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PhD THESIS

*Presence and work of the Holy Trinity in the Church and in
the Eucharist*

**** ABSTRACT ****

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The world represents an obvious existence for man and, consequently, it can become the object of human knowledge. Over time, man has become aware of the relativity and the contingency of the material universe despite its impressive greatness and therefore he understood that matter, in all its forms, is not the ultimate reality. Understanding the edge, relativity and contingency of the material cosmos impedes man to consider the world as the ultimate reality and that is why, beyond the finitude of matter, he accepts the existence of an immaterial infinite. The knowledge about the immaterial, infinite, absolute and supreme Existence is possible just due to Its benevolence. In other words, this knowledge is a gift, and the gift is an expression of love, therefore The Supreme Existence is a loving and, consequently, a personal reality. Through its revealing action, begun in the act of creation, continued through prophets and fulfilled with the Embodiment, God reveals Himself as being an Existence that has no beginning and no end.

The Sacrament of the Holy Trinity is unknowable and unspeakable. The Dogma or the teaching about the Sacrament of the Holy Trinity is central in the Church experience and it has a supralogical character, since it transcends the capacities of the limited human reason¹, being at the same time the heavenly foundation of the Christian life. The unity of God's nature and the Trinity of the divine Hypostases are stated through it.

God is One in Its Being and three in Persons. The distinction between the Hypostases or the Trinity Persons is carried out depending on their origin and not on an opposition: the father is unborn, The Son is born out of eternity of His Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from eternity from the Father². All Persons are equal in dignity, identical in being and perichoretic through their into-another-relationship. This personal, in-communion way of living of the Holy Trinity is a call addressed to man. Indeed, the man is called to a personal way of existence in communion with God, with his fellows and with the entire creation understood rationally or as a vast weave of interdependencies.

¹ Clark Carlton, *The Faith. Understanding Orthodox Christianity*, translated by pr. Vasile Bârză and Dragoș Dâscă, Sibiu, Ecclesiast Publishing House, 2010, p. 45.

² John Breck, *The Sacred Gift of Life. Orthodox Christianity and Bioethics*, translated by His Grace Irineu Pop, Cluj-Napoca, Patmos Publishing House, 2003, p. 39.

The Creation has at its origin the freely creative will of God and it is ontologically different from the divine nature³. Therefore, the creation belongs to the Holy Trinity, and the Church confesses that the Father is the Creator of the universe, but He is a creator through the Son in the Holy Spirit. The Son or the Word of God is presented at the beginning of this universe as a cause of creation⁴, since the Father creates together with the Son and through the Son. The Father creates everything through the Son, Who is the Logos and His infinite Reason, He is the one who renders rationality to the creation. Due to its rationality, the world is inexhaustible light⁵, for the world enlightens itself in its relationship with God, but at the same time, the rationality of the created world enables man's deification and the universe transfiguration through the uncreated energies of the Logos. That is why, in its ways of being, the creation can be changed, but in its interior rationality, it remains unchangeable⁶.

Orthodox ecclesiology is based on the teaching about the Holy Trinity and it must be related to the teaching about creation. The teaching about the Church is of a high importance because in the Church the reunion of everything created takes place, with the seen God as communion of personal love. At the same time, the Church is the sacred body of Christ: Christ with His deified body extends Himself in the humankind⁷.

The Church, as the sacred body of Christ, has its ultimate ground in the Holy Trinity. Jesus is the head of Church and He strengthens the ecclesial existence through His entire redeeming activity, starting with His Embodiment and culminating with his Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven⁸. If, by Embodiment, Christ becomes a man, through all His other redeeming acts, He places human kind back in the dignity it had prior to falling into sin, and He unites it with godhood in an everlasting way.

³ John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, translated by pr. associate professor. Alexandru I. Stan, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Biblical and Missionary Institute of Romanian Orthodox Church, 1996, p. 173.

⁴ Gheorghe Șchiopu, *Teaching about the Trinity, knowledge and anthropology in the view of Clement of Alexandria*, Deva, Emia Publishing House, 2006, p. 150.

⁵ Pr. prof. PhD Dumitru Popescu, *Jesus Christ Pantocrator*, Publishing House of the Biblical and Missionary Institute of Romanian Orthodox Church, 2005, p. 141-2.

⁶ Pr. prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, 'The Son and the Word of God through Whom all were made and remade', in *Orthodoxy*, year 35 (1986), no. 2, p.174.

