

Cezar Login, *LEITOURGIA, Teologie și practică liturgică – studii* –, Editura Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2014, 191 p.

Mr. Cezar Login, author of the work we present, as father prof. Dr. Vasile Stanciu says in the preface, is a physician and professor at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy “Iuliu Hațieganu” in Cluj-Napoca. At the same time he is also a theologian with serious concerns for many years in the area of liturgical theology, of ritual and Orthodox Church typicon, where he published numerous specialized studies in journals and books in the country and abroad. He is also a member in prestigious scientific societies of liturgical theology from abroad, like *The Society of Oriental Liturgics* and *Societas Liturgica*, as well in our country like the *Association of Romanian liturgists “Ene Braniște”*. His concerns in liturgical theology and Church rite materialized also in founding in 2007 a specialist collection - *Liturgica* - at the Publishing House *Renașterea* of Archdiocese of Vad, Feleac and Cluj. He was also concerned with the translation into Romanian of many current works and reference books in the field of liturgical theology, signed by sounding name of the Eastern (Alexander Schmemmann, Nikolai Uspensky, John Mayendorff, Paul Mayendorff, Nicolas Lossky, John Breck, Stefanos Alexopoulos etc.) and Western area (Juan Mateos, Robert F. Taft, Thomas Pott etc.) (p. 8)

Cezar Login’s theological work we refer brings together over twenty articles and studies published in the last eight years in Magazine *Renașterea* from Cluj and other journals or in proceedings of conferences. To give the book a unitary character the studies were organized thematically, beginning with a series of generalities concerning the liturgical time (*Orthodoxy and Liturgy, The Divine Liturgy Time*), continuing with issues concerning the Divine Liturgy (*The non-liturgical days, The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts etc.*), the daily cycle, the great feasts and ends with other aspects of liturgical order and theology. As we learn from the preface all these studies now reunited in one volume were fully adapted and revised to their

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initial form and publication in *Renașterea* magazine, in accordance with the current state of knowledge in the field, but without being radically modified from their original form (p. 9).

In the introduction of the paper explaining the theme title, the author shows that “theology and liturgical practice, combined with religious ritual are two essential topics for the life of the Orthodox Church”. In this respect it should be borne in mind that “our Church services always have two dimensions: the structure and headings, how they are performed, the internal logic of celebrations and their practical dimension on the one hand and the theological content, hymnography and prayers, on the other hand” (p. 11). Therefore, he shows “plenary understanding of a service requires a good knowledge of history of celebration (how it appeared, what changes underwent over time and their cause, etc.), of headings and conduct of service and also the knowledge of the theological content wealth that lays inside prayers and hymnography” (p. 11). This is because “in the absence of historical development knowledge there is a risk of interpretations that have nothing to do with reality and are illogical ...” (pp. 11-12). Then Cezar Login refers to the fact that although initially there was great liturgical diversity gradually it was tended to systematize and standardize the worship. Currently the liturgical theology studies contain many references to two fundamental characteristics of Orthodox liturgical worship: *stability* and *uniformity*. This happens despite the fact that today “... differences can be identified between the various national Orthodox Churches only by form, and not substance... even in one and the same autocephalous Orthodox Church, the service can be inconsistent from one area to another, or even from a place of worship to another” (pp. 12-13). But these differences do not affect the dogmatic and liturgical unity of Orthodoxy as “the liturgical unity of the Orthodox Church is almost perfect in terms of substance and essential elements, with differences only in terms of headings details” (pp. 13-14). So “uniformity should not be understood rigidly but as a uniformity of fundamental elements, having minor differences in worship details” (p. 15). However, Cezar Login warns that “when we talk about renewal of worship, we should bear in mind the existence of stability and uniformity of worship principle. It does not allow modification or suppression of elements by personal whim or taste of ministers or of local churches, because worship is not the product of theologians, bishops or a Synod genius but in its exterior forms, and also in its deep essence it is the collective and

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anonymous work of the whole Orthodox Church, and an expression of the Church unity”, in the sense that “the liturgical celebrations are the foundation and the axis around which the spiritual life gravitates” (pp. 14-15). In conclusion, the author considers that “for preserving the liturgical unity and uniformity it is necessary to have an adequate knowledge of today religious worship and liturgical practice “ as “the absence of this knowledge leads to truncated services, often abbreviated almost irrationally according to the preferences of the minister or of the singer” (p. 15). In another part of the paper the author points out that “the service that respects the typicon... cannot be considered an anachronism, but must be regarded as authentic expression of the experience of the Fathers of the Church who composed the service outlining a true liturgical catechesis” (p. 147). Finally, the author shows that “not knowing the theological content of the services leads to doctrinal deviations”. Therefore, “both aspects - the structure and content - should be viewed as a whole, revealing and developing the same theology: the theology of the Church” (p. 15).

As the author shows in the final part of the introduction, the “volume brings together several articles and studies on liturgical history and theology, on the one hand and on religious ritual, on the other hand (p. 15). Showing his intention in writing these materials, Cezar Login states that “most of them were written as a result of concrete situations in the life of the Church, or to analyze the context of some deviations from the great Byzantine tradition and the experience of the two thousandth Orthodox Church or to prevent them “ (p. 16).

The topics of liturgical theology and practice addressed in this volume are: *Orthodoxy and Liturgy*; *The time of the Divine Liturgy*; *The non-liturgical days*; *The fortieth, Annunciation and Liturgy*; „*Fervently!*”; *The beginning of St. Luke Gospel from September?*; *Communion Hymn*; *Adaptations of night religious services during winter*; *On vigil*; *The dismissal of the services during Pentecostarion*; *An antiphon of the Matins*; *Moses’ Songs –the canon of Matins stikheron*; *The Holy Spirit feast*; *The Elevation of the Holy Cross*; *The Services with „Halleluja” in small lents*; *The Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ*; *How we celebrate The Eve of the Nativity of Christ on Saturday?*; *The liturgical preparation for Holy Theophany*; *A problem of translation in Byzantine Liturgy*; *The Paraklesis to the Most Holy Theotokos*; *Lamentations on Dormition of Theotokos* and *The Holy*

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Doors.

Joining the feedback on this work made by Fr. prof. Dr. Vasile Stanciu, and covering the contents of this paper of synthesis we note “concise text, the coherent and logic explanations on the details of ritual, coupled with forays into the theological significance of gestures and liturgical structures”. All these recommend the book “to those interested in studying the Orthodox and involved in ministry either at the altar or in the choir. However it can be helpful for the lay faithful eager to penetrate the divine universe of the religious services and to better understand their sense” (p. 9).

As a final conclusion on the interesting inroads made by Cezar Login in the typicon, order and theology of our Church religious services, we propose a short text contained in the paper presented by us: “In an era where there is a need for a more fervid pastoral mission, for transforming and deepening the faith of the majority Orthodox Christians - which often is characterized by a pietism, lacking theological depth of their faith - liturgical catechesis made also through observing the liturgical norms experienced by the millenary tradition of the Orthodox Church is more than welcome” (p. 147).

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