

**UNIVERSITY “OVIDIUS” OF CONSTANȚA
Faculty of Orthodox Theology**

DOCTORAL THESIS

SUMMARY

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CONSTANȚA

2014

Canonical rules and regulations on the cult of the Orthodox Church

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Keywords:

The Cult of the Church, the sanctifying power of the Church, canonical regulations, canonical rules

In the Church life, and, especially, in Orthodox Churches, the cult plays an important role, being the first factor that, "day by day, moment by moment", promotes "the spiritual life of the masses of church-goers"¹. By its beauty, richness, theology, poetry, music and variety, the cult of the Church has the gift and power to influence the human soul; it has the gift to edify, to instruct and to lead the church-goers towards salvation. Consequently, the Christian cult brings "a decisive contribution"² to the salvation of church-goers.

The theme of this doctoral thesis tries to respond to several pressing current problems, as there are many deviations from the statutes and rules of the Church, especially during the public divine worship.

For the statement and assessment of the rules and regulations of the Church regarding its Cult, I used both the canonical Orthodox doctrine, as well as the documentary information provided by the (canonical, liturgical, biblical and historical) literature, already illustrated by famous writers, in the field of Orthodox Theology, in Romanian language.

In developing this doctoral thesis, I used both the canon law text, accompanied by the comments of the chief canonists of the Orthodox Church, and a rich literature, resulting in a bibliography that comprises numerous studies, manuals, treatises, dictionaries etc. These studies and papers also include the latest published works, including the current year, i.e. 2014.

This paper is divided into eight chapters, preceded by an Introduction and followed by Conclusions.

In the Introduction, in order to familiarize the reader with the terms used in this doctoral thesis, I made some notional clarifications; afterwards, I presented the reasons that led me to propose this theme and to treat it in the 300 pages of this work. These motivations reveal, indirectly, the actuality of the topic analyzed.

Also, in order to familiarize the reader with the topic of this Ph.D. thesis, I presented the structure of my work and the method of my scientific research, revealing, at the same time, the motivation that led me to approach this subject, and, of course, the critical assessment of the documentary material and literature.

In addition, in the Introduction, I presented the references regarding the works that I have studied and the bibliography.

In the first chapter of my thesis, entitled "The liturgical (public) cult in the Ante-Nicene era", I explained how Church Cult developed in the first centuries of the Christian Church, until the Edict of Milan (313).

¹ S. Cândeа, *Cultul divin și pastorală creștină factori de promovare a vieții religioase în ortodoxie*, în BOR, LXXXV (1967), nr. 11-12, p. 1194.

² Ibidem.

The first section of this chapter entitled "The Holy Scripture, foundation of the liturgical and canonical rules of the Primary Church", I firstly emphasized that the Holy Scripture is the first source of Canon Law, since it expresses "the will of its divine founder", i.e. of Jesus Christ.

In the canonical Orthodox doctrine, we distinguish between the principles stated by Jesus Christ and the Apostles' "prescriptions". Thus, the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) are the main sources of Canon Law, as they comprise the most important teachings that Jesus Christ has left to the Church; the other canonical books of the New Testament include the Apostles' deeds and teachings and they are the secondary sources of canon Law.

The books of the Old Testament are also an important basis of the canonical and liturgical rules and regulations of the Church. Jesus Christ Himself, who expressly stated that He did not come to destroy the old law, but to fulfill it (Mt. 5, 17), already affirmed the importance of the Old Testament writings. In his turn, the Apostle Paul wrote that the Old Testament Law is "holy and righteous and good" (Rm. 7, 12), that it is a "pedagogue to Christ" (Gal. 3, 24) and the "shadow of future goods" (Evr. 10, 1).

In addition, regarding the writings of the Old Testament, I have shown that not all the prescriptions of the Mosaic Law are valid in the Christian Church (see Deeds 15, 6, 29).

The liturgical year and its subdivisions are among the primary elements of the Christian cult, in the Old Testament.

In the second subchapter, entitled "The canonical custom, foundation of the liturgical rules of the Church in the Ante-Nicene era", I firstly stated that, along with the canonical, religious or positive moral rules, the Church was led by certain rules set the canonical custom, as evident from the provisions of canons 6 and 7 of the First Ecumenical Council (Nicaea, 325), which establishes the custom as a source of law, recognizing its power of law.

In order to become a source of secular law, the custom must meet the following requirements: be old; be applied continuously for a long time; be (originally) unwritten; a large category of people from a certain area should have a strong attachment to it; be known to the legislator and not contrary to the written law". In addition to these conditions, in order to become a source of canon law, the custom must meet two specific conditions: a) to be in accordance with the teachings of the faith and with the religious and moral standards of the Church (it should not contain teachings unknown or contrary to the divine revelation); b) to have the consensus of the whole Church (to have been accepted and always used by the whole Church, not just in some local churches).

The custom has the same power within the Church as the positive law³, as evidenced by the provisions of Canon 18 of the First Ecumenical Council; sometimes it even prevails the written law. According to the canonical doctrine of the Orthodox Church, the church custom can also be contrary to the written law, if it does not affect the doctrine of faith or the religious moral norms of the Church.

However, the custom should not be limited only to the first stage of Church canonical regulations, as it continues to this day, adapting the text of positive rules to the needs of the church-goers in each historical period.

For example, regarding its cult regulations, they are based on the guidance concerning the "essential elements of the sanctifying work" transmitted by the Apostles to bishops, priests and Christians, in general. These elements of the regulations inherited from the Apostles were then developed and amplified by the Church, according to its practical needs, but without compromising the principles inherited from the apostolic branch.

In the second chapter, entitled "The canonical rules and regulations on the Orthodox Church", I showed first that a canonical rule or regulation is that rule or regulation based on the truths of faith and morals of the Church. These truths of faith and morals are nothing but the principles stated by Jesus Christ and by His Holy Apostles and transmitted by the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church.

