving, and the Son continuously affirms the Father as Father through accepting to be set into existence, through giving Himself to the Father as the Son. And God cannot lack a perfect and eternal love. By setting each other into existence through perfect love, the acts through which this is accomplished are eternal acts, and have the character of entirely perfect acts, although they are acts in which the divine persons are active together” – Dumitru STĂNILIOAE, *Sfânta Treime, structura supremei iubiri (The Holy Trinity, the structure of supreme love)*, in *Studii Teologice* nr. 5-6/1970, p. 336.

overcoming of an exclusively conceptual approach to the Mystery of Godhood¹⁴. The person is not reduced to an idea, to a concept, because it is ever *enflamed* with a living and loving relationship with others. Communication between people is not just reduced to the *level* of ideas, which only represents a partial thing. The fullness of communication is accomplished in the meeting and life communion of people. With God, the „Trinitarian community of the Godly persons is not a uniform love of the three persons for each other, but the love of a Father, of a Son, and the hypostatized communication between Them in the person of The Holy Spirit. Love is not uniform. The sensitivity of the Father to the Son takes the hypostatically comforting form of the Holy Spirit. The Father rejoices in the Son together with the Spirit. But this hypostatic comfort of the Father, directed toward the Son, also makes The Son feel an intensified feeling of the love of the Father to Him”¹⁵.

The Word is essential beginning from the uncircumscribed interior of the Holy Scripture, which means eternity: „In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God” (*John* 1:1-2). If the Father is the One who outpours Himself, eternally moving Oneness toward Trinity, or the monad toward perfection or progress, the *Logos*¹⁶ is the Seal of the being of the Father, and at the same time, externally, the One through which all is created, as an outpouring of Godhood outside of Itself: „The Father speaks unto Himself as a whole, and through this, a full-fledged alter-ego is constituted or a completely intimate and equal You of His. The self to which He speaks does not remain mere imagination, but becomes personally consistent. This You of the Father is called the Word, as the One who is the real condition of speech in God”¹⁷. We observe that the first type of dialogue ever initiated is the love of the Father for His Son and the love of the Son for His Father, the Source of His own being. „The Father knows Himself in the Son and through the Son only inasmuch as the Son as a real image projects His existence as the Son of the Father toward the Father, not as a passive image of

¹⁴ The intervention of Father Dumitru Stăniloae is worthy of appreciation, as he noted: „The Trinity is proof of the love that exists from age to age. At the foundation of existence lies not an unconscious essence, but a God of love, a God in three persons, a Father, a Son – and whomsoever loves more than a father and whomsoever responds better to the love of a father than a son? This love is eternal, and in order for this love to be perfect, the Father wants to have a third person, who can rejoice together with Him in His Son, and the Son wants to have this third person who can rejoice together with Him in His Father. Then, love is perfect: threefold love, and from the sign and power of this love, we are baptized. We receive the power to love one another as the persons of the Holy Trinity do. We receive the power to love one another not just one by one, but to love all people because each one of them could become our «you». This is Christianity: the religion of love” (*Duhovnici români în dialog cu tinerii, ediția a II-a – Romanian Fathers in dialogue with young people, second edition*, Byzantine Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006, pp. 14-15).

¹⁵ Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Spiritualitatea ortodoxă. Ascetica și mistica (Orthodox spirituality. Asceticism and mysticism)*, vol. 3, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1992, pp. 36-37.

¹⁶ „The Face of God, entirely identical, is the Word alone. The Word is the Face of the Father. That is why, since the Word is the Face of the Father, Christ (Incarnate) is the Face of the Father as Logos – the Word. But through the communication of His attributes, The Word Incarnate, which is the human nature of Christis also the face of the Father” (Ierotheos VLACHOS, Metropolitan of Nafpaktos, *Dogmatica empirică după învățăturile prin viu grai ale Părintelui Ioannis Romanidis – Empirical dogmatics according to the oral teachings of Father Ioannis Romanidis*, vol. II, Doxologia Publishing House, Iași, 2017, p. 99).

¹⁷ Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Studii catolice recente despre Filioque (Recent Catholic studies on Filioque)*, in *Studii Teologice*, nr. 7-8/1973, p. 504.

His, but an active image which returns, in its own turn, the knowledge of the Father unto Him, a knowledge that became possible because it started as a perfect real image of the Father. The Birth of the Son by the Father is the premise of self-knowledge of the Father, accomplished in common with the Son¹⁸. On the other hand, the illustrious Romanian theologian states that although man is made in the image and likeness of God, the Son is not hypostasized in the image of His Father, but is the very Countenance of His Eternal Birth-giver, with whom he is, simultaneously, consubstantial. Therefore, oneness, equality¹⁹, and all that is related to the Holy God-Trinity, tend to exclude any iconic relationship defined through the resemblance as well as the difference of (ontological) degree between terms. the resemblance as well as the difference of (ontological) degree between terms. In spite of this, the iconic relationship of the Prototype-Countenance sort remains remarking and irradiated from the relative register to the absolute one. As follows, the condition of resemblance between persons from the human plane, which is the resemblance between a father and a son has the distinction or difference between hypostases for a correspondent in Godhood. Also, the difference of nature from the human realm has the identity of nature and consubstantiality as a correspondent in the intratrinitarian plan. Finally, the Son is the Countenance of the Father, in an ineffable manner which ultimately also encompasses the difference (in person) and consubstantiality with the Unborn: „Il est ce qu’Il exprime, à savoir Dieu, mais Il n’est pas celui qu’Il exprime, à savoir le Père”²⁰.

