

**OVIDIUS UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANTZA**

**FACULTY OF THEOLOGY**

**DOCTORAL THESIS**

**MATRIMONY, INSTITUTION OF THE OLD  
TESTAMENT AND HOLY MYSTERY OF THE  
NEW TESTAMENT**

**SCIENTIFIC COORDINATOR:**

**PRIEST UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR DOCTOR  
EMILIAN CORNITESCU**

**CANDIDATE:**

**PRIEST BURCEA ADRIAN CORNELIU**

**CONSTANTZA  
2019**

# CONTENTS

A. INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1: INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE DURING THE OLD TESTAMENT.....	8
I.1. Marriage in the old Oriental world.....	8
I.1.1. Babylonians and Assyrians.....	8
I.1.2. Family in the ancient Egypt.....	10
I.1.3. The ancient Greeks.....	12
I.1.4. Family in the Roman antiquity.....	13
I.2. The holiness of matrimony, instituted by God, according to The Old Testament	
I.3. Conditions necessary for making marriage official.....	26
I.4. Deformations of legal marriage.....	32
I.4.1. Marriage between slaves.....	32
I.4.2. The Levirate Marriage.....	32
I.5. The purpose and utility of marriage according to the Old Testament.....	33
I.5.1. Dissolution of family in the Old Testament. Causes.....	43
I.5.1.1. Divorce, scourge of society, stigmatized by the mosaic law.....	49
CHAPTER 2: NEO-TESTAMENTARY GROUNDS FOR THE HOLY MYSTERY OF MATRIMONY.....	53
2. 1. The establishment of marriage as Mystery by Jesus Christ the Saviour at the wedding in the town of Cana in Galilee.....	58
2.2. Jesus Christ's teaching of marriage.....	63
2.3. Value and idissolubility of the holy matrimonial union in the Holy Gospels.....	74
2.4. Pauline teaching of marriage .....	82
2.5. Marriage from the perspective of the Holy Fathers' teaching.....	99
II.5.1. The Apostolic Fathers period.....	99
II.5.2. The polemic apologetic period.....	99
II.5.3. The post-apologetic period .....	99
II.5.4 Saint Polycarp of Smyrna.....	100

II.5.5. Saint Ignatius Theophoros.....	101
II.5.6. Saint Clement of Rome.....	102
II.5.7. Saint Justin the Philosopher and the Martyr.....	104
II.5.8. Theophilus of Antioch.....	105
II.5.9. Tertullian.....	105
II.5.10. Minucius Felix.....	108
II.5.11. Saint Cyprian of Carthage.....	108
II.5.12. Clement of Alexandria.....	110
II.5.13. Origen.....	113
II.5.14. Methodius of Olympus.....	114
II.5.15. Saint Gregory of Nazianzus.....	116
II.5.16. Saint John Chrysostom.....	116
II.5.17. Saint Basil the Great.....	119
2. 6. The purpose of marriage blessed by God.....	123
2. 7. Relationships between spouses within the Christian marriage.....	133
2. 8. Childbirth and taking responsibility of bringing up the children.....	134
2. 9. Children's duties towards their parents.....	137

### CHAPTER 3: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE NORM..... 139

3. 1. The union between Christ and His Church as a pattern of relationships between husband and wife.....	139
3. 2. Mutual rights and duties of spouses.....	149
3. 3. Equal rights of spouses.....	160

### CHAPTER 4: BIBLICAL NORMS REGARDING MARRIAGE AT THE PRESENT TIME..... 175

4. 1. Marriage as foundation of the monogamous family .....	175
4. 2. Marriage between a believer and a heretic within the context of today's marriages .....	184
4. 3. Today's challenges against marriage.....	190
4.3.1. Adultery.....	199
4.3.2. Contraception.....	202
4.3.3. Divorce.....	206

4.3.4. Abortion.....	210
4.3.5. Homosexuality.....	213
4.3.6. Pedophilia.....	225
4.3.7. Drugs .....	226
4.3.8. Other types of family .....	227
CONCLUSIONS.....	231
ABBREVIATIONS .....	251

## **The topicality and usefulness of the subject**

Marriage and family have always been important to the Church and this union, which is blessed by God, is called the mystery of marriage. The mystery of matrimony is a sacred covenant, of divine origin, through which a man and a woman share the Grace of the Holy Spirit, as a result of their freely consented agreement. The Grace sanctifies and ranks this natural bond of matrimony at the same height and dignity of the sacred union between Jesus Christ The Saviour and His Church.

The importance of such a thesis is of great interest in today's society. Having been integrated in the European family, the Romanian society has borrowed some obviously secularizing tendencies, remote from the traditional Romanian Christian spirit, due to which fact it has been trapped in an existential whirlpool where nonsense and trivial things are made into social norm. The younger generation is confused in front of such exacerbated and denatured tendencies of the western civilization which are now invading our country. The reactions of the Church must not be late. It must reveal the reality of the family institution: the freely consented union between a man and a woman, based on mutual love and respect.

Under the new circumstances of a profound moral crisis, which society confronts with, characterized by libertinism, indifference, lack of faith and unawareness of the the religious demension of the Mystery of Matrimony, under these circumstances the Church must intervene and fortify this devine bond between a man and a woman. The canonical norms of the Church, founded on the divine Revelation which regulates man's unity with God, as well as the unity among Christians, entitle us to approach this necessary and important subject. The knowledge of all these norms and their putting into practice lead to the healing of souls and the alleviating of sufferings. (Canon 2 Trulan).

