

VI. REVIEWS

Patriciu Vlaicu and Răzvan Perșa, eds., *Canonical Tradition and Mission of the Church* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2018), 350 pp. [In Romanian]

The first volume of the collection “Studii Nomocanonice” brings together the papers presented at the International Conference of Canon Law and Orthodox Theology from Bruxelles (3-5 September 2015). The 13 contributions are divided in five sections, each of them having a distinct importance for this theological domain: canonical tradition, canonical principles, role of clergy, Church and law, the actuality of the tradition.

The only article included in the section *The Canonical Tradition of the Orthodox Church* is dedicated by Revd. Assoc. Prof. Irimie Marga to “The Canonical View of Revd. Prof. Liviu Stan” [pp. 9-25], one of the most important professors of Canon Law in the Romanian Orthodox Church. His canonical thinking is complex and profound, and the author underlines five main characteristics: a) his view is based on Andrei Șaguna's ecclesiastically canonical foundation; b) Liviu Stan's contribution as a pathfinder for the Romanian Orthodox Canon Law; c) his preoccupation to rediscover the Orthodox canonical principles, especially with that of laity's participation to Church's life; 4) his persistence to return to the study of ecclesiastic law sources and e) Stan's approach to all current problems faced by the Church.

The section *The Fundamental Canonical Principles in the Tradition of Orthodox Church* opens with the study signed by Assist. Prof. Iulian Mihai Constantinescu, “La Tradition canonique orthodoxe et l'application du principe hierarchique dans la vie pratique ecclesiastique (The Orthodox Canonical Tradition and the Implementation of



the hierarchical principle in the practical ecclesiastic Life)" [pp. 29-48]. In this contribution the author analyses one of the most important principles for the organization and leadership of the Church – the hierarchical principle, which is directly related to the other canonical principles and highlights the problem of "canonical primacy" in the sense that there cannot be a bishop above the ecclesiastical power, transmitted through apostolic succession. This subject is even more relevant when we think that the use of this hierarchical principle within the practical life of the Church has raised many issues, with some canonical implications for the inter-orthodox relationships, due to different interpretations and ecclesiastical interests of some local Autocephalous Churches.

The following study, "Synodality and primacy: expressions of Ecclesiastic Communion and joint Responsibility" [pp. 49-73], written by Revd. Assoc. Prof. Patriciu Vlaicu, highlights the relation between the sacramental and eschatological dimension of the Church and the institutional one. The author emphasises on the one hand the ways in which synodality is manifested at the local level, and on the other that this was the effect of the influence of the Roman-Byzantine Empire on the Church's structure.

The study signed by Revd. Assist. Prof. Grigore Dinu Moş, "Is 'sacramental oikonomia' a coherent and faithful expression of Orthodox ecclesiology and is it useful for its ecumenical vocation? Reflections on some theological conceptions and official statements" [pp. 74-100], explores the nuances of this concept and the limitations of this practice, underlining the two positions of St. Cyprian of Carthage and Saint Basil the Great regarding the admission of heretics and schismatics, and their influence over time. The author considers that the theory of 'sacramental economy' does not represent "the tradition and perennial teaching of the Orthodox Church".

The third section, *The Role of Clerics in the Canonical Tradition of the Orthodox Church*, begins with the study of Revd. Assist. Prof. Nicolae-Coriolan Dura, entitled "Communicating the Priest's Mission in a Secular World" [pp. 103-117]. The author admits that there is a great temptation for clerics to identify themselves with the world, but the Church has kept vigil, so that, through her canonical norms, the aspect connected to this menace should be cleared up since the beginning. They are guided by these rules to know exactly what the nature of their service in this world is.

The next study, "The historical Developing of Clerical Offices and Canonical Norms regarding the clerics in the Canonical Tradition of the Orthodox Church" [pp. 118-165], written by Assist. Răzvan Perşa, analyses the terminological and historical considerations regarding the title of clerical offices and emphasizes different ways of naming the clerical orders and offices in the Orthodox Church, such as: inferior and superior clergy. Referring to the non-clerical personnel the author stresses that the inferior clergy although doesn't receive through χειροτονία the admission in the sacramental hierarchy, they have distinct functions and liturgical responsibilities in order to build the relationship between clerics and laity.

