

ICOANA CREDINȚEI
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

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



Number 10, Year 5, June 2019
Ideas Forum International Academic and Scientific Association,
Târgoviște, Romania 2019

ICOANA CREDINȚEI
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY SCIENTIFIC
RESEARCH
EDITORIAL BOARD AND STAFF

President

His Eminence Metropolitan **NIFON**, Archdiocese of Târgoviște, PhD Prof., Faculty of Orthodox Theology and Education Sciences, “Valahia” University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA

Advisory Board

Nicolae **IOANNIDIS**, Arch. PhD. Prof. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Athens, GREECE
Georgios **METALLINOS**, Fr. PhD. Prof. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Athens, GREECE
Vasile **RADUCA**, Rev. PhD. Prof., Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Bucuresti University, ROMANIA
Nicușor **BELDIMAN**, PhD., Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Bucuresti University, ROMANIA
George **GRIGORITA**, PhD., Faculty of Orthodox Theology “ Bucuresti” University, Bucuresti, Romania
Gheorghe **ANGHELESCU**, Prof. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA
Gabriela Alina **ANGHEL**, Conf. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA
Adrian **IGNAT**, Prof. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA
Ancuta Elena **SANTI**, DPPD., Universitatea “Valahia”, Târgoviște, ROMANIA
Claudia **VLAICU**, PhD. Prof. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA
Nicolae **PREDA**, Asist. PhD. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Bucuresti University, ROMANIA
Alexandru-Traian **MIU**, PhD. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA
Cosmin **SANTI**, Fr. PhD. Asist. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA

Editorial Board

Pablo **ARGARATE**, PhD. Prof. Department at the Institute for Ecumenical Theology, Eastern Orthodoxy and Patristics at Graz University, AUSTRIA
Lucian **TURCESCU**, PhD. Prof. Depart. of Theological Studies, Concordia University, Montreal, CANADA
Marian **VILCIU**, Fr. PhD. Prof. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA
Florea **STEFAN**, Fr. PhD. Prof. Faculty of Orthodox Theolog, Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA
Marina **KOLOVOPULU**, Prof. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Athens, GREECE
Daniel Alberto **AYUCH**, PhD. Professor, Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Balamand, LIBAN,
Encarnación Ruiz **CALLEJÓN**, Prof. Faculty of Philosophy, University of Granada, SPAIN
Ramona **NEACSA**, PhD. Lect. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA
Nicolae **XIONIS**, PhD. Prof. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Athens, GREECE
Ion **CROITORU**, PhD. Prof. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA
Svetoslav **RIBOLOV**, PhD. Prof. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Sofia University, Sofia, BULGARIA
Aleksi **KSHUTASHVILI**, PhD. Prof. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Tbilisi University, GEORGIA
Co-Editor Alexandru-Corneliu **ARION**, Fr. PhD. Lect. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA

Editor-in-chief

Marin **BUGIULESCU**, Fr. Prof. PhD. Member of Dumitru Stăniloae Scientific and Interdisciplinary Research Center, Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA

Icoana Credintei. 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 collaborations with members of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology and Education Sciences, “Valahia” University, Târgoviște, Romania.

Web: <http://revistaicoanacredintei.com>

Email: iconfaith_journal@yahoo.com

www.facebook.com/icoana.credintei

Grafic disinger: Marin **BUGIULESCU**

Text correction: Alexandru-Corneliu **ARION**

© Icoana Credintei. Copyright is warranted by national and international laws.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial Board of ICOANA CREDINTEI	2
Table of contents	3
Preface	4

* **THEOLOGY STUDIES**

Ph.D. Daniel AYUCH, JUSTICE BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE	5
Ph.D. Nicușor BELDIMAN, THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SERMON AND THE PREACHER’S RESPONSIBILITY, ACCORDING TO ARCHIMANDRITE IULIU SCRIBAN	10
Ph.D. David PESTROIU, “THE CONCEPT OF “THE PRESENCE OF GOD”- A LINK BETWEEN MISSIONARY THEOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY	21
PhD. Mathew VIVAN, THE METAPHYSICS OF THE CONCUISCENCE	31
PhD. Marin BUGIULESCU, THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE SIN AT THE LEVEL OF HUMAN MIND, WILL, AND SENTIMENT AND OF FREEDOM AND CONSCIOUSNESS	49
Adrian IGNAT, THE ECONOMIC CRISIS – THE TRIAL MOMENTS OF OUR SOCIETY	59
PhD. arch. Ioana Păvălucă-BRĂESCU, ASPECTS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE ROMANIAN MONASTERIES: THE PRESENCE OF PRISONS IN THE MODERN PERIOD	69
Ph.D. Ion Marian CROITORU, PATRISTIC AND NEOPATRISTIC THEOLOGY? PERIODS OF PATROLOGY IN THE CHURCH LIFE	79
Presentation of ICOANA CREDINTEI	97

Preface

The 10th issue of Icoana Credintei Credintei - Icon of Faith, International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research (IFIJISR) encompasses a group of articles on various themes, dedicated to the areas of Theology, Education, Science and Religion. In addition, although Theology, Education, Science and Religion studies have been a major focus for our life and many scholars understand their value, only a few spend their time actually exploring related issues.

In this context the committee of corresponding authors for the issue 10, (june 2019) of Icoana Credintei, invite authors and readers to visit our website to review articles and items of interest. The issue starts with the keynote lecture “JUSTICE BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE, delivered by Professor Prof. Ph.D. Daniel AYUCH. The article provides a critical approach to justice and social justice as reflected in Scripture and contemporary Orthodox theology. The next paper belongs to Prof. Ph.D. Nicușor BELDIMAN, entitled: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SERMON AND THE PREACHER’S RESPONSIBILITY, ACCORDING TO ARCHIMANDRITE IULIU SCRIBAN. Author present the personality of Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban and the significance that speech has in preaching the Word of God and he describes it as the tool with which the priest fulfills the mission he was given by his Savior, to preach His Gospel to the world.

Prof. Ph.D. David PESTROIU, signs the paper, entitled: “THE CONCEPT OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD”- A LINK BETWEEN MISSIONARY THEOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY. In this study, author present, on the one hand, the role of spirituality for missionary theology, starting from fulfilling the concrete experience of the Divine Presence, and on the other, I will seek raising awareness of the dangers of the false spiritualist movements promoted by the New Age movement and the rationalistic - anti-theistic concepts of postmodernity. The next author Mathew VIVAN, bears the title: THE METAPHYSICS OF THE CONCUPISCENCE.

The following issue, unfolded by Prof. Ph.D. Marin BUGIULESCU is the THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE SIN AT THE LEVEL OF HUMAN MIND, WILL, AND SENTIMENT AND OF FREEDOM AND CONSCIOUSNESS. Author presents the moral impact of sin on man and society, she remark that modern man does not have as features spiritual and moral balance. The next paper belongs to Prof. Ph.D. Adrian IGNAT and brings new clues in understanding THE ECONOMIC CRISIS – THE TRIAL MOMENTS OF OUR SOCIETY. The paper analyses the French Revolution, as the start of individualism on society understanding, and continues with actual economic crisis with its involvement on our society and our life. The next article belongs to Ph.D. arch. Ioana Păvălucă-BRĂESCU in which he exposes the theme: ASPECTS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE ROMANIAN MONASTERIES: THE PRESENCE OF PRISONS IN THE MODERN.

The issue 10, June 2019, of Icoana Credintei, ends with Prof. Ph.D. Ion Marian CROITORU paper: PATRISTIC AND NEOPATRISTIC THEOLOGY? PERIODS OF PATROLOGY IN THE CHURCH LIFE. The central idea present the concepts of patristic theology and neopatristic theology, and also concerning the syntagms neopatristic or new patristic synthesis, all of them having as a substratum the issue of accepting or not limits for the patristic period

June 2019

Prof. Ph.D. Marin BUGIULESCU

JUSTICE BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Prof. Ph.D. Daniel AYUCH,
Faculty of Orthodox Theology,
University of Balamand,
LIBAN
E-mail: dayuch@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article provides a critical approach to justice and social justice as reflected in Scripture and contemporary Orthodox theology. Some readings from the prophets and the wisdom books are commented and related to some key texts in the New Testament, especially those in the Sermon on the Mount. Usually, human beings seek justice because they need an ordered social context. Christians, however, pursue justice mainly because they intend to live according to the Lord's commandment to love the neighbor as themselves. Christians show their faith in their deeds, i.e., they express their orthodoxy through orthopraxy, which is particularly evident in the way they approach their neighbor and the environment where they live.

Keywords: justice, social justice, neighborly love, the beatitudes, Georges Khodr;

INTRODUCTION

The quest for justice is an inherent desire in human nature and has its origins in the mere notion of subsisting within an ordered social context. The idea of justice is part of the common imagination of human beings as Yuval Noah Harari would say (Sapiens 3). Already the Code of King Hammurabi presents the monarch as a just king thanks to divine instruction. Anu, Enlil and Marduk, the great gods of the Mesopotamian pantheon, designated Hammurabi “to make justice prevail in the land, to abolish the wicked and the evil, to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak” (Roth 76). Inspired or not, the canon of this Mesopotamian king persists to this day and is one of the oldest sources of law collections treasured by humankind. Justice is a divine principle that is present not only in the Mesopotamian and Egyptian wisdom, but also in the Biblical wisdom. The divinities have founded and based the entire creation on justice, and they have bestowed on this concept a power of vital character. This order of life called justice rules not only the created world but also the gods. In Sumerian they called it ME, in ancient Coptic they called it Ma'at and in Biblical Hebrew it has always been called Ts^cdeqah.

1. JUSTICE IN REVELATION

The wisdom of Israel urges its readers to identify this primary order in daily life and to validate it in practice. This order is called “justice”. A main axiom for the wise men of the Old Testament says that justice achieves peace (הַצְדָּקָה מְבִיאָ אֶת-הַשְּׁלוֹמִים). This is witnessed in several books of the Bible such as in Isaiah 32:17 “And the work of righteousness will be peace, and the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever” or in Psalm 85:10 “Lovingkindness and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” In the Old Testament the quest for justice is not a profane intellectual activity, as

perhaps it would be today in a secular world, but it is anchored in the essential principle of wisdom, i.e., the fear of God. Therefore: “Timor domini principium sapientiae” says Proverbs 1:7 and many other biblical quotations. In them one can find the Lord of revelation showing himself as a model of justice and as a source of justice. Hence, for the believers to seek God means to seek justice. Already Psalm 42:1 exclaims this thirst for the just God: “As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God.” The entire psalm is an extraordinary text expressing the pain of an exiled man that feels beaten by injustice. This is why in verse 10 the psalmist declares: “I will say to God my rock, ‘Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?’” (Ps 42:9). In other words, the thirst for justice is manifested above all when the human beings experience oppression for themselves. Those who love their neighbor as themselves, a commandment common to both the Old and the New Testament, do also feel a thirst for justice whenever they see a human being suffering under oppression and injustice. Moreover, it is this thirst that moves them to take initiative and go out in search of God. That is why Psalm 43, a complement to the previous poem – both psalms are supposed to be read together-, begins with the exclamation: “Vindicate me, O God, and plead my case against an ungodly nation; O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!”

The prophet Amos denounces those who “sell the righteous for money and the needy for a pair of sandals” (Am 2:6. See also 5:11 and 8:5-6). Similarly Isaiah declares: “The Lord enters into judgment with the elders and princes of His people: ‘It is you who have devoured the vineyard; the plunder of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the face of the poor?’” (Is 3:14-15). In the same time, Micah stands up in the name of the Lord against those “who eat the flesh of my people, strip off their skin from them, break their bones and chop them up as for the pot and as meat in a kettle (Mi 3:3).¹

“Eloi, Eloi lama sabachthani!” A cry that comes out from the heart of man whenever they experience injustice, that is to say, when they experience the absence of God. From the very heart of Jesus on the cross, Mark testifies, this exclamation sprang up, which is at the same time a quotation from the opening verse of Psalm 22. This is one of those few quotations that in the Gospel are first given in Aramaic and then translated into Greek (see Mk 15:34). The psalm appeals for justice and speaks of a righteous man who suffers in the name of justice and for the sake of justice. It is exactly in those moments in which both harshness and weakness collide when justice shows itself as a need. In this sense, the cross and the resurrection are the certainty that God will not leave the oppressed and the persecuted ones without doing justice to them and without granting his servants a triumphant ending.

But does this imply a neglect of the needy in the hope of God's intervention? Should one behave like the evil ones of Psalm 22 and say, “he committed *himself* to the Lord; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him” (v. 9). Of course not. The essential principle of *imitatio Dei* rules on all those who believe in the God of revelation and even more on those who believe in Jesus Christ, so that they are called to become an instrument of God and to intervene to save all who suffer injustice, oppression and pain. This principle is already present in the story of creation “rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Gen 1:28). But it is anchored above all in the famous axiom of Jesus “you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48), which the author of Luke formulated as “be

¹ See more in Verkindere, G. *La Justicia en el Antiguo Testamento*. CB 105. Estella (Navarra): Verbo Divino. 2001, 30.

merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Lk 6:36). A saying that has its origins in the Law, especially in Lev 19:2 where we read “you shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.” Finally, the alphabetic psalm pair 111-112 explains in the verse that starts with the Hebrew letter Het (verse 4b) the existing synergy between divine and human actions thanks to man’s imitation of divine justice. While psalm 111 praises the divine works, the other one commends the righteous person because of their life witness:

Ps 111:4b	The Lord is gracious and compassionate. ἐλεήμων καὶ οἰκτίρων ὁ κύριος
Ps 112:4b	He is gracious and compassionate and <i>righteous</i> . ἐλεήμων καὶ οἰκτίρων καὶ δίκαιος

To replace the divine name, the commendation of the virtuous man adds here the most holy title a man can obtain, which is to be a *righteous* man. The community of believers express their faith by doing good works so that their orthodoxy may be reflected in an orthopraxy, that is to say that they show orthodoxy every time they care for their neighbors, particularly for the needy. Moreover, today it is also necessary to extend this orthopraxy to the environment as well, since Christians are called to take care of nature in every sense: the earth, the air, the water and every living plant and animal in the world.

2. JUSTICE IN MATTHEW 5:6

In the Christian tradition the Sermon on the Mount is that greatest text to which we turn to consult on the foundations of Christian faith and work. Precisely in this sermon, Matthew mentions the term justice (δικαιοσύνη) most frequently, i.e., five of the seven times that the term appears in his Gospel. It may not be a high rate of occurrences, yet justice is an immanent and essential component of Matthew's theology. The first time he mentions it is in the fourth beatitude, which refers above all to that yearning for justice that we have been talking about above: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied” (μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται).

If we make a synoptic comparison of the Beatitude in both Matthew 5:6 and Luke 6:21, we can see how Matthew added the term “justice” as a direct object of hunger and thirst. That is to say, in Luke hunger has the experiential and material connotation of the individual, which is to go through the real feeling of need for food, “Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied” (Lk 6:21). On the other hand, the writer of the First Gospel adds the verb to thirst and the noun justice in order to give to the beatitude a spiritual background that does not take away the material aspect but takes it a step further. That is to say, nothing prevents the recipients of Matthew's beatitude from suffering material hunger, but above all, Matthew awakens that attitude of solidarity and neighborly love that move the disciples to feel hunger and thirst for justice when they see someone suffering oppression and need. Therefore, if we see the entire added expression “to thirst for justice” the educated reader of the Bible recognizes immediately the allusion to Psalms 42-43 that were mentioned earlier and that begin with: “As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God,” in which the longing for God is to thirst for justice. Perhaps, that is why St. Gregory of Nyssa in his homily on Matthew 4 in paragraph 5 understands Matthean justice as the ideal of virtue in general. And when Saint John Chrysostom interprets it in his commentary as a special virtue against greed, he was without a doubt referring to social justice, that is, to the generous administration of goods in favor of those in need (Commentary to Matthew 15:3).

The Biblical scholar Ulrich Luz, an important representative of modern exegesis on the Gospel according to Matthew, affirms that the term justice that appears in the fourth and eighth beatitudes is to be understood as a reference to human behavior. Thus, therefore, “being hungry and thirsty” can mean both “longing for” and “striving to” something. Thus, classical and modern exegesis sees in this text of Matthew a call to social commitment. To hunger and thirst for justice is therefore to strive constantly, day by day, in a quest for understanding virtue and practicing a true Christian behavior.

3. A SUCCINCT THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Based on the prophetic Biblical texts, the former Archbishop of Mount Lebanon, H.E. Georges Khodr, points out in one of his articles written in year 2009 that justice must be measured by the way it behaves towards the poor.² This is in itself a Biblical principle that, as he points out, is to be read in the Book of Isaiah, although Amos already had it clearly envisaged as well, beside all the other prophets. Justice in society is reflected mainly in the treatment they give to the weaker, in the readiness they show to assist those who can neither give back nor reward with material possessions. When the authorities of a society and their individuals help out of conviction, because they need to do good to others, then a service of love is being offered, as Bishop Khodr says. Therefore, justice manifests itself in the practice of the commandment of neighborly love. These words sound quite difficult to be put in practice, but they are important for those Christians who commit themselves to follow Jesus and try to love not only those who are close but also their enemies (Neighborly love: Mt 5:43, 19:19; Enemy love: Mt 5: 44; Lk 6:27).

In another article of year 2010 H.E. Georges Khodr says that a righteous ruler is a ruler who confesses God’s authority and who follows His commandments. In this case, the ruler becomes a kind of God’s instrument to fulfill His justice on earth. Justice is not necessarily present in what the majority votes neither in a government of consensus, because, as Khodr says, one can make a nation agree on hatred and be in favor of injustice.³ Something that has been seen repeatedly in history and the Nazi Germany can be a clear example. Only God has a justice that is absolute and that therefore does not vary in favor of the conveniences of some, but rather acts, according to our Christian theology, by the principles of love and mercy. Therefore, it is important that it be God, the God of revelation, the first and highest model of justice for man.

On a different note and in an era in which collective responsibility is a must and sustainability projects with commitments that protect the environment worldwide are claimed by the younger generations, Staretz Zosima from “The Brothers Karamazov” illustrates well enough our responsibility to be just and to do justice. We are all responsible for the destiny of every human being. Zosima says:

“There is one way for you to overcome these obstacles: take firm hold of yourselves and make yourselves answerable for all men’s sins. This is also the truth, friends! For as soon as a man sincerely accepts the idea that he is answerable for the sins of all men, he will realize that, indeed, he is answerable for everybody and everything” (Karamazov II.VI.G).

2 “Woe to who is cursed by the poor citizen.” *Annahar Newspaper*, 7 May 2018. ONLINE. Reprinted in: <https://goo.gl/rSqZmQ> (In Arabic).

3 “Authority.” *Annahar Newspaper*, 19 June 2010. ONLINE. Reprinted in: <https://goo.gl/ZwVYRx> (In Arabic).

This teaching on shared responsibility should not be used to incriminate others and consider ourselves free from sin, as if all others were guilty and we were not, but above all it should serve to awaken a feeling of solidarity and to promote a spirit of community work.

CONCLUSIONS

Last year an internationally famous Lebanese movie with the title “Capernaum” has critically and acutely pointed out the level of social injustice that exists in Lebanese society. Above all, it has accused an indifferent society and a cadre of leaders who do not engage beyond the needed formalities, being more concerned in appearing to observe justice than to really practice justice; the polar opposite of Jesus' instruction: “Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them” (Mt 6:1).

The call “Justice, *and only* justice, you shall pursue” in Deuteronomy 16:20, is a Biblical imperative that the great saints in different parts of the world sought to fulfill. Let's mention in the Orthodox Church Saint Nektarios of Aegina and Saint Nicholas of Mira and also Saint Juliana of Lazarevo. From the West, one can mention Saint Francis of Assisi, Mother Teresa of Calcutta and also Saint Maximilian Kolbe. These men and women did not go out to “change the world” in the political sense of the phrase, nor did they need a rational motivation based on humanist solidarity and philanthropy. These blessed Christians are clear role-models, who understood the imperative of behaving with justice and wanted to live following the footsteps of the Lord with the only desire of contributing with a grain of sand to the propagation of the Christian message of salvation to those around them.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Dostoyevsky, Fyodor, and Andrew H. MacAndrew. *The Brothers Karamazov*. New York: Bantam Books, 2009. EPUB.
- [2] Guillaumin, Jean Y. Gabrielle Parent, and Adalbert G. Hamman. *Grégoire De Nysse Commente Les Béatitudes*. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1979. Print.
- [3] Harari, Yuval Noah. *Sapiens: a brief history of humankind*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2018.
- [4] John Chrysostom. *Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew*. Translated by Philip Schaff. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991. Print.
- [5] Khodr, Georges. “Authority.” *Annahar Newspaper*, 19 June 2010. ONLINE. Reprinted in: <https://goo.gl/ZwVYRx> (In Arabic).
- [6] Khodr, Georges. “Woe to who is cursed by the poor citizen.” *Annahar Newspaper*, 7 May 2018. ONLINE. Reprinted in: <https://goo.gl/rSqZmQ> (In Arabic).
- [7] Luz, Ulrich. *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007. Print.
- [8] Roth, M. *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*. Atlanta: SBL, 1997.
- [9] Verkindere, G. *La Justicia en el Antiguo Testamento*. CB 105. Estella (Navarra): Verbo Divino, 2001.

<https://doi.org/10.26520/icoana.2019.10.5.10-20>

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SERMON AND THE PREACHER'S RESPONSIBILITY, ACCORDING TO ARCHIMANDRITE IULIU SCRIBAN

Prof. Ph.D. Nicușor BELDIMAN,

“Faculty of Orthodox Theology „Justinian the Patriarch”, University of Bucharest,
ROMANIA,

E-mail: prnbeldiman@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In his homiletic writings, the author illustrates the significance that speech has in preaching the Word of God and he describes it as the tool with which the priest fulfills the mission he was given by his Savior, to preach His Gospel to the world. Father Iuliu Scriban insists on several traits that characterize church language, stressing the idea that the Church has established very precise forms for expounding the truths of faith, for the use of the revealed Word. Thus, words must be the most suitable in respect with their contents; they must convey God's will. He recommends that words without any impact or words that carry no emotion, no suggestive value, no authority, should be avoided.

Keywords: Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban; prestigious preacher; sermon; realism; homiletic writings; sermon for children;

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Being sensitive to all the great aspirations of his time and integrating himself fully into the age in which he was living, Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban tried to suggest answers to the major problems of life by relying on Christian teachings, seeking to enlighten and instill morale in the society to which he belonged. He “guided, he led the way but at the same time he fought, he debated”. He was the Church's spokesman in all social, cultural and religious matters of his time, “guiding, and teaching with conviction and wisdom”¹. As a priest, he served in the Romanian Chapel in Baden-Baden and at the “Kalinderu” Church in Bucharest, where he carried out his mission with remarkable dignity, celebrating the liturgical services with piety and warmth, but above all, preaching zealously, with talent and passion, as a prestigious preacher.

Using ample gestures and his pleasant baritone voice, he delivered his sermons in a pure Romanian language, making deeply insightful commentaries and giving convincing examples². His speeches were enjoyed by educated people and by the less educated alike. He preached so extensively that “if he had written on paper all his sermons and speeches, hundreds of volumes would have been created”. He spoke with ease and fluency, and he was

¹ Pr. Nicușor Beldiman, *Predica în Biserica Ortodoxă Română din Muntenia în secolul al XX-lea – Analiză și evaluare (The Sermon in the Romanian Orthodox Church from Muntenia in the XX th Century. Analysis and Evaluation)*, University of Bucharest, 2017, p. 102.

² *Ibidem*.

gifted with the rare skill of improvisation. He was unique in interpreting the nature of contemporary life down to the most insignificant fact, and this gave his sermons realism and a great power of attracting the audience”³. He was born on May 31st, 1878 in Galați and attended the Theological Seminary in Galați, “Veniamin” Seminary in Iași and the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest (1898-1902), obtaining his degree in 1903 and his Ph.D. in 1920. He was tonsured into the monastic life at the Neamt monastery (1904), ordained as hiero-monk and superior of the Romanian Orthodox Chapel in Baden-Baden (1904-1909). During this time, he attended the courses of the Faculty of Catholic and Protestant Theology in Strasbourg, and the Faculty of Philosophy in Heidelberg. He was promoted to the rank of Archimandrite by Metropolitan Iosif Gheorghian. On his return to the country, he was appointed Headmaster of the Central Seminary in Bucharest (1909-1919), and continued there as a professor until 1928. He then became a professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Theology at the Faculty of Theology in Chișinău, and was later transferred to the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest (1941-1943). He participated in many different ecumenical and inter-Orthodox meetings abroad: the Inter-Orthodox Conference on the matter of the calendar (Constantinople, 1923), the World Conference on Practical Christianity (Stockholm, 1925), the Congress of Orthodox Theology Professors held in Athens (1936).

He published textbooks for seminaries, homiletic, pastoral and apologetic studies, volumes of sermons, devotional books, hundreds of articles, translations, notes, and reviews in the Church magazines: *Pentru limbă și țară* (*For the language and the country*), Bucharest, 1916; *Chemarea preotului. Studiu îndrumător pentru activitatea pastorală a preotului* (*A Priest's Calling. A Guidebook for the Priest's Pastoral Activity*), Bucharest, 1921; *Studiul Pastoralei în Biserica românească* (*Study on the Pastoral Work in the Romanian Church*), Sibiu, 1924; *Priveliști din câmpul Omileticii* (*Considerations on Homiletics*), Bucharest, 1929; *Un predicator francez: Père Brydaine* (*A French Preacher: Père Brydane*) (1701-1767), Bucharest, 1933; *Datoria preotului către limba bisericească* (*The Priest's Duty towards the Church language*) Sibiu, 1938; *Patruzeci de predici populare* (*Forty sermons for the People*), 1st edition, Bucharest, 1904; *Cincizeci de predici populare* (*Fifty sermons for the People*), 2nd edition, Vălenii de Munte, 1908; *Șaizeci de predici populare* (*Sixty sermons for the People*), 3rd edition, Vălenii de Munte, 1913; *Predici pentru popor* (*Sermons for the People*), 4th edition, Bucharest, 1944; *Originea Duminicii ca zi de sărbătoare în Biserica creștină* (*The Origins of Sunday as a Holy day in the Christian Church*), Bucharest, 1921; *Învățătura crucii sau alfabetul creștinului* (*Teachings of the Cross or a Christian's Alphabet*), Bucharest, 1922; *Tălcuirea Sfintelor Evanghelii a celor patru evangheliști* (*Interpretation of the Holy Gospels of the four Evangelists*) Chișinău, 1931; *Cartea cărților: Sfânta Scriptură sau Biblia* (*The Book of Books: The Holy Scripture or the Bible*), Bucharest, 1937.

As a Theology professor, he kept his students informed about everything that was being published in the literature on the subjects he was teaching, about all the movements and theological currents developing abroad. His Pastoral Theology courses were interesting and educational, because in his youth he had been concerned with the study of the Pastoral Theology and his discourses were informed by his rich pastoral experience⁴. When teaching Homiletics, he didn't simply address the homiletic principles within the limited framework

³ Pr. Grigorie Cristescu, *Părintele arhimandrit Iuliu Scriban* (*Father Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban*), in „G.B.”, year VIII (1949), no. 1-2, p. 111.

⁴ Pr. prof. Ioan Constantinescu, *Arhimandritul Iuliu Scriban* (*Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban*) (1878-1949), in „S.T.”, year XXVIII (1976), no. 7-10, p. 740.

of the course, but instead presented the profiles of a series of Christian preachers such as: Franck Thomas, Spurgeon, Filaret, Zocchi, Robertson, Père Samson, as well as some of their sermons, as sources and examples for the speeches delivered in the church. By understanding the role and noble purpose of sermon, he advocated outside the academic circles, in various articles, for restoring the sermon to its rightful leading role in a priest's activity. He had a true calling for spreading the Word of God and he was evidently well prepared and well-endowed for this mission⁵.

In his homiletic writings, the author illustrates the significance that speech has in preaching the Word of God and he describes it as the tool with which the priest fulfills the mission he was given by his Savior, to preach His Gospel to the world. Father Iuliu Scriban insists on several traits that characterize church language, stressing the idea that the Church has established very precise forms for expounding the truths of faith, for the use of the revealed Word. Thus, words must be the most suitable with respect of their contents; they must convey God's will. He recommends that words without any impact or words that carry no emotion, no suggestive value, no authority, should be avoided.

1. A FRENCH PREACHER: JACQUES BRYDAINE (1701-1767)

Information about this brochure is provided in its foreword, where the author tells us that it is part of a small collection of studies published for the benefit of his students at the Faculty of Theology in Chișinău⁶. The book includes two articles, namely: *Viața și lucrarea lui Jacques Brydaine (The Life and Works of Jacques Brydaine)*, first published in *Păstorul Ortodox (The Orthodox Shepherd)* review, and respectively: *De ce nu predicăm și de ce predicăm slab? (Why we fail to preach, or we preach poorly)*, first published in *Viitorul (The Future)* review.

The author presents the biographical data of the preacher Jacques Brydaine highlighting several significant aspects of his life: he began his preaching activity in 1725 when he was ordained as priest; as a missionary he "traveled across France, preaching everywhere he went"⁷, during his 256 missionary journeys. Due to his fervor for Christian sermon, his activity remains as an important page in the history of the great Christian preachers.

What established him as a consecrated preacher was his speech of 1753, delivered in the Saint-Sulpice Church in Paris. There were voices claiming that the introductory part of this sermon does not belong to Father Brydaine, because it was *improved* over time⁸. Upon examining several sermons of Father, Archimandrite Scriban ascertains that this introduction is indeed entirely the author's: "having read his sermons, we assert that the introductory part in question is in full agreement with the usual tone and ardor of Brydaine"⁹. The author further highlights a detail about the preacher's speeches, namely that he did not prepare them beforehand, and in spite of this, they were very well put together, proving an incredible

⁵ Pr. prof. dr. Constantin Galeriu, *Catedra de Omiletică și Catehetică cu noțiuni de Pedagogie*, in „S.T.”, year XXXIII (1981), no. 7-10, p. 580.

⁶ The two articles in this brochure are part of the course entitled *Chipurile cele mai de seamă ale cuvântării creștinești (The most important figures of Christian sermon)* at the department of Homiletics of the Faculty of Theology in Chișinău.

⁷ Arhim. Iuliu Scriban, *Predicatorul francez Jacques Brydaine (French Preacher Jacques Brydaine)*, „Astoria” Printing Press, Bucharest, 1933, p. 8-9.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 10-11.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

mastery of the discourse. Finally, we are presented with the famous introduction of the 1753 sermon and with another speech on the topic of forgiveness of one's enemies.

In the second part of the brochure, the author speaks about the sermon by answering two questions: *Why do we fail to preach?* and *Why do we preach poorly?* Paradoxically, the Church was born through preaching, and yet, hundreds of years later, there is almost no preaching going on anymore. During the early centuries people were not so educated, so preaching was performed as best possible. Later, the Church noticed how the preaching activity was becoming more and more scarcer and took a stand: canon 58 of the Apostolic Council¹⁰, canon 19 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council¹¹. There should be more preaching, said Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban: "failure to preach is tantamount to denying the Church, because when you say Church you say preaching, teaching. At its very core lies the act of preaching"¹².

To answer the question *Why do we fail to preach?*, the author gives a simple and forthright reason: "because there is no love"¹³. If the priest truly loves his flock, he shall preach, he shall open the minds of people and show them where they err. In addition, the author draws attention to another aspect, namely the need to defend the Church, because "one hears so many unfair accusations against the Church that it is impossible not to feel pain in our heart and not come to its defense"¹⁴. Finally, the author addresses the weak points, showing that the amount of preaching is rather insufficient: "we boast about the great number of sermons delivered today in Romania. Actually there are not that many, but to be truthful, there are really very few; the pulpits are silent, most of the time"¹⁵. Rarely can one find a good sermon, and the reason is that the sermon is delivered not out of love, but out of duty. To make a good sermon, you need to prepare thoroughly, because "without preparation, the sermon cannot come together as a whole"¹⁶. Archimandrite Scriban lays particular emphasis on the special preparation of the sermon.

Accepting the risk of being criticized, the author revealed these flaws of the Romanian sermon, hoping that in the future priests would show more zeal in their service and would pay more attention to the moment of preaching, remembering the Savior's commandment "Go and teach all nations..." (Matthew 28, 19).

¹⁰ "If any bishop or presbyter neglects the clergy or the people, and does not instruct them in the way of godliness, let him be excommunicated, and if he persists in his negligence and idleness, let him be deposed." (Archdeacon prof. dr. Ioan N. Floca, *Canoanele Bisericii Ortodoxe, Note și comentarii (Canons of the Orthodox Church, Notes and commentaries)*, 3rd edition, improved, Sorin Joantă ed., Sibiu, 2005, p. 40). As the Savior commanded, *Go and teach all nations..* (Matthew 28, 19), priests and bishops have the duty to teach the believers about the Orthodox faith. For this purpose, the clergy must preach and catechize the believers.

¹¹ "We declare that the deans of churches., on every day, but more especially on Sundays, must teach all the Clergy and the laity words of truth out of the Holy Bible, analyzing the meanings and judgments of the truth, and not deviating from the definitions already laid down, or the teaching derived from the God-bearing Fathers; but also, if the discourse be one concerning a passage of Scripture, not to interpret it otherwise than as the luminaries and teachers of the Church in their own written works have presented it; and let them rather content themselves with these discourses than attempt to produce discourses of their own, lest, at times, being resourceless, they overstep the bounds of propriety..." (Arhid. prof. dr. Ioan N. Floca, *Canoanele Bisericii Ortodoxe (Canons of the Romanian Orthodox Church)*... p. 128). Through this canon bishops and priests have the obligation to preach especially on Sundays but when they prepare the sermons they need to do it in the spirit of the Holy Fathers, following their guidance in order not to fall in error.

¹² Arhim. Iuliu Scriban, *Predicatorul francez Jacques Brydaine...*, p. 2.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 2-3.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

This shows the importance Iuliu Scriban assigns to the sermon, but also his interest in the foreign preachers that may set examples for us.

2. CONSIDERATIONS ON HOMILETICS¹⁷

In 1928 he was appointed the position of Professor of Homiletics at the Faculty of Theology in Chișinău. In addition to the notions he taught his students, he worked to create a textbook as study material for the course, thus reviving the subject of Homiletics: “Until now the principles of Homiletics used to be taught according to a set of rules that were entirely unappealing to those learning them and from which they hardly derived any benefit. Archimandrite Scriban has widened the horizon of the Homiletics field, has laid new bases and sowed rich seeds that are beginning to ripen into usefulness. He made the homiletic material richer, he interpreted its principles, and he made the representative figures of sermon well known to any theologian”¹⁸.

The book presents articles published in the *Biserica Ortodoxă Română (Romanian Orthodox Church)* review. The textbook has 178 pages, grouped in 14 chapters. We mention the essential ideas in each chapter.

*Old Romanian Homiletics*¹⁹. In the beginning the author remarks that the first to appear were the sermons and then the books/textbooks on how sermons can be produced. The first compilations of sermons appeared in the 16th-17th centuries (*Cazaniile [Sermon Books]*, the *Kiriakodromion*), while treatises on Homiletics appeared much later, in the 19th century. He then examines and highlights the essential parts of the Homiletics treatises. The first published work was entitled: *Teologia pastorală sau datoriile preoților* (Pastoral Theology or the Priest's Duties) and was a Russian treatise written by hierarchs Gheorghe Coninski and Partenie Sopkovski in 1776, translated and published in Romanian in 1817. The first Romanian Homiletics work belongs to Archimandrite Teoctist Scriban - *Omiletica sau Știința despre literatura bisericească (Homiletics or the Science of Church Literature)*, Iași, 1856, followed by a second volume in 1857. Upon examining the book, the author notes that it is more than just a homiletics textbook because “the teachings imparted by this book is purely Christian”²⁰. Archim. Scriban recommends this text because it offers solutions and points of view concerning the fight against sects. *Omiletica (The Homiletics)* by Dionisie Romano, *Principii de Retorică și Eloquiuța Amvonului (Principles of Rhetorics and Eloquence at the Pulpit)* (Iași, 1859) is, as the title indicates, a book on rhetorics rather than on Homiletics as such. It is divided into: “rules of general oratory... common classification of rhetorics, with approaches on syllogisms, dilemmas, inductive reasoning and others”²¹. He translates and presents the section on church language in the book entitled *Lecons de Litterature* by Ulysse de Marsillac, published in Bucharest in 1859. It is a short list of homiletic principles which Archimandrite Scriban considers important because it is offered not by an expert but rather by a teacher of French literature. This is what he mentions at the end of this presentation: “So we had amidst us, though not in our own language, a brief but beautiful presentation of homiletics, a study well put together; its discovery brought us great

¹⁷ The Printing Press of Church Books, Bucharest, 1929.

¹⁸ Jerom. Vasile Vasilache, *Arhimandritul Iuliu Scriban (Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban)*, in „M.M.S”, anul XXV (1949), nr. 1-2, p. 236.

¹⁹ Archim. Iuliu Scriban, *Vechile Omiletici românești (The Old Romanian Homiletics)*, in „B.O.R.”, year XLVI (1928), no. 7, pp. 613-623.

²⁰ Idem, *Priveliști din câmpul Omileticii (Considerations on Homiletics)*, the Printing Press of Church Books, Bucharest, 1929, p. 9.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

joy and with the same joy we share it with our readers and with those who are drawn to homiletic studies”²².

The Sermon Today²³. The author notes that preaching is scarce and tries to find out the cause, but also to offer solutions. This is what he says: “The blame is to be placed on the very contents of the sermon, on the method used, on its shift from a living event, as is expected of the preacher who should pour his soul out to his followers, into a mere piece of standardized work”²⁴. Archimandrite Scriban also finds that the audience has changed: people are no longer religious, they no longer come to the church, and priests have to speak to them as they would to pagans and to ignorant. That means that preaching work will become easier since “we will no longer deal with important matters extensively, nor choose those that are the most difficult, but rather start from the beginners’ level... talk in a language that is simple and comprehensible...”²⁵. At the same time, he gives examples of priests and bishops who were concerned with the sermon: Metropolitan Partenie of Moldavia who even sent a pastoral letter asking priests to preach regularly in the church. Other bishops who were concerned with the sermon were Ghenadie Petrescu and bishop Atanasie of Râmnic.

