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## **Orthodox Worldview. The Eucharistic and Therapeutic Tradition of the Church**

**Abstract:** The confrontation of the therapeutic to the Eucharistic spirituality and of the therapeutic to Eucharistic worldview is not an isolated process. The Church continues to secularize. One of the reason for this, as well as for the crises in the monasticism, the clergy and the entire Church is precisely this confrontation. Only the return of the Eucharistic worldview, the resumption of the liturgical life and the communion among the Christians, would give the possibility to the Church to carry out its duties. And that would be just the beginning. They themselves can not change the Church reality, but they are the most important steps that we should do... If we believe that the Eucharist is the foundation of the Church.

**Key words:** therapeutic tradition, liturgical life, spirituality, monasticism, Communion.

What the orthodox worldview is? Do we have an orthodox worldview ourselves? How the orthodox Christian "looks" at the world – as a creation of God or as a society of sinners, which he must resist? Such questions and their answers determine the content of the theme of the orthodox worldview. The aim of this exploration is to follow the shaping of the orthodox worldview, its functions, content, development through the ages and contemporary state on the basis of the tradition of the Holy Fathers and the liturgical life of the Church.

The creation of the world is described in the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of the book of Genesis. The holy prophet Moses writes that the world is created gorgeous by God and every creation in it is nice, beautiful, splendid and "very good" (καλά λίαν): "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31).

The commentaries of the Holy Fathers portray the man as "a crown of creation".<sup>1</sup> He is created in the image and likeness of God and some of the Fathers say that the image of God in man includes not only the soul, but also the body. Thus they – the human soul and body, represent the beauty of God's creation in the utmost degree. They represent the beauty and the harmony, that reign in the divine life within the Most Holy Trinity.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. St. John Chrysostom, *Interpretation of Genesis*, 3, 2 PG 54, 593; St. Gregory Theologian, *Oration* 45, 7 PG 36, 269.

The ancestral sin of Adam and Eve in Paradise is namely a denial of this beauty. Their fall leads to a loss of the beauty of the man, to an alienation from God and to a darkening of the God's image in him. The first men's communion with God in Paradise was a premise for their sanctification and holiness, needed to become as wonderful as the Creator Himself. But the interruption of the communion with God, the alienation from Him brings a loss of the good and the beauty and infiltration of the passions into the man. He realizes that he is naked, lacking the beauty and the good, lacking the God's glory and harmony. That's why God dressed him in "coats of skin" (Gen. 3:21), which, according to the interpretations of Origen, St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Maxim Confessor represent the passions in the man.

The Incarnation of the Logos is fulfilment of God's providence – the man has to become an inheritor of the Kingdom of God and His blessings. In Lord Jesus Christ there is unity of the both natures – divine and human. All humanity is adopted in the hypostasis of God the Word. Everybody is called to participate in the divine life and to be "sons of God". This happens in the life of the Christians in the Church. The baptism vests us with the God's glory, beauty, purity and incorruption. It engrafts us into the Body of Christ and establishes the new Life in us. The Eucharist and all mysteries of the Church bring Christians together with Christ, making them participants of the coming Kingdom of glory and transforming them into holy and righteous persons as Christ Himself is.

In the life of the Christian Church there are two basic preconditions that had and have the most important influence over its development. These are firstly the Eucharistic tradition of the Church and secondly the monastic – ascetical tradition.

A pivot of the liturgical and spiritual life of the Body of the Church is the Eucharist. St. Paul talks about it in the eleventh chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians: the communion with Christ in the Eucharist will proclaim the Christ's death "till He comes"<sup>2</sup>. This is the coming Kingdom of God, the life in the age to come, that begins with "the braking of the bread" and the participation in the Body and the Blood of Christ. That's why the Eucharist also has clearly expressed eschatological perspectives.

The rest of the New Testament texts, where the Eucharist is mentioned (John 6; Luke 22; Acts 22) are not of the less importance concerning the dogmatic teaching of the Church about the Eucharist. "The bread" and "the wine" that Christians eat, are "the life of the world" (John 6:51). The Eucharist holds the fullness of the faith. It is the Mystery of the Church, that is accomplished by "all together" and that never had stopped to be accomplishing in the Church body.<sup>3</sup> In the early Christians texts, as Didache and the writings of the Holy Fathers from 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> century for example, these ideas continue to develop. St. Ignatius of Antioch (+107) represents the Eucharistic community as follows: all together gathered at one place around their own bishop for praying and offering the Eucharistic sacrifice.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. 1Cor. 11:26.

