

HABILITATION THESIS ABSTRACT

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The image of Christ reflected in the Church of the Apocalypse

The study “The image of Christ reflected in the Church of the Apocalypse” is aimed at presenting the scientific and academic results and achievements in the field of theology, New Testament, obtained in the academic career starting with 2009, the year when I defended my Ph.D. thesis. The didactic and research activity was started immediately after my master’s degree obtained at the Pontifical Urban University of Rome, Italy. In 1999, upon my return to my country, I was invited to teach biblical science courses as associate professor at the “St. Joseph” Roman-Catholic Theological Institute of Iasi, as well as at the Franciscan Theological Institute of Roman.

Upon completion of doctoral studies (2005-2009), I resumed the teaching activity at the “St. Joseph” Roman-Catholic Theological Institute of Iasi. Apart from the didactic activity, I accepted the challenge of the vast and fascinating field of biblical research. The challenges were numerous. One of them relates to the mystery of the Church, analyzed also from the local and traditional perspective and in a permanent process of transformation. Who is the Church, how should the Church live and how should it relate to Christ, its head?

The research activity focused on my two works: the master’s thesis on the Gospel of St. Luke, and the doctoral thesis on the Apocalypse of St. John. Consequently, the first direction of my research was inspired by the richness of the Revelation, a both fascinating and difficult work. I tried to go beyond and understand some of its mysteries. The analyses performed and presented in these pages focused more on the Ecclesiology of the book, as well as on its symbolism extracted from the Holy Scripture. This choice can also be accounted for from hermeneutical perspective. The work of John of Patmos can be accurately interpreted if its rich symbolism is understood. On the other hand, the understanding of this book is also conditioned by our understanding of the manner in which the author uses the Holy Scripture, considering that the ideas and images in the book are inspired by the Old and the New Testaments. However, both the symbolism and the use of the sacred Scriptures were ways and methods to describe God’s people throughout its historical journey towards the heavenly Jerusalem.

The second direction of research is focused on the synoptic gospels, the main source to get to know Jesus the Savior. The image of Jesus Christ is at the center of the Bible, of the Church and of the Christian life. The various works (books, articles, conferences) were meant to bring light on the person of the Savior. The analysis was focused on the human dimension of the historical Jesus and also on Christ’s divine dimension perceived from the perspective of faith. Again, the main method used was that of synthesis. In fact, all the works, as well as this work, are aimed at offering a synthesis on Jesus Christ and his community, history and faith, Bible and theology. On the same note, the Christology of the Gospels was combined with the study of the term “Church” from biblical theology perspective. The focus of the scientific research was not necessarily on exegesis, but rather on biblical theology. In fact, the further

specialization at the Pontifical Urban University was oriented in this direction. Furthermore, the scholars who have inspired me belong generally to the Italian biblical school. Nevertheless, in view of a wider context, I have also resorted to the English or German biblical scholars.

The two directions of research, the one focused on the Gospels and the other one on the Apocalypse, can indicate the area of theological expertise: the theme of Ecclesiology as presented in the New Testament. The image of the community of faith or of the Church is at the forefront, being addressed from several perspectives. The studies performed were intended to go into detail in the relationship of the community of faith primarily with Christ (see the books entitled “Jesus Christ in the Synoptic Gospels”, “The Mystery of Jesus and the Disciples’ Perception of Him”). In fact, at ontological and pragmatic level, Ecclesiology is based on Christology. In order to understand its being and to find the right course of action, the Church has the duty to draw inspiration from the model presented by Christ. Furthermore, there was an analysis on the relationship between Ecclesiology and Eschatology. There is a close connection between the historical journey of God’s people and final fulfillment. Finally, the object of study was also represented by the methods of interpretation of the Scriptures practiced by the Christians of the 1st century A.D.

A last area of investigation was focused on the general context of the Scripture, with its themes and challenges. In fact, it was necessary to fit the entire analysis in the broader context of the unity of the Bible, taking into account one of the indications of the Dei Verbum Dogmatic Constitution, namely *analogia Scripturae*.

The content of the work was drafted with the observance of the rules on the preparation of the habilitation thesis. Thus, the first part presents the scientific, didactic and professional results in diachronic manner, taking into account the research directions used. The many books, articles, studies, conferences and communications presented and published in these recent few years were focused on the development of biblical science in the direction of Christology and Ecclesiology at scriptural and theological level. Beyond the scientific effort with its rigor, there was also a focus on update, with the attempt to bring the biblical message as close as possible to man and the current times. The diachronic and synchronous presentation of the results also highlights the ability to organize, manage and facilitate learning and research. This component is in direct connection with the environment where I have been performing my activity in the recent years, namely the Seminary of the Diocese of Iasi, the institution where the future priests are prepared, as well as the recently-founded Faculty of Roman-Catholic Theology of “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University.

In line with the methodology proposed by the education law with regard to the preparation of the habilitation thesis, the second part is dedicated to future perspectives and consists in a project for further development of the academic career including the research activity. The plan is an objective one, yet aspiring to bring minimum progress and a grasp of clarity in the complex panorama of the multitude of ideas present in the world of the third millennium.

As regards the dissemination of the results, the majority of the books were published by the Sapientia publishing house, a nationally-recognized academic publishing house and included in the B category by the National Scientific Research Council. A series of scientific articles, which I consider important, were published in the “Theologia Catholica Latina”

journal of the “Babeş-Bolyai” University of Cluj. Important studies were also published in Italian in the “Theological Journal” of the Faculty of Catholic Theology of Lugano, Switzerland.

In addition to the articles published in journals indexed in international databases, the work mentions numerous communications and conferences at national and international symposiums or other types of scientific events. In this field of scientific communication, there is a wide area of possibilities and perspectives. I am particularly thinking at the opportunity of a more intense dialogue with the other Christian communities.

To conclude, I hope that this synthesis of the scientific results will open the door to better understand the depth of the mystery of Christ and of the Church. At the same time, I hope it will be a stimulus to become aware of our role of people called to build a better world, in the light of the Kingdom of justice, peace and love intended by Jesus Christ.

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