As rev. prof. David Pestroiu asserted, “we can still distinguish between preaching and dialogue. They both have the same purpose: spreading the Truth, but they are different in shape and content. The preaching can also be a monologue and has as the single point of order the words from the Holy Bible. Instead, the dialogue knows a much higher plate of meanings and approaches, in regard to different functions of language and also to context of pluralism, industrialization and globalization”²⁶

Is sermon wanted? Because preaching had not been done all the time, it had become an oddity in some parishes. Scriban even asserted that parishioners did not know that the sermon is a liturgical act. There were, however, people who were aware of the importance of the sermon. One of them was Prince Barbu Dimitrie Stirbei, former minister of Religious Affairs, who proposed to establish seminaries where the future priests would be trained so that they could speak to all Romanians everywhere. Another advocate of preaching was Minister Grigore Paucescu, who wanted “churches to offer teachings too”²⁷. The same stance was taken by Bishop Iosif Gheorghian of Galați and by Gh. D. Mugur, who wrote two articles on the importance of sermon in the “Universul” newspaper in 1927.

A great figure of the Orthodox preaching. As soon as he became a professor at the Faculty of Theology in Chișinău, he showed an ardent desire to make personalities of sermon known to the world. One of them was Archbishop Innocent of Odessa and Herson. He published his sermons in a journal that was highly demanded, and even founded his own review – *Citirea Duminicală (Sunday Readings)*.

Oral or written preaching? Pope Leon XIII once said: *Our newspapers will reach places where your sermons do not*. Taking this dictum into consideration, the author shows that a written sermon is also a means of catechizing the people. Just as a written sermon is difficult to put together, so is the spoken one, because in a matter of minutes you need to summarize what you want to convey. However, he draws attention to the fact that we should

²² *Ibidem*, p. 24.

²³ *Idem*, *Predica în ziua de azi (Sermon Today)*, în „B.O.R.”, anul XLVI (1928), no. 10, p. 896-909.

²⁴ *Idem*, *Privești din câmpul Omileticii (Considerations on Homiletics)*..., p. 26.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 30.

²⁶ David PESTROIU, *Religious Dialogue in Postmodernity – Necessity, Chances, Perspectives*, in „International Journal of Orthodox Theology”, no. 4:1 (2013), p. 154.

²⁷ Arhim. Iuliu SCRIBAN, *Privești din câmpul Omileticii (Considerations on Homiletics)*..., p. 40.

prefer preaching orally, “because what does man do more readily? Talk or read?”²⁸. It is easier to listen than to read. The author is right when he asserts that written sermons will not be widely read.

Another great figure of Orthodox sermon: Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow. Archimandrite Scriban considers Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow the most important 19th - century personality of the Russian Church. Referring to the sermons of the Russian Metropolitan, Archimandrite Scriban states that “in addition to their theological significance, there are some that are fruitful and enlightening through the very national language”²⁹. After a brief review of the important moments in the Metropolitan’s life, the author presents some of the characteristics of his sermons.

Challenges faced in preaching. In this chapter the author addresses another challenge that the sermon meets: free preaching. In history there have been great preachers who had difficulties in learning the sermon by heart. Some stopped preaching out of fear of making fools of themselves by stumbling right in the middle of their speech. To avoid this problem, the author believes that the sermon must be thoroughly prepared: “What is prepared down to the smallest detail is better than what is left to the spur of the moment”³⁰. Here is what the author recommends as a solution for a successful sermon: “The plan must be carefully thought out, revised, chiseled here, and mended there, so that in the end you will hold in your hands a beautiful piece of work. Your next step is filling with material each part of the plan that is clothing each characteristic in ideas, so that what results from this is an entirety perfectly bound together. This means putting on paper the entire chain of ideas, like something that grows step by step from your mind. Once you have done this as well, you need to go on further and search for ways in which you could utter what you have worked. From here you will struggle with the text that you created, to master its ideas. In order to voice them, you need to have them in mind, so that you will be able to utter them easily”³¹.

By the power of the mind or the grimaces of the face? Another foreign preacher is presented here, namely the Franciscan monk Agostino da Montefeltro. As is his custom, the author provides some biographical information, followed by an examination of his preaching manner. What can be remarked here is the fact that the author highlights the weaknesses in the speech of the above-mentioned monk, namely: the sermon must resemble a discourse from within the Church, not from without; by using these means of the *outside* world, ”he did not manage to attain what should have been the aim of the sermon: to turn man’s will towards God”³²; speaking too fast³³ or the contrary – speaking too slowly. In the end, Archimandrite Scriban also presents one of the monk’s sermons, namely an approach to *Cinstirea sărbătorilor (Observance of Holidays)*, uttered on the occasion of the 1889 Lent.

Preacher Gaetano Zocchi. We tend to believe that Archimandrite Scriban presented the Jesuit Gaetano Zocchi for the purpose of evidencing another threat to sermon – the exaggerated use of physical movements, namely mimic and gestures. The author explains: “it is not recommended that the man stand completely still, while speaking... on the other hand, nor should he be gesturing excessively”³⁴.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 59.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 68.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 75.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 77-78.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 88.

³³ The monk Agostino held the record of the fastest speaker. The newspapers of those times wrote that he would exceed 150 words per minute.

³⁴ Arhim. Iuliu SCRIBAN, *Priveliști din câmpul Omileticii (Considerations on Homiletics)*..., p. 104.

Preachers of today. Archim. Scriban believes that the person who extended the borders of Homiletics studies was Metropolitan Nectarie of Bukovina who, in his work entitled *Trepte formale în predică (Formal steps in sermon)* (Cernăuți, 1923) approached issues that had not been dealt with until then. After a brief review of the most famous preachers, the author stops at the French preacher Père Samson. As usual, the author provides us with a model of the most representative sermon of this French preacher. The speech is the first of a series of 7 sermons delivered in 1925. The one presented here is entitled *Învățătura noastră: Iisus Hristos și Iisus Hristos răstignit (Our teaching: Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ crucified)*, uttered in the presence of Cardinal Dubois and of three other bishops at the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris.

Poorly prepared sermons³⁵. Archimandrite Scriban thinks that many people are able to speak without having a text to read from or without preparing beforehand. The success of a discourse lies in thinking it through because “the whole foundation is not the spoken word, but what lies inside it, namely the thought”³⁶. The mistake people make is that they believe that the spoken word is everything and if the spoken words flow easily, the speech can be considered successful. That is why they should not open their mouth before thinking about what they are going to say, nor should they say anything or believe that if the spoken words flow easily, then everything else is also right. Rather than having spoken words pour out, people should care more for deep and clear thinking, because if their mind is clearly structured, then thought is easier to put into speech, even when you are not accustomed to speaking. “It is better to put some thought into what you say rather than just utter words in which you have not yet accustomed yourself to pour any meaning”³⁷. To speak should mean to think. When you start speaking, first you must think about what you intend to say. Don’t let yourself be carried away by the hope that language will work by itself and that you will easily be able to come up with random words. We must beware of words uttered uselessly, words that not have been thought out, words that have not been reflected upon, because to really say something, it takes more than just opening your mouth”³⁸.

He who starts speaking without preparation has an even greater duty to have a background of deeper, fuller preparation, a strong culture, and strong principles, rich experience and knowledge, on which he can rely when necessary. Preparation is always needed. “There is no water springing if there is no reservoir, and just like water will never climb higher than the height of the spring it came from, man will never reach higher than the training he possesses”³⁹. The unprepared speaker must write more, particularly in the beginning. By writing, you learn to speak. Just by speaking, you can only say what you have said before and you will see your horizon narrowing more and more, precisely when you want to expand it. The ability to think and speak is acquired through precise, carefully and persistently researched work, and this you cannot get from the spoken word alone. To be able to have many words at hand, and a treasury of well-tailored and enlightened speeches, the same diligence is necessary”⁴⁰.

³⁵ Idem, *Dacă am vorbi pe nepregătite (If we speak unprepared)* in „B.O.R.”, year XLVIII (1930), nr. 2, p. 130-139.

³⁶ Idem, *Priveliști din câmpul Omileticii (Considerations on Homiletics)*..., p.131.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 132.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 141.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

As for the contents of the discourse, the control through writing is unavoidable. Nobody can think straight if he cannot write. You should always fear the unclear speech, because the speech reveals its own flaws. With writing you are more careful and expect more from your work, while he who improvises a speech misguides himself with words that only conceal his flaws⁴¹.

Further on we find the opinion of Archbishop Ambrosius of Harkov about unprepared speech, as well as an article of the French preacher A. de Sertillanges.

A man who loved the sermon: Constantin Căță Nicolescu. The author presents this preacher as a “a man in love with sermon”⁴². We are introduced to his ideas on the significance of sermon and the power of the word. Archimandrite Scriban recommends the examples offered by Căță Nicolescu “to any young man who is learning the art of mastering speech”⁴³.

Sermons for children⁴⁴. An interesting fact is that the author reserves a special place in this textbook to the sermons for children. “The sermon for children stands next to the sermon for the grown up”⁴⁵. The sermon intended for children first appeared in England in the 1870s-1880s. Not any preacher can deliver a discourse to children because it is no easy task to talk to children. On the other hand, it is difficult to step down from your level of thinking to make your message understood by children.

The sermon broadcast on the radio. The author offers us some very interesting information, namely that in his time it was already possible to preach on the radio. These sermons were subsequently put in writing, and thus an entire radiophonic literature was born. However, it is one thing to speak to people standing right in front of you, and another thing to preach in their absence. Archimandrite Scriban concludes that “the radio-delivered sermon must be much more fluent in terms of speech so that it is understood by all”⁴⁶. Its language must be as simple as possible, without too many turns of phrases or subtleties in thinking; sentences must be short so as to meet this need as much as possible, and the length must be shorter than in the case of other sermons. The sermon delivered on the radio is heard by a larger audience than in a church. That is why the radiophonic speech must flow easily so everybody understands it. On the radio it is not appropriate to deliver very deep speeches. Although meant for people so spread out and far away, they must be friendly, as if the preacher were talking to the listeners face to face.

*“The sermon broadcast on the radio – says the author – those who are ill can hear it from their hospital beds. It is particularly for them that the sermon is of great comfort. As for those who are in prisons, speeches aired on the radio constitute a great and pleasant novelty. For this reason, the messenger of God must be happy that he has such preaching means available to him, when only the preaching in the church is not enough. Now, that we have this tool, all we need to do is use it!”*⁴⁷.

Finally, he presents a model of a radio sermon. Following the examination of these works, we can conclude that it is a very good textbook for the subject that he was teaching, especially due to the fact that it contained unusual chapters such as: *Challenges faced by the*

⁴¹ *Ibidem.*

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 148.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 150.

⁴⁴ Idem, *Predica pentru copii (Sermon for children)*, in „B.O.R.”, year XLIX (1931), no. 5, p. 422-427; *Evanghelizarea copiilor (Gospelizing children)*, in „B.O.R.”, year XLII (1924), no. 10, p. 602-604.

⁴⁵ Idem, *Privești din câmpul Omileticii (Considerations on Homiletics)*..., p. 159.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 172.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 167.

sermon, Poorly prepared sermons, Sermons for children etc., all these remarks being described in his characteristic style, wise and moralizing.

3. A PRIEST'S DUTY TOWARDS THE LANGUAGE OF THE CHURCH⁴⁸

The priest is an educated man. We can make him better understand the beautiful gift that the Church is given through the language it has worked with over time in the midst of its people. That is why it is very relevant to talk about the Church's language today. The priest, having the duty to protect the people from the many foreign infiltrations in its midst, needs to realize this and take upon himself to carry out the duty concerning "the language of old". By doing so, the priest shall be a soldier without sword and rifle, but defending fully and truthfully this valuable heritage of the past that is our language, from the days of Trajan up to the present⁴⁹.

In the language of church books, we find a treasure that must be cherished and used. No matter how full of Slavic terms it may be said to have, let us think that in it we find the first attempts of transposing thoughts into the language of the people, a task that was not at all easy. Just as Luther's Bible was treasured by his people, because it meant comprising the German language in writing, so the language in our church writings is "the common bond we all share, as a body of people" speaking the same language on the Romanian land⁵⁰.

CONCLUSION

As can be noted from everything presented here, Archimandrite Prof. Iuliu Scriban believed that sermon has an extremely important role in the pastoral mission. However, it must not be separated from the context of a life lived responsibly, and during which other missions also require to be carried out. Preaching the word is one of the greatest duties a priest has towards those he shepherds and all this must be in harmony. A true sermon is always in the spirit of the liturgical, architectural and iconographical ministry of a church. The Holy Liturgy prepares the believers for receiving the word of teaching. During the Liturgy, believers are much more willing to listen to a sermon. The sermon or homily, whatever the genre, completed later by the catechesis, have been and still are mandatory parts of the Holy Liturgy. The sermon is not optional, but rather an important moment in the mandatory ritual of Holy Liturgy. That is why we cannot conceive the Holy Liturgy without sermon or teachings.

A speech isolated from the Liturgy may generate in the listener a misguided sensation of knowledge of God. Thus, one may come to mistake the Gospel for the intellectual comprehension of faith, accompanied by a set of moral rules. As for the person who is preaching, his discourse, no matter how well built oratorically, if it is apart from the church, if it does not subscribe to the liturgical reality, then it is not a sermon, but rather, it becomes a personal act of the preacher.

⁴⁸ Sibiu, 1938.

⁴⁹ Arhim. Iuliu Scriban, *Datoria preotului către limba bisericească (Priest's duty towards the language of the church)*, Sibiu, 1938, p. 14, 29.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] Beldiman, Nicușor, *Predica în Biserica Ortodoxă Română din Muntenia în secolul al XX-lea – Analiză și evaluare*, University of Bucharest, 2017.
- [2] Constantinescu, Ioan, *Arhimandritul Iuliu Scriban (1878-1949)*, in „S.T.”, year XXVIII (1976), no. 7-10.
- [3] Cristescu, Grigorie, *Părintele arhimandrit Iuliu Scriban*, in „G.B.”, year VIII (1949), no. 1-2.
- [4] Galeriu, Constantin, *Catedra de Omiletică și Catehetică cu noțiuni de Pedagogie*, in „S.T.”, year XXXIII (1981), no. 7-10.
- [5] Pestroiu, David, *Religious Dialogue in Postmodernity – Necessity, Chances, Perspectives*, in „International Journal of Orthodox Theology”, no. 4:1 (2013).
- [6] Scriban, Iuliu, *Dacă am vorbi pe nepregătite*, in „B.O.R.”, year XLVIII (1930), no. 2.
- [7] Scriban, Iuliu, *Evangelizarea copiilor*, in „B.O.R.”, year XLII (1924), no. 10.
- [8] Scriban, Iuliu, *Predica în ziua de azi*, în „B.O.R.”, year XLVI (1928), no. 10.
- [9] Scriban, Iuliu, *Predica pentru copii*, in „B.O.R.”, year XLIX (1931), no. 5.
- [10] Scriban, Iuliu, *Predicatorul francez Jacques Brydaine*, „Astoria” Printing Press, Bucharest, 1933.
- [11] Scriban, Iuliu, *Privești din câmpul Omileticii*, the Printing Press of Church Books, Bucharest, 1929.
- [12] Scriban, Iuliu, *Vechile Omiletici românești*, in „B.O.R.”, year XLVI (1928), no. 7.
- [13] Scriban, Iuliu, *Datoria preotului către limba bisericească*, Sibiu, 1938.
- [14] Vasilache, Vasile, *Arhimandritul Iuliu Scriban*, in „M.M.S”, year XXV (1949), no. 1-2

THE CONCEPT OF "THE PRESENCE OF GOD"- A LINK BETWEEN MISSIONARY THEOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

Prof. Ph.D. David PESTROIU,

“Faculty of Orthodox Theology „Justinian the Patriarch”, University of Bucharest,
ROMANIA,

E-mail: pestroiu@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In a world of religious and moral dissolution, in which nihilist atheism and hedonistic consumerism prevail, missionary theology must propose to the secularized human the experience of reunion with God as a means of restarting the religious experience manifested concretely through prayer and intense spiritual life. Modernity has obviously fuelled deified conceptions, isolating God in an inaccessible transcendence, and promoting a total abandonment of the possibility of experiencing any form of real encounter with Him. The only way to get in touch with Him was rational knowledge, as it was found in the Bible, or logical deductions resulting from the dialogue between theology and science. But they dangerously lead to the postmodern concept of a God-idea, concept, force, etc., lacking the attribute of personality. According to Orthodox doctrine, God has a personal character, being, more specifically, a Trinity of Persons. Therefore, we find enough biblical and patristic grounds, all testifying to the existence of divine Presence. This Personal Presence is the basis of promoting an intense spiritual life of the faithful human, who is aware of the necessity of an organic bond with it, creating a true state of communion. It is, on the one hand, a personal relationship cultivated by every person through prayer, but also an inter-personal relationship created within the public cult, especially in the Divine Liturgy and the Holy Mysteries of the Church. The experience of Divine Presence as generated the consciousness of asceticism, consisting in desolation and climbing on the virtue scale, to perfection. The intense spiritual life, especially promoted in the monasteries, has led to the experience of awakesness as a work designed to transfigure human, who gives up on the comfort of the material world, preparing himself or herself for experiencing of the kingdom of God. In this study, I will present, on the one hand, the role of spirituality for missionary theology, starting from fulfilling the concrete experience of the Divine Presence, and on the other, I will seek raising awareness of the dangers of the false spiritualist movements promoted by the New Age movement and the rationalistic - anti-theistic concepts of postmodernity.

Keywords: Postmodernity; divine presence; theosis; orthodox spirituality;

1. THE DISCOVERY OF GOD'S PRESENCE IN THE WORLD'S IMMANENCE - THE CORE OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY

According to Orthodox teachings, The Triune God revealed Himself as the symbol of perfect communion. Father Dumitru Stăniloae called the Holy Trinity as "the structure of

supreme love."¹ Indeed, disinterested, sacrificial, merciful love (*agape*-in Greek) determined (caused) the creation of the world, the work of salvation, but also the perfection or sanctification of all creation. The *new heaven and new earth* expression describes this state of rebirth to a new life of communion with God through the restoration of man by Jesus Christ. Through His resurrection with flesh of glory, pneumatized, He gave human nature the purpose for which it was created, placing it on the right side of the Father.

Orthodoxy reveals God as close to people, not isolated in an inaccessible transcendence. Ever since creation, God entered into dialogue with man, giving him the status of intra-Trinitarian communion as an existential example. According to Orthodox theology, man was created after the image of God, but the likeness with God should be gained by personal effort. In the primordial state of the Eden Heaven man had to pass the exam of obedience to the divine commandment, in order to attain to the state of perfection, the deification through grace (*theosis*). It was also proof of the finalization of God's creation, which, in order to be perfect, had to be filtered through the mandatory condition of expressing free will.

The man made, however, another choice. His chance to reach the goal for which he was created (deification) has not changed, but the course has become more difficult. The human nature has been altered, heading for death as a *payment of sin* (*Romans 6,23*), but receives the hope of an eternal life, in the eschatological kingdom of the restored world.

The redemption of man was accomplished by the Savior promised by Proto-Gospel (*Genesis 3, 15*), Jesus Christ, the Son of God Incarnate, the palpable evidence of Divine Presence in the life of the world. About Him, the Apostle Paul affirms that He has given up divine glory, taking the form of a servant and a human face, showing the perfect divine love to the human race (*Philippians 2, 7*).

But even until Jesus Christ, God fully manifests his presence in the life of mankind, enlivening the passing through history of the chosen people, the guardian of the revelation of the motive and purpose of creation. In the Old Testament books, there are enough references to the real presence of God in the world, even after the eviction of the man in Eden.

2. DIVINE PRESENCE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

God addresses Himself directly to the patriarchs and prophets, to whom he communicates His will and transmits His commandments, guiding them to perfection. The essential attribute of the divine mission in the Old Testament is to strengthen the theocracy and transmit the Messianic idea. The world, though imbruted by the consequences of sin, is sanctified by the presence of God.

The Holy Trinity is revealed to Patriarch Abraham at the oak tree of Mamvri, under the faces of the three young men, suggesting that the eternity of man restored in the relationship of perfect communion with God will be accomplished at the age of the young man. Jacob is shown the presence of God's glory in a night vision, in the form of a stairway that unites heaven with the earth upon which the angels ascend and descend. Eastern Patristic sees in this a prefiguration of the Church later on, and the very stairway is a prefiguration of the Mother of God. Things happen similarly on Horeb. There, the Mother of God is prefigured by the burning bush, and the presence of God offers the place a special holiness, causing Moses to take his shoes off in respect. God's glory appeared and filled the

¹ See: Fr. Prof. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, „Sfânta Treime – structura supremei iubiri” (Holy Trinity – the Structure of the Supreme Love), in: *Studii Teologice*, 1970, Nr. 5-6, pp. 333-356.

temple of the Lord, and his altar, called the *Holy of Holies*, was considered to be the place of its dwelling, the place where God was present.

Through the theophanies and the angelophanies, God communicates his will and continuously guides his chosen ones. Noah is taught how to build his ark, Abraham is led to Canaan, his faith is tried, and God enters into an everlasting covenant with him and his descendants, Moses is sent as a liberator from the Egyptian bondage, Samuel is entrusted with the task of establishing royalty, through the presence of the *Lord's anointed*, great and small prophets are sent to preach and proclaim the will of God. These are only a few examples of the many similarities that the Bible sets, in order to prove to the utmost that the monotheistic religion of the Old Covenant was guided directly by God, who coordinated its history.

3. DIVINE PRESENCE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament, God descends into the world through His Incarnate Son, the Divine Logos Jesus Christ, and the restorer of fallen human nature. If until now God's presence was only made in a syncopated way, He becomes present through the incarnation of Christ, and remains present in the eternal world; *and, behold, I remain with you until the end of the world (Matthew 28,20)*. He does not only offer the great commandment of love, but exemplifies it by the state of sacred communion, offering himself for men in the sacrifice of Golgotha, but also giving everyone the opportunity to unite with him through the Eucharist: *Who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood remains in me and I in him (John 6,56)*. Another chance to feel His presence is prayer made in the state of fellowship of others: *Where are two or three are gathered in My Name, there I am in the midst of them (Matthew 18,20)*. Love as the foundation of communion is the foundation on which Christ builds His discourse that revolutionized history. The love for your enemies is a socio-communal concept so high that humanity has not been able to implement it in all the 2000 years since then, and it fails to do so even today. It is, however, the identity mark of the *kingdom of heaven (Matthew 13, 11; Luke 8,10)*, which must be preached to all nations, becoming the ultimate goal of human existence. The Incarnation of the Word of God is considered by St. Paul *the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages (Colossians 1,26-27)*, which is now revealed to all. In the face of the mythologies of antiquity, creations of the human mind to justify the desire for earthly hegemony of temporal leaders, the truth of God's immense love for His creation is now revealed and postulates a new world in which love and justice intertwine, as unique criteria of organization and leadership. "The importance of the embodiment of God's Son must be understood as the best way to redeem man, because sin and death have come into the world through one man (Adam), so redemption had to come through one man as well (the New Adam), who is God-Man, Jesus Christ, that is God's grace and his gift to the world should be abundant, through the embodiment, Death, and Resurrection of Christ"². Thus, the Church is born - a *theandric* body in which Christ is continually present, enlivening and leading all the people who take shelter in it to the goal of salvation. St. Paul associates the Church with a body whose head is Christ, and we are members, each one (*I Corinthians 12,27*). He furthermore resembles the mystical connection between Christ and the Church to a wedding, thus symbolizing their indissoluble connection, united by love. The one who enlivens this divine-human synergistic osmosis is the Holy Spirit, which *fills everything (Ephesians 4,10): The Spirit of God lives in you (Romans 8, 9)*. He makes Christ present in the Sacraments of the Church so that believers can themselves be

² Nicușor BELDIMAN, "Dogmatic teachings on the Persons of the Holy Trinity reflected in the works of the preachers from Muntenia in the 20th century", in: *International Journal of Orthodox Theology* 7:1 (2016), p. 88.

part of the death and resurrection of Christ. For example, in the Sacrament of Baptism, the neophyte buries himself with Christ in the three-dip diving in the water, and then resurrects with Him when, from the bath of birth again, he rises holy to live with Him now. That is why the Apostle of the Gentiles exclaims: *for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ (Galatians 3,27)*. He is aware of the presence of Christ in His being, transfigured and transformed by faith, grace and good deeds into the Church: *I no longer live, but Christ lives in me (Galatians 2,20)*. Thus, Christian life is presented as a participation in the life of Christ: *For to me, to live is Christ (Philippians 1,21)* - says the same Apostle.

4. DIVINE PRESENCE IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The establishment of the Christian Church in history is based on the consciousness of divine presence. The first centuries of Christianity are marked by the existence of martyrs who preferred to die and be with Christ rather than lose their salvation, leading a concupiscent life on Earth without Him. Moreover, the faith of the early Christians was heavily impregnated by the imminence of *Parousia*, and their experience was sincere in the form of an *Eschaton* before its time. The first martyr, Saint Stephen, in the moment of the sting of stoning, does not feel the pain of death-causing blows, but rejoices seeing the heavens opening up and the Son of Man to the right of the Father (*Acts 7, 56*). From there, the entire latter patristic theology is impregnated by the mystical experience: the meeting with God and experiencing his salvific presence. Through it, God directly unites with the righteous to whom He is revealed in His perfect form. Apostle Paul himself was abducted to the third heaven (*1 Corinthians 12, 1-4*).

St. Cyril of Alexandria interconnects mystic ecstasy of the knowledge of unapproachable light as a taboric experience: *"The Son thus illuminates in a creative way, as He who is the True Light, and the creature is enlightened by participation in the Light. That is why it is called light, ascending higher than the human nature by grace that glorifies it and crowns it with various honors."*³ Thus, according to Prof. Ullrich Zeitler, *"it might be useful to distinguish between «spiritualizing» and «spirituality». While «spiritualizing» often is seen as a process that points to something beyond this world and in contrast with this world, «spirituality» – at least in Christian understanding – is related to an embodiment, an involvement in daily life."*⁴ To exemplify this kind of physical transformation, I chose the words of Blessed Augustine, full of deep mystical experience: *"Late have I loved you, beauty so old and so new: late have I loved you. And see, you were within, and I was in the external world and sought you there, and in my unlovely state I plunged into those lovely created things which you made. You were with me, and I was not with you. The lovely things kept me far from you, though if they did not have their existence in you, they had no existence at all. You called and cried out loud and shattered my deafness. You were radiant and resplendent, you put to flight my blindness."*⁵ A special relationship between restored humanity and Christ, her Savior, also sees Origen, who identifies the meaning of the Son of God's kenosis

³ St. CYRIL of Alexandria, *Comentariu la Evanghelia Sf. Ioan (Comment on St John's Gospel)*, translation in Romanian by Fr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, published by: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 2000, p. 91.

⁴ Ullrich ZEITLER (ed.), *Spirituality, Diaconia and Social Work*, Publisher: Knowledge Center for Diaconia and Pedagogy, Diakonhøjskolen i Aarhus, Højbjerg, Denmark, 2012, p. 74.

⁵ AUGUSTINE, *Confessiones*, translation in Romanian by N. Barbu, published by: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1983, p. 224.

- his descent into the world to lift it to the knowledge of divine light: "So did the Son also, when He got rid Himself of His equality with the Father, to show us the way of knowledge, thus becoming «the image of God», and we, who cannot look at the magnification of the preached Light that lies in the glory His deity, through the fact that Christ became His light for our sake, we got to see the divine light, contemplating its glory."⁶

St. Athanasius the Great states, "*We must not wonder if the Son speaks of His projection in us as He speaks of himself ...*"⁷ And St. John Cassian discovers the valences of this relationship between the saved and the Savior, when he says, "*Whoever has in Himself the fullness of the deity can gift to all from His fullness, the One in whom in the fullness of the deity dwells, He Himself dwells in each of the saints, which he counts as worthy of His dwelling, and, no matter how much He gives to all from His fullness, He Himself remains unceasingly in His fullness. Even while He was in His body on Earth, He was in the souls of all the saints, filled the heavens, the earth, the sea, all that exists with the endlessness of His power and magnification. He was so in Himself that the edges of the world could not encompass Him, because, however large and unsaid are the ones that have been made, yet none of them are stretched and unmeasured enough to encompass Their Maker ...*"⁸ The key to understanding this synergic dwelling-place is love, as revealed by St. Maximus the Confessor: "*Why do theologians call Godhead either eros or agape, either dear or loved. For on one hand it moves itself, on the other it just moves. Or to put it more clearly: as love and affection, divinity moves itself, and as a dear and loving it moves all those capable of love and affection closer to itself. And to make it even clearer: it moves as it plants the inner affection of love in those capable of it and moves as it attracts the desire of those who move through it. And again: it moves and moves, because it thirsts after its thirst, and loves to be loved ...*"⁹

As he himself promises, God is present in the world's immanence until the end of the ages. Commenting on this text, from *Matthew 28, 20*, St. John Chrysostom says: "*Did you see the authority with which he spoke to them? Did you see that these words were spoken on the level of the apprentices' understanding? He did not say that he would be with them only, but with all the latter faithful believers - the apostles were not going to live until the end of time - he spoke to them as some who would make a single body with all the latter believers. The Lord said, «Do not talk to me about the burden of commission. I, who make everything lighter, am with you! » This is what he also often said to the prophets in the Old Testament: to Jeremiah, who put his youth before, and Moses and Ezekiel, who hesitated: I am with you! The same thing He now tells His disciples too.*"¹⁰

⁶ ORIGEN, *De principiis*, translation in Romanian by Teodor Bodogae, published by: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1982, p. 63.

⁷ St. ATHANASIUS the Great, *Trei cuvinte contra Arienilor (Three discourses against the Arians)*, in: *Scrieri – partea I (Writings – first part)*, translation in Romanian by Fr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, published by: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1987, p. 321.

⁸ St. JOHN Cassian, *Despre întruparea Cuvântului (About de Word's Incarnation)*, translation in Romanian by Vasile Cojocaru și David Popescu, published by: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1990, p. 821.

⁹ St. MAXIMUS the Confessor, *Ambigua*, translation in Romanian by Fr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, published by: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1983, p. 229.

¹⁰ St. JOHN Chrysostom, *Comentariu la Evanghelia Sf. Matei (Comment on St Mathew's Gospel)*, translation in Romanian by Fr. Prof. Dumitru Fecioru, published by: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1994, pp. 1001-1002.

The place of the plenary meeting of man with God is the liturgical space. That is why St. Ambrose of Mediolanum states that where the Church officiates the Holy Sacraments, Christ Himself is present¹¹.

5. THE LITURGIC MYSTERY – THE PRESENCE OF GOD

The whole set of cultic acts of Orthodoxy is centered on the need for mystical experience, as a way of blessing the man with divine grace. For orthodox people, grace is uncreated and not separated from God, sparking as an energy that illuminates, perfects and sanctifies the work of divine creation. God descends into the immanence of the world on the thread of uncreated divine energies, lifting people into the kingdom of heaven. That is why the Orthodox Liturgy begins with the blessing of *"the Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit"*, and a very beautiful hymn reads: *"In the church of Your glory standing, in heaven we seem to be ..."* The motivation of common prayer in Orthodoxy is therefore the creation of an interpersonal communion between God and man on one hand and between people all together on the other. John Meyendorff points out in this regard: *"The conscious and personal experience of the Holy Spirit is therefore the supreme goal of Christian life in the Byzantine tradition, an experience which presupposes constant growth and ascent. This experience is not opposed to an essentially Christocentric understanding of the Gospel, for it itself is possible only «in Christ», i.e., through communion in the deified humanity of Jesus; nor is it contradictory to practical ethical requirements, for it remains impossible unless these requirements are fulfilled. But obviously, such experience reflects a basically personalistic understanding of Christianity."*¹²

A great help in this process of spiritual becoming are the visual supports - the icons, the true windows to the heavens. According to Leonid Uspenski, they have a strong dogmatic and missionary role: *"Only the Orthodox icon confesses fully to the Trinitarian iconomy, since the knowledge of God through the Incarnate Word (which is the face of the Father) is accomplished only by the iconomy of the Third Hypostasis of the Holy Trinity in the sacred light of the Pentecost. To such a testimony - which culminated in the hesychasm - the ensemble of the artistic creation of the Church after the iconoclasm is oriented."*¹³ The same author testifies about the confessing role of the icon: *"The icon (modern or ancient) testifies to the salvation «prepared before all people, the existential realization that allowed the formation of the Church in the world», «light that glorifies the nations and the grace of the people», of the new Israel. Designed for the man, revelation is given to the Church and fulfilled through it, which is revealed to the world. And the image of the revelation which is brought to the world is that of the worshiped Body of Christ, the image of the Church itself, the testimony of faith and holiness within, testimony of the Church about itself. That is why the specific character of the Orthodox icon reveals the broad vision that brings together the past and the future in a continuous present. And, no matter how precarious the means are, the human creation serves the age to come."*¹⁴

¹¹ St. AMBROSE of Mediolanum, *Despre Sfintele Taine (About Holy Sacraments)*, translation in Romanian by Fr. Prof. Ene Braniște, published by: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1994, p. 27.

¹² John MEYENDORFF, *Teologia bizantină (Byzantine Theology)*, translation in Romanian by Fr. Prof. Alexandru I. Stan, published by: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1996, p. 237.

¹³ Leonid USPENSKI, *Teologia icoanei în Biserica Ortodoxă (Theology of the Icon in the Orthodox Church)*, translation in Romanian by Teodor Baconsky, published by Anastasia, București, 1994, p. 210.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 217.

The function of liturgical language is, according to André Scrima, to always make God present¹⁵. That is why the Liturgy proposes a theological view on human life and is the source of the permanent experience of the Church in relation to the world, called to become the key to the kingdom of God. By participating in the Liturgy, man is fascinated by God's presence, circumscribed by space and time, while offering the chance of a spiritual elevation of the human being above the coordinates of his telluric existence, in order to experience the joys of eternal life. According to Father Mihai Hincinschi, "in the Liturgy, the Spirit does not descend because Christ is in heaven, to substitute Him on Earth, but to make Christ present through His Body and Blood on the Table of the Holy Altar under the image of bread and wine, which are given to all who come to Him with faith, full of the Holy Spirit."¹⁶ Thus, all *those too small (Matthew 25, 40)*, having the image of Christ mirrored on their faces, create a state of communion starting from the Chalice.

The Church does not therefore show a dominant, triumphant attitude over men, but a merciful bent on their real, spiritual and bodily problems, giving them the necessary assistance to enter the kingdom of heaven. Social interactions, which are in a spectacular dynamic today, should not bypass the living, steady, presence of the Church, whose involvement in public life is more necessary than ever.

6. THE ALLEGED DIVINE IMMANENCE OF FALSE ESOTERIC SPIRITUALITY IN THE POSTMODERN WORLD

With the secularization of Western societies, there was an increased incidence of esoteric currents associated with the New Age movement. This confirms the man's thirst for the presence of God in his life. If Western Christianity has isolated God in transcendence, accentuating an unnatural separatism between Divinity and the created world, esoteric currents strongly promote the opposite: God is with the world, in the pantheistic manner promoted by oriental religions, syncretically imported into the secularized West. The idea that mankind needs a synthetic religion is accredited, and both Christianity and other religions are taken separately and considered to be outdated. The purpose of man is to evolve from the spiritual point of view under the direction of a master, and, through successive reincarnations, reach the state of *Nirvana*. Thus, appear the relativization of human life in flesh and the denial of the necessity of fulfilling moral norms that will be the object of divine judgment after death. Moreover, man's relationship with God is replaced by a surrogate relationship with a human person with alleged spiritual leader qualities, which often target merchant interests on the account of the naive in search of "masters." Here is one example, picked from a highly publicized source in post-communist Romania: "*In order to obtain a clear vision of the Final Goal, it is essential to have a perfect GURU who knows every branch of the Four Ways of Initiation Rituals, without the slightest misunderstanding or doubt as to them. He can make the Final Goal perfectly explicit ...*"¹⁷

Techniques of meditation or relaxation, yoga practice, the fake bio-energetic or *reiki thaumaturgy* have spread rapidly in the Christian area, benefiting from the support of new-

¹⁵ André SCRIMA, *Biserica liturgică (The liturgical Church)*, translation in Romanian by Anca Manolescu, published by: Humanitas, București, 2005., p. 318.

¹⁶ Fr. lect. dr. Mihai HINCINSCHI, *Biserica în societate. Aspecte misionare ale Bisericii în societatea actuală (The Church in society. Missional aspects of the Church in nowadays society)*, published by: Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2006, p. 60.

¹⁷ Titi TUDORANCEA (coord.), *Nirvana. Tehnici de Meditație (Nirvana. Meditation Technics)*, published by: Societatea Informația, București, 1993, p. 108.

agers, theosophists and anthroposophists who have sought to create sui-generis oriental and Christian doctrine combinations, stirring everything into a "religious soup" with fake, appealing flavors. Thus, Jesus Christ has descended, in turn, from the stature of the Son of God incarnate, at the level of a simple guru, with occult powers. In this regard, Prof. Michael Fuss warns: "*The cosmic Christ, who appears as the solar Logos, is definitely not the biblical Jesus.*"¹⁸ He also denounces "the conviction that the entire revelation of the historical Jesus is an applied oriental wisdom, „inculturated” into the Palestinian context and hence at the roots of Christian tradition. Since the „Christ-consciousness” of Jesus of Nazareth was induced by Eastern mysticism, Christianity stands in a secondary position and transcends from the outset the boundaries of the Church, while the divine nature of the biblical Jesus is radically challenged. Here appears, vested in an attractive journalistic montage, a very concrete „theology of religions”, at a time when the Church still has not fully faced up to these problems.”¹⁹

The main challenge of postmodernity on the anthropological plane is individualism, defined as the glorification of the self, to the detriment of God. Man has built his own autarchic, hedonistic and consumerist paradisiacal universe, fueled by pride and selfishness - in the spiritual plane and opulence, wealth and technology facilities - in the material plane. In this respect, prof. Radu-Petre Mureșan's thoughts on pseudo-spiritual religious movements are very up to date: "*Man establishes himself as the measure of all things. In these systems, Christ is not the one who saves man in the Church, but man strives to self-serve and self-justify without the grace of God. That is why all these groups and trends reject the Church and promote personal spiritual practices by using techniques and methods through which the subject keeps control of its inner evolution. However, these spiritual alternatives accommodate to the dominant religious culture, or at least there is no contradiction between the teachings they propagate and the religious environment from which the potential followers come from.*"²⁰ The new humanism, also known as the "human potential movement," promotes the concept of a set of divinities, equal to the number of people on earth. They only need to discover and capitalize the inexhaustible potential of their demiurgical resources. In a similar way, with a science-fiction production color, Scientology is also expressed, considering humans the *Thetans (extraterrestrials)* who need help finding their own way to self-redeeming.