The canonical principles are "the material source of the content, the substance or the core of concrete legal rules, the canons, the religious written and unwritten laws. In other words, they are the canonical and fundamental principles that "define and characterize the organization form and function of the Orthodox Church"⁴. These principles are contained "in the universal constitutional charter of the Church, which consists in the collection of the Holy Canons" and in "the long and constant practice of the church life, which become custom of the canon law"⁵.

The canonical "core" principles are the same for the entire Orthodoxy, being one of the essential elements of the ecumenical unity of Orthodoxy, which states itself in a threefold way: as a dogmatic, cult and canonical unity⁶.

Although all the canonical principles must and agree with the teachings of the Church cult, not all of them are direct expressions of the truths of faith; there are certain principles arising from

³ See, N. V. Dură, *Legislația canonica a Sinodului II ecumenic și importanța sa pentru organizarea și disciplina Bisericii*, în Glasul Bisericii, XL (1981), nr. 6-8, p. 630-671; C. Mititelu, *Internal (Material) Sources of Orthodox Canonical Law*, in Philosophical-Theological Reviewer, Tbilisi State University (Georgia), nr. 1, 2011, p. 111-120.

⁴ N. V. Dură, *Principiile canonice, fundamentale, de Organizare și Funcționare a Bisericii Ortodoxe și reflectarea lor în Legiunile Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, în Revista de Teologie Sfântul Apostol Andrei, V (2001), nr. 9, p. 129.

⁵ L. Stan, *Despre principiile canonice fundamentale ale Ortodoxiei*, în vol. Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Liviu Stan, *Biserica și Dreptul. Studii de Drept canonic ortodox*, vol. III, Ed. Andreiana, Sibiu, 2012, p. 5.

⁶ I. N. Floca, *Drept canonic ortodox. Legislație și administrație bisericească*, vol. I, Ed. IBMBOR, București, 1990, p.192.

the interests or from the practical needs of the Church. Therefore, the Orthodox Church canonists divide them in "fundamental canonical principles of dogmatic basis or content" and "fundamental canonical principles of legal or canonical basis"⁷.

Following this distinction made by the Orthodox canonists, I analyzed the fundamental canonical principles with dogmatic content (eight in number), namely: 1) the institutional ecclesiological principle, 2) the organic or constitutional principle, 3) the ecumenical principle, 4) the hierarchical principle, 5) the synodic principle, 6) the principle of economy, 7) the principle of external autonomy and 8) the principle of loyalty to the state. I also analyzed the principles of legal or canonical basis (four in number), namely: 1) the principle of autocephaly, 2) the principle of internal autonomy, 3) the Nomocanon principle and 4) the territorial principle.

Addressing the issue of church law, I emphasized, from the very beginning, the fact that the legislative power of the Church is supported by "the full divine mandate", which is also noticed in the approach of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod (can. 1). In order to express the will and power of the Holy Ghost, in the Church legislative power, two conditions must be met: a) the legislative power must work on behalf of the whole Church as one body, which is inspired by the Holy Ghost; b) the Bodies of this power must receive the Sacrament of the Holy Orders, by which "there is granted a special gift by God"⁸.

The written laws of the Church from the classical era (the first Christian millennium) are called "canons" (οἱ κανόνες), in order to separate them from the secular laws, which were simply called "laws"; due to their ecclesiastical nature, the canons are also called "holy canons".

I then showed that the general law of the Church is made up of four major categories of canons, namely, the apostolic canons, the canons of the Ecumenical Councils, the canons of Local Councils and the canons of the Holy Fathers.

According to the Orthodox canonical doctrine, the Church law collections were not made only of canons⁹; often, the canons were also accompanied by political and ecclesiastical laws, or consisted only of such laws, which circulated in Nomocanon Collections, known usually under the name of Nomocanons or Codes of Laws¹⁰.

⁷ L. Stan, op. cit., p. 6.

⁸ N. Milaș, *Dreptul bisericesc oriental*, trad. Dim I. Cornilescu și Vasile S. Radu, Tipografia Gutenberg, București, 1915, p. 369.

⁹ See, C. Mititelu, *De la Colectiile de legiuiri bizantine la Nomocanoanele din secolul al XVII-lea din Țările Române. Considerații asupra Dreptului penal pravilnic*, în Revista de Teologie Sfântul Apostol Andrei, nr. 1 / 2011, p. 218-231.

¹⁰ Despre geneza și conținutul lor, a se vedea pe larg la N. V. Dură, *The Byzantine Nomocanons, fundamental sources of old Romanian Law*, în vol. International Conference, "Exploration, Education and Progress in the third Millennium", Proceedings vol. I, no. 3, Galati University Press, Galați, 2011, p. 25-48; C. Mititelu, *Începuturile Dreptului scris la români*, în Dionysiana, nr. 1/2009, 417-426.

Therefore, within the Church, there circulated three types of collections, i.e. Collections composed of "purely ecclesiastical laws", i.e. canons, Collections which consisted of "political and ecclesiastical laws", i.e. state laws on such ecclesiastical matters, and mixed Collections, "i.e. composed of purely ecclesiastical laws and political- ecclesiastical laws." The latter bear the name of Nomocanons or Codes of Laws¹¹.

In my PhD thesis, I used the most important canonical Eastern and Western Collections, from the first millennium, the Nomocanon Collections and the political-ecclesiastical Collections.

In the third chapter, entitled "Canonical rules and regulations on the exercise of the sanctifying power", I presented both the canonical bases of the ecclesiastical power and its exercise and the canonical bases of the sanctifying power and its exercise.