⁷ Idem, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, vol. 2, second edition, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Biblical and Missionary Institute of Romanian Orthodox Church, 1997, p. 138.

⁸ Pr. prof. Cristinel Ioja, 'The Mystery of the Holy Trinity and the Experience of God in Liturgy. Dogma, Spirituality and Liturgy in Orthodoxy', in *International Journal of Orthodox Theology*, vol. 2 (2011), nr. 1, p. 108.

Man's redemption entails freely assuming the way that Christ initially went through, having Him as model, supporter and leader, namely entering into this state of pure sacrifice⁹. By freely assuming this state of sacrifice '*we open ourselves to the thorough communion with God the Father, just like Christ*'¹⁰, and by this we sanctify ourselves: '*Christ cannot produce this sanctification within our body, if we do not acquire the state of sacrifice and of generous devotion of Christ, which culminated in His Cross*'¹¹.

The purpose of this thesis is the analysis of the deep relationship between triadology and ecclesiology. It is an analysis conceived on the thread of the ecclesial experience of God's Sacrament. For this is what differentiates the Orthodox understanding from the other perspectives over ecclesiology. Not only the emphasis put on the necessity of experience, but even the starting point of theology, which can be characterized as Orthodox, has a correspondence in the ecclesial experience of God's Sacrament.

The first chapter of the thesis, *Orthodox teaching about the Holy Trinity and its relationship with ecclesiology* highlights the relationship between ecclesiology and triadology. The symbols of faith have emphasized that the teaching about the Church is dependent upon the teaching about the Holy Trinity. Not coincidentally, the Holy Fathers, at the Second Ecumenical Council (381), have concisely voiced the doctrine about the Church, only after stating the revealed truth about the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This confession pattern is recurrent in the Christian space¹², with obvious implications in the development of ecclesiology. Due to the fact that the debate over the Church's nature and mission was subordinated to the theology about Trinity, ecclesiology doesn't seem to have had coherence in the absence of a trinitary thinking. In the East, the Church has always been part of a trinitary dogmatic assembly, which can be demonstrated if we consider two of the fundamental theses of Orthodoxy and their effect

⁹ Pr. prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, 'The Church as place and wide communion into Christ' in *Orthodoxy*, vol. 34 (1982), no. 3, p. 344.

¹⁰ Idem, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, vol. 2..., p. 146. Cf. and Idem, 'The connection between the Eucharistic and Christian love', in *Theological Studies*, second series, vol. 27 (1965), no. 1-2, p. 16-17.

¹¹ Idem, 'The Holy Cross as means of sanctification and blessing and time of worship' in *Orthodoxy*, vol. 34 (1982), no. 2, p. 180.

¹² For instance, the same pattern is issued in the 4th century – The confession of faith made by Saint Epiphanius of Salamis (373/374); and in the 16th century – The confession made by the ecumenical patriarch Jeremias II of Constantinople as a first answer to Augsburg Confession (1567). For more details, see Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss (ed.), *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, volume I, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2003, p. 100-1, 395-474. Cf. and Jaroslav Pelikan, *Credo. Historical and Theological Guide to Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2003, p. 538-70.

upon ecclesiology. Thus, the distinction between *iconomia* and *theologia*, respectively between being and energy have played a decisive role in shaping the teaching about the Church. As a place of communion between man and God, and of man's living with God and into God, the Church has its origins in Heaven. But this living and togetherness were engaged in God's eternal Council and the world was created for them, therefore, the origin of the Church, older than the origin of the world, lies in God's thinking and eternal will. The Church in the Eternal Council is Jesus Christ's Church, the one we have achieved by His precious blood and next to which He will stay till the end of time.

The teaching about the Church cannot be isolated from other theological topics, on the contrary, it is, from a certain point of view, a kind of *sum* of the principles that form the basis of any theological undertaking.

The Church is shown, in relation to this union of the creation with God, as image of the Trinity. Just as any human being exists as image of God, as icon of the Holy Trinity, the same way the Church embodies the mystery of unity within diversity on earth. The communion of Church is carried out according to the image of the trinitary communion, through Christ, in Whom virtually lies its germ, based on the hypostatic union of His divine being with the human one. The unity of the Church is the spiritual communion of a family that has God as a Father (*Mathew 5,45*) and Christ as the centre of life. The horizontal communion between the believers is developed on the pattern of the vertical communion with the entire Trinity. The Church, being covered by the trinitary communion, receives through it a touch of ontological plenitude. In this respect, the Church, addresses Itself to all people and It also gathers them in its communion. The Church is the people's common life with the Holy Trinity, their participation at God's life, it is the human beings' communion with the divine people. The Church is the life within the trinitary communion. The unity of the Church is communication and extension of God's unity in an iconomic area. The divine trinitary relationships are a model of the interpersonal relationships within the Church. The life of the Church is interlaced with the life of the Holy Trinity; the simple fact that there is love between the persons of the Holy Trinity, produces the same love between people. At the same time, between people and the Persons of the Holy Trinity it is carried out, according to grace, the same unity existing between the divine persons. The Son is so much united with people according to grace, as He is united, according to being, with His Father, having for them the same love.