Prof. M. Fuss makes an exhaustive radiography of the branches of the New Age movement, which I will reproduce in the following part, since he describes synthetically its evolutionary spectrum: "*Yet the most characteristic framework for the diffusion of New Age ideas is the «network». These groups include a broad range of associations and may be roughly listed under the following headings: a) in science: visionary physics («system of evolution»); «self-organization of the universe», global networking, holistic medicine, transpersonalistic psychology, thanatology; b) in society: alternative education, disarmament, feminism, ecology, soft technologies, New Age-management, new world order - Baha'i, body therapies, rebirth therapies, spiritual healing; c) in art: psychedelic music, overtone-singing, fantasy and science fiction literature; d) in spirituality: neo-cosmic*

¹⁸ Michael FUSS, "New Age and Europe. A Challenge for Theology", in: Michael A. Fuss (ed.), *Rethinking New Religious Movements*, Pontifical Gregorian University, Research Center on Cultures and Religions, Rome, 1998, p. 656.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 657.

²⁰ Radu-Petre MUREȘAN, *Alternative spirituale în România (Spiritual Alternatives in Romania)*, Agnos, Sibiu, 2011, p. 235.

*religiosity, gnostic-esoteric practices, natural mysticism (Find-horn), syncretistic gurus, channelling, belief in reincarnation and in extraterrestrial intelligences (UFOs), Eastern and theosophy-oriented groups*²¹.

What is most worrying is the fact that all of these mistakes receive pseudo-scientific coverage through their assumption by prestigious media channels, whether we are talking about printed press, radio or TV. In this respect, the finding of Rev. Dan Bădulescu is very pertinent: *"If, until 1990, positivist and materialist science ignored and did not accept the supernatural, supersensual domain, today, through the so-called paranormal branch, these phenomena fall under the scope of research and the description of the scientific discourse. A testimony in this respect is, among other things, the satellite TV channel Discovery, a prestigious and authoritative channel in the field. In the last few years, this channel has programs with UFO scientific claims, unexplained mysteries, paranormal, astrology, poltergeist, life after life, etc. 2-3 times a week. These puzzles are no longer simply ignored as in the past but are approached from scientific positions."*²² It is clear that we are currently confronted with a truly manipulative offensive, supported by the media, to promote New Age occultism, rightly called false spiritual alternatives.

CONCLUSION

In this study, I have attempted to highlight the value of the Orthodox mystical spirituality, based on the Divine Revelation of the Old and New Testaments, as well as of the Holy Tradition, which postulate a living, dynamic and permanent relationship of man with God, embodied in prayer and living in the spirit of interpersonal communion that enlivens the Church. God descends into His creation today, being mysteriously present when invoked by the power of divine grace. Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate and the image of the Father, sacrifices himself in every Holy Liturgy, calling on the faithful to share with Him the Eucharist chalice. Furthermore, icons open true windows to the sky, providing the mystical experience of prayer meeting with those represented in the images. The experience of tremendousness, that is to say of the unceasing "prayer of the heart"²³, especially in the monastic environment, gives the possibility of receiving the Tabor light in the soul, the mystical presence with Christ the Transfigured in glory, in the kingdom of the eternal happiness.

On the other hand, the false spiritualities of this passing age create confusion in a devastated world, where the concupiscent pleasures and the glorification of the human self are glorified, accentuating the abyss between man and God. Although strongly supported by the media, they all end by abandoning man to a selfish and individualistic loneliness, generating powerful convulsions of the human personality without communion. The technological conquests of the postmodern society, the moment of shine of ranks and riches, virtual online communication networks - all this cannot fill a man's ontological need of the life and love connection with God, his Creator and Savior. It is the task of the ecclesial mission to rebuild the bridge between the secularist man of today's time and the Church of Christ - the only one able to bring him to the *living water* of the kingdom of divine grace.

²¹ M. FUSS, *op. cit.*, p. 658.

²² Fr. Dr. Dan BĂDULESCU, *Împărăția răului: New Age (The kingdom of Evil: New Age)*, Christiana, București, 2001, p. 285.

²³ Also called: *The Jesus Prayer*: „Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy of me, a sinner!”

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] AUGUSTINE, *Confessiones*, translation in Romanian by N. BARBU, published by: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1983,
- [2] BĂDULESCU, Fr. Dr. Dan, *Împărăția răului: New Age (The kingdom of Evil: New Age)*, Christiana, București, 2001,
- [3] BELDIMAN, Nicușor, "Dogmatic Teachings on the Persons of the Holy Trinity Reflected in the Works of the Preachers from Muntenia in the 20th century", in: *International Journal of Orthodox Theology* 7:1 (2016),
- [4] FUSS, Michael, "New Age and Europe. A Challenge for Theology", in: Michael A. FUSS (ed.), *Rethinking New Religious Movements*, Pontifical Gregorian University, Research Center on Cultures and Religions, Rome, 1998,
- [5] HIMCINSCHI, Fr. lect.. dr. Mihai, *Biserica în societate. Aspecte misionare ale Bisericii în societatea actuală (The Church in society. Missional aspects of the Church in nowadays society)*, published by: Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2006,
- [6] MEYENDORFF, John, *Teologia bizantină (Byzantine Theology)*, translation in Romanian by Fr. Prof. Alexandru I. STAN, published by: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1996,
- [7] MUREȘAN Radu Petre, *Alternative spirituale în România (Spiritual Alternatives in Romania)*, Agnos, Sibiu, 2011,
- [8] ORIGEN, *De principiis*, translation in Romanian by Teodor BODOGAE, published by: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1982,
- [9] SCRIMA, André, *Biserica liturgică (The liturgical Church)*, translation in Romanian by Anca MANOLESCU, published by: Humanitas, București, 2005.,
- [10] St. AMBROSE of Mediolanum, *Despre Sfintele Taine (About Holy Sacraments)*, translation in Romanian by Fr. Prof. Ene BRANIȘTE, published by: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1994,
- [11] St. ATHANASIUS the Great, *Trei cuvinte contra Arienilor (Three discourses against the Arians)*, in: *Scrieri – partea I (Writings – first part)*, translation in Romanian by Fr. Prof. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, published by: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1987,
- [12] St. CYRIL of Alexandria, *Comentariu la Evanghelia Sf. Ioan (Comment on St John's Gospel)*, translation in Romanian by Fr. Prof. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, published by: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 2000,
- [13] St. JOHN CASSIAN, *Despre întruparea Cuvântului (About de Word's Incarnation)*, translation in Romanian by Vasile COJOCARU și David POPESCU, published by: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1990,
- [14] St. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Comentariu la Evanghelia Sf. Matei (Comment on St Mathew's Gospel)*, translation in Romanian by Fr. Prof. Dumitru FECIORU, published by: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1994,
- [15] St. MAXIMUS the Confessor, *Ambigua*, translation in Romanian by Fr. Prof. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, published by: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1983,
- [16] STĂNILOAE, fr. prof. Dumitru, „Sfânta Treime – structura supremei iubiri” (Holy Trinity – the Structure of Supreme Love), in: *Studii Teologice*, 1970, Nr. 5-6,
- [17] TUDORANCEA (coord.), Titi, *Nirvana. Tehnici de Meditație (Nirvana. Meditation Technics)*, published by: Societatea Informația, București, 1993,
- [18] USPENSKI, Leonid, *Teologia icoanei în Biserica Ortodoxă (Theology of the Icon in the Orthodox Church)*, translation in Romanian by Teodor BACONSKY, published by Anastasia, București, 1994,
- [19] ZEITLER (ed.), Ullrich, *Spirituality, Diaconia and Social Work*, Publisher: Knowledge Center for Diaconia and Pedagogy, Diakonhøjskolen i Aarhus, Højbjerg, Denmark, 2012.

<https://doi.org/10.26520/icoana.2019.10.5.31-48>

THE METAPHYSICS OF THE CONCUPISCENCE

PhD. Mathew VIVAN,
University of Abuja, Abuja,
NIGERIA,
Email: mathewblk@yahoo.co.uk

ABSTRACT

A post-concupiscence Eucharistic theology written to provide clarity to the human consciousness against the force of concupiscence which is explained to be the cause of psychological dullness that causes the imbalance of man in nature. This psychological dullness among people makes them unable to have consciousness and clarity from the clarity provided by the Eucharist. Written to explain the temporal nature of the force of concupiscence and how through instincts, it controls material properties in the world, especially animals and plants in static renewable energies in a cycle of birth, procreation and death. Man unfortunately entered into the control of this force by disobeying God at the Garden of Eden (cf. Genesis 3:1-7), even though man was created in the world from dust, he was not subject to the laws of the world in its renewable form because of his image of God and the immortality of his soul (cf. Genesis 1:26). The dust material of his body fell to the control of this law that out of its dullness, the human body becomes corrupted and liable to death. Out of love and pity, God sent the image of God through whom man was created to bring man back to the image of God and rescue man from this dull atmosphere (cf. John 3:16). Written in final exegesis of the prophet Hosea's message about the unfaithful wife and unfaithful Israel as a result of the psychological dullness that perishes the people for lack of knowledge (cf. Hosea 4:6)- the closed doors of the higher faculties of the soul¹. Jesus in the Eucharistic sacrifice- the breaking of bread who is timeless² removes this psychological dullness in Hosea's Gomer who is a picture of the entire unfaithfulness of Israel and the entire human race as a result of carnal concupiscence. The Eucharist provides clarity against the psychological dullness of concupiscence thereby ending global wars, sin and man's imbalance in nature. The teaching of St Jerome on the carnal concupiscence is improved upon not to mean that carnal concupiscence cannot be removed³, but that the force that

¹ Mathew Vivan, *Normalcy: A post Vatican II Salvation History* Manuscript, August, 15 2015, Chap I. By higher faculties of the soul and lower faculties, I am referring to the angelic communication modes that the soul is exposed to; leading the soul to being either in God in the Holy Spirit through the angels or the devil through evil tricks and demons.

²Ibid. Chap. II. Mathew Vivan's exegesis of *Malachy* 1:11 as presented here confesses the Holy Eucharist offered from the rising of the sun to its going down; as beyond the sun and everything in the environment of space and time that the sun sets on. He further submitted that the Eucharist is a Mystery that is Timeless- outside time and the physical provisions of time and space. In other words, it precedes history even though the Eucharist was offered in history and is still being offered in remembrance of that same offering in time and space; the Eucharist is beyond history.

³Fremantle W.H, Lewis G and Martley W.G, trans., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series vol. 6, Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (eds.) Christian Literature Publishing Co, Buffalo, NY:.,1886, revised and edited by Kelvin Knight in *CHURCH FATHERS: Letter 22 (Jerome)-New Advent* (2009). Retrieved from <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001022.html>, on 01.09.2016. What I am suggesting in counter reference to this is interpretive and critical analysis of the temporal energies of greed, sensuality and lust alone can cure the human person that understands their operation. The Eucharist is the authority on this ground and not just the fear of the concupiscence leading to rigorous ascetical practices for a select few of souls seeking purification

psychologically makes human beings dull had not been explained and taught in simple terms. The explanation here provides insight into the nature of sin, mercy, removal and forgiveness of sin, unity of the human race in love and deification in God peacefully through love not violently as literal exegesis of the end times passages of the Scriptures literally refers⁴.

Keywords: carnal concupiscence; psychological dullness; Eucharist; clarity;

INTRODUCTION

It remains quintessential to discuss the temporal force called carnal concupiscence—the lifeless and temporal force of material properties⁵. Humanity is first, treading on half knowledge and a very pitiable system of judgment in living in this temporal earth. The system humanity is using is just as that which was of old from the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve as actors⁶. The system of determining what is morally right and wrong and placing what is right and wrong separately to allow for continuous human existence and harmony emanated from the mistake of entering into the control of the lifeless and temporal force of concupiscence. The system makes use of the effects of the carnal concupiscence poured out and confused at the Garden of Eden with Adam, Eve and the devil as actors⁷

The system considers human actions to either be morally right or wrong according to the will of each man, as the will is considered to be the freedom a person has to choose between the two options of right and wrong not minding whether the person with the will properly harnesses his/her faculties of judgment to make such decision. The system only assesses the result of the decision of the person and subjects the person to judgment and placement of being in morally right action or morally wrong action as the case may be. This system only judges what it sees in human behavior physically and does not treat the inherent sickness that a person suffer of lack of control and possibility to sin in the body which is referred to as carnal concupiscence.

This is a poor response to the teaching of Jesus Christ on the crucifixion of the body to the attainment of clarity away from the temporal force of psychological dullness in the carnal concupiscence⁸. It is not that detachment from the temporal good will lead to

for deification as suggested by St. Jerome but an entirely universal course syllabus in teaching concupiscence in theological endeavors.

⁴My reference here is to the literal exegesis of the end times passages that talk about sorrow, agony, suffering and death in the end times (cf. *Mathew* 24:6-7, *Luke* 21:25, 1 *Timothy* 4:1, 2 *Timothy* 3:1-4). The simple path of understanding the end times passages is interpreted in the effects of the carnal concupiscence in the souls of men when the Holy Spirit breaths in the cosmos. Demons tremble and fight through concupiscence to resist the Holy Spirit of truth (cf. *John* 14:16-17). This is seen in the rage of the heathen, the global wars, agonies and pain mentioned in these passages.

⁵I employed my own definition of carnal concupiscence here. It is not that the concupiscence is evil but it is dead in comparison to the work of the Holy Spirit in human affairs (cf. *Philippians* 4:13). For a Catholic definition of concupiscence see John Ming, “Concupiscence.” *The Catholic Encyclopedia* Kelvin Knight (ed.) 2012. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04208.htm>, on 01.09.2016

⁶What I am referring to is a metaphysical exegesis of poor humanity’s disobedience and punishment represented by Adam and Eve (cf. *Genesis* 3:1-7). The system of law where a break of law leads to punishment represented in the dramatic action of Adam, Eve and the devil should be reviewed with a heart of mercy and forgiveness because of the spiritual ignorance of man. The law should not just wait with the rod in its hand waiting for the next culprit to prosecute but should look for a treatment of the sickness that creates culprits and law breakers. The Catholic teaching on carnal concupiscence handles this fit as it is presented here and other faces of Catholic teaching.

⁷ Cf. *Ibid*

⁸ I am referring to the creation of consciousness among people against the effect of concupiscence at the level of the individual, community, and consequently the universe. This is in order to enter into perfect knowledge

necessary abject poverty, lack and death, but will make the person concentrate on clarity from God and his kingdom. The temporal good should be used as temporal good but its attaching force in the carnal concupiscence must be detached from the body as it is a temporal force. In this wise, the questions of what is life? What is death? And what is permanence? Must be answered distinguishing the realm of greed which is physical from the realm of love which is clear, non-material and spiritual.

Most people don't understand on the plain, the meaning of this detachment from the carnal concupiscence and so they consider the teaching of Jesus as very difficult and strong as is evidenced by the encounter of Jesus with the rich young man (cf. *Mathew* 19:21, *Luke* 18:22, *Mark* 10:21). This is because they don't understand the meaning of realms and the two realms of greed and love. For the rich man to enter the realm of love which is clear, he has to be detached from the realm of greed which causes psychological dullness. Knowledge and its acquisition are in realms. The teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas in line with Aristotle is managing the realm of greed- concupiscence or in my words psychological dullness, to enter the realm of love- clarity which is not bad but is half and weak⁹. *This is because a person will use his or her efforts in a form of discipline not to fall into error and sin, but discipline has its limits. And sometimes, a breakdown of law and order occurs innately in people- in their bodies producing an outward break down of law and order at the level of the individual and then the community as a whole. This causes war between nations, tribes, religions and general violence and conflict in the human society. The laws of nations and all forms of moral religious and secular teachings are used to curtail this breakdown of law and order which metamorphosis physically in disharmony in the world. The governments, institutions and the law itself that is used to govern humanity to control the excesses of carnal concupiscence in humanity are made up of workers who are people- people who suffer from the excesses of the same carnal concupiscence. The law then cannot be perfect as it uses punishment which causes pain to the law breaker to solve an inherent sickness that causes psychological dullness to solve the problem of psychological dullness. The law does not cure the innate sickness innately. The atmosphere of the world today is a testimony to this. Mortal sin in all its forms, wars, murder, rape, adultery, fornication, corruption, homosexuality, abortion, pedophilia, self-centeredness and so on; are caused by carnal concupiscence in people. The law only curtails the carnal concupiscence which makes it weak and a repetition of psychological dullness*¹⁰.

Innately, a person responds to the psychological dullness of carnal concupiscence within him if he conforms to apparent morally wrong action and as well, a person conforms to the spirit of righteousness if that person conforms to apparent morally right actions. Both of these tendencies are determined by the disposition of the person at the time of making an

and deification in God represented by the encounter of Jesus with the rich man (cf. *Mathew* 19:21, *Luke* 18:22, *Mark* 10:21).

⁹ Ralph McInerney and John O'callagan, "Saint Thomas Aquinas." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* Edward N. Zalta (ed.). Second series vol. 6 (spring 2015 edition) retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/aquinas/>, on 01.09.2016

¹⁰ Henry Campbell Black, *Black's law dictionary: definitions of the terms and phrases of American and English Jurisprudence Ancient and Modern; (with pronunciations)* Bryan Garner (ed.) West Publishers, St. Paul, Minnesota, 2004, p. 900, Clause 1

action. This is to say that the information available to the person is the root cause of the person's antecedent action¹¹.

If the information the person has is about extracting excessive pleasure from an external body, object or experience and bringing it into the body to the perceived satisfaction of the body, it is said that the person is actually at the point; subject to being individualistic and is yielding to the yearnings of the body through the animal temporal force of concupiscence which works as greed, sensuality and lust. This force is not bad or evil on its own but it depends on the use it's put to.

Concupiscence subjects a person to slavery and cage confinement of psychological dullness leading the person to death. For the end of concupiscence is temporal, and not permanent. It is made to provide the temporal good in its limit not excessively. Where it becomes excessive, it is a passage route to death as it doesn't provide clarity to the person but psychological dullness which leads to death. Clarity is gotten from concentrating on the good which guides human affairs. The apostle noted the essence of clarity from Jesus as, *"Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God-what is good and is pleasing to him and perfect"* (Romans 12:2).

If on the other hand, the information the person has is about clarity from the light of reason for human growth and development, the person is in harmony and love gotten from clarity. Then, the information is righteous, is of continuity of the human kind. It is above and beyond the carnal concupiscence as it centers the person on clarity from God. The person is now on a firm communication with the heavenly kingdom envisioned in the joy of love and charity. The information the person has is for the fullness of life above the temporal psychological dullness of concupiscence which controls the world. This is envisioned in the passage, *"Happy are those who wash their robes clean and so have the right to eat the fruit from the tree of life and to go through the gates of the city"* (Revelation 22:14).

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF REALMS; THE REALMS OF GREED AND LOVE

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hosea 4:6).

Earlier on, we noted that the morally right or wrong actions of people are determined by the information that the people have from their innate judgment at the level of the individual and consequently the society, which influences their decision making in conformity with society's agreed morally right and wrong actions provided by the law. The question to be asked from this situation is on the source of the information available to people and the content of the information itself that determines the decisions of people to being in morally right or wrong dispositions as the case maybe.

This inquiry refers us to the quotation above from the Prophet Hosea as, *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge...."* People are destroyed only from morally wrong actions and not morally right actions. It suffice to say that morally right actions are or is the knowledge that God is talking about here and morally wrong actions are or is lack of knowledge that God refers to. The morally right action emanates from the presence of knowledge and clarity which is the realm of love since God is

¹¹ I am referring to the angelic communication modes and channels cf. Parker John, trans. *Dionysius the Areopagite, Works* (1897). James Parker and Co, London, 1897.p.128. Retrieved from <http://www.ccel.org/dionysius/works.I.html> 08/09.2016

love (cf. 1 *John* 4:8) and realm is an area of activity, interest or knowledge¹². The realm of love is the area of God's activity and transfer of knowledge since God has referred to himself as Knowledge and its source. People who are in the realm of love are in God and knowledge, since God is knowledge and it is from him that knowledge emanates. God and knowledge now engulf all the people in him under love in a community of persons and therefore are not destroyed as they share in the substance of God in love and knowledge which is clarity of thought and action. A person that is at the disposition of knowledge and love produces morally right actions.

On the other hand, the morally wrong action that is lack of knowledge that God refers to which leads to destruction is certainly not from the realm of love but from the realm of greed- concupiscence- which causes psychological dullness and makes a person to be away from God and away from clarity as no human being in the realm of love which is also the realm of knowledge and community of God and His creatures gets destroyed but from the realm of greed which is self-centeredness, a rebellion against the community of all the living in love and harmony. *The realm of greed is the realm of possession of material properties in the apparent and physical environment of time and space. The psychological dullness of concupiscence puts man away from clarity and makes him to willfully yield to settling in pursuing satisfaction from material properties in the physical provisions of time and space. He allows the psychological dullness of concupiscence make him sensually possessive of what he owns. This leads him to being away from the realm of love and God in the community of persons as he finds this realm uninteresting as it does not please the body for it is against the possessive laws of the body which are the psychologically dull forces of greed, sensuality and lust through pride.*

The realms of greed and love are the psychological realities that human beings are exposed to. People can either choose to be in the realm of greed and be alone with a time to die or be in the realm of love with God and clarity to live fully. It is because people refuse to clearly apply right reason from the realm of love in human affairs that man becomes imbalanced in nature. Clarity and consciousness that leads to continuous human growth and development is the only reality that conquers the psychological dullness of concupiscence which causes the imbalance of man in nature.

2. DISHARMONY AND IMBALANCE OF MAN IN NATURE

The psychological force of concupiscence is meant to provide a kind of temporal life to animals and indeed, be the mover of the natural world but not mover of man because man is created in the image and likeness of God (cf. *Genesis* 1:26-27), that does not die or get corrupted by psychological dullness. This was particularly the reason why God instructed Adam not to feed on the tree of good and evil as is noted, "He said to him, "You may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, except the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad. You must not eat the fruit of that tree; if you do you will die the same day" (*Genesis* 2:16-17). It is simply to affirm that the essence of creation was man and his harmony with nature living out the blessing of God to being fruitful and having dominion over the earth and his descendants spreading to all the parts of the earth (cf. *Genesis* 1:27-28). A clear celebration of God's creativeness and unity in harmony with his creations in a community of love and knowledge; Man achieves deification out of this. This is because Man and nature

¹² Albert Sidney Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English*, ed. Joanna Turnbull et al. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010.p. 1222.

are not equal but man disobeyed this knowledge, heeded to the control of psychological dullness creating a disharmony of his state by heeding to the trickery of the devil¹³. The state of harmony was to be in love and charity of the human race. Against this background, people now had certain attachments from disobedience to God. This disobedience to God resulted in love of self, sensuality and lust. Man became insensitive to the plight of his kind. It is easy to understand by asking about the essence of dust loving dust? A particle of dust on the ground is just there without any responsibility to another particle of dust. The attachment of the concupiscence to people was always arising to be satisfied. Concupiscence operates in people in order to corrupt and terminate the universal movement of clarity. This makes them static in one place like particles of dust. This is a clear picture of human death like animals whose destination is determined by the movement of concupiscence. The apostle noted this conflict of concupiscence in people as, *“What human nature does is quite plain. It shows itself in immoral, filthy, and indecent actions; in worship of idols and witchcraft. People become enemies and they fight; they become jealous, angry and ambitious. They separate into parties and groups; they are envious, get drunk, have orgies, and do other things like these. I warn you now as I have before: those who do these things will not possess the kingdom of God”* (Galatians 5:19-21).

The unending struggle for satisfying these attachments in people that are arising everyday led to disharmony among people as the properties that God gave us in the Garden of Eden for everybody's satisfaction became more important than people. The dull and static material properties in the world that were given to us became more important than our fellow men. *The spiritual faculties of people that cause harmony in love with the Holy Spirit became shut. What was now open was the faculty that satisfied the flesh alone, which is a material property and cannot give itself life except with the love of God. The satisfaction of this faculty of this material property became an unending repetition, repeating itself until it passed the soul to death. In response to this satisfaction of material properties, love and unity of persons became difficult in the world; material objects and the pursuit of the same were the apparent order. An unjust and unending struggle for satisfaction from material properties created a disequilibrium and disharmony in humans. Suffering entered the world as material properties and a permissible environment for the fruitful life on earth was not possible. Some humans in response to the satisfaction of the unending craving of greed, sensuality and lust refused this equitable distribution of physical properties meant for the happy, prosperous and fruitful life on earth among people. The world now became a place of dead like the jungle. This erroneous place of dead like the jungle that the earth became has lasted in this wicked system for this long period of time because people lacked the knowledge of the owner of the material properties that they worship.*

But what was God to do? He never pronounced punishment on Adam and Eve at their disobedience in the Garden of Eden and neither did he curse this earth¹⁴. Tilling the ground on the part of the man for daily survival, pain in childbirth on the part of the woman and becoming soil from which humanity was made were not condemnations (cf. *Genesis* 3:16-19). God only revealed the effects of the system of the carnal concupiscence that humanity entered into because it creates psychological dullness and not clarity which comes from the Holy Spirit. This answers St. Augustine's question on evil, *“I sought whence evil comes and there was no solution.”*¹⁵

¹³ *Ibid*, note 6.

¹⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁵ St. Augustine, *Confessions in Catechism of the Catholic Church* (hereafter CCC), p. 385.

Dear St. Augustine, evil is a fruit of concupiscence in people because man is an innocent being who without knowledge which is clarity from the Holy Spirit is controlled by the force of concupiscence willfully. This confusion leads to same sex union, bestiality, incest, nudity, pornography, rape, pedophilia, adultery, fornication, prostitution, murder, rage, pride, jealousy, wild orgies, addiction, impatience, laziness, lack of self-control, uncontrolled use of the tongue, slander, evil tricks, war, strife, lies, stealing, gluttony, self-centeredness, sensuality, lust and all sins. All of the aforementioned sins at the level of both venial and mortal sins are produced from the psychological dullness of carnal concupiscence. This clarity is anti-carnal concupiscence because it is from the Holy Spirit who created it. It is this clarity that is popularly found in the higher faculty that is popularly referred to as the law of God that is written in the hearts of men (cf. *Romans* 2:12-16).

The feeling of concupiscence is not a spiritual home where if one doesn't settle in it one will be cheated. It is only a non-material force for animals and not human beings. Consciousness is very important in living beyond this force that causes psychological dullness which is why the prophet noted that the solution to the psychological dullness is all in the eyes (cf. *Isaiah* 29:10). A person not on guard of the forces of the carnal concupiscence will easily fall prey because consciousness is very important. The apostle noted the need to be conscious and critical against this psychological force because concupiscence is stronger than physical human strength in the words, "*for we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age*" (*Ephesians* 6:12).

*Sensuality as a form of earthly home keeps drawing a person and the person fights to stay off but ends up succumbing to it. Succumbing to it is what is referred to as lust. Sensuality fights with greed in its hand drawing the person to unite sensually so that the higher faculties of the person that has the law of God written in the hearts of men might never be opened but remain closed. This we see in all forms of sexual perversion as same sex or gay, pedophilia, rape, adultery, incest and all forms of sexually immoral activities. Without sexual activity there won't be such thing as same sex union which is a misdirection of female attraction to males, to female attraction to females and male attraction to females, to male attraction to males. In this case, the three forces of greed, sensuality and lust through sight and sound; which is what is seen and heard immaterially, closes the higher faculties of the soul and misdirect the person after being in a sensual disposition to a sensual and lustful union with its gender. This sensuality and lust using greed as a weapon holds people of the same gender together and closes the higher faculties within them. People in this condition are only left with the disposition of the lower and temporal faculties of the flesh. This is a form of sickness. Jesus Himself said God made humans male and female (cf. *Mathew* 19:4). This distinction of being of different genders and yet uniting together in Sacred Matrimony is a picture of Gods unity and creativity even as the Holy Trinity is a union of three persons and yet One¹⁶. Our God of creation is a God of distinction, all creatures must not be the same of a kind, but they are united in a community of persons as the Mystery of the Holy Trinity (cf. *John* 17: 21, 23). This union is in the realm of love as against the realm of greed.*

2.1 How the Privation of Reason Occurs.

We are told that the physical world is passing away and is not alive even though it is good from creation (cf. *Genesis* 1:25) and it is subject to men and not the latter, to have

¹⁶ Cf. CCC 232- 237.

dominion over it (cf. *Genesis* 1:26) and live out the blessing of fruitfulness and creation like God is, in mutual unity and community of persons like the Holy Trinity¹⁷, leading the human community of persons to being deified in the body of the Holy Trinity in love and harmony. People refused this reality and took the excess temporal force of material objects because of sight- what is physically seen with the eyes (cf. *Genesis* 3:6). And that has been the death; lust of the eyes and lust of the flesh¹⁸.

Sensuality creates sexual posture in humans, it is the knowledge of its taste that leads to attraction through greed in want, then lust in thought or privation of reason in the person attracted or seduced. Body parts or the reproductive organs do not have life in them. It is greed for sensuality in the person that responds to greed for sensuality in another person. Sensual knowledge waters the appetite and this quickly leads to submission of greed for sensuality in another person leading to lust even without it manifesting physically, which is why Jesus said, "But now I tell you: anyone who looks at a woman and wants to possess her is guilty of committing adultery with her in his soul" (Mathew 5:28). At the birth of every sin, fear and tension is first created in the person. This feeling of fear and tension is the identity of being individualistic, self-centered as was Adam and Eve, separate from innocence and union with God. This same feeling creates hopelessness and despair as it is the same fear and tension experienced by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden at the fall as it is narrated, "As soon as they had eaten it, they were given understanding and realized they were naked; so they sowed fig leaves together and covered themselves. That evening they heard the LORD God walking in the garden, and they hid from him among the trees. But the LORD God called out to the man, "Where are you? He answered, "I heard you in the garden; I was afraid and hid from you, because I was naked" (Gen 3:7-10).

This marked the entrance into the control of the material force which the Lord further inquired from Adam on how he entered into this spirit of fear, tension and awareness of nakedness. Adam admitted to have eaten of the tree of good and evil given to him by the woman. The woman answering God after He inquired why she did what she did, responded to succumbing to a trick by the serpent- another creature made by God (cf. *Genesis* 3:11-13). The trick that led to the fall showed the use of human will in falling into the control of the force that controls material properties. Material properties in nature are always possessing, self-centered and having their god as their stomach. This is a system of living to pass away just like these material properties originally created for man to use conveniently while on earth till he gets to deification in God.

Man willfully entered into the controlling force of these material objects. The force that controls these material objects lacks reason, which is why man experiences this battle within him. The apostle explained this battle of rage within him as, "*But I see a different law at work in my body- a law that fights against the law which my mind approves of. It makes me a prisoner to the law of sin which is at work in my body*". (*Romans* 7:23). The law bedeviling the apostles body is the carnal concupiscence as again it is noted, "*Everything that belongs to the world – what the sinful self desires, what people see and want, and everything in this world that people are so proud of- none of this comes from the Father; it all comes from the world. The world and everything that people desire is passing away; but those who do the will of God live forever*" (1 *John* 2:16-17). Summarily, the passage above

¹⁷ *Ibid*, note 14.

¹⁸ I am referring to the unfortunate situation of souls struggling for the kingdom of heaven in purity and chastity as against the killer forces of lust of the eyes and lust of the flesh (cf. 1 *John* 2:16).

refers to lust of the eyes and lust of the flesh. Lust infers to being missing in the eyes and unconsciousness in the body. For something to be missing there must be a misdirection leading it to being missing. It must have gone through a form of trickery; that same trickery that led to the fall in Adam and Eve¹⁹. Since outside the confines of faith God cannot be reached, the sinful self desires what it sees and wants. People see the world, desire it and want it. This movement of the appetite is enabled by the possessive animal force of concupiscence. People never get satisfied as even in the science of Economics it is said that human wants are insatiable as it continues to undergo a repetitive process of dissatisfaction²⁰. People become misdirected from Clarity their maker to possessiveness in materialism.

Body parts have no life or energy in them, the members of the apostle experienced an entrance into the control of carnal concupiscence and then the concupiscence moves the body parts. Concupiscence is separate from the soul, the soul enters into it. The ability of the soul to dislodge itself from this cage is resident on the saving grace of Jesus Christ-the man who came and lived outside the confines of the carnal concupiscence and washed our dirty souls with His blood on the cross of Calvary. Which is why the apostle noted, *“For the law of the Spirit, which brings us life in union with Christ Jesus, has set me free from the law of sin and death”* (Romans 8:2). There is a Spiritual entry into this act. The Spiritual Man who was conceived outside carnal concupiscence entered into the same spirit of man that was created by God through the breath in the dust and changed the laws of dust to the laws of the Spirit after haven fallen to the laws of the dust willfully after the serpents trick. The apostle again interpreted this happy act of redemption as, *“for the scripture says, “The first man, Adam, was created a living being”; but the last Adam is the life-giving Spirit. It is not the Spiritual that comes first, but the physical and then the Spiritual”* (1 Corinthians 15:45-46).

Jesus did not come through concupiscence because it is an empty temporal force. It works temporally as we see in nature as it is not alive. In the married state it is a sacrament because it turns to mutual self-giving and unity, celebrating the image of the Trinity as Jesus Himself clarified, *“Jesus answered, “Haven’t you read the scripture that says that in the beginning the Creator made people male and female? And God said ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife and the two will become one’. So they are no longer two, but one. No human being must separate, then, what God has joined”* (Mathew 19:4-6).

Even with the concupiscence at work in the married state as sacrament, there could be sin if on the part of any of the spouses, there is self-centeredness against self-giving, then it becomes a sin but a venial sin as the Holy apostle rightly taught (cf. *Ephesians 5:21-25, Colossians 3:18-19*). This same self-centeredness if not confessed leads to infidelity in the married state and other forms of sin thereof. It still goes back to the concupiscence. It is simply to say, that the knowledge of the concupiscence and its operation is vital to the life of the Christian and all the children of God on the journey to salvation. The apostle again admonished the importance of this knowledge and its saving power as, *“What I mean, my friends, is this: there is not much time left, and from now on married men should live as though they were not married, those who weep, as though they did not own what they bought; those who deal in material goods, as though they were not fully occupied with them. For this world, as it is now, will not last much longer.”* (1 Corinthians 7:29-31). What the

¹⁹ This is in reference to the recounted episode of the fall of man (cf. *Genesis 3:1-13*).

²⁰ M.L. Jhingan, *Advanced Economic Theory (Micro and Macro Economics*, 12th edition, Vrinda publications, New Delhi, 2008, p.2.

apostle is advising is that all of us on the road to Christ in heaven should have our eyes fixed on heaven which is why he further states, *“For we fix our attention, not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen. What can be seen lasts only for a time, but what cannot be seen lasts forever.”* (2 Corinthians 4:18). These verses only emphasize the importance of consciousness in the clarity provided by the Eucharist against the psychological dullness of concupiscence which makes people unconscious, empty and always in pursuit of satisfaction from material properties. This is not to say that the concupiscence is not good, because if so, then the question of its essence will arise. The concupiscence will be said to be very essential to our human reality- procreation, nature and nurture.

3. THE LAW AS A REMEDY TO CONCUPISCENCE

“God gave the law through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). The system of the law couldn't truly cure the sickness of sin that has its roots in the soul. Which is why the apostle noted, *“I do not understand what I do; for I don't do what I would like to do, but instead I do what I hate. Since what I do is what I don't want to do, this shows that I agree that the Law is right. So I am not really the one who does this thing; rather it is the sin that lives in me”* (Romans 7:15-17).

This is to say that the law was formed in order to curtail the excesses of human actions and inactions. The law was formed to create harmony, balance and equity among human beings. This balance and equity was to be achieved physically by controlling the overflow of carnal concupiscence in man. The act of curtailing the carnal concupiscence in man by another system called law is insufficient because the law is a physical and static set of do's and don'ts. It evolved as a result of sin and disharmony caused by the disobedience of Adam and his wife in the Garden of Eden. The human being is by this act of disobedience born with a conflicting force inside him called concupiscence. There is bound to be conflict between this conflicting force inside human beings and the law that is meant to calm it. The system of the law was given by God through Moses in order to create a just and equal society of God's children having the conflicting force of concupiscence under control. The law given by Moses was to work “OUTSIDE IN”, which means people will behave rightly towards God and neighbor from obeying rules and regulations in the law that is outside their nature. The rules and regulations are from outside the human being and it's meant to control a sickness that is “INSIDE OUT”, which means the sickness is inside the human being but it manifests externally. St. Paul in the above lines identifies the fact that the law stands to attack a sickness that is inside the human being but this sickness is not still being cured even with the law as a medicine to cure the sickness. However, it is not the medicine that is the problem; it is the sick patient here with his words as *“I agree that the Law is right. So I am not really the one who does this thing; rather it is the sin that lives in me”*. We are happy to know that the law is a messenger of its boss- Jesus Christ since.... *“But grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”*. The law is spiritual but the human soul is unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin (cf. Romans 7:14). Nonetheless, the law pointed to perfection and a perfect System, hence the word imperfection evolved from the word perfection and simply means a fall from a superior state to its opposite as the prefix “m” - negates the positive perfection²¹. But the evidence remains that the thing that fell was created from a perfect source and that same source of creation is God. It only follows that the imperfect source kept its pointer to Perfection and Perfection alone. This analogy of imperfection to perfection is what the

²¹ The prefix im- negates the root word perfect to mean imperfect cf. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*, 752.

apostle referred to as, “*Law was introduced in order to increase wrongdoing; but where sin increased, God’s grace increased much more*” (Romans 5:20). It is also to say that the state of imperfection was influenced by an external body outside the relationship between man and his Perfect Source of creation- God. This external body is simply the devil ‘*the most cunning animal that the LORD God had made*’ (Genesis 3:1).

