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Jesus Christ – The Absolute Criterion of the Moral Life. The Theandric Aspect

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Abstract

The Incarnation constitutes the premise of the understanding of the world and the key in which this must be interpreted. The sin gave the Incarnation “a character of an extreme kenosis”, and the cross received the bloody and expiator aspect, while the resurrection received the character of victory over death. The Incarnation is the blessed target towards which God has brought the creation into existence.

Keywords

Jesus Christ, Moral Life, Moral Theology

“there is no other name given to the people under the sky, in which we must had to be saved” (Acts: 4: 12)

Christianity isn't a philosophy founded on the human rationality; it isn't either a wisdom, fruit of the experience of some spiritual master; as isn't either a simple revealed religious teaching, o collection of texts about God and about world and the man, transmitted by a prophet or a visionary¹. Christianity is *the fact* of God's intervention in the history of the humanity

¹ Placide Deseille, *Nostalgia Ortodoxiei*, trad. Dora Hezdrea, Ed. Anastasia, Buc, 1995, p. 275.

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in the way of the *Incarnation*, it is the fact of the Kingdom as a Trinitarian life *already* reached to us, it is the fact of God's remaining with us in a sensitive and seen way (ecclesia) to the end of the ages.

The Incarnation (the Christianity) answers to the fundamental aspirations and essential needs of the human being as well as to the intrinsic meaning of the creation. God-Man, Jesus Christ it is that "only one thing that is needed" (Luke 10: 42) both for the man and for the world.

"Why's that?, writes Saint Iustin Popovici, for He solved the problem of God and man in a as perfect as possible manner, as naturally as can be, as logically as can be and as theologically as can be. How's that? Showing to us in Himself in as real manner as one can get, bodily real, God, Who is the Absolute Truth, the Absolute Good, the Absolute Righteousness, the Absolute Wisdom in union with man, showing to us in Himself in the same time the man in the lack of sinfulness, in immortality and in his perfection"².

Jesus Christ, the God-Man is the measure of all. The world has been created through Him, as an eternal Logos, the man was built according to His image, and the sense of the entire creation is connected to His Incarnation.

The Incarnation – the Blessed Target for which the World Has Been Created

According to the Eastern Tradition, when the world was created it was given a constitution corresponding to the Incarnation of the Logos, *in view of the the union of the Creator with the creature*.

"This is the blessed target for which everything was founded, writes Saint Maximos the Confessor. This is the divine purpose, thought before the beginning of the ages... Looking towards this final target, God has brought to existence the beings of the things... This is the mystery which circumscribes all the ages and unveils the supra-infinite advice of God... The incarnate divine Logos revealed man... and He showed in Himself the aim

² Arhimadritul Iustin Popovici, *Omul și Dumnezeu-Om. Abisurile și culmile filosofiei*, trad. Pr.prof. Ioan Ică și diac. Ioan I. Ică jr., Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 1997, p. 120.

for which the creatures have received the beginning of the existence. Because for Christ or for the mystery of Christ, all the ages and all the ones existing within the ages, have received the beginning and the end of their existence. Because even before the ages it was thought and ordered the union of the border (of the definite) and of the borderless (of the indefinite), of the measure and of the lack of the measure, of the edge and of the edgeless, of the Creator and of the creature, of the stability and of the movement”³.

Therefore, while the creation has a structure conformed to, opened to and destined for the union with the Logos, the Incarnation constitutes the premise for the understanding of the world and the *key* in which this must be interpreted. Through its very constitution the world is oriented and tensioned towards the divine Logos. The Incarnation of the Logos in history, which fully realizes the union between the uncreated One and the creature – without terms annihilation and reducing one to the other one –, is the blessed target for which, God has brought to existence the beings of the things. And the unmixed union between God and creature means, for the creature, the achievement of the Resurrection⁴. Saint Maximos theologizes that the Incarnation of the Logos in the world would have taken place even if the falling of the humanity into sin would have not taken place. The falling of the man enlarged the sphere of the work of the Incarnation - namely, besides its fundamental goal of it, the union of the created one with the uncreated One, it aimed also to the raising of the creature from sin, death and hell. “Even without sin, father Dumitru Stăniloae interprets the affirmations of Saint Maximos, the world was destined to a incarnation of the Logos in it, to a death and to a resurrection of the humanity of the Logos and of the world in Him”⁵. The sin gave the Incarnation “a character of an

³ Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul, *Răspunsuri către Talasie*, 60, în Filocalia III, trad. Pr. prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, Ed. Harisma, Buc, 1994, p. 331-332.