I have also highlighted the fact that the origin, the existence and the perpetuation of the religious power comes from our Lord Jesus Christ "(see Mt. 28, 18-19; 11, 27; Mc. 16, 15; Lc. 24, 49; In. 3, 35; 12, 49; 13, 3; 15, 16; 17, 2-3; 20, 21 etc.). Thus, the religious elements of the ecclesiastical power come from the very work that Jesus Christ made when He founded the Church, and the moral and material elements of the ecclesiastical power are only a "support" and an "auxiliary" of the religious ones, as they come from people's work and will.

According to the canonical doctrine of the Orthodox Church, the means left by Jesus Christ to the Apostles in order to continue the three saving works (teaching, consecrating and leadership) are divine means available to people, but Christians can use them only within the limits of their human condition.

All the sanctifying means that our Savior Jesus Christ has endowed to His Church form "the specific ecclesiastical power," i.e., "the religious power of the Church", which is exercised in its threefold aspect of manifestation (teaching, sanctifying and leadership), i.e., the teaching power (ἐξουσία διδακτική), the sanctifying power (ἐξουσία ἱερατική) and the leadership power (ἐξουσία πομιαντική ἢ διοικητική).

This division of the ecclesiastical power is a spiritual one, according to the spiritual nature and purpose of the Church, which consists in preaching the Gospel, celebrating the holy sacraments and disciplining in order to save the persons ruled.

The sanctifying power of the Church is that work which sanctifies the lives of the Christian church-goers through the holy sacraments and the religious services of the church, to which there is

¹¹ V. Pocitan, *Compendiu de Drept Bisericesc*, Tipografia de Lux Adolf I. Feldmann, Bucureşti, 1898, p. 24.

also added the "achievement of other works, which entail some forms or rules for the fulfilment of sacred works, i.e. the holy sacraments and the religious services"¹².

Bishops hold the sacramental and sanctifying power of the Church, as they received this power from the Holy Apostles. Of course, the ecclesiastical power is also "partially" held by the presbyters, and, to a lesser extent, by the deacons. "The extent" to which a cleric of divine institution - whether bishop, priest or deacon - may administer the sanctifying power refers to the liturgical acts which they may perform. Moreover, any legally ordained priest or bishop is called to administer the holy work, but bishops can perform any "holy work" of the church; the presbyters cannot perform the holy sacraments and the religious services reserved for bishops, and the deacons cannot perform holy sacraments or religious services without a bishop or a presbyter.

The exercise of the ecclesiastical power and, implicitly, of the sanctifying power, is received by the clergy by two separate acts, namely, by the Sacrament of Ordination and by the formal act of the appointment to the office (installment within the parish, enthronement as a bishop). Not only that these two acts are "spaced in time", but they also produce important consequences. Thus, by the Sacrament of Ordination, the cleric of divine institution receives "the ability to perform sacraments", i.e. to exercise the sanctifying power of the Church, and by the "legal act of installment or enthronement, which is neither a sacrament nor is it part of the sacrament", the same cleric gets "the rightfulness" to administer the ecclesiastical power.

In addition, in connection with the exercise of the sanctifying power, i.e. with the administration of the holy sacraments and religious services, I have examined the canonical norms concerning the evidence of the acts for the management of the sanctifying power. The age of such "records" dates back to the first Christian century and the beginning of the second one.

Before clarifying the difference between ordination and the appointment to the office, as a way of establishing a person on one of the clerical steps, I made some remarks about the apostolic succession. This is one of the most controversial and less understood theological issues, as there "has not been reached yet to a precise dogmatic and canonical formula, which should necessarily guide the entire Orthodoxy"¹³.

The Holy Apostles performed a unique work within the Church. Therefore, when they ordained "the priests in cities" (Titus 1, 5, Deeds XIV, 23), the Apostles did not transmit all the power they were endowed with, but only the gracious state of priesthood, by the three stages of divine institution, and by the power that these three steps have in order to continue the Holy Apostles and the Savior's work, seen in its three guises (the sanctifying work, the missionary work

¹² I. N. Floca, op. cit., vol. I, p. 29.

¹³ L. Stan, *Succesiunea apostolică*, în vol. Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Liviu Stan, *Biserica și Dreptul*, vol. IV, p. 9.

and the leadership or pastoral work). In addition, by the apostolic succession, the Holy Apostles sent, "by divine mandate" – to the Church in its entirety - "the power to preserve the infallible truth of faith, the truth revealed"¹⁴.

I then showed that the redemptive work within the Church was not entrusted only to bishops but also the presbyters, which were subsequently called deacons. According to the canonical Orthodox doctrine, the presbyters and deacons are also descendants within the power sphere of the Holy Apostles, and, *ipso facto*, they participate in the apostolic succession, together with the bishops; however, only the latter have the fullness of the priestly power of apostolic origin.

As for the terms "*χειροτονία*" and "*χειροθεσία*", I showed their origin and how they were used both in the Holy Scripture and in the text of the Holy Canons.

The ordination is the investiture in one of the three stages of the divinely instituted priesthood (bishop, priest and deacon) and the appointment to the office implies the investiture in one of the humanely instituted steps.

I then showed that, regardless of what is called "clergy", "hierarchy" or "priesthood", the clerical state is a distinct status within the Church, differing from the other two elements of the Church, i.e. the laity and the monks¹⁵; in addition, its main function is the achievement of "the divine service" (the divine public cult of the Church).

Priesthood is a part of the Church body and the primary means by which salvation works within the Church. For this reason, the clergy has the highest rank in the religious life, forming the guiding and the leading element of the Church. As such, as a body of the Church, it has the main function of preserving the truth of faith and of sharing the sanctifying grace, in order to provide for the salvation of church-goers.

The Holy Apostles were the first clerics; they performed a unique work in the life of the Church, as they were appointed directly by the Savior Christ, or indirectly - such as the Apostle Matthias - by drawing lots.