Our research starts from the study of the Holy Scripture and deals with the issue of family both during the time of the Old Testament and in the light of Jesus and the Holy Apostles' teachings of the New Testament. Also, the Holy Fathers' writings and specilized studies have been employed in order to give a clear and logical presentation of the sensitive issues, of overwhelming importance, which the Orthodox Christian theology are currently signalling so that it will prove useful and persuading in shaping up a sane standpoint of marrige. The subject is approached from the perspective of the crisis today's family is undergoing and focuses upon the vulnerable aspects of it due to present realities.

The practical usefulness of this paper firstly lies in the understanding of the mysterious and profound elements which built man and made him into God's likeness through the Mystery of Marriage. It also lies in the use of the practical solutions which restore the dignity and importance of family, as an institution and legacy left by God. The Holy Mystery of Marriage offers the possibility of a union between a man and a woman who are to give life at the human level, through childbirth. This union, founded on love, is given an entirely new dimension when it identifies itself with Christ's love for His Church. The faith in Christ enables us to submit to this type of crucifixion without which true love is not possible. This is the reason why, during the performance of this Holy Mystery ceremony, the holy martyrs are mentioned, as they fought the good fight and eventually won the laurel wreath. The Holy Spirit is the person who bridges the gap between the two and gives life to and strengthens this bond. Only in this light can man see his wife as "*bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh*" (Genesis, 3:23), as she was seen before the fall into sin. In order to see his wife as "*God's likeness*" (Genesis 1:27), he must first get the Grace of God, who makes everything possible, including the fulfillment of the man's need for love and communication. If man cannot succeed in regaining his churchly status, he cannot develop his capacity of uniting to his fellows, as his egoism impedes this unit. Therefore, the Mystery of Matrimony is closely connected to the Mystery of the Eucharist, whereby, through the sharing of the Body and Blood of Christ, the two become one flesh. This religious ceremony of matrimony, which occurs sporadically in certain places, should become a general fact, when the practical meanings of marriage would be highlighted more clearly.

## CHAPTER 1:

### INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE DURING THE OLD TESTAMENT I.1. Marriage in the old Oriental world

Little do we know about the institution of marriage during the antiquity, especially regarding the marriage of ordinary people. Most information gives details about the way marriage was accomplished among aristocrats and royal families. Still, this information gives us obvious clues about woman's inferiority in front of man.

In the assyro-babylonian religion, having bad manners and intemperances, gods kept away the two partners, man and woman, from the true morality of marriage. The woman, as the man's slave, was inferior to the latter, and, therefore, the idea of marriage, as is stipulated in the Holy Scripture, with equality of the two partners, used to be altered in its essential ontology. In the ancient Egypt, despite its higher moral principles, the foundation of family was vitiated by the fact that the wife used to be sold by her parents to her future husband. As a result,

the slave-wife status was still far from the status of a Christian wife, found under the law of God's Holy Grace. The concept of family in the ancient Greece referred to an extended group of members, always belonging to the same household. Although this civilisation was governed by high moral principles, its religion still kept the woman under total submission to her man, according to the norms of slavery. In the Roman society the term "family" had a different meaning compared to the present day. The woman's inferiority to her man was a judicial principle, similar to the dictum *femina semper in tutela*.

### **I.2. The holiness of matrimony established by God according to The Old Testament**

The one who officiates marriage is God Himself. Marriage is the foundation of family and this fact is God's Will<sup>1</sup>. According to the Holy Scripture, marriage is created and designed by God even in heaven, when our progenitors Adam and Eve were blessed to be fruitful and multiply and rule the earth. 'Grow and multiply, fill the earth. And possess it' ( Genesis 1:28).

The first command given by God to our ancestors Adam and Eve was "*grow and multiply*". For this reason the foundation of a family is a deed of great importance, celibacy being considered a deviation, if not a common practice due to religious beliefs (the case of some prophets, such as Saint John the Baptizer, or the case of Nazarites who had the custom of celibacy for at least a while)<sup>2</sup>. As a consequence of the fall into sin and being prevented from God's knowledge, social subordination emerges in the world: man will rule over his woman (Genesis 3: 18), counting her among his possessions( Exodus 20:17; Deuteronom 5: 21).

Compared to the Graeco-Roman World, in the ancient Hebrew society of the Old Testament family had several different characteristics. The role of woman increases in importance since she is hierarchically the next important member, after her husband. She participates in every decision making regarding family, getting involved into the choosing of his son's future wife, in contrast to the pagan world, where young men were asked for their opinions about choosing their future partners. Young Hebrews got married at an early age, when they were 18-20 years old, whereas pagans who put off getting married until an older age. For Hebrews , the social ideal was marriage, since "*a celibate is not a real man*"<sup>3</sup>. This accounts

---

<sup>1</sup> Priest lecturer PhD Ionel Ene, *The Model of the Christian family according to „De monogamia” by Tertullian*, in vol. „Theology and education at the Lower Danube” - Fascicle X, Publishing House of the Lower Danube Archdiocese, Galați, 2011, p.199.