<sup>3</sup> Acts. 2:42.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to Smyrneans; Epistle to the Philadelphians*.

St. Irineus of Lion (+202) lays special emphasis on the doctrinal character of the Eucharist. The Eucharist contains the essence of the orthodox faith:

Our faith is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our faith. For we offer to God His own, announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and Spirit. For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two elements, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection<sup>5</sup>.

In the Communion with Christ the faithful participate in the incorrupt life of His Resurrection, this is a beginning of the life in the age to come, sharing the salvation given to us by the Redeemer. So, in the Eucharist we have the most direct expression and experience of the Christian faith – it is a token of the Church of Christ. Therefore “let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is administered either by the bishop, or by one to whom he has entrusted it.”<sup>6</sup>

The Holy Fathers after the 3<sup>rd</sup> century continue to describe the Eucharist as a central event in the parish, underlining its eschatological and soteriological character. In the Holy Communion the faithful receive Christ for unity among themselves and with Him, and for “eternal life”.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> century there are exceptional church- and worldwide events. Christianity is no longer persecuted religion. St. Constantine the Great’s decree in Mediolanum (313) brings equal rights to Christianity and generally acknowledged religions in the Roman Empire. Gradually many gentiles convert to Christianity, but not all of them do this by faith in the Resurrected Christ, but because of self-interest since Christianity becomes to prevail as a state religion in the Roman Empire. Large quantities of heathens enter the Church, but they do not want to deny easily their traditional faith in “gods”, their traditions, culture, customs. All this reflects negatively on the spiritual and moral life of Christians and this is one of the main reasons for the emergence of monasticism. Some of the Christians, who wants to live pure and holy life, according to the Christ’s commandments, prefer to seclude in distant places and thus to serve God away from “this world”. This way the anachoretism appears and it is associated with the name of St. Anthony the Great (+356). In the 4<sup>th</sup> century the anachoretism develops extremely fast, but threats to form itself as independent movement outside the Church. St. Basil the Great helps to overcome this danger, drawing up rules and statutes for the monks of the East and organizes their lives in the Church.<sup>7</sup> Such is the role of St. Benedict of Nursia in the West and to some extent of St. John Cassian the Roman. Thus the coenobian monasticism is born.

During the first centuries the faithful in the Church live and unite all around the Eucharist. It is that defines their lives, faith, worldview, culture, customs, it cultivates them in Christ. The emergence of monasticism, despite its undoubted

<sup>5</sup> Irineus of Lion, *Against heresies* 4, 18, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to Smyrneans*, 8.

<sup>7</sup> In this respect, the bishops of Alexandria have great merits.

high spiritual and moral ideal, arises certain antagonism with the Eucharistic tradition of the Church. Initially it appears deliberately to preserve what is ownership of the entire Church in the individuals – holiness, purity and life in Christ. But speaking through the prism of the past centuries, too often it manifests itself as independent, even we may say as “a church in the Church”.

The history of the Church and its life are rich of examples illustrating that the monasticism has a strong influence on our faith. We say that the Church defines the Christian faith, but often its doctrinal function is seized by the monasticism. How the monastic tradition shifts the Eucharistic tradition of the Church? The worldview of the Orthodox Christians, their faith, life, culture, education and life in Christ are formed under the influence and impact of monastic – ascetical tradition or under the Eucharistic tradition of the Church? Actually, is there really antagonism between the two main Church traditions? Unfortunately, the truth is that it existed and probably still exists in certain aspects. And we could say that monasticism does not affect only on the view, education and spirituality of the faithful, but also on the liturgical life, on the Eucharist itself, on the whole Church. So when one wants to lead a full Christian life, he goes in “the lazarette of the souls”, but this lazarette is not as the Church was once with her mystery life, but this is the monastery, where the souls are treated from the passions.<sup>8</sup>