The election of those who were to be ordained was made by the Holy Apostles "by divine mandate", i.e. according to the direction and command of the Savior, and not by the mere judgment and forethought of the Holy Apostles. This feature shows that "the three steps of the priesthood created by the Holy Apostles" are steps of divine institution or "the sacramental hierarchy (*hierarchia ordinis*) and the ordination hierarchy"¹⁶.

¹⁴ I. N. Floca, op. cit., vol. I, p. 244.

¹⁵ See N. V. Dură, *Monahismul în Dacia Pontică. „Călugării sciți (daco-romani) și contribuția lor la afirmarea unității ecumenice și la dezvoltarea culturii umanist-creștine europene*, în Biserica Ortodoxă Română, CXXII (2004), nr. 3-4, p. 347-357.

¹⁶ I. N. Floca, op. cit., vol. I, p. 240.

Among the divinely established clergy (bishops, priests and deacons), the highest degree of the church hierarchy is represented by the bishop. This primacy is based on three things, namely, that the episcopal power is inherited from the Apostles; the episcopate represents the fullness of spiritual power; and it has the highest administration powers within the Church.

Bishops can perform all major religious services (Mass, the Holy Sacraments, the sanctification of churches etc.); they also kept to themselves, until now, some of them - considered fundamental - such as clergy ordination, consecration of the Holy Chrism, sanctification of Churches and antimises.

The bishop (individually or in councils) is the one who has the duty and the canonical justification to supervise the correct performance of the cult and to make decisions about the practice of the divine service in their dioceses. In addition, the Bishop is the "leader" or the primate of any liturgical service he participates, even when he is not serving. As such, certain acts and liturgical formulas are reserved to him.

Then I stated that the second step of the divinely established priesthood is presbytership.

The legal distinction in the ecclesiastical power between Bishop and Presbyter consists in the fact that all the teaching power, the performance of Sacraments and the management power fall within the jurisdiction of the Bishop. The presbyter can perform only six Sacraments (except for ordination), and cannot perform certain liturgical acts such as the appointment to an ecclesiastical office, the sanctification of the Holy Great Myrrh and the sanctification of antimises.

Regarding the role of the priest in the exercise of the sanctifying power, I showed that, in the exercise of his liturgical function, the presbyter fulfills a dual role. The first role is that of a servant of God, of representative or successor of the Savior's priesthood, which he receives by virtue of the grace transmitted from the bishop through ordination. This role is shown in all his sanctifying work. The second role is that of interpreter, of spokesperson and delegate of the Church, in connection to his congregation of church-goers; this role is revealed by the fact that he does not serve and pray only in his name, but especially in the church-goers' name. In addition, the priest transmits to church-goers what comes from God, i.e. the divine grace, the forgiveness of sins, the eternal life, and, in general, all the spiritual gifts and material goods that we receive from God.

The third step (in descending order) of the divinely established priesthood is the diaconate.

According to the canonical Orthodox doctrine, there is a distinction between the deacons chosen in order to serve the agapa and the sacramental ones, instituted through ordination by the Holy Apostles (see Deeds 6, 8, 8, 5, 12, 38).

According to the testimony of the Apostle Paul, those who wanted to become deacons, i.e. sacramental deacons, had to meet several conditions, similarly to those who wanted to become bishops (see I Tim. 3, 8-15). In their capacity as sacramental deacons, their main tasks were: to

receive the gifts for the holy sacrifice from the church-goers and to deliver them to the bishop; to pronounce several liturgical responses and to keep the order during the Holy Mass; to utter litanies and to help the bishop or the presbyter to perform the Eucharistic Sacrifice; to read from the Holy Gospel during religious services; to train the catechumens; to visit the imprisoned confessors in prison; to record the martyrs' deeds etc.

All these duties during the Ante-Nicene era of Christianity made some patristics to say that deacons were "... the bishops' right hand, who seem to exert only by them the administration of the community money and the supervision and division of clemencies"¹⁷.

The deacons were, however - since the very beginning - "... present in smaller churches, since almost no religious services was performed without the participation of deacons"¹⁸, as confirmed today by service books.

The deacons played, from the beginning, a very well defined role in the liturgical worship and church administration¹⁹, being a divinely established step within the ecclesiastical hierarchy and not a humanely established one, as incorrectly stated by some heterodoxies. However, regardless of the administrative function that a deacon occupies, he must be in communion with the bishop and his presbyter (where applicable), as the diaconate step is lower to the presbyterate step.

The second constitutive element of the Church is the laity, which is a vital and indispensable element of the Church.

The status of the laity can be a vile one in the Church, as it has some gracious state received upon baptism, also affirmed by the other Holy Sacraments; therefore laity is also called "holy priesthood" (see I Peter 2, 5), or "universal priesthood". As such, the layman has the gracious power to perform - if necessary – the sacrament of the Holy Baptism.

By virtue of the grace received in Baptism, the simple church-goer becomes collaborator of priesthood in the effective performance of the Holy Sacraments, because, without the his/her internal adhesion – upon the administration of the saints' grace through the Holy Sacraments – they do not actually produce their effect on the church-goer who receives them.

In the fourth chapter, entitled "Canonical rules and regulations on the cult of the Orthodox Church", I indicated and analyzed the main canonical rules and regulations regarding the

¹⁷ J. Tixeront, *L'ordre et les ordinations*, p. 84-85 apud C. Dron, *Canoanele. Text și interpretare*, vol. I, Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, București, 1932, p. 69.

¹⁸ E. Braniște, *Liturgica generală cu noțiuni de artă bisericăască arhitecturală și pictură creștină*, ed. a II-a, Ed. IBMBOR, București, 1993, p. 99.

¹⁹ See, N. V. Dură, *The Ecumenical Council in Trullo (691-692). The Canonical Tradition's Evidences from East and West*, în Kanonika, Roma, 1995, nr. 6, p. 229-262.

performance of the Divine Liturgy²⁰, the church chants, the reading of the Holy Books and the duty of the clergy to preach in the public cult of the Church.