The fourth section, *Church and Law*, includes two contributions. The first one, "The natural and legal persons in the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church" [pp. 169-198] is signed by Assoc. Prof. Liviu-Marius Harosa, who explains the conditions required by laity and clerics to hold their distinct place in the ecclesiastic community. The other text, "The Religious Communities and European Court of Human Rights" [pp.

199-211] belongs to Revd. Ionuț-Gabriel Corduneanu and presents the difficulties of the international organism to define 'faith' or 'religion' and the religious character of a community. Finally, the Court has found two criteria to identify any religious communities: self-identification (which requires an organized structure) and the approval of the national authority. The key is the institutional autonomy of every religious group and of course the neutrality of the State.

The fifth and final section, *Tradition and Mission in actuality*, opens with the study of Jean-Paul Durand "Les attentats de janvier 2015 et le respect laïc en discipliner France. Comment la liberte de la satire? Responses de l'Etat de droit a un 'islamisme' terroriste (The attacks of January 2015 and laic respect in disciplining France. How far can go the freedom of satire? Responses of the Rule of Law to a terrorist 'Islamism')" [pp. 215-224]. The author explores the reaction of the French State towards the terrorist attacks which are identified as Islamist attacks, as in the case of Charlie Hebdo attack, but the main problem remains the limitations and responsibilities of the journalists, who are protected by the French law for the freedom of press (29 July 1881). There are exposed some examples of attacks against both Muslims and Catholic Christians, even against the Pope, but according to the French Law and Jurisprudence neither of them was classified as slander and so to risk perpetuating this kind of situations remains opened.

Revd. Assoc. Prof. Cristian Sonea tries in his study, entitled "The Christian mission in a changing ecclesial and global context. The Role of Academic Orthodox Theology" [pp. 225-248], to identify the main challenges of the current Christian mission. This includes solutions and answers to a new kind of spirituality, the need of a new kind of theological discourse and a new way of making mission among the migrants and proselytes. Finally, the author addresses the problem of the theological teaching and its importance.

The second contribution of Assist. Răzvan Perșa is called "The mission and involvement of lay and monks in the life of the Orthodox Church according to Canonical Tradition" [pp. 249-300] and follows the role of the laity and monachism, underlining especially the rights and duties of laymen: to participate to the exercise of the sacramental, teaching an jurisdictional power according to the canonical rules as they were specified over time.

The next study, "Bioethics: Challenge and Chance for the Church. The Christian under the pressure of bioethical decisions" [pp. 301-331], belongs to Revd. Prof. Ștefan Iloaie and tries to establish the role of Bioethics in the Dialog between science and faith, placed at the interference of many other scientific domains. The author stresses that the needs and values of the Christian family are under the pressure of the bio-ethical decisions, which regard many aspects of our daily life. This is way we need landmarks and a Christian vision for viable Bioethics.

The last text, "Diacritical thinking. Apology and cultural mission" [pp. 332-350], is written by Assist. Prof. Nicolae Turcan, who proves that the diacritical thinking joins the dialogue with God and the dialogue with the world. This kind of thinking "may take the form of criticism but also of apologetic; can become a philosophical discourse in the horizon of faith, a Christian philosophy, as well as a theological formulation in the light of divine inspiration and attentive to the current philosophy, a kind of philosophical

REVIEWS

theology; can appear as analogous and contemplative thinking [...] often paradoxical, the dialectical thinking takes place in the interval between philosophy and theology seeking to glorify with discernment and fidelity to the truth of the Church, God who cannot be comprehended by the mind” (p. 350).

The papers included in this volume highlight once more that the preoccupations in the field of Canon Law and Missiology address real problems faced by our society and prove that the Orthodox Theology has a say in solving at least part of them.

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