What is the meaning or the purpose of the human life? What is the salvation of man? Why the Word of God became flesh? Why Christ suffered for us? Why He rose? What are the functions and the purpose of the Church? Whether the purpose of the incarnation of the Word, the meaning of the death and the resurrection of Christ is the liberation of man from the sin and the passions and his unity with the Logos? Whether he is saved, struggling with the flesh and passions, or the salvation is granted and he participates in the coming Kingdom of glory as “the anointed” – Christian by the mystery life of the Church? He participates as a member of Christ’s body, one of the people of God, which has gathered all together, all in one place, to pray, commune and live in and with Christ, who is among them as “a Head of the body” (Ephes. 1:22–23). He is the Archpriest and the Sacrifice, the Offerer and the Offered.<sup>9</sup> The question is not only in the different interpretations of the salvation, but in the different worldview and spirituality, which they presented<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Here, by no means, I do not want to put a negative significance of monasticism. On the contrary – it has its undeniable values, merit and priorities that no one can obliterate. My position is only in terms of the Eucharistic tradition of the Church and in terms of how it is possible to overcome the consequences of antagonism between the two traditions. For Orthodox Serbia and Greece are examples of how this antagonism is overcome, if not entirely, at least to some extent. The true meaning of monasticism is yet to rediscover...

<sup>9</sup> The Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom – the priest prayer during the Cherubims hymn.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. the article of Βασιλειάδη, Π. *Ευχαριστιακή και θεραπευτική πνευματικότητα, Επιστημονική Επετηρίς της Θεολογικής Σχολής του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών*, Αθήνα; 3 (1993–1994) 125–147, where the author in details compares the both types of spirituality: the Eucharistic and therapeutic. The therapeutic or the healing spirituality is inherent to the monastic – ascetical tradition.

The beginning of the problem is placed in the second century by the Alexandrian school of theology and associates mainly with the names of two of its most famous representatives – Origen and Clement of Alexandria. As John Zizioulas, Metropolitan of Pergamon, says: the monastic and ascetical tradition, counting on the theological prerequisites of the Origen's teaching, poses “a new base of the ecclesiology”<sup>11</sup>. Clement of Alexandria and Origen develop an ecclesiology, which is heavily influenced by the ancient Greek philosophy and mostly by Platonism. According to them, the Church realizes its identity in the world of ideas, in the Word of God, Who unites in Himself all creatures, and the aim of the souls is the unity with the Word of God. In the beginning the world was created perfect. The Church also has been perfect. Therefore, according to the Alexandrian authors from the third century, the Church must be such like she was in its original condition. She loses its eschatological essence and no longer is an image of the eschaton but image of the initial processes, of the original nature of things.

It is not speaking about one historical community, but of a perfect state of the world, the salvation is not a realization of life in the age to come, the new creature in the new society, but unity of the soul with the Logos and effort to purify all passions that obstruct this unity. The Eucharist ceases to be a way of being, of living, sanctified by the transfigured light and power of the coming Kingdom of glory, and turns into a “religious feeling” or a means of individual salvation<sup>12</sup>. The aim is retrieval of the original state of things, unity of the soul with the Logos, an apokatastasis of everything.

Because of the condemnation of Origen's views concerning the pre-existence of the souls and the apokatastasis on the Fifth ecumenical Council in 553, his doctrine was not accepted by the Christian theology, but his influence is noticed very long.

Origen has an extraordinary large contribution to the development of Christian theology of the East. Many Church Fathers and writers knew his works very well, used them and respected personality and theology of Origen. Some of them were his students and followers.

Firstly – the cappadocian Fathers. It is not accidental that one of them – St. Gregory of Nyssa develops the Origen's teaching of apokatastasis. During their solitude on the bank of river Pontus, St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Theologian study the writings of Origen. The idea that monasticism is “an angelic life” and “a life in repentance” comes from his theology. The teaching of the struggle with passions and purification of the soul later becomes fundamental in the theology of monasticism.