The Holy Mass is the most important of the "holy works" within the Church, being instituted by Jesus Christ Himself at the Last Supper (Mt. 26, 26-28; Mc. 14, 22-24; Lc. 22, 19-20; I Cor. 11, 23-25).

According to Nicholas Cabasilas's teaching, the performance of the Holy Mass "is intended to transform the gifts into the divine Body and Blood, in order to sanctify the church-goers; as such, the forgiveness of sins and the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven are granted". The means used for this purpose are "prayers, hymns, readings from the Holy Scripture and, in general all that is done and spoken, with holy order, before and after the consecration of Gifts"²¹.

If all the other Sacraments can be performed, in need, at home or in another place, the Sacrament of Ordination and the Holy Communion can be performed only in the Church sanctified by a bishop (see can. 31 ap.; 10, 11 Cart. etc.) and in communion with him (see can. 31 trulan; 6, 21 Gang. etc.).

In the Holy Canons there are numerous rules on the performance of the Holy Mass, such as: the Mass can be performed on any day of the week, "but mainly on Sunday"²², the day when the resurrection of our Lord is honored (this was the rule in the Church from the earliest centuries of Christianity, as evident from the provisions of canon 3 of St. Timothy of Alexandria († 385)); during the Lent, the Holy Mass of St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil is performed only on Saturdays and Sundays, so as not to interrupt the fasting of Lent (see can. 51 Laod.); in this case, only the Holy Mass of the Gifts before sanctification can be performed; a priest may perform on the same day only one Holy Mass (see can. 69 ap.; 29 Sin. trulan); the defrocked clergymen and those burdened with heavy sins are not allowed to perform the Holy Sacrifice (see can. 28 ap.; 9 Sin. Neocez.); those who committed suicide cannot be mentioned in the Holy Mass, the clergy assuming the responsibility to investigate those for whom the sacrifice is brought (see can. 14 Tim. al Alx.) etc.

The Church showed a constant care for the material used in the Holy Sacrifice, as it should be in accordance with the canonical rules of the Church (see can. 3, 4 ap.; 37 Sin. Cart.; 13 Nichifor Mărt. etc). Therefore, even in the Rituals printed today with the approval and blessing of the Holy

²⁰ Idem, *Biserica etiopiană și „Anaforalele” ei liturgice*, în Revista de Teologie Sfântul Apostol Andrei, XII (2008), nr. 1, p. 9-45.

²¹ N. Cabasila, *Tâlcuirea Dumnezeiești Liturghii și despre viața în Hristos*, trad. E. Braniște și T. Bodogae, Ed. Arhiepiscopiei Bucureștilor, București, 1992, p. 27.

²² N. V. Dură, *Dispoziții și norme canonice privind săvârșirea Sfintei Liturghii*, în Ortodoxia, XXXIII (1981), nr. 1, p. 85.

Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, there are very thorough explanations on the Eucharist matter.

The Church chants must be performed in the Church, with reverence and respect, without the shouting or wailing specific to pagan religions (see can. 75 Sin. trulan). Nor are lawful improvisations regarding religious hymns allowed. Therefore, the Synod Fathers gathered at Laodicea in 343 ordered the ban on unauthorized religious chants in the Church, together with the reading of the books unclassified by the Church as canonical.

Regarding the reading of holy books, "it was ruled" that, during the holy services of the Church, some parts of the Old and New Testaments should be read, and, during the Mass, certain texts or only selected parts of the Holy Scripture of the New Testament should be read and interpreted. The purpose of reading from the Holy Scripture during church services is to spread the truths of faith, taught by Christ and by the Holy Apostles, and to acquire knowledge about the whole history of salvation.

The sermon²³ was, from the very beginning of Christianity, an intrinsic part of the cult, being based on the divine law (see Mt 28, 19; Mc. 16, 15-16). Moreover, according to the testimony of canon 19 of the Council of Laodicea (343), the sermon was part of the Holy Mass itself.

The importance of preaching is also revealed by the Apostolic Canon 58, which provides for the punishment with the suspension from office for the bishops and presbyters who neglected preaching the true faith and for the defrocking punishment for those who persevered in this carelessness and laziness.

In the fifth chapter, entitled "Canonical rules and regulations on worship places and the main liturgical objects in the Holy Shrine", we showed first that the first Christian communities had a "par excellence cultic"²⁴ nature, i.e. when gathered, Christians (clergy and laity) prayed and performed the Sacrament of Sacrifice.

At first, the place of such meetings was the temple in Jerusalem, but later Christians built and prepared special places in order to gather for prayer and for the Eucharistic sacrifice²⁵. Thus, in the third century, there were Christian places of worship - used exclusively for religious purposes, and which were not private property, but belonged to the Christian community - in almost all major cities of the empire, namely, in Ephesus, Phrygia, Ancira, Antioch, Smyrna, Neocaesarea, Thrace, Spain, etc.

²³ Idem, *Canoanele Sinodului II ecumenic și obligativitatea de a mărturisi și păstra cu credincioșie Crezul niceo-constantinopolitan*, în Ortodoxia, XXXIII (1981), nr. 2, p. 442-459.

²⁴ S. P. Pufulete, *Situația canonica și juridică a capelelor și paracliselor în Biserica Ortodoxă*, în S.T., XXVI (1974), nr. 7-8, p. 557.

²⁵ I. Ioanicescu, *Biserica locaș de închinare*, în M.O., XXVI (1974), nr. 11-12, p. 985.

As regards the external shape of worship places, since the time of Constantine the Great, they were built in the shape of boat, crosses or round etc.