In the same style of pride, which is self-centeredness and being away from God which the devil fell²², man also fell to imperfection and death. In the case of man, he fell into the system of nothingness by improperly harnessing his will. It is still the same pride, that you cannot bite the hand that feeds you continuously. Man turned to himself even when he who feeds him instructed him not to. The malfunction of man’s existence came into being, subjecting man to agony, misery and death (cf. *Genesis 3:16-19*). It wasn’t that God of mercy, love and compassion. Who is the God of creation and who created man in his own image (cf. *Genesis 1:26-27*) which dwells entirely on love and harmony in community, pronounced a judgment of suffering on man but God revealed the suffering and death in the system of death which man willfully fell in. *God did not judge man; man fell to a dead system of the apparent life which is a life of material properties that are passing away*. That force of material properties that are passing away is what is physically seen in greed, sensuality and lust through pride which is a lie. In our physical world today, this is seen to be the law of everything in matter. It is the force of material properties that are passing away and not heaven the home of clarity which provides love, harmony and community of God and his creations. To be away from this is to follow the path of the system of material properties and pass away. The essence of the force of material properties is to enable man who is physical as the physical objects of his body exists with, live and serve God in harmony with material properties around the environment of space and time. The material properties in space and time are referred to as temporal good since God created the temporal good but warned against entering into the energy that passes them away as, ‘*He said to him, “ You may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, except the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad. You must not eat the fruit of that tree; if you do, you will die the same day.*”’ (Genesis 2:16-17). The ignorance of man about the effects of disobeying this very injunction will be said to have come through pride. In this case pride is interpreted as standing alone and taking decision alone outside the knowledge of God who is wisdom, knowledge itself and the only decision without which the rest is concupiscence. Which could be good as God himself said earlier that the tree is of *the knowledge of good*, and again which could be bad as God himself said *and bad*. It is only a thin line between good and evil here but what lies ahead is the use of the human will and its aftermath. However, Adam and Eve did disobey and entered into the concupiscence (cf. *Genesis 3:6-7*) even though they had it for their use in the garden subjecting it into procreation of children under God’s knowledge. In other words, the human will was going to have subjected the animal energies and force of material properties to its use without the higher faculties of the soul being corrupted and live out God’s blessings of being fruitful in multiplication (cf. *Genesis 1:28*). Consequently, man will achieve deification and unity with the Holy Trinity out of this without confusion. Against this background, the fall came and the higher faculties of the human soul suffered corruption- creating a privation of reason and a war between the spirit and the flesh (cf. *Galatians 5:17*). The solution to the immediate battle between the spirit and the flesh after Adam and his wife experienced the entrance into the temporal force of

²² Cf. CCC 391-393.

which they realized their nakedness (cf. *Genesis 3:7*) was covering of the body by leaves and by animal skins (cf. *Genesis 3:7, 21*). Leaves and animal skins as materials are both products of plants and animals which are spiritually lifeless and temporal, and which are found on earth. Nonetheless, man uses them to cover his body to physically avoid the battle of the psychological dullness of concupiscence. This solution is physical as we still see a metamorphosis of carnal concupiscence in the world despite the coverings on the body, people yield to all forms of sexual perversions and sins in the flesh which stems from the inherent attachment of the soul to the concupiscence. No wonder, God revealed the effects of the attachment of the concupiscence to the soul of man as a diminishing energy if used badly (cf. *Genesis 3:19*). The process through which this diminishing energy acts in people through bad use leading to errors and punishment must be explained clearly and not just subjecting people to the system of law- disobedience/obedience leading to reward/punishment which most people cannot conform to but explaining how the privation of reason occurs leading to death will necessary put people on the part of spiritual reunion with the Holy Trinity.

4. THE GOODNESS OF THE CONCUPISCENCE

In the goodness of the concupiscence we find work and generational procreativity. This procreativity can also be referred to as work in harmony with the natural movement of the cosmos. Work for the sake of continuity and harmony of man at peace with the cosmos (cf. *Genesis 1:28*). Sexual activity in marriage, especially the use of the concupiscent strength in the couples to consummate, is a picture of the daily sacrifices and struggles of the person for the sake of the weak in the offspring and the community. The unity of the married couples here is spiritually bonded in concupiscence and the Holy Spirit. The concupiscence here changes to mutual self-giving. Clarity from the Holy Spirit must be continuously used by married couples and must be allowed to guard against sexual perversion and its excesses which is the stem of confusion that leads to marital disharmony and that further affects the family unit, the society, and the world at large. It is in heeding to clarity from the Holy Spirit enlightening the married couples that the Sacredness of the Sacramental reality of Matrimony is kept.

Furthermore, sexual activity must be limited to only the marital state as the apostle rightly admonished, *“A man does well not to marry. But because there is so much immorality, every man should have his own wife and every woman should have her own husband. A man should fulfill his duty as a husband, and a woman should fulfill her duty as a wife, and each should satisfy the other’s needs. A wife is not the master of her own body, but her husband is; in the same way a husband is not the master of his own body but his wife is. Do not deny yourselves to each other, unless you first agree to do so for a while in order to spend your time in prayer; but then resume normal marital relations. In this way you will be kept from giving in to Satan’s temptation because of your lack of self-control”* (1Corinthians 7:1-5).

The apostle simply summed up the required use of work- concupiscence in the married state but at the end advised on the first activity of prayer and communion with God from the attack of Satan which is in emphasis of the need to heed to the voice of the Holy Spirit continuously on the part of the leaders of the family unit who are the couples. With relation to the consummation of Jesus with the souls of men, the Holy apostle further admonished, *“Each of you should go on living according to the Lords gift to you, and as you were when God called you. This is the rule I teach in all the churches”* (1 Corinthians 7:17) and again, *“What I mean, my friends, is this: there is not much time left, and from now on*

married men should live as though they were not married; those who weep as though they were not sad; those who laugh as though they were not happy; those who buy as though they did not own what they bought; those who deal in material goods as though they were not fully occupied with them. For this world as it is now will not last much longer” (1 Corinthians 7:29-31).

The words of the apostle in sum, is total detachment from the psychological dullness of concupiscence allowing the person to be clear and chaste, waiting for the wedding feast of the lamb (cf. *Revelation 19:5-10*). On this note, it is advisable that married couples should be taught what concupiscence is and how it is used in marriage. This will go a long way in putting a halt to marital infidelity, divorce and other issues affecting marriage. However, detachment from carnal concupiscence is the summit of the Holy Spirit’s words through the apostle. We are to teach carnal concupiscence as it is directly attached to people for the sake of love and purification of the person, not the effect of the concupiscence which a lot of people cannot control as even the apostle had noted that we wrestle not with human powers but spiritual forces of the dark (cf. *Ephesians 6:12*). For the sake of God in whose body is the entire human race (cf. *Ephesians 5:30*). In this light, the teaching must start with the teachers who are the workers in the vineyard of God (cf. *Mathew 20:1-16*).

5. JESUS THE IMAGE OF GOD AND MAN’S REDEMPTION

With man’s disobedience came death but the image of God is still in man as had been said earlier (cf. *Genesis 1:26-27*). That image of God cannot die, as is from the Perfect God of creation and that image of God is our Lord Jesus Christ and that is why the apostle noted, *“Christ is the visible likeness of the invisible God. He is the firstborn Son, superior to all created things. For through Him God created everything in heaven and on earth, the seen and unseen things, including spiritual powers, lords, rulers, and authorities. God created the whole universe through him and for him. Christ existed before all things, and in union with him all things have their proper place. He is the head of his body, the church; he is the source of the body’s life. He is the first born Son, who was raised from death, in order that he alone might have the first place in all things.” (Colossians 1:15-18).*

It follows that, to restore man from the imperfect state of death in the fall, to being in the image of God, the image of God had to come to rescue- our Lord Jesus Christ. The Image of God in whom man was created and whose substance in man had been made to fall into sin and imperfection (cf. *Ephesians 5:30*), has a Spirit that is fast and active (cf. *Hebrews 4:12-13*), announced the redemption of man through the Man and God whose substance had fallen into agony, misery and death. God announced this redemption as, *“I will make you and the woman hate each other; her offspring and yours will always be enemies. Her offspring will crush your head, and you will bite her offspring’s heel.” (Genesis 3:15).* The fathers of the Church interpreted this clearly;

After his fall, man was not abandoned by God. On the contrary, God calls him and in a mysterious way heralds the coming victory over evil and his restoration from his fall. This passage in Genesis is called the Proto-evangellium (“first gospel”): the first announcement of the messiah and Redeemer, of a battle between the serpent and the Woman, and of the final victory of a descendant of hers.

The Christian tradition sees in this passage an announcement of the “New Adam” who, because he became obedient unto death, even death on a cross”, makes amends superabundantly for the disobedience of Adam. Furthermore many Fathers and Doctors of the Church have seen the woman announced in the “Proto-evangellium” as Mary, the

*mother of Christ, the “new Eve”. Mary benefitted first of all and uniquely from Christ’s victory over sin: she was preserved from all stain of original sin and by a special grace of God committed no sin of any kind during her whole earthly life.*²³

The interpretation of the Fathers afore mentioned explains the work of salvation of our Lord to have come outside the psychological dullness of carnal concupiscence, taking up substance as the first Adam and then purifying the same substance to have been corrupted by sin and made to fall into agony and death. The mother of Life- Mary, didn’t conceive through the animal energies as was evidenced in the announcement by the angel, *“The angel said to her, “Don’t be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king as his ancestor David was, and he will be the king of the descendants of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end”.* (Luke 1:30-33). Mary, not knowing how Revelation will come without the natural course of procreation asked the question, *“I am a virgin. How then can this be?”* (Luke 1:34), and the angel announced the *true spiritual identity of man*, *“The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and God’s power will rest upon you. For this reason the Holy child will be called the Son of God”.* (Luke 1:35).

The birth of our Lord revealed our spiritual identity to be outside the confines of the animal energies of the concupiscence. For the Man and God who came outside these energies that had held us captive before in the Old Testament and the law now showed us who we are and directed us to our Father in heaven. Mankind now became free, as he first freed His mother, the vessel He was to come through as the church fathers had taught *“Mary benefitted first of all and uniquely from Christ’s victory over sin: she was preserved from all stain of original sin and by a special grace of God committed no sin of any kind during her whole earthly life.”*²⁴ Jesus the redeemer, Man and God, in his continuous work of saving the souls of men from death, established the Church through the selection of the apostles and handing over the continuous work of redemption to them as He said to them, *“Go throughout the whole world and preach the gospel to the whole human race. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned”* (Mark 16:15) and again, *“Then he took a piece of bread, gave thanks to God, broke it, and gave it to them saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in memory of me”.* In the same way, he gave them the cup after the supper, saying, *“This cup is God’s new covenant sealed with my blood, which is poured out for you”* (Luke 22:19-20).

6. THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH AND TIMELESSNESS IN THE EUCHARIST

Jesus instituted the bishops and handed over the mandate of salvation through the two chief sacraments- Baptism and the Holy Eucharist and all the other sacraments rotate around these two sacraments (cf. CCC 1323). The Lord placed Peter- the rock as the head of the bishops of the Church on the Rock of ages after haven confessed the presence of God narrated as, *“Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God”.* *“Good for you, Simon Son of John!” answered Jesus. “For this truth did not come to you from any human being, but it was given to you directly by my Father in heaven. And so I tell you, Peter: you are a rock, and on this rock foundation I will build my church, and not even death will ever be able to overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven;*

²³ CCC, 410-411.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

what you prohibit on earth will be prohibited in heaven, and what you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.” (Mathew 16:16-19).

The mention of rock by Jesus in the passage above is especially in reference to its characteristics of being static and unshaken, no wonder when Peter confessed the presence of Revelation above, it now follows that he stood on the Rock of ages through God the Father, and so Christ knew he believed in Him as he further said, “*whoever believes in me should drink as the scripture says, streams of life-giving water will pour out from his side*” (John 7:38). That believe of Peter witnessed to the birth of faith which is the Holy Catholic Church. This was further evidenced as, “*Jesus said this about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were going to receive. At that time the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not been raised to glory.*” (John 7:39). Jesus revealed the coming of the Holy Spirit in the church with Peter the rock which was to happen as Jesus was raised to glory. As Jesus was now raised to glory, the apostles received the mandate of the church as He had said before his crucifixion and resurrection and they went ahead under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the work of the church (cf. *John 20:22, Acts 8, 19: 1-7*).

Faith which is static and apparent like rock is outside the psychological dullness of concupiscence and so proceeds from God alone. It is objective, merciful, not biased and it enters into all things as nothing can change or resist it (cf. 1 *John 5: 4*). No wonder Jesus our Lord revealed that even death will not be able to overcome the rock foundation of his church on Peter who has confessed revelation and indeed confessed faith and the birth of faith (cf. *John 16:18*).

Faith is repetitive spiritual union with God which in other words is called deification because people are going to be consciously clear from the psychological dullness of concupiscence in a gradual ‘*thinking through*’ discernment process. This deification occurs in the Holy Catholic church through the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, baptism and all the other sacraments. Of note is the celebration of the Holy Eucharist which needs no gainsay, “*For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts*” (*Malachy 1:11*). The pure offering offered in the species of bread and wine on the alter is outside the sun and what the sun sets on as prophesied by the prophet above. The pure offering is generally outside the physical provisions of time and space and yet is offered in time and space. It is also to mention that the Eucharist is repetitive going by the mentioned fact that it will be offered *from the rising of the sun even unto its going down*- which is an everyday activity not for the exception of Good Friday.

The pure offering being Jesus Christ is the Lamb who was slain (cf. *Revelation 5:12*) and is offered on the Alter “*from the rising of the sun even unto the going down*”²⁵. The Eucharist then is beyond the physical provisions of time and space even on alters in time and space. The Eucharist is the union of God in his angels and saints celebrated for the purity, chastity and salvation of all mankind. The Eucharist then is timeless as the sun and what it sets on are only in the physical provisions of time and space which is the cosmos. The sun and what it sets on are also material properties that lack identity as persons while the Pure Offering- our Lord is beyond the cosmos and a connection and participation in It requires illumination, and thus the fathers of the church noted, “*Thus from celebration to celebration to celebration, as they proclaim the Paschal mystery of Jesus “until he comes,” the pilgrim*

²⁵ Cf. Ibid note 2.

People of God advances, "following the narrow way of the cross," toward the heavenly banquet, when all the elect will be seated at the table of the kingdom" (CCC 1344). This narrow way of the cross is illumination from the crucifixion of the flesh in carnal concupiscence which leads to Jesus who is timelessly present in the Holy Eucharist.

The knowledge of people seems to be limited by the physical provisions of time and space alone. By timelessness we mean clarity and it is outside our understanding which is by sight of material properties more so beyond the micro particles called atoms. Jesus being outside the confines of time and space in his angels and in his saints is already here in His angels and saints- specifically in the Eucharist. The servant of God Pope Benedict XVI in his Post-Synodal Apostolic exhortation on the Eucharist as the source and summit of the Church's life and mission testified to the ever presence of God in the Eucharist through history, "*The more lively the Eucharistic faith of the people of God, the deeper is its sharing in ecclesial life in steadfast commitment to the mission entrusted by Christ to His disciples. The Church's very history bears witness to this. Every great reform has in some way been linked to the rediscovery of belief in the Lords Eucharistic presence among his people.*"²⁶ If every great reform in the Church had been linked to a rediscovery of the Lords Eucharistic presence, what belief could be greater than illuminating in the belief that the Eucharist is a Mystery that is beyond time and which provides clarity as against the psychological dullness of concupiscence? A person that approaches the Eucharist with this belief is bound to have clarity- freedom from the psychological dullness of concupiscence. The soul is in spiritual union with the Holy Spirit and consequently above the carnal concupiscence of greed, sensuality and lust as the concupiscence only operates within time and the clarity of the Eucharist that is timeless embraces with two hands the people that approach the body of Jesus in the Eucharist as he purifies their minds from the psychological dullness of concupiscence. The Eucharist then is the absolute cure for the carnal concupiscence and its fruits of violence that creates the very intolerable environment in the cosmos. The only reform in Eucharistic theology is to approach the Eucharist in the belief of timelessness and the timelessly present Jesus will receive the souls of His children from the rising of the sun to its going down (cf. *Malachy*1:11).

7. THE EUCHARIST AND THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

People wait in expectation of the physical signs in time and space which is produced from the effect of the psychological dullness of concupiscence in the world; in all the agonies spoken of by Christ about the end times (cf. *Mathew* 24:6-7, *Mark* 13: 7-8). This is to help them prepare for the end times, they wait in physical expectation of Christ to come, and so they go about trampling on each other and referring to the saints as freaks and madmen thinking that before he comes, going by the signs he had given through the Patriarchs and himself, they'll be in tune with his teaching and therefore avoid hell fire and damnation using their senses (cf. *Mathew* 24: 15- 31, *Mark* 13: 14- 27, *Luke* 21:20- 28). This is an error because knowledge from the senses or sense organs is limited to the natural working of animal body which causes lawlessness among animals. This knowledge from the sense organs is static like the dawn of day, the rising and setting of the sun, the change of weather and seasons. The fact that the natural system is static only reveals that it has been

²⁶ Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis* 22 Feb. 2007 Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20070222_sacramentum-caritatis.html on 22.07.2016. §6

programmed by the Creator of nature to work that way. Jesus is already here- beyond the knowledge of the senses which causes lawlessness among animals. In the Eucharist we grow spiritually to eternal union and deification with our Lord. Illumination and clarity from God is not through the senses or sense organs in the body but as Christ had mentioned, *“No one knows, however, when that day or hour will come- neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son; only the Father knows. Be on watch, be alert, for you do not know when the time will come. It will be like a man who goes away from home on a journey and leaves his servants in charge, after giving to each one his own work to do and after telling the doorkeeper to keep watch. Be on guard, then, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming- it might be in the evening or at midnight or before dawn or at sunrise. If he comes suddenly, he must not find you asleep. What I say to you, then I say to all: watch!”* (Mark 13: 32-37).

It is through freedom from the psychological dullness of concupiscence (cf. *Psalm 145:15*). Not the eyes of the body or decoded messages from the senses as referred above but the eyes of the Spirit revealed by Christ himself (cf. *Luke 10: 22, Mathew 11:27*). Jesus Christ will open our eyes or enlighten us in the Eucharist even as he did on the walk to Emmaus, as is noted, *“He sat down to eat with them, took the bread, and said the blessing; then he broke the bread and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight.”* (Luke 24: 30-31). This opening of the eyes is the removal of the carnal concupiscence and fulfillment of the prophecy of Hosea as, *“At that time I will make a covenant with all the wild animals and birds, so that they will not harm my people. I will also remove all weapons of war from the land, all swords and bows, and will let my people live in peace and safety. Israel, I will make you my wife; I will be true and faithful; I will show you constant love and mercy and make you mine, and you will acknowledge me as LORD. At that time I will answer the prayers of my people Israel. I will make rain fall on the earth, and the earth will produce corn and grapes and olives. I will establish my people in the land and make them prosper. I will show love to those who were called “Unloved”, and to those who were called “Not-my-People” I will say, “You are my people,” and they will answer, “You are our God.”* (Hosea 2:18-22).

CONCLUSION

The time for the fulfillment of Hosea’s prophecy had always been here, that knowledge and consciousness is revelation in the opening of the eyes in the breaking of Bread which is a consciousness that is above the controlling force of concupiscence. The Eucharist purifies and removes the psychological dullness of concupiscence that make us live against the golden rule of love your God with everything in you- heart, soul, mind and strength, then love your neighbor as yourself (cf. Mark 12:30-31). With love in place clarity and the realm of love avail; as there would be no more mortal sin wrought from the concupiscence- the temporal renewable energies in the cosmos of the temporal and material properties that are passing away. Human life and the quality of living improve to perfection as clarity will result to development and growth, discarding poverty and strife.

Everything becomes clear and known to everybody. No more sorrow, agony and death, that entrance of man into the concupiscence is reversed but this time with a more glorious state which is the Eschatological glory, as the Eucharistic Jesus renews us with his Holy Spirit, washing us in the clarity of the Eucharistic celebration and participation; offers us to Himself in his Father and the Holy Spirit, and in his angels and saints.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Mathew Vivan, *Normalcy: A Post Vatican II Salvation History Manuscript*, 15.08.2015, Chap. I.
- [2] Fremantle W.H, Lewis G and Martley W.G, transl., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series vol. 6, Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (eds.) Christian Literature Publishing Co, Buffalo, NY:.,1886, revised and edited by Kelvin Knight in *CHURCH FATHERS: Letter 22 (Jerome)-New Advent* (2009). Retrieved from <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001022.html>, on 01.09.2016
- [3] John Ming, “Concupiscence.” *The Catholic Encyclopedia* Kelvin Knight (ed.) 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04208.htm>, on 01.09.2016
- [4] Ralph McInerney and John O’callagan, “Saint Thomas Aquinas.” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* Edward N. Zalta (ed.). Second series vol. 6 (spring 2015 edition) retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/aquinas/>, on 01.09.2016
- [5] Henry Campbell Black, *Black’s law dictionary: definitions of the terms and phrases of American and English Jurisprudence Ancient and Modern; (with pronunciations)* Bryan Garner (ed.) West Publishers, St. Paul, Minnesota, 2004,p. 900, Clause 1.
- [6] Parker John, trans. *Dionysius the Areopagite, Works (1897)*. James Parker and Co, London, 1897.p.128. Retrieved from <http://www.ccel.org/dionysius/works.I.html> 08/09.2016
- [7] Albert Sidney Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English*, ed. Joanna Turnbull et al. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010.p. 752,1222
- [8] M.L. Jhingan, *Advanced Economic Theory (Micro and Macro Economics*, 12th edition, Vrinda publications, New Delhi, 2008, p.2.
- [9] Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis* 22 Feb. 2007 Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20070222_sacramentum-caritatis.html on 22.07.2016. §6
- [10] Catechism of the Catholic Church, CCC. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/arcive/catechism/p1s2c1p2.htm, on 01/09/2016. CCC 232, 237, 385, 391, 393, 410, 411.

<https://doi.org/10.26520/icoana.2019.10.5.49-58>

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE SIN AT THE LEVEL OF HUMAN MIND, WILL, AND SENTIMENT AND OF FREEDOM AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Prof. PhD. Marin BUGIULESCU,

Professor, Director of "Saint John Chrysostom" Orthodox Theological Seminary, Târgoviște,
Member of „Dumitru Stăniloae” Scientific and Interdisciplinary
Research Centre, Valahia University, Târgoviște,
ROMANIA

Email: m_bugiulescu@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This article presents the moral impact of sin on man and society. The modern man does not have as features spiritual and moral balance. The notion of sin has begun to be used more often with reference to the environment in which man lives, not only to the human person. In contrast to classical definitions, which considered sin to be a personal, intimate lack of relationship with God or others, in a more or less bilateral manner, the climate involution and the general state of the environment determined the theologians and problem specialists of ecology to speak of sins against the environment.

Keywords: sin; perfection; Christianity; man and society;

INTRODUCTION

Man was born freely, having the power to obey or not God's will from the beginning. The Creator made the compassionate beings that He created with the opportunity to move voluntarily and freely, so that they could acquire good features for themselves which they would preserve by their own will. In fact sin is the centering of man in himself, through which the powers of soul, reason and will are dominated by the senses or the body. By sin, man has departed from God, from his fellow kind and from his own self. The dynamism of the image of God in the man from the original state due to sin is passive. Because of this, human nature has undergone a series of degrading transformations that end up fatally with death.

The Concept of the Holy Fathers on Sin, according to the biblical account (see below chapter 3), considers sin to begin with the rebellion of angels against God, but subjectively it is founded on the liberty with which human kind was endowed. The original human nature has in itself the power of life, “posse non mori”, and the power of purity “posse non peccare”, but not all of it, which enables it to connect with God and communicate with God on the basis of a genuine relationship. If God had created the perfect human, then the human would have had no merit for his perfect condition, and if He had created him altogether sinful, then man would not have been able to reach to perfection and God, in this case, would have been the author of evil. The Holy Fathers argue that just as deification is possible only for rational and free beings, so is the sin made only by these beings: angels and men.

One of the fundamental questions is related to the occurrence of evil. Who is the source of evil? God or man?

Logically and ontologically God is the Supreme Being, therefore, he cannot be counted as the author of evil, because He would contradict his goodness, his love, and his absolute perfection. Both angelic beings and human beings have been created and endowed with rational and free will, so they have their own decision-making power, which enables the disposition to evil. The autonomy of angels and men reveals that God is not the author of evil, but rational and free beings, who make decisions without any constraint, both towards good - God and evil - inexistence.

As for the *sensus* and theological implications, sin is distinguished from other notions such as imperfection, passion, crime, evil, selfishness and sensuality, notions that are closely related and often confused. Thus, sin is distinguished from imperfection, which is the lack or denial of a following moral goodness, since it is not a free and conscious violation of the law. Also, sin is different of passion or vice, because sin is an act, while passion is a steady activity in action that contravenes moral law. Sin is also different from the offense that constitutes the external violation of the law. Therefore, any sin is also sin, but not every sin is also an offense, because sin can involve not only external but also internal aspects. As far as the notion of evil is concerned, it is wider than sin. Sin is the moral evil, the worst of evil and the cause of all the other misdoings, but cannot be identified with what is meant by physical evil, which is punishment for sin and metaphysical evil. Sin is conscious and free transgression of the moral law, or conscious and free opposition to the will of God, expressed in moral law. But the complete definition of sin itself is this: Sin is the transgression of God's law, and this transgression is the very opposition to the will of God made with the mind and the will of the transgressor. The transgression of the divine law is done either by omission or by commitment, and consists of a work of thought, talk, or deed.

1. PRIDE THE FIRST SOURCE OF SIN

The fall of angels and men into sin is based on the same reason, namely pride (φιλότιμο) or self-love. The angel, a spiritual being, who sees the glory of God, focused out of pride on its self-existence, gaining though eternal non-existence as an ontological state. From the point of view of Christian ontology, God is the source of all existence. Taking into account the high spiritual state in which the angels were, the punishment received by the act of evil was eternal and irrevocable, unable to be changed in any way, because after their fall into sin they were established by God according to their will in good - good angels and in evil - evil angels, having no other means of temptation. The punishment of man is also eternal, but revocable, because sin and the breaking of God's will were made under the temptation of evil angels. The fall of angels was explained by patristic theology as a means of rebellion and envy, which makes: "*The demon, the beginner of the wickedness, seeing man become an angel on earth, was consumed by envy because he who had spent between the higher powers had been thrown down from that height because of its evil desire ... so he used ... the serpent, which surpassed in wisdom all the animals created, ... as a tool, and through it deceived the unguarded vessel, the worst, that is, the woman ...*"¹.

The biblical account of the ancestral history of sin begins by emphasizing the wisdom of the serpent that deceives the woman. The biblical serpent is a mask of the evil angel or the devil. About the fall of the angels, St. John Chrysostom formulates the teaching that the good

¹ St. Ioan Gură de aur, *Omiliii la Facere*, XVI, 1, trans. Pr. D. feciorul, in P.S.B. 21, Bucharest, 1987, p. 177

angel has become evil, that is, "*he lost his worth before the creation of the first one, because he thought he could be greater than he was (Sol. 2, 24 - looking at the greatness of man - ... they have conspired against him death. That is how wickedness is! It cannot bear quietly the happiness of others!*"² The Devil (Satan), as St. Basil the Great depicts him, is the adversary (II Kings 11:14): "He is called a devil, for he is both a sinner and an accuser of sin... His purpose is leadership, as the apostle: "*Against the ruler who controls the darkness" (Ephesians 6:12) his leadership is exerted around the earth*"³.

The Sacred Scripture presents the humans' temptation and fall into sin (Genesis 3: 1-2-24), first of all the woman tasting from the forbidden tree, then the man; as well as the banishment from Heaven. The devil promises man that he will be like God, knowing good and evil (Genesis 3: 5). St. John Chrysostom says, "*Have you seen the devil's cunning? He said what God had not told them, to make the woman say what God had said to them (verses 2-3), so entrusted that the serpent speaks to her as a friend, she revealed the whole commandment, and told him everything, and so by answering the serpent, the woman deprived herself of any word of defense*"⁴.

By committing sin, the thinking of the humans which is existentially oriented towards the intelligible is dominated by the body. The taste of the tree of knowledge of good and evil awakens in the body of the human, the senses and pleasure, the concupiscence (Genesis 3: 6). The biblical opening of the eyes that sees the nakedness and awakens passionate appetites. For the first humans it was the time of alienation from God. As for the taste from the biblical tree, we can say that it did not open their eyes, because the humans could see before too, but it in that state it did not have any thoughts to deceive the command and the will of the Creator. By opening our eyes, as Saint John Chrysostom shows, we must understand that "*the eyes of the mind have been opened to them ... understand that it made them feel their nakedness and that they had fallen from the glory they were before.*"⁵

In the Holy Scripture, sin has several meanings: the removal of purpose (Rom.5, 12), the failure to obey the law (I John 2: 2 Peter 2: 6), disobedience (Genesis 2:16, Romans 5:19) fall (Mark 11: 26), rebellion, or any act contrary to God. Etymologically, the term «sin» comes from the Hebrew words: *hattat* - removal of purpose, which corresponds to the Greek word *adikia* or the Hebrew word *pesah* - Greek *anomia* - revolt, rebellion; or from ebr. *rasah* - gr. *kakopoiein* - to hurt, in Latin, *peccatum* has a very wide meaning, i.e. any mistake. But, regardless of the meanings used, sin presents itself as a contrary will, removal from God, being freely done, because man: "*abusing the natural power given to him by creation towards the union of the separated, he considered better to separate the united*"⁶. The emergence of sin is firstly connected to the world of reason or mind. Thus sin has first of all an intellectual aspect. "*The throne of the divine is the mind, and the throne of the mind is God and the Spirit, therefore it is said that Satan and his powers and beginners of darkness have settled, from the transgression of commandments, in the mind and heart of Adam as on their own throne...*"⁷.

² *Ibidem*, XX, II, p. 261

³ St. Vasile cel Mare, *Omulii și cuvântări*, IX, IX, trans. Pr. D. Feciorul in P.S.B. 17, Bucharest, 1986, p. 444

⁴ St. Ioan Gură de Aur, op.cit. XVI, III, p.179

⁵ *Ibidem* XVI, V, PG. 184- 185

⁶ St. Maxim Mărturisitorul *Ambigua*, trans. Pr. D. Staniloae, in P.S.B, Bucharest, 1983, p.236

⁷ St. Macarie Egipteanul, *Omilia* VI,V, Pr. Prof Constantin Cornițescu, P.S.B. 80, Bucharest, 1992, p.123

Patristic thought presented the process of conception of sin that takes place in several stages⁸. Hesychius the Monk counts four: the attack, the accompaniment, the consensus, the sensitive deed, and St. John Damascene seven steps: the attack, the accompaniment, the passion, the struggle, the bondage, the conscience, the perpetuation. From all these moments, the most decisive is where our thinking has its attitude. 1. The attack belongs to the Satan and is accomplished by temptation, - the time of the temptation of the woman, (Genesis 3: 1-5). The bait is shed wisely by the snake, it brings the evil thought to the woman, thought which is like a confusing image, it would have been natural for her to turn her back on it and run away. 2. Accompanying, at this stage the human thought takes on a simple form and interferes with the thought thrown by Satan. Referring to the first humans, Adam and Eve, the woman discusses with the devil, as the biblical account tells us more, is convinced by him that she will become like God: "*the mind being darkened by those promised, it makes its thoughts to give a form to the pleasure, because it is without image and form according to its reason ...*"⁹. At this stage we enter the dangerous area of sin. 3. Consciousness makes the notion of evil appear in the mind, the simple thought is visualized, now the inner passion appears: "*the woman, considering that the fruit of the tree is good to eat, and pleasing to the eyes ...*" (Genesis 3: 6). The sensitive act transposes the visual thought outward, now is the sin, and once it is done it manifests itself like a chain requiring another sin, which through exercise becomes a passion or a vice (Face 3: 6), the woman falls, tempting the man, and so sin repeats itself.

The etymology of the passionate word comes from the Greek *patio* and the Latin *passio,-onis* which means *bondage, passivity*. Reason, the human mind through passions is dominated by the impulse of matter, and that is why it manifests itself duplicitously.

*"So much sin has spread that the soul has been forced to follow the wills of the body; I forced the soul, who ought to stand the first as a master, and command, I forced him to descend from the throne and obey the pleasures of the body, I no longer took account of his nobility and his great rank. ..."*¹⁰.

Sin is the irrational start that gripped all human nature. St. Maximus the Confessor believes that the first sin is pride, and consists in selfish love, from which all other sins and passions are born. The possibility of the birth of passions is given by the existence of natural affections, which are: "*the condemnable and contrary beings that hang upon us do not have any source in us other than in the movement of affections according to nature*"¹¹, they have degenerated into the human nature with the fall into sin, dwelling on its less rational side, not part of the original constitution of man. We can say that in the original state there was a kind of affection or passion of spiritual pleasure, but it did not enslave the nature but was a real state of being, it was the real mode of existence, reason, conscience and freedom, increasingly centered in the immense divine – theonomy.

The affections added to the human nature by sin in themselves are not condemnable if they are kept within the natural boundaries, as long as it is necessary for them to exist. They characterize the fallen state of the human being, being related to leather garments (Genesis 3:21), and they become good in those who strive and tear them apart wisely of the flesh to acquire the heavenly goods. If they are satisfied, then they destroy the unity of the human being, the man reaching autonomy and self-sufficiency. Archimandrite Justin

⁸ Pr. D. Stăniloae, *Ascetica și mistică*, I,5, Bucharest, 2002, p. 114

⁹ St. Maxim Marturisorul *Ambigua.*, p. 107

¹⁰ St. Ioan Gură de Aur, *Omilii la Facere XII,V*, p.145

¹¹ St. Maxim Mărturisorul, *Quaest ad. Thalas P.G.*, 90,541

Popovich in connection with them says, "*What is the chief and most important thing for the life of man? Undoubtedly, to give meaning to his life, which from the ontological and phenomenological point of view became meaningless because of death, that is, of sin*"¹². This centering, autonomy of man in itself, embodied in the illusive thirst for the absolute, backed by the idea that he can become God, is contrary to all of the communion and love to which man is called; it places man and God in radically different realities, there is no possible connection between the divine and the human.

3. EVIL DOES NOT HAVE NATURE IT IS AN ACCIDENT AND NOT A SUBSTANCE

The essence of evil lies in the lack of good, for evil has no ontological existence, but is a state of adversity to virtue. The nature of evil appears as an accident that man adds to his nature, but the accident cannot be the same as the substance, for then there would be no accident or substance. The author cannot be God, because then all His perfection is contradicted; therefore evil has no existence, being the opposite of the idea of good not in the sense that evil exists in itself but is conceived as a lack of the manifestation of good. Manifestation of evil takes the form of good, it is disguised as good, therefore, and the fruit of the forbidden tree caused the pleasure of the flesh, and urged the first woman to taste and feel a good state of affection, but beneath this pleasure was hidden the pain. Dante Alighieri in the "Divine Comedy" says: hell is paved with good intentions (Infernal II, 127-129), that evil always bears the apparent mask of good. So if we leave the premise that evil has been from the beginning in the world is equivalent to treating God as the author of evil. Evil has entered the world through will and without a nature, but a state.

St. Gregory of Nyssa, speaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, says, "*The tree from which we gather mixed knowledge is part of the forbidden trees. Instead, his fruit, the defender of which has become the snake, is a mixture of contradictions, perhaps because, according to his nature, evil is not offered to us directly. For if evil does not leave traces so bad, it would not have been adorned with the label of good, in order to awaken the lusts in the ones he deceived. This is how the evil was presented in a shrouded way, but ... he hid, the destruction of human ... he shows the image of the good*"¹³. The interpretation given by St. Maximus to the two trees in heaven highlights the fact that evil, once fed by the human nature, lowers man's attention to the material and sensitive: "*As long as man has come into existence, made up of the soul of the mind, and of the flesh endowed with senses, according to a first sense, the tree of life is the mind of the soul, in which the wisdom has its seat, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil is the sensation of the body, in which it is obvious that the irrational movement is impelled.*"¹⁴.

The fact that man could have sinned is linked to the free will with which he was endowed, and to his dual nature, which had two movements, one ascending soul-related, and one descending of the flesh. Human freedom, standing in the middle between these two, is the force that decides the choice of good or evil. Thus, the first man desiring the bodily lusts has mastered the evil state that destroys the human nature. The beginning and root of sin lies in the nature of man, and especially in the freedom of the will. Evil, in relation to human nature, has caused pain and suffering that ends logically and ontologically with death.

The poems in prose of Baudelaire emphatically express man's relation to the defining of demons. "*The devil's most beautiful chastity is to convince us that he does not exist.*" And

¹² Arhim Iustin Pooivici, *Omul și Dumnezeu- omul*, I, trans. Ioan Ică Jr., ed. Deisis, Sibiu 1997, p.44

¹⁴ St. Maxim Mărturisitorul, *Ambigiua*.43, P.G. 90, 412-413

if it does not exist, the question arises, why does man fear him? In humanistic thinking, this state is thus conceptualized: God existence: *"I am the One who is"*. The devil is the seemingly degrading existence: *"I am called nobody, there is nobody here, why are you afraid? Tremors in the face of nonexistent?"*¹⁵

Man was created in the image of God, therefore in the ontological definition the original state was good, but the transformation inserted by sin made possible the corruption, the pain and the death. The gravity and the consequences of sin are seen from the very first moment of the transgression of the divine commandment, by sin the first men have known the effects of concupiscence: *"Then they opened their eyes to both of them, and knew that they were naked and sewed fig leaves they have covered themselves"*(Genesis 3: 7). The sense of emptiness, lack of existential sense, showed them that they lost the glory in which their image, the *eikon* was enveloped (man created in God's image). The shame that overwhelmed them was the measure of pleasure that had taken place in their nature, and reason and conscience had perverted themselves. In the biblical man subjected to sin *"was the consciousness that the gaze of the other who falls on me is not the gaze of the one who loves me, in which I trust. It is the look of a stranger that does not look at me with love, but it sees me as an object of its desire and pleasure. Looking at the other, turning me into a neutral individual ..."*¹⁶. The feeling of nakedness and shame also reveals the sense of guilt, now consciousness works and puts sin before the first humans, Adam feels fear and fear for what has been done, and shows cowardice, weakness, that is why he is hiding. Adam's fear is accentuated by God, who walks through Heaven in the cool of the evening (Genesis 3: 8), not because he did not know where man is, but to make man more aware of sin, what has happened now the righteous judge - the consciousness that awakens and shows them the magnitude of the sin committed; But instead of responding with dignity to the Creator, man is hiding from God who is everywhere. But psychologically, the voice of the Creator's love asks: *"Where are you, Adam?"*, as he calls today the fallen human, and discuss with him through biblical teaching about what has happened. Man does not have the sense of responsibility, dignity, tries to blame the woman, and the woman on the snake. After this essential moment, God throws the curse upon men and the whole earth, and also announces a Savior to lift man to lost dignity (Genesis 3:15).