Evagrius (+399), disciple and follower of Origen, develops a detailed ascetical doctrine about the struggle with passions. He draws up the scheme for the eight main passions of man and the struggle with them. Evagrius is the first that

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Zizioulas, I., *Temі di ecclesiologia ortodossa*, Roma, 2001 (datilografia), 69; Ζιζιούλα, Ι., *Θέματα εκκλησιολογίας*, Θεσσαλονίκη, 1991.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Ζηζιούλα, Ι., “Ευχαριστία και βασιλεία του Θεού”, *Σύναξη* 51, 1995, 97.

establishes the definition of “the noetic prayer”, which later is used by many of the Fathers and mainly by the hesychasts.

After Evagrius, on the West St. John Cassian and St. Gregory the Great develop further the scheme for the eight main passions. This classification is also in the writings of almost all ascetical authors on the East. The aim of the life is purification of the passions and achievement of impassiveness – “*apathia*”. It makes possible the mystical union of the soul with God and the reestablishment of the mind with God.

Undoubtedly the asceticism is necessary for the spiritual life of the orthodox Christian, but it is wrong if it turns to an end in itself, when it becomes a priority and loses its eschatological purpose. This way the very essence of ecclesiology is changed: from Eucharistic – eschatological it turns into ascetical. The spirituality is also changed – the man does not experience his salvation in the Church as Eucharist, as a thanksgiving and participation in the Holy Mysteries, but rather as purification of the passions, aiming union with God, where the Eucharist is just a subsidiary means. This way there is an impact on the orthodox worldview, on the theology, on the Eucharistic service itself, on the Church canons, on the structure of the Church itself.

The dispute between St. Augustine and Pelagius in the 5<sup>th</sup> century about the God’s grace and man’s freedom in the act of salvation is emblematical. Being under the influence of the eastern ascetical tradition Pelagius emphasizes on the contribution of man in the act of salvation in contrast to the Bishop of Hippo, who, on the basis of his personal experience stresses on the Divine in the process of the salvation of the man. Several decades later, Prosper of Aquitaine accuses St. John Cassian in wrong opinions concerning the doctrine of grace, since he attaches great importance to the deeds and efforts of man in the act of salvation. But the teaching of the most Eastern Church Fathers is similar: St. Macarius of Egypt, St. John Chrysostom, St. Gregory Theologian, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. John Damascene... And in a way with wonder and bitterness the late father John Romanides notices that Roman Catholic theologians see “a hidden Pelagianism” everywhere in the Eastern Fathers.<sup>13</sup>

Of course such statements of the Roman Catholic theology are too far-fetched, but it is true that majority of the Eastern Church Fathers attach importance to the human deeds in the act of salvation. We could say this is a fact because of the influence of Origenism and Platonism, which have impact on the orthodox asceticism even to these days. The situation in the realm of the worship, hymnography and the Church poetry is the same. In the last one, the model of holiness is the ascetic. However in the Holy Eucharist the Incarnated Logos is the prototype.

The liturgical life of the Church is very dynamic throughout the centuries. With the recognition of the Christianity in the 4<sup>th</sup> century in the Roman Empire, it begins to develop also under the influence of the monastic tradition of the Church. It is a fact, especially after the victory over iconoclasm in the 8<sup>th</sup> century,

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Ρωμανίδη, Ι. *Το προπατορικόν αμάρτιμα*, Θεσσαλονίκη, 1970, 27.



when the monasticism becomes a dominant factor in the all areas of the life of the Church.<sup>14</sup> Different services from the daily worship cycle appear – Midnight Service, Matins, Hours, Typika, Vespers, Great and Small Compline. They all respond to the vital need of permanent common prayer. Despite these services are compiled by representatives of the ascetical tradition and their function originally responds to the monastery conditions, they have broad acceptance in the parish churches. Gradually the Eucharist loses its original meaning. It turns from a common assembly of the people of God, from a Mystery of Christian love and unity, from a Feast of Christian joy into individual act and “manifestation of personal piety”. One takes Holy Communion for sanctification and victory over the passions and this happens depending on his spiritual life, but not more frequent than several times in a year. The communion of the Church with Christ in the Eucharist is almost lost, if we don’t count the well-known “four times in a year”, when the faithful traditionally take Holy Communion.