Regarding the construction of worship places, "it was required" that they mandatorily have three parts. The first part, called "βῆμα, θυσιαστήριον, *sacrum*" or "altars" was located in the eastern part of the Church. Following the Altar, there was "the nave or the church in the narrower sense of the word (εκκλησια, ναος, *ecclesia, navis, oratorium fidelium*) and, in the continuation of the nave, there was positioned the "porch or the vestibule (προναος, ναρθηξ, προπυλα, *porticus*)"²⁶.

In addition to these three main parts of worship places, before the narthex, there was a space "that was not walled to the north, west and south, but on these sides the roof was sustained by a small or large number of poles (6, 8 10 or even 12 poles)"²⁷. This area was called "portico, atrium or yard (προπυλαιον, προθυρον, πρυανλιον, αι θριον, *porticus, peristylium, atrium*)"²⁸. The arrangement of the rooms in worship places was maintained until today, except of course "the portico" whose utility fell into abeyance with the disappearance of the degrees of penance.

An important aspect in the construction of worship places - which was kept until nowadays - is their positioning with the altar to the east. This positioning of worship places is closely linked to the Christian custom of praying towards the East.

In addition, a fundamental rule for churches and chapels is that they must be holy, because the church, as a worship place, is a sacred building intended for divine worship and reserved only for this purpose. The consecration of the church included Psalms, tropes (which glorify the Martyrs called "the foundation of the church"), litanies, different prayers uttered by the bishop, readings from the Old Testament, from the Epistle and from the Gospel and various acts such as: opening the church, surrounding it with three states, sanctification of water, preparing the St. Table with the placement of relics.

The church, as a worship place, is the most important worship place; therefore, the Orthodox liturgists defined it as "that holy public, place where, by glorifying God, the most holy sacrifice of Christ is brought, and where the believers gather and become partakers to the truths and gifts of salvation that are mediated by the ministers of the altar"²⁹.

In addition to churches, the worship places also include "chapels", which are places of worship, of small size, serving a certain category of members of the Church, in special conditions of time and place.

²⁶ N. Milaș, *Canoanele Bisericii Ortodoxe însoțite de comentarii*, vol. I, part. II, trad. Uroș Kovincici, Nicolae Popovici, Tipografia Diecezana, Arad, 1930, p.60.

²⁷ Ibidem.

²⁸ Ibidem.

²⁹ B. Cireșeanu, *Tezaurul liturgic al Sfintei Biserici Creștine Ortodoxe de Răsărit*, t. II, Tipografia Gutenberg, București, 1912, p. 109-110.

The origin of these chapels coincides with the appearance of the first places of Christian worship, developing even during persecutions, when, in order to celebrate the divine service, Christians gathered in private homes, where they had arranged small chapels.

Among the worship places there are also the cemeteries, considered by the Church as "sacred goods", and the churches situated near these cemeteries.

I also showed that, in the old Church, since the second and third centuries, at the foundation of worship places or shrines, where the Holy Sacrifice was brought, the relics of martyrs were placed; however, in order to celebrate the Holy Eucharist in any place, some clergy carried bits of the martyrs' relics wrapped in a clean cloth. This habit led - especially during persecutions - to the making of antimises in their traditional form, from a better and stronger cloth, to be used as "portable" altars.

The general and binding use of the Holy Antimises - without abolishing the canonical rule according to which, at the foundation of any church, and, later, in the altar of each church, the Holy relics of martyrs should be placed - was imposed and generalized only after the Council held in Constantinople in 842.

At the same time, on the custom path, there was imposed the rule that the sanctification of antimises was reserved only to bishops, as they are a portable altar; the person serving it had to be connected to a bishop.

Nowadays, the performance of the Eucharistic Sacrifice can be done only over the St. Antimises, and, in very exceptional cases, above an altar where the holy relics were placed.

Regarding the use of icons in the cult of the Church, I emphasized the fact that the Icon plays, primarily, a liturgical-sacramental role, and then an artistic one. Therefore, the use and veneration of holy icons was integrated into the public manifestations of divine worship, so that no liturgical rite is performed without a holy icon.

Although the veneration of icons can be documented at least since the fourth century, the establishment of the nature and character of the cult of icons was established at the Seventh Ecumenical Council (especially in the decision of the seventh meeting, held on 13 October 787). The doctrine of the veneration of the holy icons was later developed, in particular, by the works of the Fathers of the Church until 842, when the fight against icons stopped.

In this PhD thesis, I shown that the iconoclasts' arguments (those who fight against the holy icons, considering them "idols") have no dogmatic, canonical and historical basis, and their theories

are nothing more than "the product of the Judeo-pagan mentality, of a distorted religious psychology and of a religious policy of circumstance"³⁰.

Under the Synod held in Constantinople between 869-870, the Christians who not worship the holy icons were anathematized by the Church in the name of the Holy Trinity.

I then revealed the importance of the Cross, to Christians, in general, and to the cult of the Church, in particular. Thus, in accordance with canon 73 Trulan, the Cross is the sign of our salvation, and, therefore, it must be given a suitable honor and worship, with the thought, the feeling and the word. Dishonoring the Holy Cross by laying it on floors, in public places, where indecent performances take place, constitute sacrilege and is punishable by excommunication.

I then showed that the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church cannot be conceived without the cross and the icon, whose presence is the testimony of the faith in the incarnate and crucified Christ. Therefore, like the icon, the cross is used not only in the performance of the Holy Mass, but also in the performance of all the sacraments and religious services of the Church.

During the performance of the Holy Sacrifice, on the Holy Table, in the Holy Shrine, the Holy Cross is placed next to St. Antimises and the Gospel. The presence of the Cross³¹ (as an object of worship) on the Holy Table depicts not only the crucifixion of Christ, but it is also the sign of the victory of life over death, i.e. of the resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ.

The Holy Cross has to be worshiped, honored and respected³²; it should not be adored, because adoration is due to God alone. This honor is due to the Holy Cross because Jesus Christ has committed on it His saving sacrifice.