⁴ “The Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word comprises in itself the meaning of all the guesses and types from the Scripture, and the science of all the visible and thought creatures. because the one who knew the mystery of the cross and of the tomb he has understood the reasons of the one said before; and the one who knew the mysterious meaning of the Resurrection he knew the goal towards which God founded all the things from before”. Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul, *Cele două sute de capete despre cunoștința de Dumnezeu și economia Întrupării Fiului lui Dumnezeu*, Întâia sută, 66, trad. Pr. prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, în Filocalia II, Ed. Humanitas, Buc, 1999, p. 150.

⁵ Pr. prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Nota la Filocalia III*, Nota 471, p. 496.

extreme kenosis”, and the cross received the bloody and expiator aspect, while the resurrection received the character of victory upon death. Even in the absence of sin creation would have needed the Incarnation, because it is the only modality which can achieve the real, organic, yet unmixed union between the divine nature and the human one, because it is operated at the level of a unique hypostasis and not simply at the level of the work of the grace. In the case of which the creature would not have fallen into the sin and would have reached perfection (a deification through the uncreated grace) this state of union with the divine would have not meant that hypostatic union which, through the Incarnation, the Hypostasis of the Eternal Logos achieved, centering in Himself the two natures (divine and human). Had not the falling existed, the Incarnation would have meant the union of the passionless and deified creature with the uncreated One, union through which the creature would have rested from (would have ceased) its natural activity and movement - which would have been the mystical death – to be exclusively activated to existence through the divine Hypostasis – what it would have been the mystical resurrection, or the deification through the participation at the divine incarnate Logos. The deification of the creature only through grace and without Incarnation would have meant an activation and a simply natural movement of the creature, a relation in which the terms (the divine subject and the human one) although they are in unity remain somehow separated, because in the creature God is fully everything and all. Only the Resurrection (mystical, in the case in which the creature would have not fallen) as a stage of the Embodiment, will make that, in all that came through creation from Him, “to spring out only the Word”. *The union* between the creature and the uncreated One would mean that God Himself is the inheritance of the ones who will be found worthy of this grace, and through this the creation will be above itself, will be above time and place, “having God Himself as its place”⁶.

⁶ “But when will cease what it is from part through the showing of what it is perfect and will pass all the mirrors and the guesses, coming the Truth face to face, then the one who is being saved, consummating himself after God, he will be above all the worlds, of all the ages and of all the places, through which he was been guided before as a child” Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul, *op. cit.*, *cap. 70*, p. 153. Father Dumitru Stăniloae interprets the Resurrection as an ultimate fact towards which the created creature is heading, as being the activation of to be of the world beyond and above any natural movement of it. “All the ones must die for us, phenomenal and noumenal realities, for Christ rising for us alone from all these death things. The Resurrection being a state transcendent to the entire natural existence and activity, all this must die within us, therefore the whole natural and noumenal man, to be us able to reach at it

“The one that reached the target, which is God, interprets Father Staniloae, can’t anymore have in himself anything belonging to the middle area (ages, times and the ones that hang on them). In he who reached God, everything is transcendent, supernatural, not through the development of the natural, but through its «death» or stopping and then through overcoming it. God is «the beginning without beginning», namely beginning or principle for the world, but not for Himself. God is an endless «target», there is an eternal progress in Him. However from the moment that the natural was exceeded, there has been an entering into the «end» zone; man has come out from the middle zone”⁷.

That’s the reason why the Incarnation it is the blessed target for which God has brought the creation to existence.