Another direct consequence of the ancestral sin is the change of the bright garment with the garments or the skins of the skins, the body (Genesis 3:21). Leather clothes, in the concept of Sacred Parents, represent the grasp of sin, which made the first men feel the unspeakable shame, but also the altered form in which death entered into human nature. St. Gregory of Nyssa, in this sense, says, *"By a movement of our free will we have become partakers of evil, mixing it in our nature through the pleasure of the pleasure ... we have transformed ourselves into the image of the evil one ... , after the first humans were cast out of heaven, the Master covered them with leather garments. I do not think that Moses is thinking of the animal skins as we have imagined, for ... the skin separated from the animal to which it belonged is a dead thing, so the possibility of dying, which was taken wisely from the nature of the unbelievers, then threw it upon men, but not forever ... because the coat is something outside us, an object that has temporal use but has nothing to do with our nature. Death ... has embraced the outer nature of this nature, not the inner nature ... without touching the very image of God in man ..."*¹⁷. Of course, the body clothed with the leather

¹⁵ Denis de Rougemont, *Partea diavolului*, trans. Mircea Ivănescu, Anastasia, Bucharest., 1994, p. 11

¹⁶ Christos Yannaras, *Abecedar al credinței*, XI, trans. Pr. C. Coman, Bizantină, Bucharest, 1996, p. 103

¹⁷ St. Grigore de Nyssa, *Despre Facerea omului*. VIII, p. 41- 43

garments, becoming dense and solid, carnal, but with it, the psychic functions became fleshy. In the sense of Saint Gregory of Nyssa, the leather garments are the concrescent carnal consciousness that appear with the entrance of sin into human nature, because: "*the coming to evil comes from not outside force, but as soon as we choose the evil, it takes existence, making itself when we choose it*"¹⁸. Panayotis Nellas, says: "*Therefore, if one wants to fully understand his existence, the good and the terrifying elements that whip him, man needs to broaden his horizon, ask himself if what he thinks is natural, is not as seems to be So we understand why, for the Saint Bishop of Nyssa, in this irrational biological, irrational, deadly carnalness, the honors man finds are inevitably ephemeral ... the certainties of the flesh are murderous, that is, death and death bringing.*"¹⁹ According to Aglaofon, anyone who realizes that the body is extinguished and returns to the dust, Methodius of Olympus, responds firmly: "*The body is between corruption and incorruptibility; he, who was the being of innocence, inclined to the dust of the earth.*"²⁰ The death of the flesh (according to Methodius of Olympus) has the following purpose in God's plan after falling into sin: "*This is the meaning of the leather tunics, clothed in them, the body is clothed in corruption, so that with it sin to be destroyed entirely*"²¹, and thus the body be raised out of corruption by the resurrection of Christ.

St. Macarius the Egyptian teaching about the human being in the flesh says: "the clothing that you wear another has made ... so also Adam transgressing the commandment ... he sold himself to the devil, and the cunning clothed his soul ... for the soul mixes with those with which he unites by will ..."²², and St. John Chrysostom, speaking of the garment of leather, says that he has changed the bright garment of the image, and that were given to man by divine love, so that he does not live naked and it would differ from the clothes of the ungodly, but at the same time to remember the loss of good things in Heaven.²³ Ioannis Zizioulas and Christos Yannaras conceive the human person as the reflex of divinity, which has three hypostases in history. The natural hypostasis in the state of grace, the biological hypostasis given by the human being in leather clothes, whose psychosomatic energies are serving life as the energy of individual²⁴ survival and the ecclesiastical hypostasis achieved through the incorporation into Christ in the Church.²⁵

The orientation of human to itself, the ontological autonomy and imprisonment by God's disobedience is the being of ancestral sin and is based on pride. Pride has begun the passions that enslave the human nature and make it deal with those without spiritual sense. After St. Maximus, the state of passivity that characterizes the fallen nature, is reduced to objectification, the thirst for knowledge, and the desire for infinity manifests itself in passions to the contrary, and so the whole human perspective becomes a world of objects; but the objects are by their nature finite because they are circumscribed and thus the satisfaction received is limited, and ends tragically in nonexistence by consuming them.

The greatest consequence of sin is death because "the consequences of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). By sin, man breaks the relationship with the source of life-God, losing the

¹⁸ St. Grigore de Nyssa, *Despre fericiri*, trans. Pr. D. Stăniloae, in P.S.B. 29, Bucharest, 1982, p. 372

¹⁹ P. Nellas, *Omul, animal îndumnezeit*, trans. Ioan Ică Jr., ed. a II-a, Deisis, Sibiu 1999, p. 85, 90

²⁰ Metodiul de Olimp, *Despre înviere, XVIII*, trans. Pr. Prof. C-tin Cornițescu, in: PSB. 10, Bucharest, 1984, p. 186

²¹ *Ibidem*, XL, p. 150

²² St. Macarie Egiptenul, *Omilia*, I, VII, VIII, p. 90

²³ St. Ioan Gură de Aur, *Omilia la Facere*, I; XVIII, II, p. 209

²⁴ C. Yannaras, *Abecedar al credinței*, p. 112

²⁵ Ioannis Zizioulas, *Ființa eclesială*, trans. by Pr. Aurel Nae, Bizantină, Bucharest, 1996, p. 46-79

living grace of life, and thus receives the corruption that alters the glow of the image. All these consequences are the material aspect of the ancestral sin. Sin added to human nature becomes a second person for man, that is why it is accomplished with great ease, the nature being bent on sin, towards those that lead to death and non-existence.

The formal aspect of the original sin and guilt for sin places human responsibility in divine justice. The problem of transmitting sin to Adam's descendants is one of the very controversial themes of theological debates, for which several theories have been elaborated, more less satisfactory, of which we mention:

1. The theory of the indirect imputation of original sin. The sin is present in the human nature shared by the descendants of Adam as a mood for evil. This theory removes human consciousness and freedom.

2. The theory of external imputation that the descendants of Adam are guilty of simply being descended from him. This theory is groundless because sin is not only imputed but also real and personal.

3. Naturalistic theory; based on the text of (Romans 5:12), according to which Adam the universal man concentrates in himself the whole human nature of all time. Neither can this theory be accepted because sin belongs to the person who hypothesizes the nature, and therefore the responsibility for it lies with every person.

4. The theory of sin is ancestral to human nature. This theory claims that blame is inherited in nature, but this is also not grounded because moral responsibility lies with personal consciousness and liberty.

5. The Theory of *aligation* - Instills a judgment of God through which a moral bond has been established between Adam's sin and the will of his descendants, but is not grounded because it contradicts the freedom of each human person.

Adam's sin is personal, but since the way his descendants come into existence is linked to sin, each person portrays the fallen nature, not Adam's before sin, the human nature having the afflictions of the fall, which in they are not condemnable, but they become accusatory if they are satisfied beyond what is necessary.

The aspect of punishment of sin manifests itself in many ways in the human nature, resulting ultimately in death. Death encompasses all humanity, for: "By one error came the chastisement of all men." (Romans 5:18). Adam's fall in sin is universal; therefore, the consequences extend to all people as descendants. "*In fact, leaving Adam out of heaven, all creation ... seeing him more willing to obey the disobedient ... (the nature was lacking help from the uncreated energies from above that had retracted) ... seeing the naked man of the glory that was initially bestowed they despised him and stumbled against him ...*"²⁶.

The transmission of the ancestral sin is related to the way of Adam's descendants coming into existence. The fall in sin being included in the divine plan of creation, allowed man another way to share the supportive face of existence, that is, the birth. Adam came to existence through creation, and his descendants through birth: "*For the first creation is called genesis and not genisis. Genesis is the first creation of God; but the birth is the succession of one another as a consequence of condemnation to death because of the transgression of the commandment ...*"²⁷ Through the man - Adam it has been received the image of incomprehension, of impiety, and the new man receives the God's image altered by sin, the broken part of the flesh, the affections, the ability of suffering, but not Adam's sin and

²⁶ St. Simeon Noul Teolog, *Cuvântări morale*, I, trans. Pr. D. Stăniloae, in: *Filocalia*, vol. VI, Bucharest, 1977, p. 128.

²⁷ St. Ioan Damaschin, *Dogmatica*, XXX, trans. Pr. D. Fecioru, Bucharest, 2001, p. 110.

personal guilt. Of all men, only Adam has the faculty; his descendants come into existence by birth. Birth brings to man the fallen nature, so what man is born with the ancestral sin: "In sins my mother gave birth to me." (Psalm 50: 6), as the Psalmist says. Birth is seen as the means by which nature exists, a means of its perpetuation; that is why it produced much joy to Adam, who did not know what would happen to his nature, which was going to death: "*the birth of the heirs was the greatest comfort for the loss of the nation, it could be said that through this God outlined a picture of the resurrection, ordering others to rise instead of the dead ...*"²⁸. Birth is the means by which the Savior Christ assumes the fallen human nature, and Adam's made nature. By rehabilitating the fallen nature and filling with grace the made one, being the New Adam in which all are born for eternal life.

Adamic sin has the same form, with the sin committed by every man, and results in the lack of grace and life implication, but other content, for example, the sin of Cain as it is narrated by Scripture, has the same form as that of the forefathers but the curse, his punishment, is much greater, because it is the devil's tool through which death enters the world, even though it was "born in the image of God" (Genesis 5,3-5), which shows that man remains the image of God and after the receipt of corruption, the image being indelible, even if by sin man no longer has life as his constitutive characteristic, he no longer exists because of the life that naturally escapes from him, his life (*zoē*) has changed into blind battle for survival (*epiviose*). Sin contains in body the one nature (John 3: 6), and the human race receives death as God's law for the transgression of the divine commandment. But in order for man to escape from the punishment of the law and death, God is made a true man, sharing through His resurrection, the likeness, the one created in the *ikon*, the God's image in the humans, destroying the sin and the **needle** of death, through death defeating death, bringing together that which were apart, filling them with His great glory.

CONCLUSION

Christian morality deals with living and applying Christian teachings. Sin is an illusion of existence. According to the form of realization, sin is of two kinds: ancestry and personal. Ancestral sin is considered an anomaly at the level of genuine reality for which man was created. Sin by consequence manifests itself: intellectual, moral and religious. Personal sin is the sin committed by human as a result of the orientation of his free will to evil or to a seeming good that disregards the moral law. It may be present when the transgression or omission of the law is done in a single, habitual way when it is a sinful state that lasts.

The measure of the gravity of sin is given by several aspects:

1. the importance of the unconquered command, which encompassed the entire moral law;
2. the ease with which it was done at the urging of the wicked;
3. the punishment dictated by God's justice: death and other serious consequences.

The consequences of the ancestral sin are both spiritual and physical in nature. Of the spiritual ones, it is proper to state that on the soul, the ancestral sin meant:

1. Breaking the holy communion with God and altering the original state, the loss of love and grace, and thereby the spiritual death of man, in fact is the loss of the original perfection, the power of the soul, and the alteration of God's image in man.

²⁸ St. Ioan Gură de Aur, *Omilii la Facere*. XVIII, IV, p. 214.

2. The darkening of the mind, which immediately confuses good with evil. He believed he could hide from God, and that he could exonerate himself, blaming Eve and, indirectly, God.

3. Perversion of the heart, which has become more inclined to the worldly and sensitive, following the lusts of the body and changing the love of God with love for the creature.

4. The weakening of the will that it follows the path of passions with ease, creating a permanent tension between different tendencies of human in his earthly life.

The greatest consequence of sin is death because “the punishment of sin is death” (Romans 6:23), because by sin man breaks the relationship with the source of life-God, losing his life-giving grace, and thus receives the corruption that alters the glory image. The consequences of sin are the alteration of the divine image of human, which darkens the mind, weakens the will, and perverts the human nature, but reflects on the entire creation.

The fall of man into sin produces both cosmological and anthropological disorder, because sin disrupts and destroys by death all existences, leading them into non-existence through hedonistic and irrational pleasures, which don't have real purpose.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] St. John Damascene, *Dogmatica*, (Dogmatics), trans. Pr. D. Feciorul, Bucharest, 2001
- [2] Denis de Rougemont, *Partea diavolului*, trans. Mircea Ivănescu, Editura Anastasia, Bucharest, 1994.
- [3] Sfântul Grigore de Nyssa, *Despre Facerea omului*, [About man's creation], trans. Pr. T. Bodogae, in: P.S.B. 30, București 1998.
- [4] Sfântul Grigore de Nyssa, *Despre fericiri*, trans. Pr. D. Stăniloae, in: P.S.B. 29, Bucharest, 1982.
- [5] Sfântul Ioan Gură de Aur, *Omilii la Facere*, trans. Pr. D. feciorul, in: P.S.B. 21, Bucharest, 1987.
- [6] Sfântul Macarie Egipteanul, *Omilii*, Pr. Prof Constantin Cornițescu, P.S.B. 80, Bucharest, 1992.
- [7] Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul, *Ambigua*, trans. Pr. D. Staniloae, in: P.S.B., Bucharest, 1983.
- [8] Metodiu de Olimp, *Despre inviere*, [About resurrection] trans. Pr. Prof. C-tin Cornițescu in: P.S.B. 10, Bucharest 1984.
- [9] Nellas Pannayotis, *Omul, animal indumnezeit*, trans. Ioan Ică Jr., ed. a II- a, Deisis, Sibiu 1999.
- [10] Pooivici Arhim Iustin, *Omul și Dumnezeu- omul*, I, trans. Ioan Ică Jr., Deisis, Sibiu 1997
- [11] Simeon Sfântul Noul Teolog, *Cuvântări morale*, trans. Pr. D. Stăniloae, in: Filocalia 6, Bucharest, 1977
- [12] Stăniloae Pr. D., *Ascetica și mistica*, I,5, Bucharest, 2002.
- [13] Sfântul Vasile cel Mare, *Omilii și cuvântări*, trans. Pr. D. Feciorul in: P.S.B. 17, Bucharest, 1986.
- [14] Yannaras Christos, *Abecedar al credinței* (Elements of Faith: An Introduction to Orthodox Theology) a.trans. Coman Constantin, Bizantină, Bucharest, 1996.
- [15] Zizoulaslas Ioanis, *Ființa Eclesială*, (*Being as Communion*), Bizantină, București 2000.

<https://doi.org/10.26520/icoana.2019.10.5.59-68>

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS – THE TRIAL MOMENTS OF OUR SOCIETY

Prof. Ph.D. Adrian IGNAT,
Faculty of Theology and Sciences of Education,
Valahia University of Târgoviște,
ROMANIA
E-mail: adriagnat1974@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This article tries to underline the economic crisis which is faced the world today and the individualistic idea of living without God and the conscience of God presence in this world. Human being must understand that we are living here, in the world, as a community and communion, being connected one with another. For that it is important to save all resources, being in solidarity with entire world. The paper analyses the French Revolution, as the start of individualism on society understanding, and continues with actual economic crisis with its involvement on our society and our life. The Orthodox Church proposes an important paradigm which can be used on our society. This model emphasises the Christian solidarity and love, as our Lord Jesus Christ taught us.

Keywords: economic crisis; Orthodox Church; individualism; solidarity; consumption;

INTRODUCTION

The current crisis has created panic and mischief in people's lives. Faced with huge debts, the general economic collapse, and personally, some of our fellows have given up. Searching for financial stability has become the expression of many worries. Forced execution and the loss of all agonizing were hard times in the lives of those closest to us.

Under these conditions, those affected by the crisis (unemployed or drastically diminished salaries) reacted differently. Some have sought to find their way into spiritual values, in eternal values, in faith in God. Others who have been so despised by the lack of a real solution to real problems have become indifferent to spiritual values, seeking to solve only the material one. That is why depression and suicide have multiplied¹. Against the backdrop of material shortages, this category has become more and more numerous. The religious man died, and in his place the material (economic) man grew up and consolidated, with all its consequences.

1. THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND ITS EFFECTS

The notion of "light", as it was understood in that time, can be found in various combinations: *Enlightenment and light, freedom and light; "to light is to remove the various veils and envelopes in front of the eyes, to make room for light in the intellect and in the*

¹ Sorin M. Rădulescu, „Sinuciderea în Europa, în contextul crizei economice globale” [Suicide in Europe in the context of the global economic crisis], în *Revista Română de Sociologie*, XXIII (2012), nr. 5–6, pp. 385–403.

heart, so that it illuminates and heats it, as well as entering into the realm and order of the fields, where tones the fulfillment of man and true happiness?"² Wieland praises any contribution to the "national economy, politics, civil and military constitution, religion, morals, public education, science and the arts, crafts and agriculture, which spreads some light in every part of our homeland."³

The Age of Lights⁴ represents a turning point for the history of mankind and the history of the Christian Church. For the West, enlightenment "meant the clear division between religion and the field of public life, that is, the first and deepest rupture between Christianity and Europe."⁵ The French Revolution is the hardest expression of secular society towards Christian religion⁶. "The French Revolution (1789) was one of the highlights of the Enlightenment period. One of the goals that Enlightenment has proposed was the eradication of occultism and its practices."⁷

The attempts to humanize and democratize the world, decreed by the age of lights, are based not on Christian humanism, but on the influence of secular humanism. "Because of enlightenment, man managed to record victories beyond the eighteenth century, known as the century of lights, to dominate the outer nature through the prestigious development of science and technology, but he also became the slave of his own passions in his being, that can no longer control"⁸. The victory of the French Revolution also meant the categorical separation of the State Church. On the other hand, the events of 1789-1794 "gave birth to capitalism, economically; the preponderance of the bourgeoisie in the social and political order; and the ideological values that are supposed to be its own."⁹

Replacing feudalism with capitalism was a development for European society, marked in particular by the rise of a new social class - the bourgeoisie - and the entrance into a shadowy cone of the great landowners. At the same time, the Western Church passes through convulsions marked by the anti-clerical attitude of the revolutionaries. During the French Revolution, Christianity was declared "dangerous superstition" and was outlawed (November 1793).¹⁰

The end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the age of lights brought about dramatic changes in Western Christianity. "Religious individualism and subjectivism, preached by Protestantism, led to the multiplication of confessions, to doubt and inner disintegration, to endless and sterile discussions that caused the pietistic reaction. The progress of physic-mathematical science in the seventeenth century, as well as the flourishing of Cartesian philosophy and empiricism or English Gnosticism, eventually led to

² Ulrich Im Hof, *Europa luminilor [Europe of lights]*, traducere de Val Panaitescu, Polirom, Iași, 2003, p. 9.

³ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 11.

⁴ To be seen M. Vovelle, *Omul luminilor [Man of the lights]*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2000.

⁵ Pr. Dr. Nicolae Achimescu, *Religii în dialog [Religions on dialogue]*, Editura Trinitas, Iași, 2006, p. 395.

⁶ In its most eccentric form, inspired by J.-J. Rousseau, the laicism of the French Revolution, converted into civil religion, had Robespierre as the ultimate sacerdot and transformed Reason into Goddess of the Republic. Cf. M. Ozouf, *La fête révolutionnaire*, Gallimard, Paris, 1976; J. Starobinsky, *1789: Emblemele rațiunii [1789: The emblems of reason]*, traducere de I. Pop, Editura Meridiane, București, 1990.

⁷ Pr. Dr. Nicolae Achimescu, *Noile mișcări religioase [New religious movements]*, Editura Limes, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, p. 41.

⁸ Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, *Hristos, Biserică, Societate [Christ, Church, Society]*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1998, p. 16.

⁹ François Furet, *Reflecții asupra revoluției franceze [Reflections on the French Revolution]*, traducere de Mircea Vasilescu, ediția a II-a, Editura Humanitas, București, 2011, p. 35.

¹⁰ Pr. Ioan Bizău, *Viața în Hristos și maladia secularizării [Life in Christ and the disease of secularization]*, Editura Patmos, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, p. 267.

*deism, naturism, monadology, scepticism and sensualism, free thinking French encyclopaedists and materialists, and even from here to hate the Church*¹¹.

Together with the many secular decisions taken during the French Revolution, a church restoration was achieved through its liberation from the state. Still now, the old sins have been removed, which brought heavy to the service of the Church and to Christianity: the recruitment of bishops only among nobles and landowners, the exaggerated domination of the Jesuits, etc. The abolition or suspension of papal privileges was again a necessary action. *“The awakening of interest in the ethnography and religion of pagan peoples and the giant evangelistic work are a result of this historic process so decisive in the history of humanity”*¹².

The French Revolution was about to destroy French Catholicism. However, the Church survived, but remained for a long time marked as a mortal trauma. Analysing the impact of the French Revolution and Enlightenment on the Catholic Church, Antonio Rosmini, in his manifesto entitled *Delle cinque piaghe della Santa Chiesa*, speaks of the five wounds in the body of the Church: the distance between the clergy and the people; the insufficiency of clergy education; the separation of bishops; the appointment of bishops by state power; the service of church goods¹³. On these issues, the Catholic Church will have a position through the encyclical of Pope Leon XIII, *Rerum novarum*. It will accept the distinction between ecclesial society and civilian sovereignty; recognize the diversity of nature and purpose, and the autonomy and legitimacy of political power, while insisting on the ideal of harmony between the two societies and powers.

2. THE ECONOMIC CRISIS - THE EMINENTLY MORAL CRISIS OF SOCIETY

In an article published in the *Theological Magazine*, Nicoleta Acatrinei points out that *“The economic man was born in the middle of the nineteenth century and had as a father the utilitarian philosopher Bentham and as a «mother» the Ricardian economy strengthened and developed by John Stuart Mill”*.¹⁴ Following this symbiosis, a purely theoretical construction was created¹⁵. *“The last economic abstractions that are economic laws are based on a prior abstraction of man, the economic man. The statement «man is motivated by desire for wealth» can be considered as an implicit definition of the term «economic man»”*¹⁶. In Mill’s view, no other facet of human nature is analyzed, and this *„not because any economist would be so stupid to think that humanity would have done so, but because it is the road that science necessarily needs to follow... The way in which the political economy proceeds necessarily is to regard this primary and acknowledged goal*

¹¹ Pr. Prof. Dr. Ioan Rămureanu, Pr. Prof. Dr. Milan Şesan, Pr. Prof. Dr. Teodor Bodogae, *Istoria Bisericească Universală [Universal Church History]*, vol. II, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1956, p. 262.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 266.

¹³ Cf. Ioan I. Ică jr., „Biserică, societate, gândire în Răsărit, în Occident și în Europa de azi” [„Church, Society, Thought in the East, in the West and in Europe today”], în vol. *Gândirea socială a Bisericii*, Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 2002, p. 31.

¹⁴ Nicoleta Acatrinei, „Sfântul Ioan Gură de Aur și homo oeconomicus: de la etică la morală” [„St. John Chrysostom and homo oeconomicus: from ethics to morality”], în *Revista Teologică*, XVII (2007), nr. 4, p. 168.

¹⁵ K. Pribam, *Les fondements de la pensée économique*, Economica, Paris, 1986, p. 175.

¹⁶ J. S. Mill, *Sur la définition de l'économie politique; et sur le méthode d'investigation qui lui est propre*, Michel Houdiard Editeur, Paris, 2003, p. 22.

(the accumulation of wealth) as if it were, from all the comparable hypotheses in simplicity, the closest to the truth”¹⁷.

The accumulation of wealth is thus the desideratum of an age that no longer focuses on spiritual goods, but only on material assets. The crisis of today’s society is characterized by: blind obsession for money; the pre-eminence of selfishness; proliferation of lack of sincerity; family decay as a social institution; the public outbreak of sexuality; increasing discord; the amplification of conflicts of all kinds (among individuals, among individuals and society, among social groups, among generations) etc. The man of today is lonely and empty, it is free of landmarks, it is “*the object of manipulation*” and of *antimods*” that deepen the value crisis, no longer recognizes itself, is deceived by the illusion of false values.¹⁸ „*The current economic crisis is not only global but also systemic. This is a crisis of values, a crisis of prospects. History has definitely demonstrated that the possibility of solving the political, economic and humanitarian problems of the modern world must be sought not only in the redistribution of material resources or in the improvement of their management technologies, but also in the spiritual sphere. The first cause of this crisis is the degradation of moral-ethical motivation from economic activity, that is, the loss of the main purpose in the economy, namely to build a harmonious and equitable society in which man can realize his professional or spiritual potential regardless of the social position or his political beliefs.*”¹⁹

Faced with the most diverse and sophisticated challenges, mankind has gone through the centuries a road that has unfortunately not approached God but has removed it. Secularization, globalization, atheism, agnosticism, hedonism are only a few of the phenomena facing the present society. Searching for the meaning of existence has become important in a senseless world. That is why today, when we are confronted with an acute economic crisis, we find that, in fact, we are facing a crisis of values, models, life itself. This is all the more interesting, as all these shortcomings come to light when society is confronted with material gaps, when the economic market is felt as a result of major financial disasters generated by greed and avarice, lack of scruples and deliberate ignorance your own conscience, lack of character and dignity, servility and misery, etc. These social races, deeply sown in many of our fellows, have resulted in a continuous degradation of the personal and social moral life, the perspective of Christian living. “*The essence of the moral crisis consists, of course, in the diminution of religiosity*”²⁰.

The problem of “*model crises*” has become important also for many specialists. However, the conclusions are divergent. In the literature, three main types of models are analyzed: *simple models*, imitated by attempts and errors; *scientific models* that we try to reproduce by assimilating the principles of action and behavioral norms; *ethical models* that are imitated by value criteria and which awaken in enthusiasm, passion, aspirations, high spiritual orientation²¹. All historical periods have faced challenges and crises. Mankind was not and will not be free of “*crises*”. Each generation considered that the crisis was the

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

¹⁸ Prof. univ. dr. Anca Borza, Conf. univ. dr. Mirela Popa, Lect. univ. dr. Codruța Osoian, „«Criza de model moral» – o realitate?” [„Moral pattern crisis» – a reality?”], în *Management & marketing*, <http://www.managementmarketing.ro/pdf/articole/47.pdf>, p. 46.

¹⁹ Cf. www.teologia-sociala.ro. The original can be found on the official website of the Moscow Patriarchate, www.mospat.ru

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ Constantin Enăchescu, *Tratat de psihologie morală [Treatise of moral psychology]*, Editura Tehnică, București, 2005, p. 230.

hardest and the biggest effects for that time. The economic crisis implies “*the manifestation of difficulties or periods of tension, of disturbance, of attempts that manifest in the society*”²².

Having its starting point in the US in 2007, the current economic crisis has spread rapidly across Europe and from here across the world. Increasing the degree of indebtedness to banks for satisfying various needs or pleasures has led to the inability to pay the contracted loans²³. All these toxic credits have in turn led to a chain-fall of financial institutions, economic actors, and so on.

However, the current economic crisis, with the exception of its negative aspects, has brought with it benefits. We have realized that any economic prosperity ends at one point, that ethics, defined and appropriated in everybody’s sense, is more important than price or product policy. The global, national or regional economy would be much more profitable if it were ethical in advertising policy, in sales, in the treatment of employees, partners and clients. Aristotle, speaking in the context of his time, exemplifies this by saying: “*By guitar singing someone becomes for instance a good guitarist as well as evil and in the same way with the architect and any craftsman or artist. Whoever builds well becomes a good architect, and who builds evil, a bad architect. If that were not so, no teacher would need it, but everyone would come to the world master or scribe. Even so there are the things and the virtues. Through our behavior in new business relationships we become righteous or unjust; by acting in danger and by the habit of fearing them or resisting them, we become valiant or cowards. And that is also the case with lust or anger: some become sober and idle, others unafraid and angry, as they do in some cases (...). And that is why it is not so important if we get used to this or that; on the contrary it means very much or better said everything*”²⁴.

The economic means to acquire the necessary for life or, in the case of many, to satisfy our own pleasures, must not constitute real goals for our life. If originally money represented only one currency of exchange, then they became an aim in itself. Despite this, the Church does not want and “*does not accept the separation of the human economy, the development of the civilization in which it is inserted. What matters is man, every man, every group of people, the whole of mankind*”²⁵.

The people summarized in a dictum the whole attitude about wealth or poverty, the position in society or the prestige held: “*To be a gentleman is a chance to be human is a great thing.*” As a result, in the economy, as in the other spheres of life, ethics must be the human conduct of welfare. “*When man is aware of the fundamental values of life, true beauty and riches, he approaches pure science with a prophylactic, therapeutic and vitamin effect on mind and soul*”²⁶.

What characterizes man, his humanity itself, must be the foundation of human relationships. An important aspect of our relationships with our fellows is our human solidarity. Solidarity is a feature that refers not only to individuals but also to international

²² ***, *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române [The explanatory dictionary of the Romanian language]*, <http://dictionare.edu.ro/definitie/criz%C4%83>; Jean Marie Albertini, Ahmed Silem (eds.), *Lexique d'économie*, Dalloz, Paris, 1999.

²³ Banks have also borrowed low-income persons who have been unable to repay the loans, and so the phenomenon of "crise des subprimes" appears.

²⁴ Aristotel, *Etica nicomahică [Nicomahic ethics]*, Editura Antet, București, 2002, p. 38.

²⁵ L. J. Leuret, *Dynamique concrète du développement. Économie et Humanisme*, Les Éditions Ouvrières, Paris, 1961, p. 28.

²⁶ Cosmin Stoica, *Considerații privind importanța eticii creștine în viața economică [Considerations on the importance of Christian ethics in economic life]*, <http://atreiafortaromaniaprofunda.blogspot.ro/2011/02/consideratii-privind-importanta-eticii.html>

economic policies. Within the framework of solidarity, man meets the one next to him, discovers him, discovers himself and discovers God. From this, the wealthy should learn and apply in their relations with the disadvantaged, the poor, the sick, the helpless. Some of them, however, “*stubborn in their avarice, will only be able to provoke the judgment of God and the wrath of the poor, with unpredictable consequences. Closing themselves in the shell of their own egoism, the presently thriving civilizations will end up destroying their highest values, sacrificing the will to be the desire to have more*”²⁷.

In order to address the current economic crises, several considerations have been issued within the Christian Church. Paul Heyne believes that Christian economists are “*fleeing an illusion*”, because it is not “*a single Christian vision in the economic order*”, and that is why Christian economists “*should leave their theology at home*”, when they try to deal with economic issues and makes public a Christian statement on economic policy²⁸. Webb synthesizes Heyne’s position as follows: “*We should be good economists and offer a policy of choice: we should be both Christians and live in obedience to the radical commandments of the New Testament. But attempts to mix the two will not lead us to the pursuit of unity...*”²⁹. Atherton³⁰ believes, like Heyne, that all Christians have adopted a variety of views on the value of the market economy from radical criticism to moral support. However, Atherton does not understand the complexity of how markets operate, as well as their broad social implications. In the opinion of other researchers, placing Christian values above the market, not the association of free market values with Christian social ethics, is the way the current crisis is resolved. On the basis of these considerations, Hay³¹ will propose “*seeking interim solutions*”³².

On the other hand, all economic specialists are looking to come up with the most ingenious solutions, ranging from encouraging consumption, to reducing financial deficits and emerging debt³³. However, only by adopting Christian solutions, love for God and

²⁷ Paul al VI-lea, The encyclical letter *Populorum progressio*, nr. 49.

²⁸ Paul Heyne, „Christianity and the Economic Order”, in *Bulletin of the Association of Christian Economists*, 15 (Spring), 5-6, 1990.

²⁹ Bruce G. Webb, „Whose theology? Which economics?”, in *Bulletin of the Association of Christian Economists*, 23 (Spring), 1994, p. 50.

³⁰ John Atherton, *Christianity and the Market: Christian Social Thought for Our Times*, SPCK, London, 1992.

³¹ Donald A. Hay, „On being a Christian economist”, in (eds.) Donald A. Hay and Alan Kreider, *Christianity and the Culture of Economics*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2001, pp. 166-190.

³² Cf. Andrew Henley, Swansea University, *Doing economics as a Christian – constructive engagement or prophetic detachment?*, Cambridge, 2004, http://www.christian-economists.org.uk/jour34_Henley.pdf, p. 5.

³³ Lect. PhD. Ioana Lupasc, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, "Dunarea de Jos" University, Galati (Romania), proposes the following solutions:

- to promptly and accurately inform the actors involved (population, economic agents) of the risks associated with lending activity by creating crisis scenarios, as the current crisis was largely due to the failure to pass on the necessary information on all associated risks;
- elimination of waste by reducing administrative budget expenditures, but not by reducing the salaries of the public sector by 25% as it did in Romania, but by creating a viable plan that would allow the crisis to exit; in practice, an effective analysis of budget expenditures was required to eliminate inefficient or low efficiency spending. We believe that the most effective investment is in human capital, youth, or education. In Romania, this investment has not been supported;
- recapitalization of affected public or private institutions, especially banks; the Basel III Agreement provides for global capital adequacy standards, better risk coverage and liquidity standards for banks;
- creation of new jobs, both by private economic agents and by the state, by attracting investments;
- investment plan in public infrastructure;
- creating social programs and related investments;

neighbor, we will succeed in removing poverty and illiteracy from society, we can cultivate value and faith, life and not death.³⁴ Fasting, praying, as well as serving together can bring many benefits for every person and for society as a whole.³⁵

The courage of the confession of Christ must manifest itself in every field of activity: politics, economy, education, culture, etc. Only in this way can human society heal its illnesses and temptations. The transition from the *consumer society* to the *assume society*, i.e., “*the society that assumes the realities that are driven by reason, creates an inner human balance between reason, indolence and lust*”³⁶, may be a current way of life.

From the theological-theoretical point of view, the word *econom*, *iconom* (that is, the one that saves money) refers to the spiritual guide, who manages the spiritual ones, keeping the human nature within its limits. Instead, the present society understands by economic means the preaching of consumption, the satisfaction of desires and pleasures, without limits. As a result, the exit from the crisis cannot be achieved by consuming, because consumption means material and spiritual exhaustion of resources and life. For the real exit from the crisis is necessary repentance - metanoia - change of mind, mentality from the service of bodily pleasures, to the service of God. “*So the bridge from the consumer society to the assimilation society is repentance, the mind enlightened by grace, through their pure life, with professional training. So society can enter the road of peace, having a peaceful life.*”³⁷

The Orthodox Church has repeatedly stressed, through the voice of its representatives, that today we are actually confronted with an eminently moral crisis that also presents itself as an economic one. This is all the more important, especially as with the identification of the causes of the current crisis, we will know what measures we need to take to succeed in combating it. „*The economic-financial and socio-moral crisis has shaken our world, calling for meditation and change, for transfiguration and renewal, for, as we know, this negative phenomenon causes an intensification of searches, a profound existential*

- tax reform, but it must be taken into account that by referring to the Fiscal Code, it should not be changed / changed too often, as is the case in Romania, because certain stability must be ensured and guaranteed in the fiscal field;

- at individual level - strictly organizing and observing a personal budget, which means that only expenditures of strict necessity must be made. To be seen Lect. PhD. Ioana Lupașc, „O provocare a societății moderne: criza economică. Remedii din perspectivă creștină” [„A challenge for modern society: the economic crisis. Remedies from a Christian perspective”], in *Călăuza creștină*, Revista Arhiepiscopiei Dunării de Jos, <http://www.calauza.edj.ro/?p=3312>

³⁴ „Economists assess the laws of the market to see if they work properly, but the Church describes the theological frameworks within which man will move, propose spiritual goals, and comfort the wounds of men, using wine and oil, materials that truly cleanse, healing the wounds as we do shows the evangelical parable of the good Samaritan”.***, *Considerații teologice referitoare la criza economică. Scrisoare circulară citită în parohii și mănăstiri la 21 martie 2010* [Theological considerations regarding the economic crisis. Circular letter read in parishes and monasteries on 21 March 2010], la <http://romaningermania.ro/mesajul-bisericii-ortodoxe-din-grecia-cu-privire-la-criza-economica/>

³⁵ „Abundance, well-being, over-consumption are the causes responsible for economic crises. Of course, it is important to live every “decent” in terms of material goods, but they all have their limits. Church life is closely related to asceticism and contentment with less [λιγάρκεια]. Christians must live in simplicity [μυ λιτότητα]. Unfortunately, however, the asceticism that underlies Christian life is not lived in hyper-consumerist societies. By saying ascetic, we understand the correct use of the material goods necessary for life and not the exacerbated accumulation and consumption”. *Ibid.*

³⁶ Pr. Conf. Dr. Petre Comșa, „Reflecții ortodoxe la criza financiară și economică” [„Orthodox Reflections on the Financial and Economic Crisis”], in *Almanah bisericesc*, Arhiepiscopia Târgoviștei, 2010, p. 66.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

*evaluation offers the germs of building a new world with the hope of a more beautiful, better and more straightforward paradigm of true Christian civilization*³⁸.

Structured profoundly on promoting the purely economic values, personal financial possibilities, the current society is facing an acute crisis of values. Those who have enough capital are often not very well educated intellectually or do not want to make a positive change in the lives of others, but only in their own lives. Personal account and material availability are the targets for such people. For them there are no scruples, Christian morals or professional ethics. For them money is the supreme master to worship³⁹.

The creation of such capitalism, a ferocious capitalism, with serious implications in social life, disrupts the meaning of human existence, the natural movement of man and the world towards their Creator. Faced often with such challenges, with secularism and globalism, with the desire for an accentuated consumerism, the Orthodox Church tried to adapt its mission and pastoral work. *“The Orthodox Church is the first to keep up the sense of social solidarity. Struggling with the mentality of the old slavery and feudal society, she (the Church) taught her believers to temper their individualism and selfishness and to subordinate their personal interests to the general interest of the society in which man is integrated”*⁴⁰.

The awareness of one’s own mission and the attempt to respond to the spiritual and material needs of the present world has led the Church of Christ to take an attitude, seeking man’s recitation not of emerging material needs, but of perennial spiritual needs. The awareness of one’s own mission and the attempt to respond to the spiritual and material needs of the present world has led the Church of Christ to take an attitude, seeking man’s recitation not of emerging material needs, but of perennial spiritual needs. *“In this situation of economic greed without ethics, when everything becomes uncertain and unpredictable, changing and deceiving, it is necessary to increase prayer, to draw closer to God, the steadfast and implacable, just and merciful, but also to increase vigilance and prudence in order not to be deceived. Although the financial and economic crisis is largely a harsh immanent judgment for too much greed of material things gathered unjustly and too much waste of money, it can still be understood and used as a call for a new beginning in the lives of people and peoples. Thus, the economic crisis leads us to be more economical and more rigid, not to put our hope in material values, money and wealth more than in the spiritual values of faith, justice, fairness, and solidarity with those in need”*⁴¹.

In a word addressed to representatives of all religions in Europe, Patriarch Daniel, making a brief analysis of the current economic crisis faced by the world, said: *“The current economic crisis requires Member States and all European citizens to moderate and vigilant in using money, and calls on the European Union to progress in wisdom and solidarity, that is to respond to new problems emerging as major tensions between the economic crisis and*

³⁸ † IPS Nifon, Arhiepiscop și Mitropolit al Târgoviștei, „Perspectiva ortodoxă asupra misiunii și dialogului ecumenic” [„The Orthodox Perspective on Ecumenical Mission and Dialogue”], in *Decernarea titlului de Doctor Honoris Causa Înaltpreasfințitului Părinte Prof. Univ. Dr. Nifon Mihăiță Arhiepiscop și Mitropolit, Târgoviște*, 11 iulie 2013, p. 32.