<sup>2</sup> Priest Prof.PhD.Petre Semen, *Biblical archeology in the present*, The Publishing House of the Metropolitanate of Moldova and Bucovina, Iassy, 1997, p.44

<sup>3</sup> Daniel-Rops, *La vie quotidienne en Palestine au temps de Jesus*, apud Priest PhD.Constantin Mihoc, op.cit., p.18.

for the existence of the levirate marriage, a characteristic of the Hebrew family, by means of which the widow woman is prevented from getting estranged from the deceased husband's family or staying alone until she finds a new husband, which fact enhanced the morality of the chosen people.

The Hebrew family still keeps partially the paradisiac significance, even though there have been accidents in the long run, such as polygamy: "*The old law is a good teacher for Christ. The matrimony of this law, symbol of a holy alliance, is an anticipation of the wedding as mystery*".<sup>4</sup> Initially, family life reflected God's likeness. After the fall into sin, relationships started to deteriorate, harmony weakened, its unity being seriously affected by various means. Although it was severely affected and "*lost the grace of its primordial state, it was not yet destroyed in its essence. Neither was the human nature*".<sup>5</sup>

Despite all its moral deviations, the monogamous family in the Old Testament stays as a landmark, a paradigm of marriages of all times<sup>6</sup>, as Israel speaks through all the pages of the Holy Scripture and God Himself<sup>7</sup> speaks through Israel. The Scripture offers a pedagogical way of moral and spiritual education to that who reads it, even nowadays. God's words are eternally valid ( Marcus 3:31). Marriage and family were institutions created by God with the aim of moral fulfillment of both man and woman. Family life, founded in the light of God's teachings, brings about happiness. This becomes even more meaningful in the New Testament.

## CHAPTER 2: NEO-TESTAMENTARY GROUNDS FOR THE HOLY MYSTERY OF MATRIMONY

The Christian teaching of family changes the perspective on marriage definitively . Whereas in the Old Testament marriage held up its holiness as an ideal, in the New Testament it is revealed as Mystery, established by the Saviour, whereby the paradisiac holiness can be achieved. Only by means of marriage can the heavenly unity between a man and a woman be achieved (Genesis 1:27; 5:2; Matthew 19:4)<sup>8</sup> and so can the equality between husband and wife (Galatians 3:8)<sup>9</sup>. The Christian teaching of family is rooted in Jesus Christ and in the Holy

<sup>4</sup> Priest.Prof.Ilie Moldovan, op.cit., p.86.

<sup>5</sup> Priest Prof. . Dumitru Stăniloae, *The Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, vol. III, Bucharest, 1978, p.182.

<sup>6</sup> Leon R. Kass, op.cit., p.10

<sup>7</sup> Henricus Renckens, *La Bible et les origines du monde*, Tournai, Desclée, 1964, p.14.

<sup>8</sup> PhD.Candidate Rene Broscăreanu, op.cit., p.107

<sup>9</sup> Priest Lecturer Ghe. Popa, *The Christian family: a spiritual and theological perspective* in *The Christian Family*, Iassy, 1995, p.145

Apostles's preaching , and later based on the Holy Fathers' teachings. This bond, having the attribute of a mystery, proves that man is not only a being with physiological, sociological and psychological functions, but he is also and promordially the son belonging to the Kingdom of God, which means his entire life is meant to serve God Himself<sup>10</sup>. Through the Mystery of Matrimony, the bond between bride and groom is blessed by the devine grace which accompanies them on their way to perfection when they unite to Christ, transcending their natural condition. By participating at the wedding in the town of Cana in Galilee (John 2:1-11), The Saviour restores the primordial state of family. He is not only a theorist of family but he also sets a good example of a son who obeys and takes care of his parents (Luca 2:51). Jesus Christ the Saviour places emphasis on the monogamous feature of family, condemning poligamy as a straying away from the heavenly order : "*Haven't you read that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female ?*" ( Matthew 19:4 ), characteristic also proclaimed by the Holy Fathers<sup>11</sup>.

**II.4. Pauline teaching of family .** St. Paul the Apostle pays special attention to marriage, which he considers a "*a gift from God*" (Romans 7: 2-3; I Corinthians 7:2, 3-17; 14:34-35; II Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5: 2-11; Colossians 1:18-21; I Thessalonians 4:4; I Timothy 2:8-15; 3:2-4; 4 : 3; 5 : 9-16; Tit 1:6; 2 :1-5; Hebrews 11:4). The woman is also called for the same salvation as her man is<sup>12</sup>, since she makes her equal contribution to marriage, bears the same faith in her soul and grace aquired through the Mystery of Mariage. Marriage is a divine institution, as "*for just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman, and all things come from God*" (Corinthians 11:12 From the perspective of his teaching, St. Paul the Apostle shows the indissoluble bond of marriage, similar to the unity of the Holy Trinity. In the Pauline theology, marriage is established by God as a means of preventing sin and a way for the married couple to be saved.

#### **II.5. Marriage from the perspective of the Holy Fathers' teaching**

Apart from the Holy Scripture which allows us to get familiar with Jesus Christ The Saviour's teaching, Revelation lies in the Sacred Tradition, as well. The Holy Fathers, true torches of the grace, by means of their teachings, lit the moral religious life of the newly established communities. The debated issues were various, highlighting both the moral

---

<sup>10</sup>Jean Meyendorff, *Le Marriage dans perspective orthodoxe*, Paris, 1986, p.8.