Jesus Christ Incarnate – the Absolute Criterion of the Creation

The falling into the sin meant man’s and world’s renouncing and closing for the blessed target they were created for. The sin has opened into the man and into the world the chasm of death⁸, namely the creature’s turning its back to God. The dynamism of the cosmos and of the man has become a movement connected to death, crossed through by the phenomena of the

through grace. Neither the mind in its natural state obtains Christ, as it would seem that Evagrius sustains, but only the transcendent man, from beyond, not the nature, but the grace. The mind is only the faculty capable to receive God through grace, but not the one which potentially comprises God in itself. Until the man activates through his natural powers he is tied to the Logos through the natural relation. But the salvation it is made beyond the rational plan, exclusively through the grace. In this sense, that Christ is the One Who gives us also the power for receiving Him must be understood that everything that is natural dies, to appear only Christ, but not in the sense of the disappearance of the creature, for everything in us and outside us to become Christ. This is said by Saint Maximos, by declaring that Christ circumscribes everything in Himself, but He doesn’t abolish them, he elevates them in the plan of the relation with Himself through the grace, namely he saves them through His love, not through their natural powers.”, Pr. prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Note la Filocalia II, Nota 2*, p. 151-152.

⁷ Pr. prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Note la Filocalia II, Nota 2*, p. 152.

⁸ “The sin penetrated where must have mastered the grace and instead of the divine fullness there was opened a precipice of the nonentity opened into the creation of God”, Vladimir Lossky, *Teologia mistică a Bisericii de Răsărit*, trad. Vasile Răducă, Ed. Anastasia, Buc, p. 161.

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entropy, of monstrosity, of disintegration. Instead of leading itself towards its primal vocation – the deification through grace and the waiting for the Incarnation of the Logos for the full unity with God -, the creature opts for becoming autonomous and through this it achieves beastly and darkened characteristics. “I am looking over the country and behold it is a wilderness -, exclaims prophet Jeremiah. I am watching the sky and behold there is no light over it; and I am looking at the mountains and behold they tremble, and the all the hills shake”. The sin meant the option against the nature, for a direction opposite to the Incarnation. The human existence it has been reduced through the sin to a confusion between life and the material survival, to a perspective in which the truth of the man and of the world is shaded away in the favor of terrestrial surviving, in which the dependency of the man by the world appears more evident and more pregnant than the dependency by God (by Incarnation). The man places himself into a consumerist perspective vacuuming in this way the existence and the world of their eschatological content (namely of Resurrection, as a consequence of the Incarnation).

If the man has renounced the blessed target for which he has been created, God, in His great mercifulness and in His unspeakable wisdom, came out searching for the lost ship.

“God makes Himself Man, to save the lost man... He makes Himself man having, as us, all our aspects without any lack, except the sin... He fulfilled like a man, with the deed and with the truth, through unshaken obedience, all the ones ordered by God Himself from before, to be done, realizing the whole advice of God and Father in our favor, who hindered through the bad usage the power which was given to us from the beginning, in a natural way, towards this”⁹.

In the fact of the Incarnation, Christ, God-Man, has renewed (has ontologically restored) the natural power of the man to be the unifier of the creation, he has united, then, through the entire His savior work (activity, Sacrifice, Death, Resurrection, Ascension), the world and the human nature transfigured with God¹⁰. Into Christ the man and the creation have

⁹ Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul, *Ambigua*, 106: *Tâlcuire duhovnicească a cuvintelor „Se înnoiesc firile și Dumnezeu se face om”*, trad. Pr. prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, Ed. IBM al BOR, Buc, 2006, p. 394-395, 396..

¹⁰ “A difficult to explain paradox: the Word, without any changing in His divine nature, which cannot be diminished by anything, fully engages Himself in our condition to the point of accepting the death itself... The Person of the Son overcomes the frontiers

reached their blessed target for which they have been created. From this reason God-Man is the criterion of the absolute revelation of God and is the absolute and the definitive measure of the human condition and of the creation.

“God-Man, writes Saint Iustin Popovici, showed equally real both God in His consummation and the man in his consummation. When we are studying in an impartial way the history of the human kind, we must acknowledge that in the history of the human kind there does not exist a better man than Jesus. This means that there is no better God than Jesus”¹¹.