The second chapter of the paper, *The Church – experience of the communion with the Holy Trinity*, states that the Eastern Theology calls, in order to explain the ecclesial experience, on the idea of love communion with the Holy Trinity.

The communion with the Holy Trinity and the loving relationship between the members of the Church have characterized numerous ecclesiological descriptions of the Holy Fathers. As an environment in which Christ's sacrament of world redemption is fulfilled, the Church is also the place in which there are and there work the uncreated divine energies, which are introduced in the world by the Holy Spirit. Christ, whose body is the Church, fulfils His sanctifying and redeeming aim in the Church, through the Holy Spirit. Those who are in Christ, live in the Holy Spirit and the Spirit is within them. Christ's sacramental body is, at the same time, the place where all spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit work. The limbs of Christ's sacramental body are temples of the Holy Spirit also or temples out of which the Same Spirit of Christ glows. The Greek theologian Nikos Nissiotis, talking about God's presence in the concrete community of the Church, shows that this cannot be approached correctly but in the perspective of a pneumatological Christology.¹³ Only this way the new direct and personal presence of Christ can be shaped.

Christ spreads over centuries in the Church through the Holy Spirit and, through the Spirit also, the Church lives Christ. The Spirit conveys to those gathered with Christ, through the Church, the uncreated energy – and by this He renders the Church a living body. Consequently, in isolation and schism redemption cannot be reached, on the contrary it can be lost. By breaking the life unity of the sacramental body of Christ and by moving away from the Spirit Who enlivens this body, nobody can redeem himself.

The Church communicates Christ to people, in order to unite them with God, both by announcing Christ's Gospel as well as by the Spirit's work, which covers this annunciation with the power of grace¹⁴.

¹³ Nikos Nissiotis, 'Pneumatological Christology as premises of ecclesiology', in *Voice of the Church*, 1969, no. 3-4, p. 353.

¹⁴ 'The annunciation of the Word opens our mind, gives us the knowledge of God, brings us near Him and His Kingdom; opens the eyes of our mind and heart by receiving the revealed truth, but the union with Christ, the receiving of the heavenly gift can be achieved through the Holy Sacraments. Our Lord's Grace, which is given to us through the Holy Sacraments is root for our resurrection. It seeds within us the body of glorification and fills with light the bottom of our hearts' – Vasile Coman, 'Redemption of Jesus Christ through Church' in *Orthodoxy*, vol. 37 (1985), no. 2, p. 361.

In chapter three, *Work of the Holy Trinity in the Church and in the Eucharist*, we have presented God's iconomy work in the Church. If receiving the Spirit can only be achieved through Christ, exactly the same way, Christ cannot be reached outside the Spirit nor the Father outside the Son or the Spirit. Therefore, the Pentecost strongly emphasizes the reciprocity of the divine Persons work and their unseparated presence, which is not a simple coincidence of the embodiment, but the second great work of the Father in the iconomy of redemption. If the Son is the Father's image, the Spirit is the Son's image, Whose life unfolds into the Spirit. For the life in the Son, which Saint John talks about in the prologue of his Gospel, is nothing else but the presence of the Spirit inside the Word. According to this image, Christian life itself unfolds at the level of Spirit, based on a theanthropism of human life with the divine one, and the Church appears as an update of the Pentecost. On the Pentecost day, Christ the Ascended at the right hand of His Father, perfects His messianic role by descending on the Church the promised Holy Spirit. The Descent of the Holy Spirit at the Pentecost makes that Christ – the way, the truth and the true life embodies from the beginning into the recently created Church, where He finds the proper environment for the divine-human life communion. The Pentecost appears as the second act of the Father and not only as a consequence of the embodiment, which reveals God as One in being and three in hypostases. It is a community gift of the Spirit, who did not reveal Himself to just one person, but to all Apostles, who were gathered in one place, living the Spirit of communion together.¹⁵