It is important to observe, in the Johannine prologue – a bona fide symphony in which the Godliness of the creator Word is evoked, a Source of life and light for all that is visible and invisible (*The Gospel according to John*, chapter 1, verses 1-18), that the author of the gospel establishes a common background of understanding the creation and support of the Universe and life, as well as the Self-revelation of God through the hypostatic reality of the Logos in purely personal terms. If the beginning of the prologue mentions the divinity of the Logos and His nature as Creator and Providential of the Universe, in the second part of the scriptural document, the *beloved disciple* insists upon the act of His incarnation²¹. And because there is an infinite difference of nature and quality between man and God, man cannot know God through his natural abilities, which are limited and restricted to the level of a creature, which is why the need of discovering God, for the purpose of knowledge is felt. This is the reason why, in the end of the prologue, we find, beyond the status of Creator-Logos²², His quality of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, as the One Son²³, who lives in

¹⁸ Idem, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (The Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. 1, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1996, p. 206.

¹⁹ One of the fundamental texts is the one in the *Gospel according to John* 5:18-30. Our Lord Jesus Christ was accused by His detractors of having made Himself equal to God (in Greek, the word for equal is ἴσος). Thus, He does not deny that He is equal to God, but merely explains to His listeners what being equal to God means.

²⁰ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *La Gloire et la Croix (The Glory and the Cross)*, tome 1, Le Cerf Publishing House, Paris, 1993, p. 174.

²¹ *Μία φύσις τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγου σαρκαωμένη*. Through Jesus Christ, we understand the Word of God united with human nature through an ineffable union, not the Word of God that is separate from human nature, nor the *temple* born of the Virgin Mary, not united with the Divine Logos.

²² The Blessed Augustine affirmed the following theological truth: „in the same regard in which He calls Himself the Word, He calls Himself The Son” (in *La Trinità*, chapter 7, *Opera omnia. Patrologiae Latinae, Documenta Catholica Omnia* Publishing House, p. 87.)

²³ Divine filiation exists from eternity, in the manner of one hypostasis giving its nature to another hypostasis, but also in the plenary participation of the second hypostasis in that process of divine

the genuine *bosom* of the Father and the one who made Him known to the entire world. If Jesus Christ, the Word, had not had His divine nature, He would have been incapable of revealing God to the world, and man would be without possibility of redeeming themselves.

Any creature of this world benefits from birth, involuntarily. All that exists, exists due to being born at a certain moment from someone. Where one cannot speak of birth, one cannot speak of existence. In fact, the word *existence* has its roots in the Latin word *existentia* which means to come from someone, its opposite being self-existence, an attribute that only God has. Moreso, even God Himself attributes the title of begotten, not made, before all ages, but without the categories of time, space and quality, being One-Begotten, or more appropriately, Only-Begotten – *μονογενής υἱός* – before all ages – which reveals that Birth is a Mystery that has to do both with the Godly ontology and the existential *level* of a creature.

CONCLUSIONS

The mystery of the Holy Trinity is impossible to understand for the human mind, being impossible to encompass with the *nutshell* of our limited knowledge the unfathomable *ocean* of Godhood. The mystery of the Godly trinity is the mystery of our entire spiritual and material existence, without Which nothing can exist and nothing can be explained. The three-hypostasis Godhood is the love which has no beginning, inexhaustible and irreplaceable. Tri-personality offers complete communication, because it is only through the communion of the three persons that God is approachable in a real manner.

Trinitarian openness represents the abandonment of egotism, quantified from the *erosion* of a person. Every person only truly becomes a person by relating to others, by living for them and within them. Egotism, egocentrism, egolatry and autarchy – the *quadrangle* of the destructuralization of the mystery of a person – are basic characteristics of the vegetative state which characterizes the existence of those in hell. Hell is not others, hell is oneself, detached from others and isolated under the *shell* of extreme egotism. Herein lies a fundamental element of freedom: one cannot be free alone.