In the same sense theologizes also the Archimandrite Sophrony:

“The absolute term of all the judgments is Christ, the Incarnate Logos of the Father. He is the measure of all the things both divine and human. Jesus Christ, as Man, sat after Resurrection at the right hand of the Father; in other words, He has become equal to Him, without transfiguring the human nature, taken by Him, in the uncreated Godhead. So than He eternally exists in the two natures: the Divine one and the human one. The Lord as Man, He truly sat «into the inside ones of the veil» (Hebrews 6: 19), and unchanged lived in the entire fullness of the Divine Being: and as Without-Beginning, The Only One Son Born according to Godhead; and as Man consummately deified, without the changing of the human nature in the essence of First-Existing

of the transcendent and of the immanent, being able to engage into the human history... The Son embodied Himself to make possible the union of the man with God... The simple fact of the Incarnation removes the first obstacle which stays in front of this union: the separation of the two natures, the nature of the man and the natures of God. There still remain two obstacles, which are connected to the decayed state of the men: the sin and the death. The task of Christ is to overcome them, to banish their necessity from the terrestrial cosmos. It is not about an unappealable overcoming of them, for this would be a violation of the liberty itself with which He created them. But it is about making the death helplessness and the sin healable through the obedience of God Himself to death and hell. In this way, the death of Christ removes from between man and God the obstacle of the sin. His Resurrection takes for the death its pin – its power. God descends in the depths from the foremost bellow, opened in creation through the sin of Adam, to be the man able to ascend to godhead”. Vladimir Lossky, *Introducere în Teologia Ortodoxă*, trad. Lidia și Remus Rus, Ed. Enciclopedică, Buc, 1993, p. 178.

¹¹ Arhimanditul Iustin Popovici, *op. cit.*, p. 120..

of God. And this is the hope which is put in front of us, which we have it as an anchor to the soul, safe and strong (Hebrews 6: 18-19)”¹².

Consequently, we affirm together with the Saint Iustin Popovici¹³, that the Incarnation realizes then most radical and total unity between God and man, unity from which all the transcendent values penetrated and united together in interior becoming immanent to the human nature; the Incarnation realized the most perfect synthesis of the divine and human, of what is here and what is beyond, of the natural and of the supernatural, of the physical and of the metaphysical, of the real and of the unreal. Because in Christ man has lived from the birth His earthly life with the entire tragedy of the sufferance and of the death unto sitting at the right hand of the Father, to Whom He has become equal without changing and without mixing; he is the full man, the key and the ultimate and definitive solution of the human. In the Person of Christ, man has achieved the appropriate image and status. Man isn't over dimensioned with anything in comparison with God (the old temptation of Adam to be like God but without Him) but isn't lowered at all from the highest possible destiny: the sitting at the right hand of the Father to Whom the man Jesus has become “equal”.

In the divine-human person of Christ it was fully and forever solved the delicate problem, for the fallen conscience of the man, of good and evil. The God-Man did not solve this anxiety in a dialectical way, through theses, analyzes and demonstrations, but through the incarnate *showing* of the Absolute good within the borders of the human nature. The good, from concept, is shown in Christ as the Good, the Good God in the limits of the human existence, or in the life above sin, evil and death¹⁴.

Man has always manifested himself in his pilgrimage through the existence, as a creature searching for the *Truth*. The mythology, the philosophy, the deistic systems, the spiritualistic and the materialistic ones, bear witness for this. But their solution either entangled the man in the most profound darkness, or brought him close to the threshold of the Kingdom - and this is because all these were meant to be mere categories of the humanism. The Incarnation showed that the Truth isn't a problem (because

¹² Arhimanditul Sofronie, *Nașterea întru Împărăția cea neclătită*, trad. Ierom Rafail Noica, Ed. Reîntregirea, Alba-Iulia, 2003, p. 34-35.

¹³ Arhimanditul Iustin Popovici, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 122.

the problem stays in the front of the thinking subject) but a Mystery / the Mystery of the divine-human Person, the humanized Logos, the blessed target for which everything exist. That's why the quests of the man for finding out the truth and God are solved in Christ. Outside Him no spiritual, philosophical or mystical experience, give man the possibility of the Truth and of knowing God The One Who Is and of the union with Him, The One of Whose Being is one, unreached, absolute, in Three unreached and absolute Hypostases, consubstantial and undivided Trinity¹⁵.