In Orthodox theology, the Church is firstly founded on the Holy Trinity, for God trinity is the ground, the ultimate fundament of everything existing: 'The origins and the grounds of the Church are hidden from eternity into threefold God. <The Church is full of Trinity>, according to Origen, and the supreme aim of the Saints is to express the unity of the Holy Trinity itself. Triadology has ecclesiology and sacramental liturgy as natural consequences. This is why, in the Creeds, the Trinity is immediately followed by the Church and the Church is followed by baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity, through which one can enter the Church. In the Trinity it is virtually comprised everything that is lived as Christian truth in Orthodoxy'¹⁶.

The objective redemption, of every single person, takes place in close connection with the objective redemption carried out by Jesus Christ the Redeemer through his redeeming acts, through holding and

¹⁵ Dumitru Gheorghe Radu, 'The ecclesiological character of the Holy Sacraments and the problem of inter-communion, PhD thesis', in *Orthodoxy*, 1978, no. 1-2, p. 76.

¹⁶ Pr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Ecumenical movement and Christian unity at present* in **Orthodoxy**, Year XV, No. 3-4, July-December, 1963, p. 551

growing everybody into Christ, until the deification of the human nature through and into Him. Through and into Christ, all people are objectively and virtually redeemed, and through Christ also and into Christ, each person is subjectively redeemed. This entails the free union of each person with Him and the advancement within this union through personal work. Thus, Christ spreads in those who come to Him for all to enjoy the gifts that have been offered to them through His deified humanity. The place where this union with Christ occurs is the Church and consequently it can be understood as an extension of Christ into those who come to Him or as the body of those gathered into Christ. The Church is the sacramental body of Christ, whose head, permanently alive and active, is Christ Himself or, in other words, it is the body created by the Son of God embodied for people's redemption and sanctification.

By the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, the humanity He assumed by embodiment was saved. This redemption is communicated by Christ to all people through the Holy Spirit, in the Church understood as his sacramental body, in which the believers are the limbs of Christ (according to I *Corinthians* 12, 12-27) and they lead a life of communion according to the trinity communion model. This makes that the life and the communion relationship within the Holy Trinity be communicated to all those who believe in the Gospel of Christ and form the Church of God. This way, people attend the loving communion life of the Holy Trinity and they unite themselves with God through grace, namely they are redeemed. In a thorough way, Jesus Christ the Redeemer founds the Church on the Cross, as His body, attracting and assimilating it in His state of deep Sacrifice, and undoubtedly rendering it the power and the order to offer He Himself as Sacrifice to the Father in all eternity, through the Holy Spirit, but, at the same time, to sacrifice itself with Him. Therefore, through the Resurrection event, Christ's humanity is transfigured and it becomes completely transparent for the Spirit and radiant of the Spirit and of His uncreated heavenly energies, in those who attend this humanity, in the Church, through the Holy Sacraments. Trinitary origin and fundament, the Church and its Sacraments were born through the redeeming acts which culminated with Jesus Sacrifice on the Cross, and their power within the humanity lies in Christ's Resurrection, as means of pneumatological irradiation, transcendence and transfiguration into and through Christ. By the sending and personal remaining of the Holy Spirit in the world and in the humanity, at Pentecost, the Church is visibly founded in the history, as a concrete community of believers deeply united with God, through Christ into the Holy Spirit.

Theology does not sum up theoretical notions, it's more likely a way of life, a living of all those who receive the Eucharist and communicate among them and with God. Saint Liturgy is the experience that any believer can have in order to meet God and to communicate with Him. The Liturgy is opened to everybody

who wants to unite, by attendance, with God. Within it, all the redeeming events are reviewed and the tense moment of Christ's second coming is lived. The fact that all people are called to devotion and union with God in the Liturgy, reveals the character of the community gathered there, namely that of being in communion with God.

Through the sacrifice made on the holy shrines, it is shown that Christ, at His embodiment, assumes the human nature in order to sacrifice it into His Own Self and to ascend it to God. God manifests Himself in the human life due to the Embodiment of His Son, and the divine cult transmits this presence and His relentless work in the world, over the centuries. Christ personally works through the Holy Liturgy with a view to redeem us. The one who performs the Liturgy does not spring Christian life through his power, but through God's grace. The close connection between the church life and the confession of truth is presented in the divine cult.