The services from the daily worshipping cycle are an attempt to fill this vacancy, despite in the parish practice they have no equivalent application. The reasons for the appearance of the pre-Paschal fast are analogical – the Great Lent originally appears among the monks for purification of the passions, but later it is accepted as preparation for taking the Holy Body and Blood of Christ, as the contemporary practice is. This fast is introduced first among the monastic communities in the Nitria desert and later in the different monastic communities in Egypt. The hymns from the Lenten period are extremely beautiful and have rich contents. Of course, they reflect the main purpose of the Christians (respectively of the monks, because most of the hymnographers are monks) – to purify the passions and to meet “with dignity” the Resurrection of Christ.

In fact, there is an intertwining of the both traditions – the ascetical and the Eucharistic and the last one gradually loses its dominating significance. It is evident everywhere in the liturgical texts of the Church.<sup>15</sup>

The contemporary problems about the participation of the laity in the Eucharist – how and how often, the relation between the Holy Communion and the confession and the fast – are not less of result from the antagonism between the both traditions, than of a lack of correct view and specific theological knowledge. Not taking Communion, the faithful do not participate in the Eucharist, in the coming Kingdom of glory and turn themselves in silent witnesses to actions with unclear and symbolical character. All prayers and sacred acts during the Liturgy prepare the faithful for receiving the Holy Body and Blood of Christ, for union with Him and with His body – the Church. Loosing their real meaning, we try either not to notice them, relying on the church-Slavonic language, either not to

<sup>14</sup> In the parish churches till the 10<sup>th</sup> century a non-monastic typicon is used and the services are shorter.

<sup>15</sup> What are such “vain and soul-harming worldly goods”, that we ask God to save us? (*Prayer book*, A prayer in Sunday, Sofia, 1991, 69–70). God created everything good in this world. Christians should not seek to avoid the “earthly goods” in the world in which they live, but to “christinize” it, let’s use this expression of fr. Justin Popovich.

pronounce these yet “secret prayers”, once being said on behalf of the whole People of God, because everybody have been taking Holy Communion.

The interpretations of the Holy Liturgy after the 4<sup>th</sup> century testify about the mystical symbolism, which tries to substitute the real self-consciousness of the Church. Something that once had a real meaning, but gradually was lost, now is substituted by mystical symbols, which despite their grand beauty, remains only symbols. This is the case with the Little and the Great Entrance. The solemn processions of the whole God’s people of old that entered the temple, later became a symbolic passage of the priest with the Gospel through the central part of the church, while the faithful simply observe. During the Great Entrance the people no longer participate in the transfer of gifts to the altar, as the practice was until the Byzantine era. “The Kiss of the peace”<sup>16</sup> that was one of the most important parts of the Liturgy for its doctrinal character, expressing the unity and love of the Christians, today lost its meaning to the whole Church and remains in the practice of the clergy only in concelebrations.

The dependency of the Eucharistic tradition under the ascetical one is seen even in the canons of the Church. On the one hand, they stimulate the communion of Christians among them and penalize unnecessary avoidance of communion with Christ, but on the other hand, there are cases that testify for the impact of ascetical tradition.

The twelfth canon of the Council in Trullo (691) announces the decision of the Church that the bishop must be celibate. In the later years, the practice to elect bishop exclusively from among the monks is imposed. Seventeenth canon of First-second council in Constantinople (861) prohibits bishops to leave the ministry and to return to the monastic life, because the monasticism is “a life in repentance”. According to the interpretations of some canonists it means in a sense even a prohibition for ordination of monks in the rank of bishops, as if it is improper to leave the bishopric because of “the life in repentance”, it should not be right to leave “the life in repentance” because of the bishopric. Till the Council in Trullo the Church accepts married episcopate because according to the ancient monastic practice, the main activity of the monk is the prayer and the contemplation. So the Rule of St. Pahomiy the Great prevents the consecration of monks in the Holy Orders. With the entering of monasticism in the world this becomes possible and has its justification, purpose and priority. This is not secularization of monasticism but denial of the world and its history, the denial of its priesthood, its beauty and the beauty in the creation. Such worldview is secularized and it may be confessed by monks and by laity. And vice versa – the true monastic theology does not deny the priority of the Eucharist.