<sup>11</sup>Saint. Irineu of Lugdunum, *The demonstration of the apostolic preaching*, translate by Prof. Remus Rus, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 2001, p.75; St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis X*, 4, translated by Priest D. Fecioru, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 2003, p.106

<sup>12</sup>Gheorghe Papuc, *The Christian Life according to the Pauline Epistles*, in „ST”, year VII, nr. 5-6, 1955, p. 359

religious life of the christians, through messages encouraging them to resist the persecutions and subject matters of eclessiastical doctrine such as: the Holy Mysteries, The Church, the ecclesiastical hierarchy<sup>13</sup>. Patristics can be classified in three main categories:

- a) The Apostolic Fathers' period
- b) The polemic apologetic period
- c) The post-apologetic period<sup>14</sup>

The Holy Fathers insist that family members pay due attention to grievous sins which destroy the unity and harmony of family. The most dreadful sins attacking the indissolubility of family are the following: 'envy'<sup>15</sup>, 'lust, adultery, spoiling of children'<sup>16</sup>, 'sodomy'<sup>17</sup>, 'infanticide'<sup>18</sup>. Relationships between husband and wife must be based on mutual love, respect, help and decency. "*Love is the root, source and mother of all existing good things*"<sup>19</sup>. It is difficult to give a complete definition of love and the relationship between husband and wife. Love, irrespective of its forms, names or ways of manifestation, is the foundation on which family is built.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE NORMS

#### 3.1. The union between Christ and His Church as a pattern of relationships between husband and wife

According to the New Law, the union between a man and a woman is seen as a great 'Mystery' ( Ephesians 5:32), as it follows the pattern of the relationship between Christ and His Church: Christ is the head of the Church and the Church is His Body. The Orthodox Church considers the second and the third marriage as a concession, but totally rejects the fourth marriage<sup>20</sup>. Only the first marriage keeps its quality of Holy Mystery, whereas the other two following are religious services, as a concession made by the Church as a result of men and women's incapacity of living without being married, after ending up their first marriage for

<sup>13</sup>Priest Prof.PhD. I.G.Coman, *Patrology*, vol. I, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1978, p.33

<sup>14</sup>Priest Prof.PhD D. Monk, *Catechetics for Theological Institutes*, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1976, p.26; Pr.Prof. N. Petrescu, *Catechetics for Theological Seminars*, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1978, p.33

<sup>15</sup>St. Clement of Rome, *Epistle to the Corinthians*, VI, 2-3, p.49

<sup>16</sup>*Epistle of Barnabas*, XX. I; XIX.4; X.7; *Didache* III.3; V.1.

<sup>17</sup>*Epistle of Barnabas*, X.8, p.127

<sup>18</sup>*Ibidem*, XX.2, p.13

<sup>19</sup>Priest Ghe. Paschia, op.cit., p.100

<sup>20</sup>Hristu Andrusos, *Symbolism*, translated by Priest Justin Moisescu, The Publishing House of Metropolitan Centre of Oltenia, Craiova, 1955, p.321

various reasons. This principle regarding the indissolubility of marriage and its monogamous nature were emphasized by Saint Paul the Apostle: “*are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife*” (I Corinthians 7:27). The role of a woman is to be a man’s partner for life, as valuable and honourable as he is. She transcends the status of a living thing, as she is viewed in the paganism or even in the Jewish religion, since “*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is male and female, for we are all one in Jesus Christ*” (Galatians 3:28)

## CHAPTER 4

### BIBLICAL NORMS REGARDING MARRIAGE AT THE PRESENT TIME

#### 4.1. Marriage as the foundation of the monogamous family

Marriage is rooted in the plan of creation, having the same purpose: creation. The Holy Mystery of Marriage bears the ‘*seal of the Holy Trinity*’<sup>21</sup>, being able to create material, spiritual and moral values, as a consequence of God’s likeness existing in man. Marriage is, from the perspective of the New Testament, a resumption of creation<sup>22</sup>. Family, which emerges as a result of marriage, is considered to be the fundamental cell of society, in the vision of the state. This comparison proves the importance of family and also justifies the struggle and efforts made in order to defend and consolidate it in that its well-being and moral sanity is a prerequisite for the welfare of the entire society. Marriage is paramount in terms of both physical health of its members and their moral sanity since it is the foundation of a nation’s existence and welfare.<sup>23</sup>

#### 4.3. Today’s Challenges against marriage

There have been obviously many changes in the perception and manifestation of family recently in the contemporary period, changes brought about by the reverberations of the industrial civilization, the excessive urbanization, the moral alienation of man, the revolution and transformation, almost reduced to their disappearance, of old established relationships which used to rule man’s life and society in general. In the current context, man is brought up,

---

<sup>21</sup> Priest Constantin Galeriu, *The Mystery of the Wedding*, in *Theological Studies*, 2nd series, year XII (1960), nr. 7-8, p.485

<sup>22</sup> His Eminence Prof. Teodosie Petrescu, Foreword to the opening of the International Symposium dedicated to the relation between the Holy Mysteries and the Christian Family, *The Holy Mysteries and the Christian Family* (17-19 of October 2011) at the Monastery „Acoperământul Maicii Domnului” - Dorna Arini, Vasiliana Publishing House '98, Sibiu-Iassyi, 2012, p.8