According to Saint Ignatius Theophorus, Christ Sacrifice on the cross is the fundament of the Church and of the Eucharist, for the Church, as Body of God and, therefore, as alive and dynamic organ, celebrates the Sacrament of Eucharist, within which, by power of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ themselves. Also, the Eucharist is carried out by the Church and for the Church, in the sense that the entire ecclesial and liturgy community must receive the Lord's Body and Blood. By uniting themselves with Christ in the Eucharist, the believers, who already are God's Body as Church, receive God's Eucharistic Body, Christifying and deifying themselves, and by doing this they become even more limbs of Christ and, consequently, His Body. In other words, the Church makes the Eucharist, but the Eucharist makes the Church as well, for the Church is, by nature, Eucharistic community, and the Eucharist is, by nature, ecclesial, and this is why Saint Ignatius saw in the Redeemer's Body sacrifice the fundament of the Church and of the Eucharist.

In the Eucharist, Christ is revealed as the life and review of the entire creation¹⁷, that is why Saint Ignatius recommends the frequent celebration of the Eucharist, because through it God's glory is manifested and the devil's work is annulled. Through the Saint Eucharist the deep communion between Christ and the Church is carried out, given the fact that by the Eucharist Christ truly enters the psychosomatic being of the believers, to ascend them to the Father¹⁸. That is why, in the Eucharist the believers receive Christ's glorified way of being¹⁹, inaugurating the plenary

¹⁷ Ioannis Zizioulas, *The Creation as Eucharist*, Bucharest, Byzantine Publishing House, 1999, p. 123.

¹⁸ Dumitru Popescu, *Orthodoxy and contemporaneity*, Diogene Publishing House, Bucharest, 1996, p. 96.

¹⁹ PhD student Valer Bel, *Church and Eucharist*, in **Theological Studies**, second series, year XXXIV, no. 3-4, March-April, Bucharest, 1982, p. 238.

participation in eschaton to Christ's glory. Since there is an irreducibly interdependence between the Church and the Eucharist, by nature the Church is Eucharistic, and the Eucharist is ecclesiological²⁰, and that is why the Eucharist takes place in the Church and for the Church, understood as a gathering of the people of God. The Eucharist expresses the sacrament of the unity of the Church gathered into Christ and in the name of Christ.

In the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the Church is consolidated in its divine-human unity, carrying out the union of the believers into Christ and through Christ between them; therefore, it is a double union: a vertical and a horizontal one which is based on the hypostatic union of the two beings, in the Person of Christ²¹. All the members of the Church are comprised in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, just like in the Golgotha Sacrifice, Christ comprised in Himself the entire humanity²².

Although the Eucharist renders possible the union of the believers with Christ, nonetheless, the Eucharist does not become the highlight of the Church piety, instead of the Person of Christ, as it happens in Roman-Catholic theology²³, but, through the Eucharist, Christ descends in the Church and ascends the Church together with Him 'at the right hand of the Father'. The Church gathers to celebrate the Eucharist and has the believers receive Lord's Body and Blood, with a view to carry out a much deeper union with Christ and this is why the centre of the Church gathering is not the Eucharist, but the divine-human Person of Jesus Christ. In contrast with the Western Christianity, in the Orthodox Church, the Eucharistic elements have never been worshiped outside the specific frame of the Eucharistic Liturgy²⁴.

In the Eucharist, the church is thoroughly Church²⁵, because through the Eucharist, Christ Himself incessantly creates the Church, as his extended Body, maintaining its unity²⁶.

Participating at the Eucharistic gathering is an act of faith, because the Redeemer Himself stated about the Eucharist: '*this is My blood of the covenant*' (Mathew, 26, 28) which sets a

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 239.

²¹ His Eminence Univ. Prof. PhD Irineu Popa, *The mystical experience of the oriental Fathers*, vol. I, Anastasia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2005, p. 184.

²² Pr. PhD student Alexandru Joița, *The Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist – Sacrament of the sacrificial love*, in **Theological Studies**, second series, year XXVII, no. 9-10, November-December, Bucharest, 1975, p. 738.

²³ Dumitru Popescu, *Orthodoxy and contemporaneity*, p. 96.

²⁴ John Meyendorff, *Byzantine theology*, translated by Alexandru Stan, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Biblical and Missionary Institute of Romanian Orthodox Church, 1996, p. 272.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 277.

²⁶ Pr. prof. PhD Dumitru Popescu, *Jesus Christ Pantocrator*, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Biblical and Missionary Institute of Romanian Orthodox Church, 2005, p. 336.

profound connection between the dogma and the Eucharist, for the Law contains Lord's whole teachings to which the Christians adhere by faith.