In this respect the contribution of St. Maxim the Confessor is remarkable. He balances the two main traditions of the Church – the Eucharistic and the ascetical. He makes *sui generis* synthesis between the both approaches in the

<sup>16</sup> In the early Church, Christians have given brotherly kiss following the command of Christ (Matt. 5:23–24). When the priest says: “Let us love one another” everybody have greeted each other with “the kiss of the peace”.



ecclesiology. The structure of the Church is the Eucharist – this is an eschatological community that participates in the coming Kingdom of glory. The purification of passions is necessary but the asceticism is not the ultimate goal of the Church. This goal is the Eucharistic communion with God and the transfiguration of all creation. The approach of St. Maxim the Confessor is the only right for our current situation<sup>17</sup>. He avoids the confrontation between the ascetical and the Eucharistic tradition, between the therapeutic and Eucharistic spirituality, as the Orthodox theology avoids it, despite the influence of scholasticism on it during the past century until today. If we have an Orthodox worldview, using the synthesis of St. Maxim the Confessor, it becomes completely real and possible to develop an Eucharistic spirituality. Then there is no sense to put the issue of the frequent communion of the faithful or – whether to fast before communion and how to do it; how often and when to confess before communion? The problem is that we do not have this “Eucharistic spirituality”, because we do not live with the Eucharist.

Therefore the worldview of the modern Orthodox Christian, who “lives” in the Church, is formed under the influence of the lawyerment, juridism and legalism in the religion, not of the life in Christ and of Christ Himself. This is rather a customary religion than a faith in Christ. Placing the confession as obligatory phase, which must be passed every time we receive Communion, today we are about to turn the repentance into psychoanalysis<sup>18</sup>. We plunge into the struggle with the passions, we act with blessings, we carry out obediences, but we do not know the basis of the Christian faith and spirituality: we do not know what the Eucharist is, what is repentance, what is the meaning of Christ’s coming to earth and the meaning of His Gospel, we do not know what the joy is, the Christian joy... Does

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Zizioula, I., *op. cit.*, 72.

<sup>18</sup> Both in Bulgaria and abroad there are enough studies illustrating the relationship between the psychoanalysis and confession. Cf. Стефанова, С., “Изповедта като свършена форма на психоанализа”, *ДК* 4, 1999, 24–31. Falling into analysis of the sin and our spiritual state, looking for the sin in each action, imperceptibly we reach to psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, but not to confession. The confession not only takes off the sin, but also unites with the Church. However, the modern rite of the confession is too dependent on scholastic influence, example of which is the famous “absolution prayer”: “Lord and our God... and I, the sinful priest, with the grace given to me by God, forgive you...” In the Orthodox confession the sin is forgiven, the person reconciles with God and the Church, the sin is wiped out, deleted by the reconciliation with God and the communion with Him in the Church. In the first centuries there was a common confession in front of the whole community. Only the grievous sins were confessed, those ones that hinder the unity of Christians with God and the Church. Therefore, the acceptance back into the Church and the remission of the sin was made by the bishop and the entire community. Under the influence of the monastic tradition the very thoughts begin to be confessed. It is completely natural the individual confession to be done that way by those who best understand the spiritual struggle. Therefore, after the Council in Trullo (691) the monasticism gets precedence over the married clergy in carrying out the confession. Since then, probably starts the merger of confession and repentance that continues to this day. G. Mandzarides writes: “It is good to distinguish the confession as an internal Church matter that the faithful are called to perform regularly for spiritual support of repentance, which is only in exceptional cases for those who sin seriously and thus separated from Church.” Μαντζαρίδη, Γ., *Χριστιανική ηθική*, Θεσσαλονίκη, 1981, 155.

to be a Christian means to be “serious” and the more serious, the more spiritual?<sup>19</sup> Does it mean to have no joy? Why and what then Christ preached? – The Gospel, the joyful news for the coming Kingdom of God.<sup>20</sup> That’s why St. Luke testifies about the early Church that the Eucharist was served with “gladness of heart”<sup>21</sup>.

Christianity is the religion of love and joy. And not just the joy of salvation, but the salvation that takes place in the Church as a joy. A joy of the communion with Christ, of the life in Christ and with Christ that already begun and becomes a Pascha, as the Pascha is infinite in “the endless Day”, in “the Kingdom which will not end”.