³⁹ Pr. Lect. Dr. Sorin Șelaru, Pr. Lect. Dr. Patriciu Vlaicu (coord.), *Misiunea sacramentală a Bisericii Ortodoxe în context european* [The sacramental mission of the Orthodox Church in a European context], Editura Basilica, București, 2013, coperta 4.

⁴⁰ Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, *Hristos, Biserică, societate* [Christ, Church, Society], p. 22.

⁴¹ † PF Daniel, Patriarhul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, *Predică la Duminica a XXXII-a după Rusalii (a lui Zahau)* [Preaching on Sunday, XXXII after Pentecost (Zahau)], http://www.basilica.ro/stiri/patima-lacomiei-de-avere_3494.html

*political credibility, between austerity policies and the need for economic growth, between individual freedom and social solidarity, between national identity and global unity, between tradition and secularization, between family crises and diminishing birth rates, between the crisis of spiritual life and the degradation of social life*⁴².

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] ***, *Considerații teologice referitoare la criza economică. Scrisoare circulară citită în parohii și mănăstiri la 21 martie 2010* [Theological considerations regarding the economic crisis. Circular letter read in parishes and monasteries on 21 March 2010], la <http://romaningermania.ro/mesajul-bisericii-ortodoxe-din-grecia-cu-privire-la-criza-economica/>
- [2] ***, *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române* [The explanatory dictionary of the Romanian language], <http://dictionare.edu.ro/definitie/criz%C4%83>
- [3] Acatrinei, Nicoleta, „Sfântul Ioan Gură de Aur și homo oeconomicus: de la etică la morală” [„St. John Chrysostom and homo oeconomicus: from ethics to morality”], în *Revista Teologică*, XVII (2007), nr. 4
- [4] Achimescu, Pr. Dr. Nicolae, *Noile mișcări religioase* [New religious movements], Editura Limes, Cluj-Napoca, 2004
- [5] Achimescu, Pr. Dr. Nicolae, *Religii în dialog* [Religions on dialogue], Editura Trinitas, Iași, 2006
- [6] Albertini, Jean Marie – Silem, Ahmed (eds.), *Lexique d'économie*, Dalloz, Paris, 1999.
- [7] Aristotel, *Etica nicomahică* [Nicomahic ethics], Editura Antet, București, 2002, p. 38.
- [8] Atherton, John, *Christianity and the Market: Christian Social Thought for Our Times*, SPCK, London, 1992.
- [9] Bizău, Pr. Ioan, *Viața în Hristos și maladia secularizării* [Life in Christ and the disease of secularization], Editura Patmos, Cluj-Napoca, 2002
- [10] Borza, Prof. univ. dr. Anca - Popa, Conf. univ. dr. Mirela - Osoian, Lect. univ. dr. Codruța, „«Criza de model moral» – o realitate?” [„«Moral pattern crisis» – a reality?”], în *Management & marketing*, <http://www.managementmarketing.ro/pdf/articole/47.pdf>, p. 46.
- [11] Comșa, Pr. Conf. Dr. Petre, „Reflecții ortodoxe la criza financiară și economică” [„Orthodox Reflections on the Financial and Economic Crisis”], în *Almanah bisericesc*, Arhiepiscopia Târgoviștei, 2010
- [12] Daniel, † PF Patriarhul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, *Criza actuală – o șansă pentru a progresa în înțelepciune* [The current crisis - a chance to progress in wisdom], la http://www.basilica.ro/stiri/b2013-anul-cetateniei-europene-criza-actuala-o-sansa-pentru-a-progresa-in-intelepciuneb_7329.html.
- [13] Daniel, † PF Patriarhul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, *Predică la Duminica a XXXII-a după Rusalii (a lui Zahau)* [Preaching on Sunday, XXXII after Pentecost (Zahau)], http://www.basilica.ro/stiri/patimalacomiei-de-avere_3494.html.
- [14] Enăchescu, Constantin, *Tratat de psihologie morală* [Treatise of moral psychology], Editura Tehnică, București, 2005
- [15] Furet, François, *Reflecții asupra revoluției franceze* [Reflections on the French Revolution], traducere de Mircea Vasilescu, ediția a II-a, Editura Humanitas, București, 2011
- [16] Hay, Donald A., „On being a Christian economist”, in (eds.) Donald A. Hay and Alan Kreider, *Christianity and the Culture of Economics*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2001
- [17] Henley, Andrew, Swansea University, *Doing economics as a Christian – constructive engagement or prophetic detachment?*, Cambridge, 2004, http://www.christian-economists.org.uk/jour34_Henley.pdf
- [18] Heyne, Paul, „Christianity and the Economic Order”, in *Bulletin of the Association of Christian Economists*, 15 (Spring), 5-6, 1990.

⁴² Idem, *Criza actuală – o șansă pentru a progresa în înțelepciune* [The current crisis - a chance to progress in wisdom], la: http://www.basilica.ro/stiri/b2013-anul-cetateniei-europene-criza-actuala-o-sansa-pentru-a-progresa-in-intelepciuneb_7329.html

- [19] Hof, Ulrich Im, *Europa luminilor [Europe of lights]*, traducere de Val Panaitescu, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2003
- [20] Ică jr., Ioan I., „Biserică, societate, gândire în Răsărit, în Occident și în Europa de azi” [„Church, Society, Thought in the East, in the West and in Europe today”], în vol. *Gândirea socială a Bisericii*, Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 2002
- [21] Lebret, L. J., *Dynamique concrète du développement. Économie et Humanisme*, Les Éditions Ouvrières, Paris, 1961
- [22] Lupașc, Lect. PhD. Ioana, „O provocare a societății moderne: criza economică. Remedii din perspectivă creștină” [„A challenge for modern society: the economic crisis. Remedies from a Christian perspective”], în *Călăuza creștină*, Revista Arhiepiscopiei Dunării de Jos, <http://www.calauza.edj.ro/?p=3312>.
- [23] Mill, J. S., *Sur la définition de l'économie politique; et sur le méthode d'investigation qui lui est propre*, Michel Houdiard Editeur, Paris, 2003
- [24] Nifon, † IPS Arhiepiscop și Mitropolit al Târgoviștei, „Perspectiva ortodoxă asupra misiunii și dialogului ecumenic” [The Orthodox Perspective on Ecumenical Mission and Dialogue”], în *Decernarea titlului de Doctor Honoris Cause Înaltpreafințitului Părinte Prof. Univ. Dr. Nifon Mihăiță Arhiepiscop și Mitropolit*, Târgoviște, 11 iulie 2013
- [25] Ozouf, M., *La fête révolutionnaire*, Gallimard, Paris, 1976;
- [26] Popescu, Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru, *Hristos, Biserică, Societate [Christ, Church, Society]*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1998
- [27] Pribam, K., *Les fondements de la pensée économique*, Editura Economică, Paris, 1986
- [28] Rădulescu, Sorin M., „Sinuciderea în Europa, în contextul crizei economice globale” [„Suicide in Europe in the context of the global economic crisis”], în *Revista Română de Sociologie*, XXIII (2012), nr. 5–6
- [29] Rămureanu, Pr. Prof. Dr. Ioan - Șesan, Pr. Prof. Dr. Milan - Bodogae, Pr. Prof. Dr. Teodor, *Istoria Bisericească Universală [Universal Church History]*, vol. II, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1956
- [30] Șelaru, Pr. Lect. Dr. Sorin – Vlaicu, Pr. Lect. Dr. Patriciu (coord.), *Misiunea sacramentală a Bisericii Ortodoxe în context european [The sacramental mission of the Orthodox Church in a European context]*, Editura Basilica, București, 2013
- [31] Starobinsky, J., *1789: Emblemele rațiunii [1789: The emblems of reason]*, traducere de I. Pop, Editura Meridiane, București, 1990.
- [32] Stoica, Cosmin, *Considerații privind importanța eticii creștine în viața economică [Considerations on the importance of Christian ethics in economic life]*, <http://atreaiafortaromaniaprofunda.blogspot.ro/2011/02/consideratii-privind-importanta-eticii.html>
- [33] Vovelle, M., *Omul luminilor [Man of the lights]*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2000.
- [34] Webb, Bruce G., „Whose theology? Which economics?”, in *Bulletin of the Association of Christian Economists*, 23 (Spring), 1994.
- [35] www.mospat.ru
- [36] www.teologia-sociala.ro

<https://doi.org/10.26520/icoana.2019.10.5.69-78>

ASPECTS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE ROMANIAN MONASTERIES: THE PRESENCE OF PRISONS IN THE MODERN PERIOD

PhD. arch. Ioana Păvălucă-BRĂESCU

"Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urbanism, Bucharest
ROMANIA

E-mail: ioanapavaluca@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Monastic detention has existed since the 6th century, but the transformation of monasteries into prisons and other institution of confinement such as houses of correction, psychiatric hospitals, sanatoriums, asylums etc., arose at a time when the ideas of the Enlightenment were embodied in the society. This was a point of inflection of the pre-modern and modern world. The paradigm shift gradually began, in the 17th century in Western Europe, until the 19th century in the Romanian Principalities. With the secularization of monastic property in 1863, and delayed construction of new prisons, a number of monasteries changed their full function, becoming prisons. The consequences were disastrous: monastic ensembles, most of them of a priceless spiritual, architectural and historical value were in many cases irreversible destroyed and their mission altered.

Keywords: 19th century; Romanian Principalities; secularization; prison, monastery; Snagov; Văcărești; Cozia; Tismana;

INTRODUCTION

This paper investigates a painful moment in the history of the Romanian Orthodox Church, essential in birth of the modern Romanian society, by following the process of transforming monasteries into prisons in the 19th century.

The capital moment that spread this process is the secularization of the monasteries fulfilled by Al.-Ioan Cuza. It began in the first half of the 19th century, through the Organic Regulations and was not limited to 1863, but continued until the end of the century. The study identifies the key stages in this process, the circumstances and their spiritual, historical, and architectural implications by presenting four cases: Snagov Monastery, which was programmed as a prison in the Organic Regulations (1831), and functioned until 1861, until it was abandoned; Văcărești monastery, which became a political prison in the context of the Revolution of 1848 and a prison of the capital city after the secularization; Cozia monastery, which functioned as a prison between 1879 and 1893 and Tismana monastery, with a large unrealized prison project, proposed in 1887.

1. THE CONTEXT. A Brief History of Monastic Detention

In the 6th century, in the various regions of the post-Roman world, emperors, kings and bishops discovered the monastery as a governing tool. In particular, the monastic reclusion changed from a form of voluntary penance to legal punishment. Thus, the 6th

century monastic detention was the first mode of deprivation of liberty in church and civil law, replacing the surge.¹

Sovereigns recognized the spiritual authority in matters of discipline and dogma establishment in communities led by archbishops, and in many cases also recognized the authority of bishops in civil matters. The bishops had a judicial responsibility in all that belonged to Christian clergy, church properties and immoral behavior in their pastoral communities, being responsible for the salvation of those who were under their leading.² In western space, the monastic prison also used the detention of the secular (non-monastic) clergy for disciplinary purposes. The process was known as *detrusio in monasterium* ("detention in the monastery") and meant a life under normal monastic discipline, or imprisonment in a monastic prison.³ The disciplinary attributions of the bishops were not restricted only to the clerical body. The laity who sinned had to repent for the sins, hence nobility and sovereigns were, in theory, also under the clergy's jurisdiction. In all cases, the duty of the clergy was to impose penance.

Following the same line, in the Romanian Principalities, detention in the monastery had the role of obliging the convict to "meditate for the committed sins"⁴, being used for noblemen, clergy, but also for women, generally adulterine or prostitutes⁵. Not a few times, however, it was the case of political detention. The monasteries that housed convicts were Dintr-un Lemn and Viforâta for women⁶, and for the men, Tismana, Snagov, Arnota, Cernica, Căldărușani, Mărgineni and Secul⁷ (especially for the priests and monks).

The Prison Reform in the 19th Century

As previously seen, detention in monasteries has existed since the 6th century, but the transformation of monasteries into prisons and other institution of confinement such as houses of correction, psychiatric hospitals, sanatoriums, asylums etc., arose at a time when the ideas of the Enlightenment were embodied in the society. This was a point of inflection of the pre-modern and modern world, first in Western Europe, then (later in the 19th century) in the Romanian Principalities. The new humanitarian spirit of the time demanded a less bloody treatment of the delinquents than it had been before.⁸ The punishment was more subtle, personal, of the psyche and of the inner self, achieved through discipline and uniformity. The prison became a representative institution for the industrial society, the perfect realization of the modern state.⁹

¹ Julia Hillner, "Monastic Imprisonment in Justinian's Novels" in *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, vol. 15, nr. 2 (2007), pp. 205-208

² Norval Morris, David J. Rothman (eds.), *The Oxford History of the Prison. The Practice of Punishment in Western Society*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1995, pp.26-32

³ Megan Cassidy-Welch, *Monastic Spaces and Their Meanings: Thirteenth-Century English Cistercian Monasteries* Brepolis, Belgium, 2001, p.123

⁴ Dan Horia Mazilu, *Lege și fărădelege în lumea românească veche*, Polirom, Iași, 2006, p. 487

⁵ Constanța Ghițulescu, *În șalvari și cu ișlic. Biserică, sexualitate, căsătorie și dovorț în Țara Românească a sec. al XVIII-lea*, Humanitas, 2004, p.367

⁶ Dan Horia Mazilu, *Lege și fărădelege...*, p. 487

⁷ Gr. I. Dianu, *Istoria închisorilor din Romania, studiu comparativ, legi și obiceiuri*, Tipografia Curții Regale Göbel și Fii, București, 1901, p.39

⁸ Michael Foulcault, *A supraveghea și a pedepsi. Nașterea închisorii*, trad. și note de Bogdan Ghiu, Editura Paralela 45, p. după *Surveller et punir*, 1975

⁹ Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain. The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*, Penguin Books, 1978, p. 207-215

In the Romanian Principalities, secular prisons lacked special functions and adaptations, and until the beginning of the 19th century, detention conditions were terrible: lack of security arrangements, hunger, cold, illness, promiscuity¹⁰. Intense criticism of the poor state of the prisons¹¹ has generated a serious concern for the leaders and legislative changes. Both in Moldova and Wallachia, on the occasion of the Organic Regulations, Prison Regulations were also drawn up, in which the preoccupation for the moral / religious recovery of the detainees appeared for the first time outside the administrative measures¹². Prince Grigore Ghica (1849-1856) called on France to supervise the application of the new regulations and Ferdinand Dodun of Perrier, an official in the prison of France, was nominated. He composed the penitentiary regulations in Moldova in 1855 and remained as an inspector until 1876, introducing the Moldavian penal system into the United Principalities.¹³ At the same time, several prisons were proposed to be built: Tg. Ocna (Moldavia), Telega, Craiova, Brăila, Giurgiu, Telega, Ocnele Mari (Wallachia). However, due to the financial difficulties these were built-up only towards the end of the century.

The reforms of the state during the reign of Al-Ioan Cuza produced a major change: the secularization of the monasteries and the regulations for the organization of penitentiary establishments in 1862 were drafted, but they were not applicable due to the lack of adequate detention facilities.¹⁴ The state came into the possession of a substantially built fund, confiscating from the Church buildings, lands and wealth. As the state's capability to build new and modern prisons was more than limited, the transformation of monastery assemblies into prisons was relatively convenient, especially those that already were accommodating prisoners (Ostrov, Snagov, Rătești, Văcărești).¹⁵

In the second half of the 19th century, prisons mostly functioned in the old monasteries.¹⁶ Meanwhile, several projects have been proposed for Ocnele Mari and Doftana prisons, but they were not erected until the end of the century. The crisis of detention places was getting worse due to the lack of space, but also due to the lack of specialized staff, who was not able to implement thoroughly the modern punishment methods.¹⁷ Thus the poor results led to the Law of Prisons in 1874, during the time of Carol I¹⁸. Unfortunately, the situation did not considerably change.

Secularization of the Monasteries

There are scholars who admit some positive effects of secularization, by observing that large religious buildings survived due to their conversion in army and penitentiary establishments, such as Avignon Papacy, the Mont-Saint-Michel, or Clairvaux and Fontevraud Abbeys¹⁹. Perhaps in a society that has undergone such a radical and bloody revolution as the French one, this kind of transformation may have saved the buildings, but

¹⁰ Horia Moldovan, *Jochann Schlatter. Cultură occidentală și arhitectură românească (1831-1866)*, Simetria, București, 2013, p.180

¹¹ Constantin Moroiu, *Disertație pentru îndreptarea pușcăriilor din București*, 1829

¹² Gr. E Constantinescu, *Evoluția regimului penitenciar în România, cu referințe la trecutul penitenciarelor din Europa și America*, 1934, p.62

¹³ Gr. I. Dianu, *Istoria închisorilor...*, p.64

¹⁴ Gr. I. Dianu, *Raport general asupra închisorilor centrale și aresturilor preventive pe anul 1897*, Imprimeria Statului, București, 1898, p.6

¹⁵ Gr. I. Dianu, *Istoria închisorilor...*, p.64

¹⁶ Gr. E. Constantinescu, *Evoluția regimului penitenciar...*, p.126

¹⁷ Gr. I. Dianu, *Raport...*, p.6

¹⁸ Gr. E. Constantinescu, *Evoluția regimului penitenciar...*, p.127

¹⁹ Rene Remond, *Religie și societatea în Europa. Secularizarea în secolele al XIX-lea și al XX-lea*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2003, p.163

in the Romanian Principalities, the secularization of the monasteries underwent disastrous consequences, both for the spiritual life and for the buildings. They have lost their appearance through the changes brought about by the new functions or have been ruined by the poverty of the remaining monastic communities.

The causes of secularization are various. In the 16th century, monasteries began to be dedicated, along with their properties, in order to support the Orthodox Christians under Ottoman rule. The only obligation was to conserve and cultivate the spiritual life in the home-country and to provide for the local religious buildings. In reality, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries, the monasteries were only exploited, neglected and the incomes and assets were sent out of the country.²⁰

On the background of the secularization in the Western Europe, that began with the Reformation and became stronger with the Revolution of 1789, the Romanian Principalities became the main financier for Oriental churches under the Ottoman Empire.²¹ This financial pressure was increased politically, so that after the restoration of the reigns of the Romanian rulers, during the reign of Gregory Dimitrie Ghica (1823-1828) and Bishop Grigory Dascales (1823-29, 1833-34), were made numerous attempts to replace Greek abbots with Romanian ones. The foreign Greek and Russian constraints have not allowed these changes to be long-lasting, despite the French support²².

With the adoption of the Organic Regulations, a number of measures have been taken in this direction. For example, a part of the revenues (i.e. a quarter) had to return to the country's treasury or a nine-year term was established, during which the dedicated monasteries had to be repaired.²³ However, these provisions did not apply, and negotiations involving French, Greek and Russian representatives failed every time.²⁴ The situation was firmly settled with passing in 1863 of the Law on the secularization of the monastic property proposed by Mihail Kogălniceanu in the Legislative Assembly of Romania. Unfortunately, besides the dedicated monasteries, the secularization applied to all the domains of the Church, also to the undedicated settlements: dioceses, monasteries, hermitages.²⁵

It was a great challenge for the Church. Church ministers (bishops, priests, and monks) have remained in many cases without livelihood and this situation has opened the way for the total functional transformation of church settlements to the benefit of the state in its boom of modernization. Thus, some of the monasteries became hospitals, shelters, hospices, schools, orphanages or prisons, and their survivors either became part of the staff of the new establishments (nurses, supervisors, guardians) - their function of spiritual service becoming secondary²⁶.

²⁰ Patriarhul Daniel, "150 de ani de la adoptarea Legii secularizării averilor mănăstirești din 1863", din *Secularizarea averilor mănăstirești (1863). Motivații și consecințe*, Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, București, 2013, p.4

²¹ Dan Berindei, "Motivații contextuale europene și românești ale secularizării averilor mănăstirești din 1863", in *Secularizarea averilor mănăstirești (1863). Motivații și consecințe*, Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, București, 2013, pp.14-15

²² Patriarh Daniel, "150 de ani...", p.4

²³ *Idem*, p.5

²⁴ Dan Berindei, "Motivații contextuale...", pp.16-18

²⁵ *Idem.*, p.19

²⁶ As is the case of monks from Cozia monks, who, during the monastery's transformation into prison, withdrew to a nearly ruined and damp building, near the monastery hospital. Although they had been promised proper housing, they did not receive it even after 8 years, as PPs Ghenadie, the bishop of Ramnic Nou Severin, reported in an address to Culture Minister in 1888, A.N.R, Fond Vornicia Temnițelor, dosar 1/1887, f.36

1. MONASTERIES TURNED INTO PRISONS

Snagov Monastery

Attested for the first time in the 15th century²⁷, the Snagov Monastery was used, apparently, as a prison from the beginning. The isolated position on the island and the bloody reign of Vlad Țepeș have fueled the collective imagination, giving clues about such use. There even circulated legends about floors that opened under the feet of the arrested, or about the existence of a torture chamber in the south of the ensemble.²⁸ In the 17th century, there are being mentioned tortures of certain opponents of Constantin Brâncoveanu.²⁹

A French traveler, Benjamin Nicolas Marie Appert, former general manager of the French prisons, visited in 1851 several prisons in Wallachia, noting the pitiful living conditions of the arrested and criticizing the poor administration of the respective settlements. At that time, at Snagov there were 160-170 convicts, with sentences of between 2 and 8 years, held together, "in misery and dampness, lying on rags and mats without ever getting undressed."³⁰ A few monks attended the arrests, with no infirmary service, no spiritual assistance from a "capable and merciful" priest³¹. Another testimony can be found in Alexandru Odobescu's report about his trip to Snagov, in which he records the status of pauperism both of the arrested, but especially of the monks who were in a spiritual decline:

"... the road (...) had caused me hunger and (...) my first concern was to ask the monks (...) to give me something to eat. The monks, with merciful air, stepped all back, swearing that they had nothing, that since the secularization of their monasteries, they have nothing to live with; that they are short of all things, that they have no clothes, neither dwelling, nor food; finally, the poor parents in all manner how sorry they felt, (...) that their monastery, turning into a prison, had been transformed in a more useful establishment."³²

In the official provisions, the monastery was provided by the Organization of Monasteries of the Organic Regulation (1832) to accommodate 30 convicts³³, and in 1840, the old buildings, apart from the church, were demolished and replaced with new ones for the arrested, guardians and monks³⁴.

The report from 1850 of Johann Schlatter, a monastery architect, revealed that the construction works were of poor quality and, in the absence of concrete measures of the abbots, the monastery went into ruin altogether. Thus the convicts were transferred to the Mărgineni Monastery.³⁵

Văcărești Monastery

Built during the two reigns of Nicholas Mavrocordat³⁶, the Văcărești Monastery was dedicated in 1721 to the Holy Sepulcher³⁷. Due to its robust fortifications, it was used in the

²⁷ The foundation is not very clear, some historians assigning it to Vlad Țepeș, others to Mircea cel Bătrân

²⁸ Gr. E. Constantinescu, *Evoluția regimului penitenciar...*, p.35

²⁹ Dan Horia Mazilu, *Lege și fărădelege...*, p.488

³⁰ Gr. E. Constantinescu, *Evoluția regimului penitenciar...*, p.108

³¹ Daniela Bușă (coord.), *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea*, vol. VI (1852-1856), București 2010, pp. 694, translation of the original text: Le Chavalier Appert, *Voyage dans le principautes danubiennes*, Mainz, 1854, apud Horia Moldovan, *Johann Schlatter...*, p.182

³² Alexandru Odobescu, *Câteva ore la Snagov* (1862), Tipografiile Române Unite, București, 1936, p. 120

³³ Nicolae I. Serbănescu, *Istoria mănăstirii Snagov*, București, 1944, p. 79

³⁴ Alexandru Odobescu, *Câteva ore...*, p.50

³⁵ Nicolae I. Serbănescu, *Istoria...*, p.83-92

³⁶ Alexandru Falcoianu, *Călăuză istorică a mănăstirii și închisorii centrale "Văcărești"*, Legătoria Închisorii Centrale "Văcărești", București, p.37

³⁷ Octavian Dumitru Marinescu, *Mănăstirea Văcărești din București, de la origini până astăzi*, Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, București, 2012, p.19

Russian-Turkish battles of the late 18th century, but also as a royal residence after the damages of the Princely Court following the earthquake of 1801³⁸. The buildings of the monastery were turned into prison in the context of the Revolution of 1848, when the authorities (Russian at that time) discovering that the old prison at the Plumbuita Monastery, where initially have been imprisoned the heads of the revolution (Ion Eliade Rădulescu, the Golești Brothers, the Brătianu, C.A. Rosetti, Ion Ghica, Popa Șapcă, Colonel Magheru, Cristian Tell, Nicolae Bălcescu etc.) was not large enough, decided to imprison them in Văcărești.³⁹

The transformation of the Văcărești monastery into the prison of the capital city occurred after secularization, in 1865, in a wider context of circumstances. Following the fire of 1847 (which remained in the history as the Great Fire), the Bucharest Capital Prison, which functioned at the beginning of the century in St. Anton Square, in an improper and inconvenient building, was transferred to Spirei Hill. As a typhus epidemic broke out in the prison in 1865 due to excessive crowding, the transfer of the condemned to the Radu-Vodă Monastery was taken into consideration. A school was already functioning there, but the cost of setting up detention facilities was too high, so the convicts were moved to Văcărești, where there was already a police arrest department.⁴⁰

Since 1865, various workshops have started to be established⁴¹: shoemaking (1865), bookbinding (1874), printing (1892), and new sections and functions were built: the hospital (1868)⁴², the barracks of the guard detachment (1884) which turned in 1898 into the section for the alienated, the baths (1890), the offices and dwellings of the staff (1892).

The monastery was built on the land of the lord and not on that of the episcopacy, who asked for an abbot and monks from the Holy Sepulcher. Under these circumstances, the administration of the monastery was done by the princes, the monks taking up only the liturgical life.⁴³ It seems that the very substantial income and wealth of the monastery took, in fact, the way abroad, which caused great discontent. Lord Caragea recorded in 1813 that the churchwardens sent the monastery's income to the Holy Sepulcher even in the years when it did not suffice for its maintenance.⁴⁴

The public disapproval of foreign abbots and the dedication of monasteries is illustrated in the famous legend around Cuza Vodă, which justified the transformation of the monastery into a prison. Cuza, hearing about the supposed greed of the monks, disguised himself in a poor and tired traveler and asked for mercy at the monastery gate. Facing a refusal, he decided to confiscate the income of the monastery and to chase the monks, bringing in their place the villains:

”... Cuza was at the forefront of the army which hid in the woods. With him he had taken under guard a lot of thieves, who had plundered and robbed many inhabitants. He moved with this cortege towards the gate of the monastery (...). He inspected the entire monastery and confiscated piles of gold (...). Suddenly the Lord walked through the cells and grabbed each monk, taking him out and introducing in his place a thief or a burglar (...) with the following words: "I pull thieves out of here, and bring back also thieves!"⁴⁵

³⁸ *Idem*, p.20

³⁹ Alexandru Falcoianu, *Călăuză istorică...*, p.37

⁴⁰ Gr. I. Dianu, *Istoria inchisorilor...*, p.151

⁴¹ *Idem*

⁴² A.N. – A.N.I.C, fond Ministerul Lucrărilor Publice, dosar 1/1868

⁴³ Octavian Dumitru Marinescu, *Mănăstirea Văcărești...*, p.67

⁴⁴ Alexandru Falcoianu, *Călăuză istorică...*, p. 30-31

⁴⁵ Octav Gorăscu, “Văcărești” manastire. „Văcărești” închisoare, 1930, pp.70-71

The scene was of extreme violence and overestimated the wealth of the monasteries and the supposed non-Christian morals of the monks, precisely to legitimize the forceful, sometimes bloody, intervention of state authorities during the confiscation of fortunes. The situation of the monks of Văcărești monastery after secularization is not known, but given the size of the prison and its importance for the capital city, it can be inferred that they have been moved to other monasteries.

Cozia Monastery

Towards the end of the 19th century, the need for adequate prisons increased as a result of the prison reform in 1872, which improved the legal framework of 1856 and varied the type of prisons in an attempt to align detention conditions with modern Western standards. As the construction of new prisons was delayed (such as the case of Ocnele Mari, discussed since 1868)⁴⁶, the authorities have returned to the previous solution to turn more monasteries into prisons, compared to those already operating since 1864.

Thus, in 1879 the Cozia monastery was temporarily transformed into a prison⁴⁷. The damage to the kneeled Church was already huge, and the Episcopate of the Râmnic-Noul Severin Diocese, through the Bishop Ghenadie, repeatedly tried to improve the deplorable conditions in which the remaining monks lived:

“... from 1880 until now <1888>, no dwelling has been given to the church servants of Cozia Monastery, and the present ones live in wet and totally ruined stone buildings nearby the church of the infirmary <Bolnița>; so the sufferings of the staff of this monastery, imprinted on their faces, provoke compassion in all the visitors, and it is not a person who passes and walks over there, that does not come to the Episcopate to defend these sufferers, each, of course, according to their temperament and view.”⁴⁸

At the same time Bishop Ghenadie tried to achieve the conversion of the monastery into a gentler and more suited function to monastic life. Invoking the historical value of the settlement and the popular piety, the hierarch asked for the transformation of Cozia into a hospital, and suggested the transfer of the penitentiary to other places, second-class monasteries (Surpatele or Mamu) or to the salt-pit⁴⁹. The unfavorable response came in the year 1889: the funds were insufficient for the construction of another penitentiary, especially because a workshop had been built, and the proposed monasteries were inadequate, ruined and unproper.⁵⁰

This is probably the context in which the authorities have tried to move the Cozia prison to another location⁵¹, coming up with the idea of building a central penitentiary in the Tismana monastery. Finally, the inmates from the Cozia monastery were transferred in 1893 to the Pângărați Monastery in Neamț County.⁵²

Tismana Monastery

Built at the end of the 16th century (1375-1378), the Tismana Monastery was partially rebuilt between 1520 and 1540 and suffered damage during the offensive of the

⁴⁶ A.N.-A.N.I.C. Fond Vornicia Temnițelor, Dosar 2/1868

⁴⁷ Between 1879-1893, the Cozia Monastery functioned as a prison. Mihai Eminescu, the poet, has written an article in *Time (Timpul)* Magazine in 12 sept. 1882 about the situation: "Cozia, where Mircea I, the greatest ruler of Wallachia, was buried, Cozia where the family of Mihai the Brave was buried, a historical monument almost as old as the country, what happened to it? It became a jail!"

⁴⁸ A.N.- A.N.I.C. Fond Vornicia Temnițelor, dosar 1/1887, f.36

⁴⁹ *Idem*

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, f.37

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, f.6

⁵² Gr. E. Constantinescu, *Evoluția regimului penitenciar...*, p.119

Transylvanian voivode Gabriel Bathory (1610-1611), being remodeled at the initiative of Matei Basarab (1646-1651). It also suffered major damage during the Russian-Turkish wars (1787-1792) and during the conflicts of 1821, between Tudor Vladimirescu's pandours and the Ottoman army.⁵³

Following the visit of Prince Gheorghe Bibescu in 1844, the decision was taken to rebuild the settlement and to transform it into a summer royal residence, also including the function of political arrest.⁵⁴ The one who carried out the reconstruction project for the Tismana monastery was the same Johann Schlatter, who had evaluated the Snagov Monastery. The function of political arrest was however not likely to be active, since Tismana was not mentioned among the prisons operating in the Principalities in 1865.

In 1888, under the circumstances already discussed, the architect Maimarolu was charged with evaluating the monastery in order to transform it into a penitentiary.⁵⁵

The undertaking moved rapidly forward and a prison project was proposed, having a capacity of 200 inmates, out of which 160 were imprisoned in shared dormitories, separated in sections and 40 in individual cells. The establishment had to be equipped with a laundry room, kitchen and a storehouse of food, served by a separate yard. It would also include an infirmary, a pharmacy warehouse and a bathroom, also separated from the rest of the functions.⁵⁶

The architect who designed the project observed that, although very general, it was impossible to be applied to the existing ensemble and proposed that the monastery and its inhabitants should be used for administration and guarding purposes, while the monastery stables, located between the hill where the monastery lied and the Tismana River, should be turned into a prison.⁵⁷

In the end, the project of the Tismana prison seemed to have been abandoned. The reasons were complex and even until this day one cannot know their true weight. It is certain that no one announced himself at the auction organized on June 20, 1887 to take over the works of the new penitentiary.⁵⁸ Moreover, the answer of the Minister of Agriculture, Commerce and Industries to the Diocese of Râmnic-Noul Severn in 1888, regarding the solicitation of the Bishop Gennady to move the Cozia prison, stated the lack of a budget for any new prison between 1889-1890.⁵⁹

CONCLUSION

Analyzing the cases above, it comes up the question of the underlying reasons behind these transformations. Undoubtedly, economic circumstances have deeply left their fingerprint. The extremely limited financial means of the Principalities have prevented the construction of new prisons and the maintenance under proper conditions of the existing ones. The lack of endowment and adequate separation of the detainees has kept poverty, misery and promiscuity among convicts and the lack of training of guards and administrative staff has led to failure of rehabilitation and recidivism.

⁵³ Horia Moldovan, *Johann Schlatter...*, pp. 170

⁵⁴ *Idem*, p.171

⁵⁵ A.N.- A.N.I.C. Fond Vornicia Temnițelor, dosar 1/1887, f.5

⁵⁶ *Idem*, f.21

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 22

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 15

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 40

Under the same category fall the irreversible losses and changes suffered by the edifices. The transformations brought to the monastery ensembles, the majority of which have had a considerable historical and artistic value, have made invaluable losses, especially for those which have been ruined.

However, the spiritual component was affected the most. The transformation of monasteries into prisons was accomplished with the humiliation of the monks who lived and with their removal from mission and spiritual service. Entire monasteries were deserted, their inhabitants being replaced by delinquents. The monks were in the best case banished or moved away to other settlements and in the worst, forced to take care of the detainees, living among them. From a spiritual point of view, the moral contamination to which these monks were exposed was diabolical indeed, being forced to live among the criminals and often lacking priests and means of survival.

We can understand the shock and the caustic remarks concerning the foreign abbots that "preyed" the monasteries they administered, but these have excessively expanded and generated hostile attitudes, among intellectuals, towards monasticism in general, attitude reflected in the law of secularization, as well. Instead of bringing into the property of the state, only the possessions of the dedicated monasteries, the possessions of all the monasteries, episcopacies and hermitages were confiscated, bringing the Church into a state of material and spiritual fragility.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] Cassidy-Welch, Megan, *Monastic Spaces and Their Meanings: Thirteenth-Century English Cistercian Monasteries*, Brepolis, Belgium, 2001
- [2] Constantinescu, Gr. Emanoil, *Evoluția regimului penitenciar în România, cu referințe la trecutul penitenciarelor din Europa și America* [The Evolution of the Penitentiary Regime in Romania, with Reference to the Past of Prisons in Europe and America], Editura „Tiparul. Românesc”, 1934
- [3] Daniel, Patriarhul, „150 de ani de la adoptarea Legii secularizării averilor mănăstirești din 1863” [150 Years since the Adoption of the Law of Secularization of Monastic Property in 1863], in *Secularizarea averilor mănăstirești (1863). Motivații și consecințe* [Secularization of the Monastic Property (1863). Motivations and consequences], Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, București, 2013, pp.3-10
- [4] Dianu Gr. I., *Istoria închisorilor din Romania, studiu comparativ, legi și obiceiuri* [History of Prisons in Romania, Comparative Study, Laws and Customs], Tipografia Curții Regale Göbel și Fii, București, 1901
- [5] Dianu, Gr. I., *Raport general asupra închisorilor centrale și aresturilor preventive pe anul 1897* [General Report on Central Prisons and Preventive Arrests for 1897], Imprimeria Statului, București, 1898
- [6] Berindei, Dan, “Motivații contextuale europene și românești ale secularizării averilor mănăstirești din 1863” [European and Romanian Contextual Motivations of Secularization of Monastic Property in 1863], in *Secularizarea averilor mănăstirești (1863). Motivații și consecințe* [Secularization of the Monastic Property (1863). Motivations and consequences], Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, București, 2013, pp.13-22
- [7] Foulcault, Michael, *A supraveghea și a pedepsi. Nașterea închisorii* [Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison], translation and notes by Bogdan Ghiu, Editura Paralela 45, 2005, translation after *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*, 1975
- [8] Ghițulescu Constanța, *În șalvari și cu ișlic. Biserică, sexualitate, căsătorie și divorț în Țara Românească a sec. al XVIII-lea* [In Shawls. Church, Sexuality, Marriage and Divorce in Wallachia 18th Century], Humanitas, 2004

- [9] Gorăscu, Octav, „Văcăreștii” manastire. „Văcărești” închisoare [Văcăreștii" Monastery. "Văcărești" Prison], 1930
- [10] Hillner, Julia, “Monastic Imprisonment in Justinian's Novels” in *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, vol. 15, nr. 2 (2007), pp. 205-208
- [11] Ignatieff, Michael, *A Just Measure of Pain. The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*, Penguin Books, 1978
- [12] Mazilu, Dan Horia, *Lege și fărădelege în lumea românească veche* [Law and Lawlessness in the Old Romanian World], Polirom, Iași, 2006
- [13] Moldovan, Horia, *Johann Schlatter. Cultură occidentală și arhitectură românească (1831-1866)* [Johann Schlatter. Western Culture and Romanian Architecture (1831-1866)], Simetria, București, 2013
- [14] Moroiu, Constantin, *Disertație pentru îndreptarea pușcăriilor din București* [Dissertation for the Improvement of the Bucharest Prisons], 1829
- [15] Morris, Norval, Rothman, David J. (eds.), *The Oxford History of the Prison. The Practice of Punishment in Western Society*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1995
- [16] Remond, Rene, *Religie și societatea în Europa. Secularizarea în secolele al XIX-lea și al XX-lea (1789-2000)*[Religion et société en Europe : La sécularisation aux XIXe et XXe siècles(1789-2000)], Editura Polirom, Iași, 2003

Abbreviations

A.N.- A.N.I.C—Arhivele Naționale ale României-Arhivele Nationale Istorice Centrale [National Archives of Romania - National Central Historical Archives]

<https://doi.org/10.26520/icoana.2019.10.5.79-96>

PATRISTIC AND NEOPATRISTIC THEOLOGY? PERIODS OF PATROLOGY IN THE CHURCH LIFE

Prof. Ph.D. Ion Marian CROITORU,
Faculty of Theology and Sciences of Education,
Valahia University of Târgoviște,
ROMANIA
E-mail: ioncroitoru@yahoo.fr

ABSTRACT

Many debates take place around the concepts of patristic theology and neopatristic theology, and also concerning the neopatristic or new patristic synthesis syntagms, all of them having as a substratum the issue of accepting or not limits for the patristic period. To avoid the netting of a lay science, Patrology has a permanent theological character and has no limits in history, just as the Holy Tradition of the Church is without limits. This fact is due to the situation that the Holy Fathers are not just authentic bearers of the Holy Tradition, but also its creators, in the sense of dynamic continuers of the spiritual and dogmatic heritage of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. Accepting a terminus point for the patristic period would trigger many consequences, such as doubting the work and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church, ranking, in a manner, however, not met in the Church life, the illumination by the Holy Spirit of the Holy Fathers from different epochs etc. The Church has not understood, however, the work of God as a limited reality, but as a dynamic one, present in its living and spiritually healthy limbs. The meeting with the Holy Church Fathers, present in all its epochs, is transforming and empowering, so that patristic theology represents in the Church a unitary and indivisible fact.