Freedom is not individual, but collective. It entails a relationship, an *I* but also a *You*. He who is egocentric, who denies any responsibility to others, owns nothing but an apparent and false freedom, however is, in truth, lamentably lacking in freedom. Liberation, completely understood, is not spiteful estrangement or aggressive self-affirmation, but partnership and solidarity. Being free entails sharing our person with others, feeling with their feelings: „If one part of our body hurts, we hurt all over. If one part of our body is honored, all parts are happy together” (*I Corinthians 12:26*). I am free only inasmuch as I

ontogenesis. Thus „maintaining the unity of being between the Father and the Son is assured by the perfect giving of the entire being, through birth, by a hypostasis, and by its complete reception, through birth, by another hypostasis. But the Birth-giver, or Father, looks at the same time with the joy of full love to the One who exists through His Self-giving. So does the Receiver of existence by birth. He who exists as the fruit of the perfect act of giving through the birth in the first hypostasis, rejoices in the Giver of His existence by birth, but not in the same manner as He who is Himself the source of this joy, for all He has, He has from the Father, and nothing that He has is through Himself” (Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Ființa și ipostasurile în Sfânta Treime, după Sfântul Vasile cel Mare (The essence and hypostasis in the Holy Trinity, by Saint Basil the Great)*, in *Ortodoxia* nr. 1/1979, pp. 71-72). Being the natural and eternal Son of He who is eternal, the Lord Jesus Christ is indeed the *Face* of the Father, and not some blueprint or spiritual or physical emanation, nor a relative pictogram of His Birth-giving Father (see the meanings of the Greek term *χαράκτήρ*).

become a person, that is, if I turn to sharing my identity with others. If I turn my back or I refuse to share, I lose my freedom. By focusing upon striking this nerve, the Christian dogma regarding God-the Holy Trinity is of an immediate relevancy for our understanding of freedom.

As Christians, we believe in a God who is not only One, but One-in-Three or Threefold-One. The countenance of God in us is the concrete countenance of the God of the Trinity. The Holy Trinity is absolute interiority and transparency. God, our Creator and Archetype, is not just one self-sufficient and self-loving person, but is the communion of three persons, with one dwelling within the other two through a ceaseless motion of mutual love. The Fathers of the Church use, as a specific term, perichoresis, or mutual interweaving, to describe the interiority of the hypostases of the Holy Trinity, the fact that each of them is absolutely open to the other two, as well as the fact that the three open subjects give themselves to each other. Basically, when we engage, at the level of our identity, in the manifestation of love for a person, we feel as though we have entered the depth of their life and become, to one another, very interior.

As follows, through love, we interiorize the person we love. They rest within our hearts, in such a manner that we feel their presence throughout our entire existence. Spiritually speaking, we are filled by the presence of the person whom we love, keeping in mind a real existential dialogue.

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ICOANA CREDINȚEI*International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research*

AIMS. *Icoana Credinței – Icon of Faith. International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research* (IFIJISR) promotes scientific research into various fields. The Journal has two issues, online (ISSN-L 2393-137X) and in print (ISSN 2501-3386) version, twice a year in January and June. *Icon of Faith. International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research* is a journal published and promoted at international level by Ideas Forum International Academic and Scientific Association (IFIASA) in collaboration with members of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology and Education Sciences, from “Valahia” University, Târgoviște, Romania.

ABSTRACT AND INDEX. Presently it is ranked at Romanian level in CNCS-B Index and in ERIH Plus Catalogue. *Icon of Faith. International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research* enjoys a broad international visibility. Its articles are indexed in prestigious data bases. Icoana Credinței is abstracted and indexed in:

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EDITORIAL ERRATUM

1. Editorial Erratum to “THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY”: [ICOANA CREDINTEI. International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research, No.8 (2018), pp.5–12].

The original version of this Article contained an error in the BIBLIOGRAPHY which was incorrectly edited. This error has now been corrected in the PDF and HTML versions of the Article.

Additional information. The first version of this study was published in Romanian, which was updated and with translated by the author in English. The online version of the corrected article can be found at <https://doi.org/10.26520/icoana.2018.8.4.5-12>

Published online: June 2018; updated:02 May 2022.

2. Erratum to: “DEACON CORESI (C. 1510 - C. 1583) AND HIS ACTIVITY AS A PRINTER IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 16TH CENTURY PROTESTANT PROPAGANDA”: [ICOANA CREDINTEI. International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research, No.14 (2021), pp. 37-75].

Additional information. This study is a translation by the author in English. For the first version of this study in Romanian, with the same title, see Diaconul Coresi - ctitor de limbă română, misionar al credinței străbune și slujitor devotat al neamului românesc, Editura Arhiepiscopiei Târgoviștei, Târgoviște, 2017, pp. 277-328. For the second version, but improved, in Romanian, see Mitropolia Olteniei, no. 69 (821-824)/5-8 (2017), pp. 68-112, which was translated by the author in English, with a small change to the title. This Additional information has now been corrected in the PDF and HTML versions of the Article. The online version of the corrected article can be found at <https://doi.org/10.26520/icoana.2021.14.7.37-75>

Published online: June 2021; updated: 09 May 2022.