It means “to live the salvation” and it is lived as joy. That’s why St. Serafim of Sarov greeted all Christians, regardless the period of time, with the words: “Christ is risen, my joy.” In the conversation with Motivilov, the peace, the warmth and the joy are the signs that Motivilov describes in the transfiguration of the both in the Spirit. St. Paul also puts the joy as a gift of the Spirit: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”<sup>22</sup> Father Alexander Shmeman<sup>23</sup> says: “The beginning of the pseudo-religion is inability to have joy, it is just a denial of joy. But the joy is so important because it is undoubtedly a result of God’s presence. It is impossible to know that God is and not to be glad. And only in relation with the joy the fear of God, and repentance, and humility are right, true and fruitful. Out of that joy they easily become “demonical” – a perversion of the depth of the religious experience. Religion of fear, religion of pseudo-humility. Religion of the guilt: all this is seduction, all this is “prelest”. But why it is not powerful only in the world, but also in the Church? Why among the religious people the joy is always in doubt? Firstly, the most important thing, the source of all is: “And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord: it shall rejoice in his salvation.”<sup>24</sup> The fear of sin does not save from the sin. The joy in the Lord saves... The feeling of guilt and the moralism does not “set free” us from the world and its lures. The joy is the foundation of the freedom, in which we are called to “stand fast” (Gal. 5:1).<sup>25</sup>

Does the joy permitted in the asceticism or not? Or in the monasticism, which is “a life in repentance”? Of course it is, even some Fathers from the Holy Mountain say that “the monkhood is a joy”, “it is Pascha”, “infinite gladness”. This joy is inherent to the people who live in the Church and have life in Christ. This life is “joy, light, gaiety, resurrection. This is the life of the Church, the life of the Gos-

<sup>19</sup> Christ wants us to become like children (see Matt. 18:3) Not only in terms of children’s gentleness, purity, humility, innocence and kindness but of the inherent to the children simplicity, sincerity and joy.

<sup>20</sup> Matt. 4:23: “κηρύσσων το ευαγγέλιον της βασιλείας”.

<sup>21</sup> Acts 2:46: “ἔχοντες χάριν”.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Gal. 5:22.

<sup>23</sup> Concerning the theological views of fr. Alexander Shmeman cf. Σταμούλης, Χ., *Καλλός το αγίον*, Θεσσαλονίκη, 2004.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Ps. 34:9.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Шмеман, А.Л., *Дневники*, М. 2005, 297–298.

pel, the Kingdom of God”.<sup>26</sup> This is the joy of the Lord, that lasts forever, in which there is an eternal joy. This is the joy of the Lord, which provides a secure peace, a peaceful delight and the most enjoyably happiness; the all-blessed joy that exceeds any joy. Christ is pleased to sow the joy, to enrich with joy those who believe in Him.<sup>27</sup>

The Orthodox asceticism does not deny the joy, does not deny the aesthetics and the beauty in the divine creation, although there are rigorists and “therapons”<sup>28</sup> in the Church. When the ascetic closes his ears, eyes, feelings and struggles with them, he protects himself from the negative impact of the surrounding world, but does not deny the beauty of the creation. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork”, says St. Prophet David.<sup>29</sup> In the marvelous creation of God St. Augustine of Hippo, St. Gregory Theologian and St. John Damascus see confirmation of the God’s existence, beauty, glory and providence.

All things around us, says Father Porphyrios Kavsokalivit<sup>30</sup>, are droplets of God’s love – the animate and the inanimate, plants and animals and birds, the mountains, the sea, the sunset and the starry sky. These are the small expressions of love by which we reach the great Love – Christ. The flowers, for example, have their own talent, they teach us with their fragrance, with their greatness. They tell us about God’s love. They scatter their fragrance and beauty to the righteous and unrighteous. To become a Christian, the man must have a poetic soul, must become a poet. Christ does not want “rough” souls close to Himself. Only when the Christian loves he is a poet and lives in the poetry. The poetic souls are able to accept love, lay it in their hearts, embrace it and feel it deeply. Take advantage of the beautiful moments. The beautiful moments draw the soul out to prayer, make it sensitive, noble, poetic. Wake up in the morning to see the king – the sun going in its purple garment from the high seas... Rejoy to everything. Everything enriches us and leads us to greater Love, everything leads us to Christ.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Γέροντος Πορφυρίου Καυσοκαλυβίτου, *Βίος και Λόγοι*, Χανιά, 2003, 205.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem.*, 218.