<sup>23</sup> His Grace Bishop Nicolae Macariopolski, *The Christian Family as Church of Family*, in MB, 1967, nr. 4-6, p. 55

since early infancy, to become successful no matter what and lead a life according to his own rules, to fulfill his needs and desires at any cost, most at the time at the expense of his fellows<sup>24</sup> interests. Very often, these goals hide rapacity and selfishness, lack of sensitivity and individualism. Man's God is currently money and his religion has become hedonism and self-indulgence, in a society which cultivates, sometimes to an exaggerated degree, all these ephemeral false joys. In this light, starting a family seems to be old-fashioned and giving birth to children becomes a hindrance in the way of personal development and everyday life pleasures. Thus family is repeatedly assaulted and severely attacked by the frivolous challenges of this world's spirit. The image of the meeting between a man and a woman has been perverted, with terrible consequences for both themselves and others, that is the results of such meetings: more and more homeless children, drug and alcohol addicts, violent juvenile criminals. The profound erotization of today's society, the spirit of hedonism, which is present everywhere and intensively promoted by any means, is a sad fact of the present day. In the name of human rights, the widespread idea of sexual 'liberalization' and 'democratization' or of a new 'amatatory order'<sup>25</sup> is becoming a common place. Obviously, family, in its traditional form, that we have inherited from our ancestors, finds itself "in distress"<sup>26</sup>. Very few people are likely to contract a marriage, most of them preferring a disorganized life, without taking any responsibilities for their partners, indulging themselves in the immediate pleasure which, once it has vanished, for different reasons (the partner's disease, a difficult period of time etc), leads to separation and search for a new partner. Even when the two partners' cohabitation lasts for a while, it takes different unconventional forms, outside marriage, in concubinage relationships. People give a lot of false reasons for this situation: lack of time or money, their need for professional development, or an explanation, which is gaining more ground, namely that an official paper is not necessary to consolidate the relation between the two spouses. More and more people prefer occasional relations, with no responsibilities or emotional implications whatsoever, whereby lust and ephemeral indulgence are encouraged at the expense of high morals and spirituality. Frivolous lifestyle, the nourishment of the body and the fulfillment of desired lusts, most of which sinful and vicious, are searched for. Man has ended up ignoring himself, denying what is beautiful, spiritual and sensitive deep in himself and choosing material well-being, pleasures

---

<sup>24</sup>Priest Prof.DPhD. Ioan Teșu, *The contemporary family – between and its ideal and crisis*, in *Theological Studies*, year 2011, nr.1, p.71

<sup>25</sup>Pascal Bruckner, Alain Finkielkraut, *The New Amatory Disorder*, translated from French by Luminița Brăileanu, Trei Publishing House, Bucharest, 2005, p.71

<sup>26</sup>Christos Yannar, *The Freedom of Morality*, Anastasia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002, p.176

and sensuality instead. This magic, self-delusion, leads man to the verge of his existence, to a state of existential nothingness<sup>27</sup>. He chooses to live a tenebrous life due to his perverted consciousness, which, this way, enables him to live and bear this kind of life, devoid of any morals, until, like the prodigal son, wakes up from the nightmare and realises he lies on the bottom of a chasm. Most of the time, he is so frightened of his terrible condition that he cannot see a way out but committing suicide.

The contemporary theology identifies the cause of the current crisis that today's family is undergoing, which lies in the modern individualistic lifestyle and the gap between the two spouses who do not understand and appreciate one another any longer, forgetting about the Mystery of Marriage that united them : *"It is obvious that the way of life imposed upon us, in this context of an autonomous civilization and consumer society, undermines (if not totally destroys) the institution of marriage. It is all due to the individualistic lifestyle, which seems to prevent man from transcending his material limits and having a committed relation with someone. Within this individualistic background, being faithful and committed to the matrimonial relationship is everywhere presented and thus perceived as natural necessity for freedom, a release from conventions and routine, an escape to an adventurous life by breaking out the established patterns"*<sup>28</sup>. In contemporary consumer society only profitable things or actions are appreciated and the idea of being a winner at any costs is being instilled into people's minds. This society is shaping up human relationships, and consequently the relations within a family<sup>29</sup>, following the same pattern. Among the most common vices, leading to the destruction of family, are: drunkenness, sexual intemperance, sins against nature, wrath, violence etc. Saint Paul the Apostle demands that *"marriage be honoured by all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, because God will judge the adulterer and the sexually immoral"* (Hebrews 13:4). Saint John Chrysostom emphasizes the fact that family must be founded only upon the priests' prayers performed in front of the Holy Altar.

#### **4.3.8. New family types**

Another cause that led to the dissolution of the traditional family and impedes the forming of new families, by weakening its internal cohesion, is the advent of new family types, so-called modern families, which are deviations from the natural way of cohabitation between a man and a woman.