Keywords: patristic theology; postpatristic theology; neopatristic synthesis; new patristic synthesis; Holy Father;

INTRODUCTION

One of the problematization met in the contemporary Orthodox theology¹ refers to the duration of the patristic period, in other words, the question is whether the division

* It should be noted that a first version of this study was presented at *The International Symposium on Patrology, First Edition*, organized by the Diocese of Severin and Strehăia in partnership with the Faculty of Orthodox Theology from Craiova, event which took place in the Monastery *Saint Ana* from Orșova, in 2014 (7-9 October).

¹ About certain problematizations, including also the topic of this study, see Ion Marian Croitoru, "The Growth of the Dogmatic Teaching in the Contemporary Orthodox World. Questions and Problematizations", *International Journal of Orthodox Theology* 6/1 (2015), p. 165-204; idem, "Problematizări privind creșterea învățăturii dogmatice în lumea ortodoxă contemporană (Problematizations regarding the Growth of the Dogmatic Teaching in the Contemporary Orthodox World)", in *Universitatea Ovidius, Facultatea de Teologie Sfântul Andrei, Tradiție și continuitate în teologia tomitană. Două decenii de învățământ teologic universitar la Constanța. 1992-2012. Simpozion Internațional (2012, Constanța) (Saint Andrew. Tradition and Continuity in the Theology of Tomis. Two Decennia of Academic Theological Education in Constanța. 1992-2012.*

operated by the Western Christian doctrine regarding this period is acceptable or we are entitled to affirm that the period under discussion has continuity in the *one, holy, catholic and apostolic* Church to this day and will continue until the second coming of the world's Savior Jesus Christ.

1. According to the Western Christian doctrine, the patristic period is divided into three periods² and ends in a certain century for the Christian world. Thus, for Western Christianity, it has been stated that the patristic period has as its last remarkable personalities: Saint Gregory the Great († 604) in Italy or Isidore of Seville († 636) in Spain³, the last centuries of the patristic literature being considered those of the years 430-850, followed afterwards by the age or the epochs of the great theologians and church doctors, who are, however, not part of the actual *Patrology*⁴. According to the same doctrine, the patristic period ended in the 8th century, for Eastern Christianity⁵ and, beginning with that epoch, other theologies have been developed, which formulate the Church experience using the terms and the thinking of each epoch. For instance, for Western Christianity, it is considered that one of these theologies was, as the supporters of this division claim, the

International Symposium (2012, Constanța)” (Constanța: Editura Arhiepiscopiei Tomisului, 2012/2013), p. 204-23.

² It ought to be mentioned that the sequencing of these three periods depends from one patrologist to the next, and a general classification is as follows: the 1st period, going from the activity of the Savior Jesus Christ on earth and the Holy Apostles' preaching to 313 (The *Edict* of Milan) or 325 (1st Ecumenical Synod); the 2nd period, usually comprised between the 1st Ecumenical Synod and the 4th Ecumenical Synod (Chalcedon, 451), proposing as limits also the personality of Blessed Augustine († 430) or that of Saint Cyril of Alexandria († 444); and the 3rd period, which has several limits, both for the West and for the East, without, however, going over the first half of the 9th century. For instance, Cayré has the following proposition: the 1st period, between the 1st and the 3rd century A.D.; the second period, between the years 300 and 430; the 3rd period, during the interval 430-850 [F. Cayré, *Précis de Patrologie et d'Histoire de la Théologie*, Livres I et II (Paris, Tournai, Rome: Desclée et Cie, Editeurs Pontificaux, 1931), p. 7; Ioan M. Bota, *Patrologia (Patrology)* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Viața Creștină, 2002), p. 17]. In the Roman-Catholic doctrine of the contemporary period, there is also the proposition that the ending date of the three patristical periods should be connected to three Ecumenical Synods: the 1st Ecumenical Synod (Nicea, 325) for the 1st period; the 4th Ecumenical Synod (Chalcedon, 451), which concludes the 2nd period; and the 7th Ecumenical Synod (Nicea, 787) for the 3rd period. After these three periods of the Holy Fathers follow the *Theologians and spiritual Masters* (Bota, *Patrologia*, p. 17-18, 397). More recently, it has been proposed to use the syntagm of *early Christian Greek and Latin literature* for the whole patristic period, taking as a last term of reference the 5th Ecumenical Synod of Constantinople (553), with its last ramifications, mentioning, however, that *for the Greek area there have never been any "limit dates"*, see Claudio Moreschini and Enrico Norelli, *Istoria literaturii creștine vechi grecești și latine, II/1, De la Conciliul de la Niceea la începuturile Evului Mediu (The History of the Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature, II/1, From the Council of Nicea to the Beginnings of the Middle Ages)*, translation from Italian by Elena Caraboi, Doina Cernica, Emanuela Stoleriu and Dana Zămosteanu (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2013), p. 5; see also Damian Gheorghe Pătrașcu, *Patrologie și Patristică. Secolele I-IV (Patrology and Patristics. The 1st-4th centuries)*, vol. I (Roman: Editura Serafica, 2007), p. 15.

³ See Ioan G. Coman, *Patrologie (Patrology)*, I (București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1984), p. 31; Constantin Voicu, *Patrologie (Patrology)*, I (București: Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, 2009), p. 27; Στυλιανού Γ. Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία (Patrology)*, Α' (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Παρουσία, 1997), p. 83; idem, *Οι Πατέρες και Διδάσκαλοι της Εκκλησίας μας (The Fathers and the Teachers of our Church)*, Ἐρὰ Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Ἀθηνῶν, χ.ε., p. 13. To these two personalities one can add Saint Gregory of Tours († 594) in France and Saint Beda/Bede the Venerable († 735) in England, see Cayré, *Précis de Patrologie*, p. 9.

⁴ Cayré, *Précis de Patrologie*, p. 7-9; F. Cayré, *Patrologie et Histoire de la Théologie*, Livres III et IV (Paris, Tournai, Rome: Desclée et Cie, Editeurs Pontificaux, 1933), p. 347.

⁵ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 83.

scholastic theology together with its representatives, *who are considered the new theologians* or *Fathers of the Western tradition*⁶. One of them was Thomas Aquinas (1224/1225-1274), who uses in his work, *Summa Theologica*, aspects of the teaching of Saint John of Damascus († 749). In this way, according to the Christian tradition of the West, among the Holy Fathers of the first eight centuries is considered Saint John of Damascus, as well, with whom the patristic period of the East ends⁷.

2. This opinion has sneaked its way into the Orthodox world and has been appropriated especially by certain patrologists. As far as the Romanian side is concerned, the two official textbooks of *Patrology*, mostly for students' use, contain as accepted the perspective of the Western theology. According to the authors of the two textbooks (Fr. Ioan G. Coman, Archdeacon Constantin Voicu), the third and last period of Patrology starts from one of the final years of the second period [† 430 (Blessed Augustine), 444 († Saint Cyril of Alexandria), 451 (the 4th Ecumenical Synod), 461 († Saint Leo the Great)] and ends in 749, namely in the year of Saint John of Damascus' dormition in Christ, or in 843, with the Sunday of the Orthodoxy, or even in 787, in other words, in the year of the 7th Ecumenical Synod⁸. Taking as a landmark this division, Father Ioan G. Coman even speaks about

⁶ Iεροθέου Μητροπολίτου Ναυπάκτου καὶ Ἀγίου Βλασίου, *Μεταπατερικὴ θεολογία καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικὴ πατερικὴ ἐμπειρία (Postpatristic Theology and Ecclesial Patristic Experience)* [Ἱερὰ Μονὴ Γενεθλίου τῆς Θεοτόκου (Πελαγίας), 2012], p. 17.

⁷ Iεροθέου Μητροπολίτου, *Μεταπατερικὴ θεολογία*, p.17. There are also opinions of some Western patrologists who, for the East, extend the last patristic period up to Saint Theodore the Studite (†826) or even up to the beginning of the 9th century, also including the end of the iconoclast debate (Cayré, *Patrologie et Histoire*, p.1-2).

⁸ See Coman, *Patrologie*, I, p. 31; Voicu, *Patrologie*, I, p. 26-7. The position of the two Romanian patrologists was not unique, because long before them, Priest Cicerone Iordăchescu introduced in the theological literature and thinking of Romania, more precisely in the atmosphere of the Faculty of Theology of Chișinău (today, in Moldova), the classical division reminded above (see note 2), indicating as well its main source, the Roman-Catholic patrologist Otto Bardenhewer, followed by the Protestant Adolf von Harnack, to whom he adds other names as well, Gerhard Rauschen, Albert Ehrhard and F. Cayré. Therefore, making first a synthesis of the above-mentioned patrologists' opinions, Father Iordăchescu presents the delimitation of the three periods: the 1st period, comprising the first three centuries of the Church, until 325 (1st Ecumenical Synod); the 2nd period, also called the Golden Age of the Christian literature, going from 325 to the year 430, in the West (the year of Blessed Augustine's death), and 444, in the East (the year of Saint Cyril of Alexandria's death), or even 461 (the year of Pope Leo the Great's death); the 3rd period, starting from the middle of the 5th century and going, in the West, up to Isidore of Seville's death († 636), and in the East, up to Saint John of Damascus' demise († 749), proposing as landmarks as well the years 680 (the 6th Ecumenical Synod), 787 (the 7th Ecumenical Synod) or 843 (the triumph of the Orthodoxy), see idem, *Istoria vechii literaturi creștine (Primele trei veacuri până la 325)* [*The History of the Early Christian Literature (The First Three Centuries up to 325)*], vol. I (Chișinău: Tipografia Țerek & Caminschi, 1934; Iași: Editura Moldova, ²1996), p. VI-VII, p. 11-2; idem, *Istoria vechii literaturi creștine (Epoca de la 461 la 636/750)* [*The History of the Early Christian Literature (The Epoch from 461 to 636/750)*], vol. III (Chișinău: Tipografia Țerek & Caminschi, 1940; Iași: Editura Moldova, ²1996), p. VII. Finally, Priest Cicerone Iordăchescu adopted Bardenhewer's division: the 1st period up to 325 (the 1st Ecumenical Synod); the 2nd period, between the years 325-461 (Pope Leo the Great's death); the 3rd period, during the years 461-636 († Isidore of Seville), for the West, and 461-749 († Saint John of Damascus), for the East (Iordăchescu, *Istoria vechii literaturi creștine*, I, p. 12). For the classifications adopted in the two *Textbooks* quoted at the beginning of the note, one can notice that the 1st period goes from the end of the 1st century (92) to the beginning of the 4th century, finally taking as a landmark the year 313 (*The Edict of Milan*); the 2nd period ranges from 313 to different dates (430, 444, 451, 461), accepting as a last landmark the year 461, namely the date of Pope Leo the Great's death [Coman, *Patrologie*, I, p. 25, 27; Voicu, *Patrologie*, I, 25-26, see also Ioan G. Coman, *Patrologie (Patrology)* (București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă, 1956), p. 11-2; for a presentation of the patristic epoch periodization according to the Roman-

patristic and postpatristic generations, and implicitly also about *the patristic and postpatristic tradition*⁹.

However, in the latest Greek theological thinking, one can note the existence of two perspectives. According to the first perspective (Panagiótes Chrestos), the *period of the Fathers continues at least until 1453*, namely until the fall of Constantinople¹⁰. The second perspective (Stylianos Papadópuhos¹¹) rejects the existence of any limits in time for the patristic period, as this would signify a *separation of the Fathers from the Church* and, naturally, *ignorance of what a Father and Teacher* or what we commonly call *Church Father means*¹². In the practice of the theological and Church language, the name of *Holy*

Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox patrologists, see M. Șesan, “Despre încheierea epocii patristice (On the Conclusion of the Patristic Epoch)”, *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei* 53/5-6 (1967): p. 362-4]. It should be mentioned that Father Constantin Voicu reedited his *Textbook of Patrology* [vol. I-II (București: Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, 2009), vol. III (București: Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, 2010)], in collaboration with Father Lucian-Dumitru Colda, in an *extended and revised edition*. The above-mentioned *classical division of the patristic period* is maintained, and in the 3rd volume are also included *postpatristic authors* [Constantin Voicu, “Cuvânt înainte (Foreword)”, in Constantin Voicu and Lucian-Dumitru Colda, *Patrologie (Patrology)*, I (București: Editura Basilica, 2015), p. 10; see also *ibidem*, p. 28-31]. The two authors, referring to *patrologists who take the study of “Patrology” beyond the 8th century, up to the 12th and even the 15th century*, mentioning that this period is called *postpatristic theology*, affirm that *it would be, therefore, necessary for the study of “Patrology” to go beyond the strict framework of the first eight centuries*. However, they claim that *we only have Holy Fathers during the first eight centuries of the Christian era; consequently, the study of “Patrology” covers only those eight centuries (ibidem, p. 21, 29)*. All the affirmations above confirm patrologist Adrian Marinescu’s opinion, namely that since the 19th century one can note this *drawing close to and pursuit of the Western perspectives, first of all by “copying” the specialized textbooks, in their double manifestation: Roman-Catholic and Protestant, then by redundantly resuming some so-called main themes promoted by Western patrologists* [idem, “Patrologia și studiile de specialitate în cadrul Ortodoxiei din secolul al XX-lea și începutul secolului al XXI-lea. Școli și direcții de cercetare (Patrology and Specialized Studies in the frame of the Orthodoxy in the 20th Century and at the Beginning of the 21st Century. Schools and research directions)”, in *Teologia ortodoxă în secolul al XX-lea și la începutul secolului al XXI-lea (The Orthodox Theology in the 20th Century and at the Beginning of the 21st Century)*, coord. Fr. Viorel Ioniță (București: Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, 2011), p. 307].

⁹ See Ioan G. Coman, “Sfânta Tradiție în lumina Sfinților Părinți (The Holy Tradition in the light of the Holy Fathers)”, *Ortodoxia* 8/2, (1956): p. 174, 186. The position of Father Ioan G. Coman is also appropriated by other younger Romanian patrologists, who divide the Christian literature into patristic and postpatristic, see Constantin I. Băjău, *Patrologie (Patrology)* (Craiova: Tipografia Universității, 2002), p. 8, 438; idem, *Patrologie și literatură post-patristică (Patrology and Post-Patristic Literature)* (Craiova: Editura Universitaria, 2013), p. 7, 337. There is also the opinion (Fr. M. Șesan) that even the postpatristic period, beginning with the years that follow the Sunday of the Orthodoxy (843), when the patristic epoch ends, and the age of Saint Photios the Great († 893), lasts until Michael Psellos († 1078), see Șesan, “Despre încheierea epocii patristice”, p. 365-6.

¹⁰ Παναγιώτη Κ. Χρήστου, *Ελληνική Πατρολογία (Greek Patrology)*, Α' (Θεσσαλονίκη: Εκδοτικός Οίκος Κυρομάνος, Θεσσαλονίκη, 1994), p. 11. It ought to be mentioned that J. P. Migne published, in his *Patristic Collection*, works covering a much longer period than the classical periods. Thus, in the *Seria graeca* (161 vol., Paris, 1857-1866), the printing of the works begins with Clemens Romanus and goes up to Constantine Palaiologos, namely from the year 90 up to the year 1453, when the fall of the Constantinople takes place, and in the *Seria latina* (221 vol., Paris, 1841-1864), the period is comprised between Tertullian and Innocent III, namely from the year 200 up to the year 1216 (Pătrașcu, *Patrologie și Patristică*, p. 15, note 24).

¹¹ It is worth mentioning the spiritual standing of this Greek patrologist, who, two months before his departure to the Lord († 15 January 2012), becomes a monk and receives the name of Gerasimus. His tomb is at the Docheiariou Monastery of the Holy Mount Athos.

¹² Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 83. One should note the contribution of the Russian patrologists of the 19th century, regarding the patristic period or epoch. For example, Archbishop Philaret (1805-1866) of Chernigov (1859-1866), considered the author of the first Orthodox textbook of *Patrology* [*Învățătura istorică despre Sfinții Părinți (Historical Teaching on the Holy Fathers)*, 3 vol. (Petrograd, 1859), in Russian], although

Father and Teacher is replaced by the simple form of *Holy Father*, which nevertheless shows that the respective person sums up, by his life and his activities, the attributes of *shepherd of souls* and *teacher* in Jesus Christ's Church. In other words, on the one hand, he takes care of the believers' spiritual guidance for them to get to unity with Christ by the Holy Spirit, he preaches to them the *Gospel*, he accomplishes for them the Holy Mysteries of the Church and is called for all these *Father*, and, on the other hand, he teaches the believers the Church teaching and interprets to them God's revelation, answering, at the same time, the great problems and theological crises from the Church. This thing does not mean that the other Saints are less Saints or less Orthodox than the Holy Fathers and Teachers; it simply means that they did not have the charisma specific of the Holy Father and Teacher. Actually, the Holy Fathers had and have different functions in the church [bishops, priests (Jerome, John of Damascus, Symeon the New Theologian etc.), deacons (Ephrem the Syrian etc.), monks (Macarius the Egyptian etc.), lay people (Justin the Martyr and Philosopher, Nicholas Cabasilas etc.)] and it is not meet to compare them with one another or divide them into categories, *because all of them have been organs of God, have fulfilled their calling and have successfully served the Church, namely man's salvation*¹³.

3. The characteristic features of a Holy Father and Teacher of the Church are: a) *the embodiment, from a theological perspective, of the Church Tradition and way of living*; b) *the illumination par excellence by the Holy Spirit to express theologically a grown and larger experience of the eternal Truth Himself, Who is declared in the Tradition, namely in the patristic theology confirmed previously, but also in the Holy Scripture*; c) *the decisive contribution, by expressing this divine experience, to overcoming a theological crisis, which has shaken the Church during a certain epoch, regarding both the authentic living of the Truth and, at the same time, man's salvation*¹⁴. By the three qualities or features enumerated above, the Greek patrologist Stylianos Papadópulos affirms, on the one hand, that a clearer distinction is made between the Holy Fathers and Teachers of the Church and the Church writers¹⁵. On the other hand, he considers that the classical features met in the *Patrology*

dividing the patristic period into four periods (70-312, 312-620, 620-850, 850-1206), affirms in the *Preface* of the respective textbook that there are no limits to the patristic period, and the opinions setting as a limit of the patristic period the 6th or the 13th century are not grounded. This position gets to be known both to the Greek and to the Romanians, through the translation of his textbook into Greek [*Ιστορική διδασκαλία περι τῶν Πατέρων τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μέχρι τοῦ ἰβ' αἰῶνος* (*Historical Teaching on the Church Fathers up to the 12th Century*), tom. 1-3 (Ἱεροσόλυμα, 1885-1887)] and Romanian [*Patristica séu studiul istoric asupra Părinților Bisericeii* (*Patristics or Historical Study on the Church Fathers*) (București: 1879, ²1880)]. At the same time, Archbishop Philaret (1782-1867) of Moscow (1821-1867), one of the most important supporters of the project of translations of the Holy Fathers into Russian, formulated the demand that in the Academies of Moscow, Petersburg and Kiev, and then in the one of Kazan, as well, the study of the Holy Church Fathers should extend *in time* up to the end of the 18th century, being included also the work of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, proclaimed a Saint only in the year 1861. The positions of the two archbishops and patrologists show the conviction that the patristic period was contemporary to them [Marinescu, "Patrologia și studiile de specialitate", p. 308-13; see also Sophie Deicha, "Impulsion donnée par le Métropolitaine Philarète de Moscou (1782-1826) aux études patristiques en Russie au XIX^e siècle", *Studia Patristica* XXIII (1993), p. 226-31].

¹³ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 18, 20, 67.

¹⁴ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 78; see also Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 77, 83; Adrian Marinescu, "Criteriile și fundamentele patristice ale teologiei, elemente structurale ale teologiei ortodoxe dintotdeauna și premise ale rezolvării problematicei teologice de astăzi (The patristic criteria and fundamentals of theology, structural elements of the Orthodox theology since always and premises for solving today's theological problems) (I)", *Studii Teologice* 9/2 (2013): p. 264.

¹⁵ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 78. It ought to be mentioned that along with the Holy Fathers are studied also *the other Church writers, whose name is great and whose works are innumerable*. Actually, the Holy

Textbooks [holiness (ἀγιότης, *sanctitas vitae*), orthodoxy (ὀρθοδοξία, *Orthodox doctrine*), recognition (ἀναγνώρισις, *aprobatio*), ancientness (ἀρχαιότης, *antiquitas*) and defense of the faith (ὑπεράσπισις τῆς πίστεως, *defensores fidei*)], representing processings by the Western theologians, are scholastic and conventional, triggering problems, according to the same patrologist. If one were to refer to some of these features, one could ask, for instance, based on what criterion ought the holiness of Saint Cyril of Alexandria to be researched, who, although he has certain mistakes¹⁶, is nevertheless considered a Holy Father and Teacher of the Church. Ancientness represents, therefore, a *utopic feature*, since the *Holy Father's expression of truth is appropriated or rejected during the epoch* when it has been made known, and the *Church does not wait for centuries to honor the author whose teaching she has appropriated*. Actually, in the bosom of the Church, there are Fathers and Teachers not just during the *early Christian epoch but also during the subsequent as well*¹⁷. “*The Golden Age*”, inaugurated by Christ, by the Apostles and by the early Fathers, is continued in the works of the Church Fathers of our times¹⁸. As far as the defense of the faith is concerned, this is realized not just by Holy Fathers and Teachers, but also by Church writers¹⁹ and lay believers of the Church.

In this way it becomes clear why the Church, in her conscience, *does not despise the one who has been wrong, because she knows very well that a Father will not become less of a Father because he has made a certain mistake*. Important is that the respective Holy Father should not continue in this mistake. The classical example is the position of the Holy Cappadocian Fathers towards Saint Athanasius. *The first ones did not follow the second in what he said about the identity between being and hypostasis, but honored him for his subsequent contribution as their greatest teacher*²⁰. Therefore, the patristic theological contribution is moving in between two ascertainments: a) the Holy Fathers theologize by the illumination of the Holy Spirit and the intellectual gifts specific of each one of them; b) the Holy Fathers make mistakes in certain cases. *The fact of illumination* is highlighted by the reality that their teachings are appropriated by the Church, because they agree with the *Holy Scripture* and with the decisions of the *Ecumenical Synods*, and, consequently, also with the *Holy Tradition*, in which they are incorporated as well. *The fact of the mistake* of certain Holy Fathers is noticed by the attitude of the Church, who does not appropriate the respective wrong teachings, these being rejected and forgotten. For instance, the *millenarist conceptions of Irenaeus, or all that Athanasius the Great affirmed on the identity between being and hypostasis in God or even the conception of Gregory of Nyssa on the apokatastasis of all and many other cases of greater or lesser importance*²¹. This conscience of the Church is explained by Saint Photios the Great, underlining the fact that if some Holy Fathers spoke reticently about certain things or deviated from the right path out of some

Fathers' theological contribution represents the core *around which all the other Christian literature generally revolves*. The latter can, up to a certain point, be characterized as *interpretation or comment on the Fathers' vital contribution, as long as this contribution creates, by addition and growth, the whole Tradition* (Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 24).

¹⁶ They have been considered by some as *serious*, and by others as *unclarities* (Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 78).

¹⁷ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 78-9.

¹⁸ Episcopul Hilarion Alfeyev, “Moștenirea patristică și modernitatea (Patristic Heritage and Modernity)”, translation by Ștefan Toma, *Revista teologică* 17 (89)/2 (2007): p. 26.

¹⁹ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 79.

²⁰ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 45.

²¹ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 44-5.

unknown reason, but, nevertheless, no objection has been brought against them, nor have they been exhorted by someone in particular to teach the truth, then they are nonetheless considered Fathers and Teachers, with the difference that the *words* in which they were wrong are not followed²². Therefore, *the common experience of the Saints and the illumination are guarantees of an accurate expression of the truth, which always moves within a therapeutical approach and not within an axiological classification*²³.

From the history of the Church, one can note, however, that the three elements mentioned above, characterizing a theologian as Church Father and Teacher, and also making his work be expressed under different forms (catechesis, sermon, hermeneutics, apologetics, polemic theology, poetry, narrative of divine experiences and of states of vision of God, description of the stages of the neptic life, narrative of the Saints' lives, composition of Synodal texts and decisions etc.²⁴), *exist regardless of the epochs*²⁵. In other words, any theological crisis expressed under the form of a heresy and endangering the authentic living of the Truth and, consequently, the believers' salvation, may occur at any place and at any time. To be able to meet such a crisis, it is certainly necessary to have a more intense experience of the Truth²⁶, which experience, expressing the truth of the *Holy Scripture*²⁷ and the continuity of the *Holy Tradition*, guarantees the faith, the kind of faith able to assure people's salvation. One can note that, during each epoch, when the content of faith is altered and the believers' salvation becomes doubtful, the Holy Spirit brings to light in the Church great theologians, through whom any wrong teaching is refuted. *Therefore, as long as the Church is history*²⁸, *it will have Fathers. Consequently, "Patrology", also considered a branch of the theological science, has no limits in history, just as the Church Tradition has no limits*²⁹, nor can it be multiform, but is only one, as Christ's Church is one³⁰, and this

²² See Φωτίου τοῦ Μεγάλου, *Ἐπιστολή Ε΄, Πρὸς τὸν Ἀκυληΐας Ἰωάννην* (10th Epistle, To John of Aquileia), ι', in Ἰ. Βαλέττα, *Φωτίου Ἐπιστολαί* (Λονδῖνο: 1864), p. 196, cf. Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 46. In this context, the concept of *consensus patrum* (accord or consent of the Fathers), borrowed from Western theology, supposes, from the perspective of the Orthodox theology, the Holy Fathers' consent in essential matters, with the possibility of some divergences in minor problems. When in a Holy Father's works one can note some opinion contradicting other Holy Fathers' teachings, *we should not hesitate to reject it as a "personal theological opinion", falling out of the "Father's consent"* (Episcopul Hilarion, "Μοσθενirea patristică", p. 27).

²³ Χρήστου Αθ. Αραμπατζή, *Θέματα Εκκλησιαστικής Γραμματολογίας και Πατερικής Ερμηνευτικής* (Church Literature and Patristic Hermeneutics Topics) (Θεσσαλονίκη: Ostracon Publishing, 2014), p. 315.

²⁴ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 23.

²⁵ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 83.

²⁶ It should be mentioned that *truth*, according to the theological terminology, designates both the *divine reality itself*, and the fact of *experiencing or knowing it*, see Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 36.

²⁷ The Holy Fathers saw and see the *Holy Scripture* as being an *expression and formulation of the Truth and not the Truth Himself, Who, naturally, can be comprised in no book and no form at all. They were [and are] aware that the text of the Scripture, as expression and form, represents a sort of symbols, used conventionally and with the consent of those interested, to express fundamental redeeming aspects of the divine truth* (Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 37-8).

²⁸ It has been adequately affirmed that *history, from the Christian perspective, is a permanent Theophany, while God's birth of a woman, namely of the All-holy Virgin Mary, as God-man represents the revelation* (2 Tim. 1: 10) *and the confirmation of the accomplishment of history's aim* [Γεωργίου Δ. Μεταλληνού (Πρωτοπρ.), "Ο λυτρωτικός διάλογος κτιστού και Ακτίστου μέσα στην ιστορία (The redeeming dialogue between created and Uncreated in history)", in idem, *Λόγος ως αντίλογος. Θεολογικά δοκίμια* (The Word as Contrary Opinion. Theological Essays) (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Άρμός, 2019), p. 33].

²⁹ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 84.

³⁰ Saint Ciprian, *Letter 74*, 4 (ed. Hartel), vol. III, 2, p. 802.

Holy Tradition is the work of the Holy Spirit³¹, Who is at work in the one Church of Christ. *And the Tradition cannot have limits precisely because the Fathers are not just its authentic bearers, but also its creators, in other words, dynamic continuers*³² of the spiritual and dogmatic heritage of the Church, for they theologize under the Holy Spirit's guidance and illumination³³, a fact that indicates precisely the dynamic character of the *Holy Tradition*³⁴. Actually, the Holy Fathers are called *distinguished and worthy/notable men* (διαπρέψαντες καὶ ἔγκριτοι/πρόκριτοι ἄνδρες) of the Church and *illuminators in the world* (φωστήρες ἐν κόσμῳ), whose *writings and dogmas handed over by God* (θεοπαράδοτα συγγράμματα καὶ δόγματα) have been kept and appropriated by the Church³⁵, since *each teaching revealed is a work of God for man's salvation, which has been realized authentically in all the epochs, from the first century to this day*³⁶.

Consequently, *there is no end to the Holy Fathers' epoch*³⁷ and *we can set no limit to the Holy Fathers' emergence and action*, who have been revealed by the Holy Spirit during different periods of the Church history (for instance, Saint Symeon the New Theologian during the 11th century, Saint Gregory Palamas during the 14th century etc.)³⁸, for the very reason that their group is not closed, and, by their presence, "*Patrology*" has a permanent theological character, since *theology in the Church can only be "patristic", and not at all "postpatristic" or "neopatristic"*³⁹. *If "Patrology" loses its theological character, then it loses its identity, its orientation, namely it is laicized, it becomes a lay science completely powerless when it comes to interpreting theologically the Holy Fathers' achievements*⁴⁰. Such a secularized approach could not justify the efforts of the Church meant to ensure the unity of faith and the integrity of the theological ethos, understanding by this ethos the patristic way of thinking and living, which is recorded, for instance, in the *History of Dogmas and of Spirituality*, since dogma, in its turn, is the fruit of the holy-spiritual living and experience⁴¹, opening *an infinite horizon of life and freedom*, being the expression of the divine love⁴². For this reason, approaching the *History of Dogmas*, from the perspective of

³¹ Στυλιανού Γ. Παπαδοπούλου, *Ὁρθοδόξων πορεία. Ἐκκλησία καὶ Θεολογία στὸν 21^ο αἰῶνα* (*The Way of the Orthodox. The 21st Century Church and Theology*) (Αθήνα: Ἐκδόσεις Γρηγόρη, 2012), p. 70.

³² Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 84.

³³ See Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 24-6.

³⁴ From this perspective, a difference is made between the *Holy Tradition* and the *local customs and traditions* of a people, because the latter, however positive they may seem for the life of the Church, do not aim her purpose, namely man's union with God, see Γεωργίου Δορυπαράκη (Πρωτοπρ.), "Οἱ Πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὡς γνήσιοι φορεῖς καὶ θεματοφύλακες τῆς Ἱερᾶς Παραδόσεως (The Church Fathers as authentic bearers and protectors of the Holy Tradition)", in *Στά βήματα τῶν Πατέρων μας. Συλλογικός τόμος (In the Footsteps of Our Fathers. Collective Volume)* (Αθήνα: Ἐκδόσεις Ἀρχονταρῆκι, 2014), p. 43.

³⁵ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 19.

³⁶ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 36.

³⁷ Ἰγνατίου Μητροπολίτου Δημητριάδος καὶ Ἄλμυροῦ, "Χαιρετισμός κατά τὴν ἔναρξη τῶν Ἱερατικῶν Συνάξεων 2012-13 (Blessing at the Beginning of the Priestly Synaxes 2012-13)", in *Στά βήματα τῶν Πατέρων μας...*, p. 20.

³⁸ Παπαδοπούλου, *Οἱ Πατέρες καὶ Διδάσκαλοι*, p. 13-14; Episcopul Hilarion, "Moștenirea patristică", p. 26.

³⁹ Gheorghe Holbea, "Raportul dintre teologia patristică și teologia post-patristică (The relation between patristic and post-patristic theology)", *Ortodoxia* 4/2 (2012): p. 116.

⁴⁰ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 82. It has been stated that *the worst disservice done to "Patrology" since the middle of the last century is that it has been cultivated particularly as a historical-philological science* (Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 88).

⁴¹ Ἱεροθέου Μητροπολίτου, *Μεταπατερική θεολογία*, 359; see also N. Chițescu, "Ființa dogmei (The Being of the Dogma)", *Studii Teologice* 5/3-4 (1953): p. 188-209.

⁴² Holbea, "Raportul", p. 119.

the Orthodox teaching, is not limited to the classical periods into which the Western Christian doctrine has divided the patrological material, but follows the entire dimension of the Church history⁴³.

4. Accepting a terminus for the patristic period would trigger many consequences, such as: a) doubting the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church; b) ranking, in a manner never met, however, in the Church life, the illumination of the Holy Fathers by the Holy Spirit during different epochs; c) betraying the spirit of the Holy Church Fathers by not understanding accurately their manner of living and thinking; d) underestimating the crisis phenomenon and its approach by the Holy Fathers and Teachers of the Church; e) using philosophic criteria regarding the Holy Fathers' theology and teaching; f) turning to the Holy Fathers' authority only out of an act of "erudition"⁴⁴ and attributing to them, willingly or unwillingly, interpretations that are totally foreign to their teaching⁴⁵. For this reason, the Holy Fathers ought not to be reduced to simple "spiritual instances" or "theological options" that one can use only to defend one's own theological affirmations, being therefore

⁴³ For instance, the distinguished professor Constantine Scutéris projected his monumental work on *The History of Dogmas*, of which only two volumes have appeared (Athens, 1998 and 2004), into four periods: 1) from Jesus Christ's preaching until the years that preceded the 1st Ecumenical Synod (Nicea, 325); 2) from the 1st Ecumenical Synod to the 7th Ecumenical Synod (Nicea, 787); 3) from the 7th Ecumenical Synod until the years of the Reformation in the West, along the 16th century; 4) from the Reformation to *our days*. Yet, the author makes the mention that he has made use of this periodization out of reasons that clearly concern the research and presentation *method*, and the *inner connection* and the *matching* of the material of *The History of Dogmas*, which covers almost the entire span of the Church history [idem, *Ιστορία Δογματών, τόμος 1^{ος}, Η Ορθόδοξη δογματική παράδοση και οι παραχαράξεις της κατά τους τρεις πρώτους αιώνες (History of Dogmas, vol. I, The Orthodox Dogmatic Tradition and Its Falsifications during the First Three Christian Centuries)* (Αθήνα, 1998), p. 16-8]. Jaroslav Pelikan had the same vision in the monumental work *The Christian Tradition. A History of the Development of Doctrine* (vol. I-V, 1971, 1977, 1978, 1983, 1987), finished before his passage from Lutheranism to the Orthodoxy (1997). In the *Preface* to the first volume, he confesses that he proposes a unitary vision on the *Christian Tradition* and takes on the daring, yet, at the same time, necessary task of starting from the origins of the Christian doctrine history to go up to the 20th century, while maintaining the distinctions between the Christian Churches {idem, *Tradiția creștină. O istorie a dezvoltării doctrinei. I. Nașterea tradiției universale (100-600) [The Christian Tradition. A History of the Development of the Doctrine. I. The Birth of the Universal Tradition (100-600)]*, translation from English by Silvia Palade (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2004), p. 11}.

⁴⁴ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 85-6; Ίγνατίου Μητροπολίτου, „Χαιρετισμός”, p. 20-1; † Ignatie Mureșeanul, “Elemente de isagogie în studiul patristic (Elements of Isagogics in the Study of Patristics)”, p. 1-2, <http://comptepv.typepad.fr/files/elemente-de-isagogie-patristica.pdf> (accessed on July 25, 2015); Juan José Ayan Calvo, “Mâna creatoare a lui Dumnezeu (God's Creating Hand)”, in Cristian Bădiliță, *Știință. Dragoste. Credință. Convorbiri cu patrologi europeni (Science. Love. Faith. Dialogues with European Patrologists)*, Col. “Știință și Religie (Science and Religion)” (București: Editura Curtea Veche, 2008), p. 95; Adrian Marinescu, “Ortodoxie și ortopraxie. Reflecții privind importanța, autoritatea și actualitatea Părinților pentru omul contemporan (I) [Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy. Reflections on the Fathers' importance, authority and topicality for the contemporary man (I)]”, *Tabor* 5/12 (2012): p. 32.

⁴⁵ See, for instance, the concepts of “person” and “individual” with Saint Gregory of Nyssa, together with the other Holy Cappadocian Fathers, and the erroneous interpretation of these concepts with John Zizioulas, metropolitan of Pergamon, in his attempt of making them forerunners of the modern personalism or of rejecting certain modern components of the concept of “person”, in Lucian Turcescu, «“Person” versus “Individual”, and Other Modern Misreadings of Gregory of Nyssa», in Cristian Bădiliță, Charles Kannengiesser (éd.), *Les Pères de l'Eglise dans le monde d'aujourd'hui. Actes du colloque international organisé par le New Europe College en collaboration avec la Ludwig Boltzmann Gesellschaft (Bucarest, 7-8 octobre 2004)* (Paris: Beauchesne, București: Curtea Veche, 2006), p. 311-26; see also idem, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

“instrumentalized” or reduced to the status of “archeological relics”⁴⁶, nor is it meet to separate them into hermeneuts of the *Holy Scripture*, historians, dogmatists, polemist etc., because their aim is not hermeneutics, dogmatics or history. On the contrary, they have taken and they have as their basis the *Holy Scripture* and they have processed and put together the theological contribution of the Holy Fathers that preceded them, to provide an answer to certain theological challenges of their epoch in order to strengthen the believers spiritually⁴⁷. At the same time, the Holy Fathers are authentic bearers of the *Holy Tradition*, having the experience of the Holy Spirit’s work into them⁴⁸. This experience, on the one hand, shows the Holy Spirit’s work in the Church, by which the way of living in Christ is transmitted, from generation to generation, and, on the other hand, indicates the dynamism of the *Holy Tradition*⁴⁹.