<sup>28</sup> Father Therapont – literary hero of F. Dostoevski’s novel “The Brothers Karamazov”.

<sup>29</sup> Ps. 18:1.

<sup>30</sup> Father Porphyrios Kavsokalivit (+1991) one of the most famous modern elders in Greece. It is remarkable that Father Porphyrios have no completed even first class, but everything he says is from his experience in Christ.

<sup>31</sup> Вж. Γέροντος Πορφυρίου Καυσοκαλυβίτου, *Βίος και Λόγοι*, Χανιά, 2003, 461–462. The same theological idea is contained in one of the stories of the famous Greek writer Nikos Gabriel Pendzikis (1993), as well as of Bojidara Karachomakova “Why the sun rises: “I rise to heat you with my rays – whispered the sun. – To wake up the birds to sing you, to rush the wind who fondles you with the breath of thousands flowers, to fill the clouds with water and pour upon the fields, that give you your bread, and then to spread my rainbow as a fan, so you see its beauty. I rise to shine you all day while you walk, work or rest, and then I burst into a fiery sunset and crimson the sky in the color of love. And when I low down behind the horizon, I illumine the moon to light your night on the background of thousands stars in the sky... and tomorrow I will rise again for you, I hope you feel that someone loves you and decorates your hair with blooming hope, sprinkles you with rain of joy, fills you up with faith and vests you with his joy as a dress... These are the thousands miracles around you, which you call “ordi-

The confrontation of the therapeutic to the Eucharistic spirituality and of the therapeutic to Eucharistic worldview is not an isolated process. The Church continues to secularize. One of the reason for this, as well as for the crises in the monasticism, the clergy and the entire Church is precisely this confrontation. A few decades ago Nikos Gabriel Pendzikis<sup>32</sup> successfully represented the worldview and “traditions” completed by Christians as the walls of our fathers house that should be demolished if we want to reveal the Church under them.<sup>33</sup> Only the return of the Eucharistic worldview, the resumption of the liturgical life and the communion among the Christians, would give the possibility to the Church to carry out its duties. And that would be just the beginning. They themselves can not change the Church reality, but they are the most important steps that we should do... If we believe that the Eucharist is the foundation of the Church.

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nary things” but are closing your eyes to them... and still I will rise tomorrow, I hope you will see them... Sun’s whisper fade away and there was silence. I remained dumb, peering at the picture of this extraordinary sunrise over this extraordinary day. And there behind the beaming sun, I saw the loving eyes, the warm smile and golden curls of the One, Who loved us so much that He created the endless wonders for us – The Creator of the universe.” It is amazing how successfully Bojidara Karachomakova was able to deliver the profound theological truths for all readers, regardless of “the age” in Christ.

<sup>32</sup> Ν. Γ. Πεντζίκης (1908–1993) ‘is the most significant writer in Greek literature.’ Translated in many languages. He is famous with his church position that is expressed in his works. Thoroughly examines the works of St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain. In 1971 is awarded by the Ecumenical patriarch with the honor “great arhont of the Church” because of his huge contribution to the Orthodox Church.

<sup>33</sup> Вж. Πεντζίκη, Ν. Γ. *Ο πεθαμένος και η ανάσταση*, Αθήνα, 1982, 153.

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## **Православни светоназор. Евхаристијско и терапевтско предање Цркве**

Супротстављање терапевтске и евхаристијске духовности и таквих погледа на свет нису изоловани процеси и могу да се прате се кроз читаву историју Цркве. Представљајући такве конфронтације кроз векове на пољима литургијског живота, богословља, канонског права и савремених изазова, аутор представља закључке, којима позива на повратак на евхаристијско виђење живота, који је холистички као што је свеобухватна Црква, чији је темељ управо Евхаристија.