---

<sup>27</sup>Priest.Prof.PhD.Ioan Teșu, op.cit., p.71

<sup>28</sup>Christos Yannaras, op.cit., p.177

<sup>29</sup>Erich Fromm, *The Art of Love*, Anima Publishing House, Bucharest, 1995, p.11

## CONCLUSIONS

The Christian family is definitely superior to all forms of family throughout history and this is because it is blessed by Jesus Christ the Saviour by participating at the wedding in the town of Cana in Galilee. It is based upon love capable of sacrifice, following His Example of sacrifice, for “*perfect love is crucified love. This is the reason why the wreaths worn by groom and bride remind us of the thorn wreath worn by Jesus the Lord*”. In spite of its high moral and spiritual status, it is known that the christian marriage is undergoing a severe crisis nowadays. This crisis is due to the deliberate rejection of the christian type of family, which is considered outdated and thus replaced by a new type of family, more suitable for libertinism and inappropriate relationships, so intensively promoted recently under the umbrella of human rights activism. Starting from these concrete realities of today’s society, this paper has aimed at highlighting the characteristic aspects of the christian family, based on the teachings of the New Testament and the Holy Fathers. We have presented the situation of the family in heaven, then the fall into sin and the dramatic condition triggered by this fall, whose consequences affected the entire humanity, including marriage. This sad situation is visible in the way marriage is perceived both in paganism and in the Jewish religion.

We have taken into account the historical and spiritual continuity that link the two Testaments and highlighted the clear answers and efficient solutions to the everyday problems of marriage that we have found in the New Testament and the Patristic literature. We also presented the coordinates of family exactly the same way they were established by Jesus Christ: marriage was ranked at the height of a Holy Mystery when it was blessed by Jesus at the wedding in the town of Cana in Galilee.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND THEIR TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH**

1. BOR (Biserica Ortodoxă Română ) - The Romanian Orthodox Church
2. BRC (Biserica Romano-Catolică) - The Roman Catholic Church
3. BSS (Biblioteca Sfântului Sinod) – The Library of the Holy Synod
4. CBO (Canoanele Bisericii Ortodoxe) – The Canons of the Orthodox Church
5. EA (Editura Academiei) - The Publishing House of the Romanian Academy
6. EIBMBOR (Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române)-The Publishing House of The Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church
7. GB (Glasul Bisericii – revistă teologică) – Voice of the Church - theological magazine
8. MA (Mitropolia Ardealului) – Metropolitanate of Transylvania
9. MB (Mitropolia Banatului) – Metropolitanate of Banat
10. MMS (Mitropolia Moldovei și a Sucevei) – Metropolitanate of Moldova and Suceava
11. MO (Mitropolia Olteniei) – Metropolitanate of Oltenia
12. O (Ortodoxia - revistă teologică) – Orthodoxy- theological magazine
13. PG (Patrologia Graeca) – Greek Patrology
14. PL (Patrologia Latina) – Latin Patrology
15. PSB (Părinți și scriitori bisericești – colecție de traduceri patristice în limba română) -
16. ST (Studii teologice- revistă teologică) – Theological Studies-  
theological magazine
17. VO (Vestitorul Ortodoxiei- revistă teologică) – The Herald of Orthodoxy -theological magazine

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### I. SOURCES:

*The Bible* or *The Holy Scripture*, published under the guidance of His Beatitude Patriarch Teoctist, with the approval of The Holy Synod, EIBMBOR, BUCHAREST, 2005 *The Bible* or *The Holy Scripture*, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 2008

*The Holy Scripture*, Bartolomeu Valeriu Anania, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 2001

*The Hebrew Bible*, edited by Rudolph Kittel, Württembergische Bibelanstalt, Stuttgart, 1973

### II. LITURGICAL BOOKS

*The Aghiasmatarian*, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1992, 2002

*The Euchologion*, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1965, 1984, 1998

*The Lenten Triodion*, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 2000

### III. PATRISTIC WRITINGS, CATECHISMS, CHRISTIAN FAITH BOOKS

A. Cohen, *The Talmud*, translated by C. Litman, Hasefer Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001  
Abrudan, Pr. Prof. Dumitru; Cornișescu, Deacon, Prof. Emilian, *Biblical Archeology*,  
EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1994

*Catechisme de l'Eglise Catholique*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican, 1992 *Filocalia*,  
vol. I, translated from Greek by Priest Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, Sibiu, 1947;

Harisma Publishing House, Bucharest, 1993; Humanitas Publishing House,  
Bucharest, 2005

*Filocalia*, vol. 2, Humanitas Publishing House, 1999

*Filocalia*, vol. 3, translated by Priest Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, Sibiu, Archdiocese Typography  
1948; Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1999

*Filocalia*, vol. 4, translated by Priest Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, Sibiu, 1948

*Filocalia*, vol. 6, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1977

*PSB*, vol. 1, translation, notes and clues by Priest D. Fecioru, EIBMBOR, Bucharest 1979

*PSB*, vol. 2, translated by Priest T. Bodogae, Pr. Olimp Căciulă and Pr. D. Fecioru, EIBMBOR,  
Bucharest, 1980

*PSB*, vol.3, translated by Nicolea Chițescu, Eliodor Constantinescu, Paul Papadopol,  
David Popescu, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1981

*PSB*, vol.4, translation, notes and clues by Priest D. Fecioru, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1982

*PSB*, vol.5, Pr.D. translation, notes and clues by Fecioru, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1982

*PSB*, vol.6, translated by Priest Prof. T. Bodogae, Priest Prof. Nicolae Neaga and Zorica Lațcu,  
Bucharest, 1981

#### **IV. DICTIONARIES, ENCYCLOPEDIAS, LEXICONS, VOCABULARIES**

Arthur G. Patzia, Anthony J. Petrotta, *Dictionary of Biblical Studies*, Bucharest,  
Logos Publishing House, 2008