The world’s Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ and God’s Son, said that He would give His disciples, namely the ones who live the faith in Him, the Holy Spirit, leading any man who purifies himself and gets to be illumined to the knowledge of the Truth. Therefore, He did not say that He would give Ecumenical Synods, but the Holy Spirit leading to *all the truth*⁵⁰, which means that it is not the synod that makes the Holy Fathers; on the contrary, it is the Holy Fathers who, being illumined and inspired by God, give authority to a synod and make it represent the authentic expression of the Truth⁵¹. Consequently, the authentic expression of the Truth relies on the experiencing of the Truth, which means a greater perception and knowledge of the Truth, by the work of the Holy Spirit, because the Truth Jesus Christ is not known exhaustively, being unlimited⁵². Therefore, *the Ecumenical Synods’ theology and decisions cannot be understood without the Holy Fathers and Teachers’ theological contribution, which precedes and prepares, more or less, the ground for the acceptance of the correct standpoint by the whole Church. Yet, the acceptance of a patristic theological standpoint does not depend on the agreement or not of the majority of the Church body, as it has been so intensely claimed, but there are two premises regarding the orthodoxy and the acceptance of a patristic theological standpoint: a) the traditionality of the standpoint, namely its agreement with the Holy Scripture, the Holy Tradition and the entire way of living of the Church; b) the proceeding of this standpoint from the illumination of the Holy Spirit, poured in the Church through persons, not through institutionalized forms*⁵³.

5. A correct perception and [an accurate] interpretation of the Holy Father require for the penetration in the spiritual climate of the Holy Father, meaning participation to the experiences expressed by the Holy Father. The starting point in the effort to understand the Holy Father is, at the same time, his person and his work. Seeking the person facilitates the explanation of the work. By the work we approach the person, and, by the person, the work⁵⁴. Therefore, what is important is to follow the person creating, time after time,

⁴⁶ † Ignatie Mureșeanul, “Elemente”, p. 2; Calvo, “Mâna creatoare”, p. 95; Episcopul Hilarion, “Moștenirea patristică”, p. 25-6.

⁴⁷ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α΄, p. 86.

⁴⁸ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α΄, p. 21, 34, 46, 49.

⁴⁹ Δορμπαράκη, “Οι Πατέρες της Έκκλησίας”, p. 42-3.

⁵⁰ *John* 16, 13.

⁵¹ Ανθίμου Μητροπολίτου Αλεξανδρουπόλεως, “Οι Πατέρες καί ή εποχή μας (The Fathers and Our Epoch)”, in *Στά βήματα τών Πατέρων μας...*, p. 30; Δορμπαράκη, “Οι Πατέρες της Έκκλησίας”, p. 46.

⁵² Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α΄, p. 30-1.

⁵³ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α΄, p. 68.

⁵⁴ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α΄, p. 74.

*theology. Only the person stands out in the unitary area of theology and only the person represents the smaller or bigger stage on the way of theology*⁵⁵, and the indication about the way the dogmatic teaching grows, since these two, namely theology and the dogmatic teaching, represent an *organic unity* in the Church⁵⁶, just as the *Holy Scripture* and the *Holy Tradition* represent the unitary way of theology, the expression of the divine truth, which saves man in the Church⁵⁷. The Holy Fathers' contribution consists, beside the example of a life led in the Church by their full living of Christ's teaching, in the growth in the knowledge of the Truth, Who is Jesus Christ Himself, God's Son and the world's Saviour. The divine revelation has been accomplished in and by Jesus Christ, not in a static, but in a dynamic manner, because it continues, not in the sense of discovering a different Truth, since only Jesus Christ is *the way, the truth and the life* (John 14: 6), but by experiencing the Truth⁵⁸, which represents a permanent state in the Church and leads to the growth of the content of the *Holy Tradition*, but also of the Church⁵⁹. Consequently, the Holy Fathers are not people who once belonged to the Church, but they continue to exist on earth and to belong to the Church to this day. Actually, the Church is not old but contemporary, permanently renewed⁶⁰, and *lived and lives with [Holy] Fathers and Teachers*⁶¹, who have been enriching and widening the *Holy Tradition* by the work of the Holy Spirit.

*The Church, just as in the past, also in the future, will have its «great» men, namely its Holy Fathers and Teachers*⁶². Saint Gregory the Theologian, referring to Saint Athanasius the Great - who, observing the problems created by Arius, *joined at the right time*⁶³ the disputes of his epoch, *healing the disease* in the Church⁶⁴ - affirms that *many and great are, therefore, the Holy Church Fathers and Teachers, so much so that no one could tell how many and how great they are, whom we have and will have from God*⁶⁵.

6. It ought to be mentioned that, in the Romanian area, one can also note the standpoint of the passage from the neoscholastic to the neopatristic model, yet as a creative return to the patristic theology, according to Father Gheorghe Florovsky's perspective, announced in two essays that he himself presented during the first *International Congress of the Faculties of Orthodox Theology*, held in Athens, in 1936⁶⁶. It should be specified that,

⁵⁵ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 91. Regarding the close connection between person and the experiencing of the divine truth see also Marinescu, "Ortodoxie și ortopraxie, I", p. 42; Adrian Marinescu, "Ortodoxie și ortopraxie. Reflecții privind importanța, autoritatea și actualitatea Părinților pentru omul contemporan (II) – Cu un studiu de caz privind fenomenologia patristică și (re)contextualizarea ei în societatea contemporană [Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy. Reflections on the Fathers' importance, authority and topicality for the contemporary man (II) – With a case study on the patristic phenomenology and its (re)contextualization in the contemporary society]", *Tabor* 6/7 (2012): p. 29 - note 49, 45.

⁵⁶ Marinescu, "Ortodoxie și ortopraxie, II", p. 11.

⁵⁷ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 43.

⁵⁸ Δορμπαράκη, "Οἱ Πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας", p. 51-2.

⁵⁹ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 48.

⁶⁰ Marinescu, "Ortodoxie și ortopraxie, I", p. 33, 50.

⁶¹ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 2.

⁶² Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 86.

⁶³ Saint Gregory the Theologian, *The 31st Discourse* 7, PG 35, 1098 A.

⁶⁴ Saint Gregory the Theologian, *The 31st Discourse* 14, PG 35, 1096 C.

⁶⁵ Saint Gregory the Theologian, *The 31st Discourse* 1, PG 35, 1084 A; Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 86.

⁶⁶ For the perspective he stands up for, see G. Florovsky, "Westliche Einflüsse in der russischen Theologie", in *Procès-verbaux du Premier Congrès de Théologie Orthodoxe à Athènes, 29 novembre-6 décembre 1936*, publiés par les soins du Président Prof. Hamilcas S. Alivisatos (Athènes: Editions Pyrsos, 1939), p. 212-31; idem, "Patristics and Modern Theology", in *Procès-verbaux du Premier Congrès*, p. 238-42.

during the same period, in France (1937), a project of translations, studies and comments of the Fathers, particularly of the Greek Fathers, was started. This fact marked, on the one hand, certain Roman-Catholic theologians and erudites' desire of unification between their Church and the Orthodox Church, and, on the other hand, an escape from the Latin juridism and rationalism, through the return to the Greek Fathers. This project, whose founders are the Jesuits Jean Daniélou (1905-1974), Pierre Chaillet (1900-1972), Henri de Lubac (1896-1991) and Claude Mondésert (1906-1990), will lie at the basis of the collection *Sources Chrétiennes*, launched in 1941⁶⁷, and, later on, of the organization of the *First International Conference on Patristics Studies at Oxford*, in 1951⁶⁸, which has continued the series of its reunions to the present epoch. Father Claude Mondésert, sent by Jean Daniélou to the 7th *International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (Brussels, 1948), to present the collection *Sources Chrétiennes*, upheld the *unity of culture from the Apostolical Fathers – and even from Philo – to Saint Bernard* († 1153), in the West, and Saint Nicholas Cabasilas († 1391), in the East, Saint Gregory Palamas († 1359) being included as well, which means the extension of the patristic period up to the above-mentioned authors⁶⁹. One can observe that the well-known collection *Sources Chrétiennes* appeared precisely at the moment when the Roman-Catholic Church had adopted officially the scholastic theology, which it considered as *a progress and an indispensable and definitive clarification of the faith, whereas the reference to the Fathers seemed a turning back in time*. Yet, the Second Vatican Council acknowledged the *Fathers' irreplaceable role as first interpreters of the Christian mystery*⁷⁰.

As far as the Christian Orthodox world is concerned, Father George Florovsky's call was quickly received by the Orthodox theologians of the Russian Diaspora in the West (Vladimir Lossky, Archimandrite Ciprian Kern, Archbishop Basil Krivocheine, Myra Lot-Borodine, Father John Meyendorff), finding, however, supporters as well in the countries of Orthodox tradition, such as in Greece (Father John Romanidis), Serbia (Saint Iustin Popovici) and Romania (Father Dumitru Stăniloae). The last three mentioned above identified themselves with what is called *patristic practice and tradition*⁷¹, highlighting in

⁶⁷ Appreciated as well in the Orthodox Christian world, this collection had, in 2006, when it celebrated 66 years of activity, 500 volumes, of which 10 belong to the Hebrew literature, 238 to the Greek literature (49 % or half of them), 164 to the Roman-Catholic or Latin literature (33.8 % or a quarter of them), 70 to the medieval literature of the West (14.4 %) and 13 to the Eastern literature (2.6 %). As time, 115 volumes cover the period of the 1st-3rd centuries (23.5 %), 288 volumes belong to the 4th to the 8th century (59.3 %) and 82 volumes are from the period of the 8th to the 16th century (16.9 %) [Dominique Gonnet, s.j., "La portée œcuménique de Sources Chrétiennes", in *Patristique et œcuménisme. Thèmes, contextes, personnages. Colloque international sous le patronage de Mgr Teodosie, Archevêque de Tomis Constanța (Roumanie), 17-20 octobre 2008*, éd. Cristian Bădiliță, Collection PONTUS EUXINUS (Paris: Editions Bauchesne, Târgu Lăpuș: Editura Galaxia Gutenberg, 2010), p. 28-30].

⁶⁸ The initiative belonged to a mixed team, made up of two Roman-Catholics, the Jesuit Jean Daniélou and the Dominican François Sagnard (1898-1957), and two Anglicans, the pastors Frank Leslie Cross (1900-1968) and Patrick McLaughlin (1909-1988). In the context of the epoch, the participation of Jean Daniélou was excluded by Jean-Baptiste Janssens (1889-1964), superior of the Jesuit Order, at the pressure of the Holy See, which was reserved to the initiative coming also from the Anglicans, which looked like an ecumenical reunion, having an active Roman-Catholic participation [Gonnet, s.j., "Sources Chrétiennes", p. 25; for details see Etienne Fouilloux, *Les Catholiques et l'unité chrétienne : du XIX^e au XX^e siècle, itinéraires européens d'expression française* (Paris : Le Centurion, 1982), p. 885].

⁶⁹ Gonnet, s.j., "Sources Chrétiennes", p. 24; see also Etienne Fouilloux, *La collection « Sources chrétiennes » : éditer les Pères de l'Eglise au XX^e siècle* (Paris : Cerf, 1995), p. 148-9; Claude Mondésert, "La collection « Sources Chrétiennes »", *Byzantion* XX (1950): p. 382-5.

⁷⁰ Gonnet, s.j., "Sources Chrétiennes", p. 29.

⁷¹ Marinescu, "Criteriile (I)", p. 296.

their works the role of the restoration of the patristic spirit, namely the way of spiritual thinking and living specific of the Holy Fathers⁷².

However, the use of the term *neopatristic theology* (*νεοπατερική θεολογία*) is not adequate, precisely because it leaves room for understanding that a period of patristic theology is over and now we are in a new period, no matter how much this last period were to be considered as a continuation of the first⁷³. Concerning the patristic renewal of the 20th century, called *neopatristic synthesis* (*νεοπατερική σύνθεση*), there has been proposed, as a better expression, the formulation *the new patristic synthesis* (*νέα πατερική σύνθεση*)⁷⁴. This formulation does not betray the interpretation that Father Florovsky himself gives to the expression *neopatristic synthesis*, which he conceives as *patristic*, in other words, faithful to the spirit and the vision of the Holy Fathers, *ad mentem Patrum*, but also *neopatristic*, in the sense that, on the one hand, it addresses a new generation, with its own problems and questions⁷⁵, while, on the other hand, it leads to a *development* and a *continuation* of the patristic teaching, yet, *homogenous*⁷⁶, since the same Father states that it is impossible to limit the patristic period *to a period or the other*⁷⁷. Therefore, the patristic theology, based on the patristic experience, namely on the living of the states of purification, illumination and deification, holds solutions to all the problems of the past, of the present and of the future⁷⁸, because these solutions are given by the Holy Church Fathers, contemporary to a man either by the topicality of their teachings and the power of the prayers to them, if they have lived during past periods of time, or by their presence in the present time. For this reason, Father Florovsky sees the return to the Holy Fathers not just as a means of preserving the patristic experience, but also as a means of rediscovering it, so that this experience may pass into the life of the man of any epoch⁷⁹.

⁷² Ioan Moga, “Despre maladiile teologiei. Marginalii la o temă actuală (On the maladies of theology. Marginalia to a topical theme)”, *Tabor* 6/5 (2012): p. 24-7; Holbea, “Raportul”, p. 114-5.

⁷³ This aspect can be noted by reading Father Dumitru Stăniloae’s *Prologue* from his *Dogmatics*, see idem, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, I (București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe, 1978), p. 5-6. Yet, a general reference to Father Stăniloae’s entire work highlights his perception of the patristic character of theology, which indicates its dynamism, a fact emerging as well from his vision on the *Philokalia*, which he considerably enriched compared to the Greek original, going over the limits of the classical division of the patristic period, precisely because it represents the endless spiritual reality open to every believer regardless of the epoch he lives in. Thus, there is discussion about the *Orthodox patristic theology of the 20th century*, and Father Stăniloae, combining preoccupations of *Dogmatics*, *Liturgical Theology*, *Patrology* and *Patristics*, is considered, *properly*, also *the greatest Romanian patrologist* (Marinescu, “Patrologia și studiile de specialitate”, p. 316-note 22, 317).

⁷⁴ See Marinescu, “Ortodoxie și ortopraxie, II”, p. 18.

⁷⁵ Andrew Blane (ed.), *Georges Florovsky: Russian Intellectual, Orthodox Churchman* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1993), p. 154; see also Georges H. Williams, “The Neo-Patristic Synthesis of Georges Florovsky”, in Andrew Blane (ed.), *Georges Florovsky*, p. 287-340.

⁷⁶ Florovsky, “Patristics and Modern Theology”, p. 240; see also Ciprian Iulian Toroczka, *Tradiția patristică în modernitate. Ecleziologia Părintelui Georges V. Florovsky (1893-1979) în contextul mișcării neopatristice contemporane (The patristic tradition in the modern times. The ecclesiology of Father Georges V. Florovsky (1893-1979) in the context of the contemporary neopatristic movement)* (Sibiu: Editura ASTRA Museum, Editura Andreiana, 2012).

⁷⁷ See Georges Florovsky, “St. Gregory Palamas and the Tradition of the Fathers”, in *Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View*, I, *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky* (Belmont: General Editor Richard S. Hauch, 1987), p. 105-20.

⁷⁸ Episcopul Hilarion, “Moștenirea patristică”, p. 47.

⁷⁹ Georges Florovsky, *Les voies de théologie russe*, traduction et notes J.-L. Palierne (Lausanne: L’Age d’homme, 2001), p. 448.

7. The term *postpatristic* can have a chronological meaning, indicating the *end of the patristic period*, but also a critical one, referring to a *relativization, a partial or total contestation, and a reconsideration or falling out of the Holy Fathers' theological thinking*⁸⁰, which would also denote a normative meaning. For this reason, by the use of this term, *the Fathers' spiritual life and holiness, which are the foundation of theologising in the Church*, are limited to a certain period, while *the divine inspiration of the Holy Fathers' teachings and works, the presence and the work of the Holy Spirit in their life and work* are relativized. At the same time, the use of this term leads to a *labyrinth of intellectual syllogisms, which sows doubt regarding the Holy Church Fathers' personalities, teachings and writings*⁸¹. The fact of being followers of the Holy Fathers (*ἐπόμενοι τοῖς πατράσι*) means living according to God, which leads to talking with and about Him, namely to true theologizing⁸².

Actually, a division of *Patrology* based on historical criteria or only depending on the major theological debates or crises cannot be supported⁸³, and similarly a separation of the patrological material into *early-Christian and patrological* or, by extension, into *patristic and postpatristic* or *neopatristic*, is *neither necessary, nor realistic*⁸⁴, because patristic theology represents a unitary and undividable fact. Each type of theology flourished in the bosom of another, so that old [theology] and new theology can only be conventionally distinguished⁸⁵. This affirmation is not unique, because other Orthodox theologians also believe that the patristic period is not over and will continue *as long as Christ's Church is present in the world and the Holy Spirit exists in it*⁸⁶. The notion of *postpatristic* (*μεταπατερική*) is foreign to the Orthodox Church, because the entire historical manifestation of the Church is a patristic one. Only a scholastic thinking distinguishes between patristic and postpatristic, since patristic theology has always had as its fundamental coordinate "modernity" or "the contemporary man", even though it did not develop a theory of the meeting between the Church and modernity⁸⁷. For this reason, each

⁸⁰ Holbea, "Raportul", p. 115; see also Ἱεροθέου, Μητροπολίτου Ναυπάκτου καὶ Ἀγ. Βλασίου, "Ἡ μεταπατερική θεολογία ἀπὸ ἐκκλησιαστικῆς προοπτικῆς (Postpatristic Theology from an Ecclesial Perspective)", in Ἱερά Μητρόπολις Πειραιῶς, *Πατερική Θεολογία καὶ μεταπατερική αἵρεση. Πρακτικὰ Θεολογικῆς Ἡμερίδος (Patristic Theology and the PostPatristic Heresy. The Works of the One-Day Manifestation)* (Πειραιεὺς, 2012), p. 181-2.

⁸¹ Holbea, "Raportul", p. 116; see also Marinescu, "Patrologia și studiile de specialitate", p. 360.

⁸² Marinescu, "Patrologia și studiile de specialitate", p. 349.

⁸³ The patrologist Stylianos Papadopoulos proposes to go over this division and to bring to light the great patristic figures in the context of their epoch, which permits to highlight the great stages of the patristic theology (2nd century: unity of the Church; 3rd century: authenticity of the Church, triadology; 4th century: triadology, pneumatology, christology; 5th-7th: christology etc.). For this reason, he considers that the criterion of division of *Patrology* is the knowledge of the theological process of the whole Church, and the theological presentation of a Holy Father shall be better perceived when this is researched in relation to each crisis, having in view, at the same time, also the other efforts of the theologians of the different local Churches. For instance, while Athanasius the Great and the Cappadocian Fathers were fighting against heresies, Evagrius Ponticus was writing his well-known «*Chapters on Prayer*», a fact showing the multilateral dynamism of the Church during a certain epoch. In this way, by means of the Fathers, we will know the Church, and, by means of the Church, we will know the Holy Fathers, see Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 91-5.

⁸⁴ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 92; † Ignatie Mureșeanul, "Elemente", p. 5.

⁸⁵ Παπαδοπούλου, *Πατρολογία*, Α', p. 91.

⁸⁶ Episcopul Hilarion, "Μοștenirea πατριστιῶν", p. 26; see also Georges Florovsky, "St. Gregory Palamas", p. 105-20; Bishop Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (London, 1992), p. 212; Holbea, "Raportul", p. 115-6.

⁸⁷ Marinescu, "Ortodoxie și ortopraxie, II", p. 27, 28-note 46; Adrian Marinescu, "Ortodoxie și ortopraxie. Reflecții privind importanța, autoritatea și actualitatea Părinților pentru omul contemporan (III) – Cu un studiu

epoch is no less patristic than any other⁸⁸, since the patristic period *is an open reality*⁸⁹ and a *theology of the experience*⁹⁰, and man is called to be always *patristic*, namely to think and act patristically, which means sharing the Holy Fathers' experience and aspirations⁹¹ in the frame of the Church, where the mystery of the divine iconomy has been lived uninterruptedly, being nothing else but man's salvation in Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son and the world's Saviour⁹². Therefore, on the one hand, *if each epoch of the Church has and wins its Fathers, then the patristic work remains forever open (opera aperta), indicating the fact that God's work goes on in the world and in history. On the other hand, the Church has not understood God's work as a limited reality, with beginning and end, but as a dynamic one, to be found both in her entirety and in her parts*⁹³.

The patristic presence or the patristic feeling has a few features: it protects without oppressing, encourages without flattering, shows mercy without compelling, teaches the Truth without altering Him⁹⁴, has the *capacity to make our faith fully "patristic"* and to *present it in a language accessible to the 21st century man*⁹⁵. All these are due to the fact that *the meeting with the Fathers is transforming and invigorating, dynamizing and vivifying for man's life*⁹⁶. Based on this experience, Father Dumitru Stăniloae states that *there is organic unity between patristic thinking and the thinking having to give an answer to today's problems. Indeed, the Fathers' thinking is immortal*⁹⁷ and forever actual, just as their presence in the Church is permanent, since the *one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church* advances in history by her Saints' steps.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Alfeyev, Episcopul Hilarion, "Moștenirea patristică și modernitatea", traducere de Ștefan Toma, *Revista teologică* 17 (89)/2 (2007).
- [2] Băjău, Constantin I. *Patrologie și literatură post-patristică* (Craiova: Editura Universitaria, 2013).
- [3] Idem, *Patrologie* (Craiova: Tipografia Universității, 2002).
- [4] Blane, Andrew (ed.), *Georges Florovsky: Russian Intellectual, Orthodox Churchman* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993).

de caz privind fenomenologia patristică și (re)contextualizarea ei în societatea contemporană [Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy. Reflections on the Fathers' importance, authority and topicality for the contemporary man (III) – With a case study on the patristic phenomenology and its (re)contextualization in the contemporary society]", *Tabor* 7/6 (2013): p. 40.

⁸⁸ Episcopul Hilarion, "Moștenirea patristică", p. 26.

⁸⁹ Marinescu, "Ortodoxie și ortopraxie, I", p. 18, note 17.

⁹⁰ Holbea, "Raportul", p. 127.

⁹¹ Episcopul Hilarion, "Moștenirea patristică", p. 25; Marinescu, "Ortodoxie și ortopraxie, I", p. 28.

⁹² Dumitru Stăniloae, "Câteva trăsături caracteristice ale Ortodoxiei» (Several characteristic features of the Orthodoxy)", *Mitropolia Olteniei* 22/7-8 (1970): p. 732; Holbea, "Raportul", p. 127.

⁹³ Adrian Marinescu, "Criteriile și fundamentele patristice ale teologiei, elemente structurale ale teologiei ortodoxe dintotdeauna și premise ale rezolvării problematicei teologice de astăzi (The patristic criteria and fundaments of theology, structural elements of the Orthodox theology since always and premises for solving today's theological problems) (II)", *Studii Teologice* 9/3 (2013): p. 25, note 35.

⁹⁴ Ἰγνατίου Μητροπολίτου, "Χαιρετισμός", p. 18.

⁹⁵ Episcopul Hilarion, "Moștenirea patristică", p. 25.

⁹⁶ Marinescu, "Criteriile (I)", p. 286.

⁹⁷ Jürgen Henkel, "Teologia conform tradiției Părinților Bisericii: dogmatica și metoda teologică a Părintelui Stăniloae (Theology according to the Church Fathers's tradition: Father Stăniloae's dogmatics and theological method)", in IPS Laurențiu Streza, J. Henkel, Gh. F. Angheliescu (editors), *Dumitru Stăniloae (1903-1993). Teologie românească de dimensiune europeană [Dumitru Stăniloae (1903-1993). Romanian Theology of European Dimension]* (Sibiu: Editura Schiller, 2007), p. 258.

- [5] Bota, Ioan M., *Patrologia* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Viața Creștină, ²2002).
- [6] Calvo, Juan José Ayan, “Mâna creatoare a lui Dumnezeu”, in Cristian Bădiliță, *Știință. Dragoste. Credință. Convorbiri cu patrologi europeni* (Col. „Știință și Religie” (București: Editura Curtea Veche, 2008).
- [7] Cayré, F., *Patrologie et Histoire de la Théologie*, Livres III et IV (Paris, Tournai, Rome: Desclée et Cie, Editeurs Pontificaux, ²1933).
- [8] Idem, *Précis de Patrologie et d’Histoire de la Théologie*, Livres I et II (Paris, Tournai, Rome: Desclée et Cie, Editeurs Pontificaux, ²1931).
- [9] Chițescu, N., “Ființa dogmei”, *Studii Teologice* 5/3-4 (1953).
- [10] Coman, Ioan G., “Sfânta Tradiție în lumina Sfinților Părinți”, *Ortodoxia* 8/2 (1956).
- [11] Idem, *Patrologie* (București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă, 1956).
- [12] Idem, *Patrologie*, vol. I (București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1984).
- [13] Croitoru, Ion Marian, “Problematizări privind creșterea învățării dogmatice în lumea ortodoxă contemporană”, in Universitatea Ovidius, Facultatea de Teologie *Sfântul Andrei, Tradiție și continuitate în teologia tomitană. Două decenii de învățământ teologic universitar la Constanța. 1992-2012. Simpozion Internațional (2012, Constanța)* (Constanța: Editura Arhiepiscopiei Tomisului, 2012/2013).
- [14] Idem, “The Growth of the Dogmatic Teaching in the Contemporary Orthodox World. Questions and Problematizations”, *International Journal of Orthodox Theology* 6/1 (2015).
- [15] Deicha, Sophie, “Impulsion donnée par le Métropolitte Philarète de Moscou (1782-1826) aux études patristiques en Russie au XIX^e siècle”, *Studia Patristica* XXIII (1993).
- [16] Florovsky, Georges, “Patristics and Modern Theology”, in *Procès-verbaux du Premier Congrès de Théologie Orthodoxe à Athènes, 29 novembre-6 décembre 1936*, publiés par les soins du Président Prof. Hamilcas S. Alivisatos (Athènes: Editions Pyrsos, 1939).
- [17] Idem, “Westliche Einflüsse in der russischen Theologie”, in *Procès-verbaux du Premier Congrès*.
- [18] Idem, “St. Gregory Palamas and the Tradition of the Fathers”, in *Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View, I, The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky* (Belmont: General Editor Richard S. Hauch, 1987).
- [19] Idem, *Les voies de théologie russe*, traduction et notes J.-L. Palierne (Lausanne : L’Age d’homme, 2001).
- [20] Fouilloux, Etienne, *La collection « Sources chrétiennes » : éditer les Pères de l’Eglise au XX^e siècle* (Paris : Cerf, 1995).
- [21] Idem, *Les Catholiques et l’unité chrétienne : du XIX^e au XX^e siècle, itinéraires européens d’expression française* (Paris : Le Centurion, 1982).
- [22] Gonnet, s.j., Dominique, “La portée œcuménique de Sources Chrétiennes”, in *Patristique et œcuménisme. Thèmes, contextes, personnages. Colloque international sous le patronage de Mgr Teodosie, Archevêque de Tomis Constanța (Roumanie), 17-20 octobre 2008*, éd. Cristian Bădiliță, Collection PONTUS EUXINUS (Paris : Editions Bauchesne, Târgu Lăpuș: Editura Galaxia Gutenberg, 2010).
- [23] Henkel, Jürgen, “Teologia conform tradiției Părinților Bisericii: dogmatica și metoda teologică a Părintelui Stăniloae”, in IPS Laurențiu Streza, J. Henkel, Gh. F. Anghelescu (editori), *Dumitru Stăniloae (1903-1993). Teologie românească de dimensiune europeană* (Sibiu: Editura Schiller, 2007).
- [24] Holbea, Gheorghe, “Raportul dintre teologia patristică și teologia post-patristică”, *Ortodoxia* 4/2 (2012).
- [25] Ignatie Mureșeanul, “Elemente de isagogie în studiul patristic”, <http://comptepv.typepad.fr/files/elemente-de-isagogie-patristica.pdf> (accesat la 25 iulie, 2015).
- [26] Iordăchescu, Cicerone, *Istoria vechii literaturi creștine (Primele trei veacuri până la 325)*, vol. I (Chișinău: Tipografia Țerek & Caminschi, 1934; Iași: Editura Moldova, ²1996).
- [27] Idem, *Istoria vechii literaturi creștine (Epoca de la 461 la 636/750)*, vol. III (Chișinău: Tipografia Țerek & Caminschi, 1940; Iași: Editura Moldova, ²1996).
- [28] Marinescu, Adrian, “Criteriile și fundamentele patristice ale teologiei, elemente structurale ale teologiei ortodoxe dintotdeauna și premise ale rezolvării problematicei teologice de astăzi (I)”, *Studii Teologice* 9/2 (2013); (II), *Studii Teologice* 9/3 (2013).
- [29] Idem, “Ortodoxie și ortopraxie. Reflecții privind importanța, autoritatea și actualitatea Părinților pentru omul contemporan (I)”, *Tabor* 5/12 (2012); “(II) – Cu un studiu de caz privind fenomenologia

- patristică și (re)contextualizarea ei în societatea contemporană”, *Tabor* 6/7 (2012); “(III) – Cu un studiu de caz privind fenomenologia patristică și (re)contextualizarea ei în societatea contemporană”, *Tabor* 7/6 (2013).
- [30] Idem, “Patrologia și studiile de specialitate în cadrul Ortodoxiei din secolul al XX-lea și începutul secolului al XXI-lea. Școli și direcții de cercetare”, in *Teologia ortodoxă în secolul al XX-lea și la începutul secolului al XXI-lea*, coord. Pr. prof. dr. Viorel Ioniță (București: Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, 2011).
- [31] Moga, Ioan, “Despre maladiile teologiei. Marginalii la o temă actuală”, *Tabor* 6/5 (2012).
- [32] Mondésert, Claude, “La collection « Sources Chrésiennes »”, *Byzantion* XX (1950).
- [33] Moreschini, Claudio / Norelli, Enrico, *Istoria literaturii creștine vechi grecești și latine, II/1, De la Conciliul de la Niceea la începuturile Evului Mediu*, traducere din italiană de Elena Caraboi, Doina Cernica, Emanuela Stoleriu și Dana Zămosteanu (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2013).
- [34] *Patrologia. Seria graeca* (161 vol., Paris, 1857-1866).
- [35] *Patrologia. Seria latina* (221 vol., Paris, 1841-1864).
- [36] Pătrașcu, Damian Gheorghe, *Patrologie și Patristică. Secolele I-IV*, vol. I (Roman: Editura Serafica, 2007).
- [37] Pelikan, Jaroslav, *Tradiția creștină. O istorie a dezvoltării doctrinei. I. Nașterea tradiției universale (100-600)*, traducere din limba engleză de Silvia Palade (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2004).
- [38] Stăniloae, Dumitru, “Câteva trăsături caracteristice ale Ortodoxiei”, *Mitropolia Olteniei* 22/7-8 (1970).
- [39] Idem, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, I (București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe, 1978).
- [40] Șesan, M., “Despre încheierea epocii patristice”, *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei* 53/5-6 (1967).
- [41] Toroczkai, Ciprian Iulian, *Tradiția patristică în modernitate. Ecleziologia Părintelui Georges V. Florovsky (1893-1979) în contextul mișcării neopatristice contemporane* (Sibiu: Editura ASTRA Museum, Editura Andreiana, 2012).
- [42] Turcescu, Lucian, «“Person” versus “Individual”, and Other Modern Misreadings of Gregory of Nyssa», in Cristian Bădiliță, Charles Kannengiesser (éd.), *Les Pères de l’Eglise dans le monde d’aujourd’hui. Actes du colloque international organisé par le New Europe College en collaboration avec la Ludwig Boltzmann Gesellschaft (Bucarest, 7-8 octobre 2004)* (Paris: Beauchesne, București: Curtea Veche, 2006).
- [43] Idem, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- [44] Voicu, Constantin / Colda, Lucian-Dumitru, *Patrologie*, vol. I-II (București: Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, 2009), vol. III (București: Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, 2010).
- [45] Idem, *Patrologie*, I (București: Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, 2009).
- [46] Ware, Bishop Kallistos, *The Orthodox Church* (London, 1992).
- [47] Ανθήμιου Μητροπολίτου Αλεξανδρουπόλεως, “Οἱ Πατέρες καί ἡ ἐποχή μας (The Fathers and Our Epoch)”, in *Στά βήματα τῶν Πατέρων μας. Συλλογικός τόμος (In the Footsteps of Our Fathers. Collective Volume)* (Ἀθήνα: Ἐκδόσεις Ἀρχονταρῆκι, 2014).
- [48] Αραμπατζή, Χρήστου, Αθ. *Θέματα Εκκλησιαστικής Γραμματολογίας και Πατερικής Ερμηνευτικής (Church Literature and Patristic Hermeneutics Topics)* (Θεσσαλονίκη: Ostrakon Publishing, 2014).
- [49] Δορμπαράκη (Πρωτοπρ.), Γεωργίου, “Οἱ Πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὡς γνήσιοι φορεῖς καί θεματοφύλακες τῆς Ἱερᾶς Παραδόσεως (The Church Fathers as authentic bearers and protectors of the Holy Tradition)”, in *Στά βήματα τῶν Πατέρων μας*.
- [50] Ἰγνατίου Μητροπολίτου Δημητριάδος καί Ἀλμυροῦ, “Χαιρετισμός κατά τήν ἔναρξη τῶν Ἱερατικῶν Συνάξεων 2012-13 (Blessing at the Beginning of the Priestly Synaxes 2012-13)”, in *Στά βήματα τῶν Πατέρων μας*.
- [51] Ἱεροθέου Μητροπολίτου Ναυπάκτου καί Ἀγίου Βλασίου, *Μεταπατερική θεολογία καί ἐκκλησιαστική πατερική ἐμπειρία (Postpatristic Theology and Ecclesial Patristic Experience)* [Ἱερά Μονή Γενεθλίου τῆς Θεοτόκου (Πελαγίας), 2012].
- [52] Idem, “Ἡ μεταπατερική θεολογία ἀπό ἐκκλησιαστικῆς προοπτικῆς (Postpatristic Theology from an Ecclesial Perspective)”, in Ἱερά Μητρόπολις Πειραιῶς, *Πατερική Θεολογία καί μεταπατερική αἵρεση. Πρακτικά Θεολογικῆς Ἡμερίδος (Patristic Theology and the PostPatristic Heresy. The Works of the One-Day Manifestation)* (Πειραιεύς, 2012).
- [53] Μεταλληνοῦ (Πρωτοπρ.), Γεωργίου Δ., „Ὁ λυτρωτικὸς διάλογος κτιστοῦ καί Ἀκτίστου μέσα στήν ἰστορία (The redeeming dialogue between created and Uncreated in history)”, in idem, *Λόγος ὡς*

- ἀντίλογος. Θεολογικά δοκίμια (*The Word as Contrary Opinion. Theological Essays*) (Αθήνα: Έκδόσεις Άρμός, ²1998).
- [54] Παπαδοπούλου, Στυλιανού Γ., *Οί Πατέρες και Διδάσκαλοι τής Έκκλησίας μας (The Fathers and the Teachers of our Church)* (Ίερά Αρχιεπισκοπή Αθηνών, χ.ε.).
- [55] Idem, *Όρθοδόξων πορεία. Έκκλησία και Θεολογία στόν 21^ο αιώνα (The Way of the Orthodox. The 21st Century Church and Theology)* (Αθήνα: Έκδόσεις Γρηγόρη, 2012).
- [56] Idem, *Πατρολογία (Patrology)*, Α' (Αθήνα: Έκδόσεις Παρουσία, ³1997).
- [57] Σκουτέρη, Κωνσταντίνου, *Ίστορία Δογμάτων, τόμος 1^{ος}, Η Όρθόδοξη δογματική παράδοση και οι παραχαράξεις της κατά τούς τρεις πρώτους αιώνες (History of Dogmas, vol. I, The Orthodox Dogmatic Tradition and Its Falsifications during the First Three Christian Centuries)* (Αθήνα, 1998).
- [58] Χρήστου, Παναγιώτη Κ., *Ελληνική Πατρολογία (Greek Patrology)*, Α' (Θεσσαλονίκη: Εκδοτικός Οίκος Κυρομάνος, Θεσσαλονίκη, ³1994).

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 collaborations with members of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology and Education Sciences, “Valahia” University, Târgoviște, Romania.

This Journal provides a platform for the latest scientific research theological and moral-education, encouraging approaches from different areas and points of view. Therefore, the theme of the journal is, from the beginning, a religious one with a wide opening towards universal cultural values.

SUBJECT AREAS

Icoana Credinței promotes interdisciplinary approaches to any of the world's religious/spiritual traditions and in various fields:

THEOLOGY; COMPARATIVE STUDIES IN RELIGION AND POLITICS;
PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION; PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION; HISTORY OF
RELIGIONS; ROLE OF RELIGION IN CULTURE AND SOCIETY;

ABSTRACT AND INDEX

Icoana Credinței is abstracted and indexed in:

ERIHPLUS <https://dbh.nsd.uib.no/publiseringskanaler/erihplus/index>

<https://dbh.nsd.uib.no/publiseringskanaler/erihplus/periodical/info.action?id=486240>

CROSSREF <https://search.crossref.org/?q=icoana>

CEEOL <https://www.ceeol.com/search/journal-detail?id=1398>

DOAJ doaj.org/search#.WIsxbdJ95dg

SCIPPIO <http://www.scipio.ro/web/icoana-credintei>

OAJI <http://oaji.net/journal-detail.html?number=1743>

EBSCO host. <https://help.ebsco.com/interfaces/EBSCOhost>

GOOGLE SCHOLAR <https://scholar.google.ro/scholar>

EZB <http://rzblx1.uni-regensburg.de/ezeit/search>.

WORLDCAT <http://www.worldcat.org/title/icoana-credintei-icon-of-faith/oclc/907452557>

PLAGIARISM POLICY

The editorial board is very strict regarding plagiarism. The journal believes that taking the ideas and work of others without giving them credit is unfair and dishonest. The editorial board retains the absolute authority to reject the review process of a submitted manuscript if it is suspect at plagiarism or subject to plagiarism.

HOW TO SUBMIT THE PAPER

The author should submit the paper via e-mail to the executive editor at:

ifiasa@yahoo.com iconfaith_journal@yahoo.com