“God-Man Christ is the truth in an ontological manner, not as a word, not as a teaching and neither as a concrete action, but as a divine-human perfect and eternally alive hypostasis. Only as divine – human Person He is the measure of the Truth. That's why the God-Man said about Himself not only: I am the Truth, but also: I am the Way (John 14: 6), the Way and the Truth itself, namely the measure of this Truth, the essence itself of this Truth. The Measure of the Truth is the Truth Himself and the Truth is the God-Man Christ. Therefore, everything that isn't from Him, it is not Truth. Outside His divine-human Person, the Truth is ontologically inexistent. In Christianity the truth isn't a philosophical notion, neither a theory, nor a teaching, nor a system of teachings, but is the living divine-human Hypostasis – Jesus Christ the historical One (John 14, 6). Together with Christ, as Logos of the incarnate God, the divine truth enters in this world. For this reason it was also said in the Holy Gospel: The Truth has come through Jesus Christ (John 1: 17)¹⁶.

Jesus Christ, the God-Man definitively and effectively unveiled the mystery of life and death. The man, in his autonomy, never understood what life and death were. He couldn't raise himself above the life, for comprising, understanding, and defining it. No matter how much he will philosophize about life, the man remains a fragment of it, a “prisoner” in the sea of the life, without succeeding to comprise it and to master it. Even less, man has access to the mystery of the death which is so crushing that questions man himself. Christ, as full God, is the Only One Who has given Himself human life, Who could voluntarily and with sovereignty (freely) decide to be born, he was the Only One Who could utter *nobody will take*

¹⁵ Arhimanditul Sofronie, *op.cit.*, p. 62.

¹⁶ Arhimanditul Iustin Popovici, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

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My life, Myself alone give it, the Only One Who could exist in death (“in tomb with the body, in hell with the soul, as a God, in heaven with the thief and on the chair together with the Father and the Holy Ghost), the Only One Who could say: *I Am the Resurrection and the Life* (John 11: 25). And He could utter these ones because only He is without sin. As man, Christ was in an absolute participation and unity with the Hypostatical divine Life of the Logos and, consequently, in Him there was no sin (namely separation from God at the level of the will and existence).

“That’s why, God-Man is also the Life and the measure of the Life. Everything that doesn’t come from Him is mortal. In Him the life finds its Logos-ity and rationality, for it find its divine eternity. As God-Logos, he is the universal Life (John 1: 4) for the life it is life only through Him. Where He is not present there life is turned into death, for He is the Only One Who makes the life to be a true life. Separation from Him, Who is Life, ends always in mortality and death. That’s why only in Him, Who is the Logos and the Logos of the life, is to be found the only logical justification of the human life in the categories of the time and of the space”¹⁷.

The divine-human Person of Christ is the absolute answer to the unsettling problem of the sense of the world and of the man (the sense of the existence). Without God, the sense of the world will eternally remain an unapproachable mystery, because the sense of the world will be shattered in infinite senses, according to the mind of he who wants to understand the mystery of the creation. The Universe “exceeds man through its immeasurable massiveness... from within the world, which overwhelms, we cannot escape...”¹⁸ In man’s power of knowledge the mystery of the world and the mystery of the human creature meet each-other and they ask themselves to be explained. Without the divine perspective, namely without the full Revelation (the Incarnation), the thinking of the man is in a no escape impasse to understand why the world exists in this way and not in another form. Only in the light of the God-Man, Christ, to human thinking is opened the sense of the those that are and the sense of the fact of to be. The sense of the world isn’t an abstract Truth but is the One Who said Himself: “I am the light of the world” (John 8: 12; 9: 5). His divine – human Person is the

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 126.

¹⁸ Nichifor Crainic, *Nostalgia paradisului*, Ed. Moldova, Iași, 1994, p.7.

blessed target for which God brought everything to existence. The sense of each individual creature and of all the creatures together it is that of realizing in them and to express the Truth and the Life inaugurated by the Incarnation, to partake of The One Who Is. And this way of living brought into the world by the fact of the Incarnation, which constitutes in fact the Christian life, it is the *theandric way*.