Bebe P., *Dictionary. Women and Judaism*, Hasefer Publishing House, Bucharest,

2002 Benjamin David, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, London, 1970

Bria, Priest Prof. Ioan, *Dictionary of Orthodox Theology*, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1981, 1994

*Encyclopedia of Judaism*, translated by Viviane Prager, C. Litman, Țicu

Goldstein, coordinated by Viviane Prager, Hasefer Publishing House, Bucharest,  
2000

#### **V. LAWS, LEGAL DECISIONS, OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS, LAW BOOKS**

Albu, I., *Family Law*, The Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House, Bucharest 1975

*The Family Code*, Lumina Lex Publishing House, The Didactic and Pedagogical  
Publishing House, Bucharest, 1993

*The Family Canon Law, The Latin Catholic Church*, Book IV, Sapiaentia, 2004

Filipescu, His Eminence, *Family Law*, The Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House,  
Bucharest, 1965

Ionașcu, Traian, *Marriage in the law of the Socialist Republic of Romania*., EA, Bucharest,  
1964

*The Religious Legislation of the State of Israel*, Tel-Aviv, 1968

*The Rules of The Romanian Orthodox Church*, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1953, 2003

Meyendorff, Jean, *Le mariage dans la perspective orthodoxe* (trad. de l'anglais par Lucette  
Marçais), Paris, YMCA-PRESS/O.E.I.L., (coll. L'Echelle de Jacob, n° 5), 1986

## VI. TEXTBOOKS, TREATISES, SPECIALIZED STUDIES

Hârlăoanu, A., *A History of Mosaism and Ancient Israel*, Nemira Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001

Mitrofan, Iolanda, Nicolae Mitrofan, *Family from A to Z*, Publishing House of Students, Bucharest, 1991

Mladin, His Eminence Nicolae, Metropolitan of Ardeal, *Studies of Moral Theology*, The Publishing House of Archdiocese, Sibiu, 1969

Mladin, His Eminence Nicolae, Metropolitan of Ardeal, Deacon. Prof. Orest Bucevschi, Prof. Constantin Pavel, Diac. Prof. Ioan Zăgrean, *Moral Orthodox Theology*, textbook for Faculties of Theology, vol. I, II, Reîntregirea Publishing House, Alba-Iulia, 2003

Nicolaescu, Deacon Nicolae, Priest Grigore Marcu, Priest Sofronie Vlad, *The Study of the New Testament*, 2nd edition, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1977

Stănoiu, A., M. Voinea, *The Sociology of Family*, TUB, Bucharest, 1983

\*\*\**The Study of the Old Testament*, textbook for theological students' use, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1954

Zăgrean, Archdeacon prof. Ioan, *Christian Morals, Textbook for Theological Seminars*, Bucharest, 1974

## VII. ARTICLES, STUDIES AND MAGAZINES

Achimescu, Priest Lecturer PhD. Nicolae, *The Christian Family between Tradition and Modernity. Theological and sociological Considerations* in the magazine *Theology and Life*, year LXX (1994), nr. 5-7

Cândea, Priest Prof. Spiridon, *Modern Life and Family*, in „MA”, XII (1967), nr. 10-12

Coman, Priest Vasile, *Family in the light of the Holy Scripture*, in „MB”, anul XVII (1967), nr. 1-3

Cornițescu, PhD Candidate Emilian, *Relationships between parents and children according to the Old Testament*, in ST, 1969, nr. 1-2

Cornițescu, Deacon Prof. Emilian, *Archaeological finds in Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Syria, Asia Minor, Phenicia and Arabia related to the Old Testament*, in „ST”,

an XXXVI (1984), nr. 7-8

\*\*\**The pastoral word of the Holy Synod of BOR against abortion and in defence of the sacred gift of life*, in „BOR”, nr.1-3/1993, „GB”, nr.1-3/1993

Galeriu, Priest Prof. Constantin, *The Sacrament of the Wedding*, in „ST”, nr. 7-8/1960

Ivan, Prof. Iorgu D., *The Family Code*, in „BOR”, LXXII (1954), nr. 4.

Macariopolski, PhD. Nicolae, *The Christian Family as Church of Family*, translated by Ioan Cristea, in „MB”, nr. 4-6, 1967.

Manolache, Anca, *The Holy Mystery of the Wedding*, in „GB”, XL, (1981), nr. 1-

2 Mihoc, Priest Prof. Vasile, *Marriage and Family in the Light of the Holy*

*Scripture, Childbirth, the main purpose of marriage*, in „MA”, an XXX, nr. 9-10, sept. -oct., 1985.

Moldovan, Priest. Conf. Ilie, *The Sacrament of the Wedding*, in ”0”, XXXI (1979), nr. 3-4.

Muntean, Priest Phd. Cristian, *The family in the vision of Bishop Vasile of Oradea* (1970-1972), in „BOR”, year CXXIV (2006), nr. 1-3.

Papuc, Deacon Gheorghe, *The Family in the Old Testament*, in „MA”, year (1960), nr. 11-12.

Pavel, Prof. Constantin C., *Moral issues regarding marriage and family*, in „BOR”, nr. 1-2/ 1967.

His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, *The light of the stone house. The Christian family – the hope of Romania*, in „Ziarul Lumina”, nr. 27 (141) / 2008.

Popa, Priest Lecturer Gheorghe, *The Christian family: a spiritual and theological perspective* in *Theology and Life*, Metropolitanate of Moldova and Bucovina, new series, year IV (LXX), nr. 5-7, 1994.