Nevertheless, the Church condemned those who worship the cross in a latreutic way, as witnessed by the Epistle of the Patriarchs of Eastern Orthodox Churches sent to the Anglican Church in 1723.

Furthermore, I showed the canonical rules and regulations regarding the important items in the holy altar, used in the public divine cult of the Church, i.e. the holy ark, the candlesticks, the Crucifixion Cross, the bell, the star, the copy, the spoon, the coverings of the holy vessels and the sponge.

In the sixth chapter, entitled "Canonical rules and regulations on Holidays", I have defined the Christian holidays, which are the most important liturgical days in the church year, dedicated to the commemoration of the events or to the chief moments in the history of salvation, of the main holy

³⁰ N. V. Dură, *Teologia icoanelor, în lumina tradiției dogmatice și canonice ortodoxe*, în *Ortodoxia*, XXXIV (1982), nr. 1, p. 82.

³¹ Idem, *Crucea în lumina Tradiției dogmatice, canonice și liturgice a Bisericii Ortodoxe*; în *Ortodoxia*, XXXIV (1982), nr. 2, p. 299-328.

³² Idem, *Icoană și Rugăciune. Realități ale spiritualității ortodoxe. Icoana românească*, în *Almanahul Vestitorul*, Paris, 1989, nr. 5, p. 35-40.

people. These holidays differ from the other days of the church year in that (in those days) there is performed the divine service, attended by believers. In addition, during these holidays, Christians replace their physical daily work with religious activities, such as, attending the church service, reading from holy books, practicing body and soul mercy etc.

The holidays have a commemorative or anniversary nature and a pedagogical and soteriological one.

Sunday is the Lord's Day (*dies Dominica*), dedicated especially to the commemoration and glorification of Lord's Resurrection. Sunday is respected in the Orthodox Church and it is the first day of creation, because, on this day, the Holy Spirit descended upon the Holy Apostles and the Church was visibly created, but also because on this day the breaking of the bread, i.e. the Holy Mass, was celebrated since the very beginning.

In connection with honoring Sundays, as a weekly celebration of Christianity, in the canon law of the Orthodox Church, other rules of binding nature are also provided.

According to the rules and regulations of the Church, Christians are required to attend the Mass on every Sunday. An absence longer than three weeks in a row is not allowed (see can. 80 Sin. trulan); they have to observe the Sunday rest (see can. 29 Laod.), they have to observe Sundays by fasting and prayer (see can. 13, 29 Sin. Trulan) etc. However, it should be noted that, in accordance with the canonical rules and regulations of the Orthodox Church, on Sundays and in the fasting days of certain holy weeks, there is no dry fasting (see can. 66 ap.). On Sundays, Christians do not kneel in the Church (see can. 20 Sin. I ec.; 15 Sf. Petru al Alx.) etc.

Holidays and Feasts are dedicated to the persons of the Holy Trinity, and especially, to the main events of the Savior's earthly life and work, or in the church history. Usually, among these holidays, there are also those that honor the Virgin Mary.

In addition to the four major holidays in honor of the Virgin Mary, in the section entitled "Canonical rules and regulations on the Great Feasts", I analyzed the 10 Feasts (holidays of the divine persons), as follows: a) Nativity, b) Lord's circumcision, c) Lord's Baptism, d) the Candlemas, e) the Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday), f) Resurrection (Easter), g) the Ascension of Jesus Christ, h) the Descent of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost), i) the Transfiguration of the Lord, j) the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The dates of four holidays change: the Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday), Resurrection (Easter), the Ascension of Jesus Christ, the Descent of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost),

Virgin Mary has been honored in the Orthodox cult since the early Christian centuries, especially in the communities of Jerusalem and in the communities around her tomb at Gethsemane. However, the actual development of the Virgin Mary's cult took place after the Third Ecumenical

Council, which, condemning the heresy of Nestorius, recognized the two attributes of the Blessed Virgin, namely the "Mother of God" and "ever-virgin".

Virgin Mary is honored in the Orthodox Church by "over-veneration", unlike the honor that we pay to other saints (worship).

Among the holidays dedicated to the Mother of God, in my thesis, I analyzed the most important ones, namely, the Virgin's Birth, the Entry into the Church of Virgin Mary, the Annunciation and the Assumption of Virgin Mary.

One of the objectives of our worship cult is also represented by the Holy angels, who are both recipients of the honoring events initiated by church-goers and subjects of the adoration cult, i.e. worshipers of God along with people and saints.

In the Orthodox calendar there are five days dedicated to the worship of the holy angels, and only one of them is particularly important, namely, "the assembly of the great arch-strategists Michael and Gabriel and of all the bodiless celestial powers".

Among the holidays dedicated to saints, I analyzed in this study those with general honor throughout the Church, namely, St. Demetrios, St. Nicholas, St. Archdeacon and Protomartyr Stephen, St. Basil the Great, St. John the Baptist, the Three Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom, St. George the Great Martyr, the Saint emperors Constantine and his mother Helena, the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, the Holy Prophet Elijah the Tishbite and the Beheading of John the Baptist.

In the seventh chapter, entitled "Canonical rules and regulations on Holidays", I first noted the difference between the public prayer and the private prayer, highlighting also the canonical bases of these manifestations of the cult.

The public (liturgical) prayer and personal (private) prayer are the expression of a living and lucrative faith. Thus, by the private prayer, the faith of the Apostles and the Holy Fathers is confessed, the Church creed is uttered in the first person singular, and by the public (liturgical) prayer, the clergyman witnesses and prays for all the Christian congregation, using the personal pronoun in the first person plural.

The Church, as a place of worship, is the prayer place par excellence, and the personal prayer finds its strongest base of support and regeneration in the liturgical prayer of the Church. Moreover, the private prayer is a preparatory condition for the participation in the liturgical prayer of the Church.