The two aspects of the Holy Eucharist, of Sacrifice and of Sacrament, cannot be separated. Thus, as a Sacrifice it is a Sacrament, because when we give ourselves to God, we ascend and we receive His grace. Saint Cyril of Alexandria confesses this paradoxical state as follows: 'For it is said that it is sanctified what is brought to God'²⁷; 'The offering sanctifies the one who touches it. Because we near the holy ones just for receiving Saint Christ through unspoken, spiritual sacrifice'²⁸. In the same sense, the Sacrament is also an Offering, for the Lord's body which is being offered to us in a state of sacrifice inculcates on us this state through which we ascend and we move forward towards the resurrection.

Otherwise, all Church Sacraments do not only have a Sacramental character, but also a sacrificial one²⁹. For in all of them, Christ sacrifices Himself for us and He offers us together with Him to the Father.

In the Eucharist, Christ does not offer us just an irradiation of His sacrificial and resurrection status, but he offers His own body in this state. This is why, The Eucharist is the culmination of all the other Sacraments. The believers get ready for completely receiving Christ, at the beginning through the Sacrament of Baptism and Chrismation and then, through the Sacrament of Piety or by fasting and through a special avoidance of undue thoughts and deeds. Therefore, strengthened to receive Christ in the Eucharist, they can also receive the power of His offering in order to worship or offer their life to God and to the Church.

In the Saint Liturgy, Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man, with His fully deified and consequently eternal body, descends and spreads in those who receive Him to unite them with Him and to render them eternal. The Eucharist, as Sacrament and as bloodless Sacrifice, is a real act incessantly celebrated by Christ in the Church through the Holy Spirit. Christ's bloody sacrifice, as a divine and human act – because Jesus sacrificed Himself after his humanity, through His Body, but the subject is unique, it is the Subject of the heavenly Hypostasis, born out

²⁷ Saint Cyril of Alexandria, *The Worship of God in Spirit and in Truth*, X in Saint Cyril of Alexandria, *Writings*, First part, Translation, introduction and notes by Pr. prof. PhD Dumitru Stăniloae, Publishing House of the Biblical and Missionary Institute of Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 1991, p. 349

²⁸ Saint Cyril of Alexandria, *The Worship of God in Spirit and in Truth*, XII in Saint Cyril of Alexandria, *Writings*, First part, p. 439

²⁹ Paul Evdokimov, *Orthodoxy*, translated by His Eminence Prof. Irineu Popa, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Biblical and Missionary Institute of Romanian Orthodox Church, 1996, p. 131

of eternity from the Father – happened in a real historical time penetrated by the descending eternity of God’s Son. The Eucharist, as Christ’s bloodless sacrifice, is celebrated in a historical time, but it is transfigured and transformed into a present according to the ubiquitous image of God. In the Eucharist, actually, the past, the present and the future are united in a present which does not annul the corporality of the human hypostases, but it transfigures them through their union with Christ through the Holy Spirit. The Eucharistic anamnesis is not a chronologically or psychologically remembering, it is an ascension and a real and objective lifting of the Eucharistic elements and of the entire Eucharistic community to the meeting and union with Christ. Christ’s eternity descends through the Holy Spirit, and the temporality of the world ascends to receive the Eucharistic Christ and to attain eternity through Him. The remembrance of what Christ did for us – present in the Eucharistic anamnesis, not with memorial nor symbolic character – refers to the present character of the deeds that Christ incessantly celebrates in a real but bloodless way. The remembrance about the future, about the second coming is also connected to Christ’s coming who, in a real and objective way, brings the future into the present – understood as handsel and victuals for the eternal life – the Eucharist.

Therefore, the life of the Holy Trinity, directed towards the world by the Son of God embodiment, has descended in the inside of the created existence of the world, a new life, a heavenly-like reality, God’s Kingdom. This interior reality of our spiritual life can be found and lived in Him, Who has brought it into the world, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. *“If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come” (II Corinthians, 5,17). ‘I am making everything new..., look at God’s tent with people’ (Revelation 21, 5-6).* This tent, in which God lives with the people, is the Church. Through this new way of existence and unity structured according to the model of the Holy Trinity communion life, the Church becomes a visible trinitary theophany; it lives on earth according to a heavenly existence and it anticipates the eschatological unity of the creation renewed by God Who has become *‘All in all’ (I Corinthians 15,28).*