Răducă, Priest Prof. Vasile, *Marriage- mystery of sacrifice and spiritual fulfillment*, in "S.T.", XLIV (1992), nr. 3-4.

Rose, Ieromonah Seraphim, *The child amidst temptations*, in magazine „Purpose”, nr. 28 / June 2005, p. 58-59.

Semen, Priest Conf. PhD. Petre, *Family and its importance in the Old Testament*, in  
Metropolitanate of Moldova and Bucovina, new series, year IV (LXX), nr. 5-7,  
May-July, 1994.

Saint John Chrysostom, *Homily on marriage – A commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, translation and notes by Marcel Hancheş, in „AB”, nr. 1-3, 2002.

Teoctist, His Beatitude , Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, *Children, the image of the infant Jesus*, in „BOR”, nr. 7-9 / 1991.

Verzan, Sabin, *Family from the perspective of the New Testament* in „MO”, nr. 9-10, 1954.

Vizitiu, Priest lecturer Mihai, *Family from the perspective of Jesus Christ and the Apostolic Fathers' teachings*, in Theology and Life , Metropolitanate of Moldova and Bucovina, new series, year IV (LXX), nr. 5-7, 1994.

### **VIII. OTHER WRITINGS IN THE ROMANIAN LANGUAGE:**

Abrudan, Priest Prof. D. , Deacon. Prof. E. Cornilescu, *The Study of the Old Testament, Biblical Archeology*, EIBMBOR Bucharest, 1994. Revised edition, Sibiu, 2002.

Andrei, His Eminence, Archbishop of Alba Iulia, *Today's youth in front of a dilemma*, in volume „*The Christian Paradox and the book of youth*”, volume coordinated by Priest Ilie Trif, Reîntregirea Publishing House, Alba Iulia, 2008.

Ciobotea, Daniel, Mitropolitan of Moldova and Bucovina, *The Christian family – the hope of Romania* , published in the volume dedicated to The International Congress, „*Family and life at the beginning of a new millennium*”, Bucharest 2002.

Coman, Priest Prof. Ioan G., *Saint Basil about the usefulness of the Hellenic Culture for the Christian education*, in „*The Classical Miracle*”, Bucharest, 1940.

Crainic, Nichifor, Nicolaie Mladin, Spiridon Cândeа, Emilian Vasilescu, *Youth and resurrection*, Omniscop Publishing House, Craiova, 1999.

Cucoş, Prof. Constantin, *The Religious Education*, Polirom Publishing House Bucharest 1999.

Daniel, His Beatitude, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox, in *The Christian Family – The church at home*, in vol. „*Today's Christian Family*”, Trinitas Publishing House, Iassy, 1995.

Earl H. Trutza, *The Women of the Bible*, Lumina Lumii Publishing House, 1989.

Evdokimov, Paul, *The Woman and the Salvation of the World*, forward by Olivier Clement, translated by Gabriela Moldoveanu, improved translation and revision by priest lecturer PhD Vasile Răducă, The Publishing House of Christiana Christian Philanthropic and Medical Association, Bucharest, 1995, 2004.

Fecioru, Priest PhD. D., *The pedagogical ideas of St. John Chrysostom*, Bucharest, 1937, 1957.

Ford, David and Mary, *Marriage, a way to holiness. The lives of the married saints*, translated by Constantin Făgeţan, Sofia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, 2007.

Gavrilă, Priest PhD Vasile, *The Wedding – life in the Kingdom of God*, Foreword by His Eminence, Archbishop of Caransebes prof. PhD Liviu (Laurentiu) Streza, The Publishing House of Fundația „Tradiția Românească”, Bucharest, 2001, 2004, Christiana Publishing House, Bucharest, 2004.

Ionaşcu, A., M. Mureşan, M. Costin, V. Ursu, *Family and its role in the Romanian Society*, Dacia, Publishing House Cluj - Napoca, 1975.

Leonte, Irina, *The Christian Family: parents and children*, in vol. *Today's Christian Family*, Trinitas Publishing House, Iassy, 1995, p. 157-168.

MacArthur, John, *Twelve extraordinary women*, Scriptum, Oradea, 2009.

Meyendorff, John, *Marriage— the Orthodox perspective* translated by Cezar Login, Patmos Publishing House, Cluj Napoca, 2007.

Mitrofan, I., *Conjugal couple - harmony and disharmony*, The Scientific și Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1998.

Mitrofan, N., *Love and marriage*, The Scientific și Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1984.

Necula, Priest Prof. Nicolae D., *Today's Family, pastoral and social problems*, in „GB” nr. 912/2001.

Necula, Piest. Prof. Nicolae D., *Is it allowed to officiate the Sacrament of wedding between a an orthodox Christian and a heretic ? in Tradition an innovation in the liturgical service*, vol. 2, Publishing House of Archdiocese of Lower Danube, Galați, 2001, p. 319-324.

Paulescu, Nicolae, *Instincts, vices and conflicts*, Anastasia Publishing House, Bucharest, 1995.

Popa, Priest Gheorghe, *Spiritual communion and renewal within the secularizing context of today's world*, Trinitas Publishing House, Iassy, 2000.

Popescu, Raluca, *Introduction into the sociology of family. The Romanian family in the contemporary society*, Polirom Publishing House, Iassy, 2009.