The Theandric Way

Saint Dionysus the Aeropagite theologizing upon the mystery of the Incarnation highlights that Jesus as God “The One from beyond all”, has existentially placed Himself on the same level with all the people “making himself truly a man”. Without ceasing to be “above being”, making Himself man “He worked all that belong to man in a manner higher than human”. That is, He performed what is human in a divine manner, and what is divine in a human manner. This existential mode inaugurated into the world through Incarnation it is called *theandric way* or *work*¹⁹. Saint John Damascene, commenting the affirmation quoted from Saint Dionysus, shows that the theandric way “is the life of Christ as man, a foreign and wonderful and unknown life (until now) to the nature of the existences”²⁰. The theandric way or work is difficult to express and understand through words, because it sends towards “the inexpressible way of the reciprocal interpenetration of the natures of Christ” (the Christological perichoresis) through which the characteristics and the works of the two natures from the unique hypostasis of the Lord are mutually communicated. Each nature works in a unique way what is peculiar to itself with the participation of the other one. Neither did he work the human thing in a human manner, because He wasn’t a simple man, and nor the divine ones only simply as God, but He was in the same time God and man. Because, as we know the union and the natural difference of the natures, in the same manner we

¹⁹ “shortly speaking, He wasn’t either a man, not as not being human, but as being from humans, He was beyond humans and truly made above the man. So, not working the divine ones as God, neither the human ones as man, but as humanized God he has been cohabitating with us, “*fulfilling some sort of a new work, a theandric one*”. Sfântul Dionisie Areopagitul, *Epistola IV, Către Gaius*, trad. Pr. Dumitru Stăniloae, în vol. *Sfântul Dionisie Areopagitul, Opere complete și Scoliile Sfântului Maxim Mărturisitorul*, Ed. Paideia, Buc, 1996, p. 258.

²⁰ Sfântul Ioan Damaschin, *Despre credința ortodoxă, cap XIX, Despre activitatea theandrică*, Ed. Parohiei Valea Plopului, jud. Prahova, 2000, p. 112.

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know the union and the difference of the wills and of the natural activities... Consequently, the term of *theandric activity* shows that:

“God made Himself man, namely he humanized Himself and His human activity was Divine, namely deified; His human activity wasn’t deprived of His Divine activity, and His divine activity wasn’t deprived of His human activity, but each of them it is considered together with the other one”²¹.

The theandric model, as a divine-human mode of the existence of the Savior in this world wasn’t a historical²² episode which was ended with the Ascension of the Lord. The God-Man, the theandric way, Has left Himself into the world as Church. “He is the Church in its divine-human fullness. Because the Church isn’t anything else but the God-Man prolonged into all ages: *Behold, I am with you in all the days to the end of the ages* (Matthew 28: 20)”²³.

Christ is the head of the Church (Colossians 1: 18; Ephesians 1: 22; 6: 23) and is The One Who keeps the body of the Church into a perfect unity and not separated from the Trinitarian Life. In Christ, the body of the Church receives the entire fullness of the divine life. The Holy Sacraments are sensitive images of the Person and of the divine-human (theandric) work through which in the members of the Church is inaugurated the theandric way or life. The Orthodoxy means the divine-human existence:

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 113.

²² “Usually, writes Nichifor Crainic, the role of the Savior in the world it is fragmentarily understood, as a historical episode marked by the apparition through the Incarnation and the disappearance through Ascension. The Byzantine iconography gives us a pictorial image of the entirety of this role when it shows the Savior surrounded by stars and holding in His hand the earthly globe. This icon corresponds to the just conception about His report with the world. The Savior is the Alpha and the Omega of the all created things. Is the Logos or the reason of the world, because God will judge it through Him. Outside the world as God, He is into the world as principle of eternal life of it. The love of God for the world is Jesus Christ, “Who into His own came”, namely in the work which lives through Him; and the world of Jesus Christ it is recognized creature of God. His name is inscribed in cosmos from the beginning to the end of the ages, and the destiny of the world is surrounded by the aura of His glory. The sense of the life, which is searched by the thinker, it is unveiled into Jesus Christ. He is, as Apostle Paul says, the same yesterday and today and in eternity, a real presence, a reason of all the things and *a way of working* for the world to be able to fulfill its blessed destiny, which it has been given to it in the divine plan of the creation”, Nichifor Crainic, *op.cit.*, p. 6-7.