I then analyzed the most important canonical provisions and norms concerning the prayer. According to these canonical rules and regulations, the prayer must begin and end with the glorious God in the Trinity (see can. 1 Sin. trulan); in our prayer, we should implore for the help of our Lord Jesus Christ (see Lc. 24, 25-27; can. 35 Sin. Laod.); the Christians have an obligation to pray for the

state authorities (see I Tim. 2, 1-3; Rom. 13, 1-8; can. 31 ap.; 18 Sin. IV ec.; 34 Sin. trulan); the confessor must guide those who profess to continue in prayer (see can. 28 Sf. Nichifor Mărt.; 34 Sf. Vasile cel Mare); the Christians are not allowed to pray with the heretics and the excommunicated persons (see can. 10, 45, 64 ap.; 6, 9, 32 Sin. Laod. etc.); the Orthodox clergy are not allowed to pray with defrocked clergymen (see can. 11, 28 ap.; 2 Sin. Ant.; 88 Sf. Vasile cel Mare etc.); the one who brings liturgical prayer must fully restrain in all, in due time (see can. 73 Sin. trulan; 41 Sin. Cart. etc.); Christians have the duty to remain in the Church until the "Apolis" of the Holy Mass (see Așez. Sf. Ap.; can. 2 Sin. Ant.) etc.

The fast originated in the divine law (see Mt. 4, 2; Mc. 1, 13; Lc. 4, 1-3 etc.) and has a great significance for the religious life of Christians, and, especially, for the monks, as it is part of the means of forming and perfecting the soul that wants to be worthy of receiving the Holy Eucharist.

According to the canonical doctrine of the Orthodox Church, the fast is designed and practiced both as a means of spiritual progress and as an act of worship, as a "living sacrifice of godliness", repentance, obedience and honor of God.

I then analyzed the different types of fasting depending on its severity, i.e. the full (total) fasting, the severe fasting, the ordinary (typical) fasting and the easy fasting (called absolution). According to its "extent", it is divided into general fasting, local (regional) fasting and particular fasting. Depending on its length, it is divided into one day fasting (Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the year, the day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the Eve of Epiphany, the day of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist) and several days fasting (the Nativity Lent, the Easter Lent, the Lent of the Holy Apostles and the Lent of Virgin Mary's Assumption).

In the last chapter, entitled "Decisions on the Cult of the Orthodox Church in Pan-Orthodox Conferences", I analyzed all the decisions concerning the cult of the Church, of the major pan-Orthodox conferences held from 1923 until 2009.

The first Pan-Orthodox Conference (Rhodes, 1961) which addressed the issue of the Bible and of the Orthodoxy, provided for a wider use of the Old Testament within the cult and for the redistribution of the liturgical pericopes, in general.

The topics of interest to the Church cult dealt with at the first Pan-Orthodox Conference include: a) the uniformization of the ritual and liturgical texts in the cult and in the performance of the Holy Sacraments; b) the greater participation of laymen in the cultic life of the Church; c) the means for supporting and strengthening the liturgical life of the Orthodox Church and of Byzantine art (church music, painting, architecture, liturgical vestments, etc.).

Among the topics addressed at the Pan-Orthodox Conferences, the question of the calendar was particularly important, especially regarding the date of the Easter celebration. Thus, at the pan-Orthodox conference at Vatopedi, in 1930, it was studied, among others, the issue of the calendar in

terms of the decisions of the first Ecumenical Council regarding the Paschalion. Also, the Preparatory Commission for the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church, meeting in Chambésy (Geneva) in 1971, studied the problem of the calendar, seeking to restore a common practice for the Easter celebration, demanding the observance of the decisions of principle taken by the Fathers of the Ecumenical Council, and urged all churches to adopt the new calendar.

Among the topics of the second Pre-conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference from Chambésy (Geneva), in 1982, there was included the re-adaptation of the church rules regarding fasting in accordance with the current era.

According to the decisions of this Pan-Orthodox Pre-conciliar Conference, the issue of the calendar is one that goes beyond scientific accuracy, being a matter of religious knowledge, which should not affect the unity of the Church.

According to the decisions of the Third Pre-conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, met at Chambésy (Geneva), in 1986, fasting is a Divine commandment, it is the oldest institution of Christianity and it is a spiritual struggle. According to the same decision, for those who have difficulty in observing the rules in force on fasting, either from personal reasons (illness, working conditions etc.) or from general reasons (specific climatic conditions, social structures, etc.) the spiritual local Orthodox Churches shall determine the limits of dispensation. In addition, at the Third Pre-conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, it was ordered the mandatory fasting before receiving the Holy Communion, the habit of fasting as a sign of repentance for the fulfillment of promises, for achieving a holy purpose etc.

In the Conclusions of my PhD thesis, I have emphasized both the results of my scientific research and the scientific contributions that I brought on the subjects addressed. As such, I am entitled to say that these findings reflect the contribution that I was able to bring in the research field of Orthodox theology, in canonical terms, in the field of the cult of the Orthodox Church.

The scientific work of my PhD thesis, entitled "Canonical Rules and Regulations on the Cult of the Orthodox Church", gave me the opportunity to notice the obligation of each minister of the Orthodox Church to learn and apply the canonical rules and regulations on the cult of the Orthodox Church. This entails also the need to study the canon law and doctrine since the early seminar years. Thus, being aware of this reality, I will continue my scientific approach on the subject addressed, in order to provide the canonists and liturgists of our Church with a reference work.

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137. **Vintilăescu, Pr. Prof., Petre**, *Conferința română ortodoxă-anglicană de la București, în iunie 1935, privită în cadrul temelor ei sacramental-liturgice*, în Ortodoxia, X (1958), nr. 2, p. 252-286.

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