²³ Arhimanditul Iustin Popovici, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

“everything that is Orthodox it has a divine – human character – and the knowledge, and the feeling, and the will, and the thinking, and the moral, and the dogmatic, and the philosophy, and the life. The divine-humanity is the only category in which all the manifestations of the Orthodoxy are moving and take place... God works, the man co-works. And God works not as the God of the Revelation, but as the God Who has made Himself man and lived in the categories of our human life and Showed Himself everywhere as absolutely saint, absolutely good, absolutely wise, absolute true”²⁴.

That’s why the Orthodox Moral Theology isn’t anything else than *the life lived theologically* - namely a theandric way. In such a moral we cannot speak about abstract rules and norms of the behavior, but rather, about *a rebirth, metanoia, transfiguration, ontological transformation* of the man. Each Orthodox is a limb of the Body of Christ (Ephesians 5: 30; I Corinthians 12: 13) is a person that lives and actualizes in himself the divine-humanity of Christ (“I am not living myself but Christ lives in me”), it is a theandric existence²⁵. The moral life as theandric existence it means a radical and absolute exceeding of the autonomy of the human. The virtue and all the moral value aren’t simple manners of behavior or humanistic sapience but existential contents provoked into man by the ontological union of him with the Life and the Work of the Holy Trinity present in our world as Church. The moral life as theandric existence and work, presupposes *the rebirth* or the ontological re-making of the man.

“Otherwise, writes *Saint Macarios*, for this thing our Lord Jesus Christ came, to change, to transform and to renew our nature, to recreate our soul ruined by passions, due to the transgression of the commandment and to mix it with the Ghost of His Godhead. He came to give us a new mind, a new soul, new eyes and a new spiritual tongue; in a word, to do the ones who believe in Him new men, new bottles, anointing them with the light of

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 128.

²⁵ “The mission of the Church is to realize all the values and all the divine-human things in our world. The Incarnation of God is the ultimate and full revelation which God shows it towards such a unique being as the man is. because making Himself man and not some other being, God showed that God-Man is *the nature of the nature of the man, the logic of the logic of the man, the goodness of the goodness of the man, or, in a word, the essence, the sense and the purpose of the soul of the man created according to the image of God.*”, *Ibid*, pp. 129-130.

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His knowledge, to put in them new wine, namely His Ghost”²⁶; “The Lord, delivering the man from the hand of the enemy, made him a new man, anointed him with His Ghost and poured in him the wine of the life... The Lord can change the scattered and desolated by sin soul and bring it back to his own kindness, gentleness and peace, through the Holy and Good Ghost Whom He promised to us”²⁷; “the true healing of the soul can be done only by God”²⁸.

The moral life, as a theandric way, means *the Ghost and the wine of the heavenly life* shown in the good deeds of the Christians. Without this essential and real content the human behavior and virtue are “as a dirty vestment” (Isaiah 64: 5), namely an ethic attitude which does not exceed sin and death understood as separation from God. The theandric way affirms that the moral life really moral when it is an appearance and manifestation of the intra-Trinitarian life, of the work of God, which reveals and makes perfect *the image of God* (namely the man). Here is the entire separation and difference between the Orthodox man and the natural man (between Orthodoxy and humanism). The spiritual life or the theandric way is living in communion and together-working of God and man, as living that replicates the theandric work in the Person of Christ. The Christological formula from Chalcedon (451) is essential for the theandric way: the divine and the human are united without confusion in co-working and they are distinct without separation. Outside the theandric way the humanistic ethic is in danger of falling either in the Nestorian heresy, or in the Monophysite one. On the line of the Nestorianism, the ethics proposes a separation between the heavenly city and the earthly one, what leads to the promotion of a profound lay ethic - everything is circumscribed to psychology, sociology, biology and eventually psychoanalysis. The commandments of God have only a complete and supra-structural role. The Monophysite line proposes either a spirituality in which the human reality is minimized – respectively a spiritualism of de-Incarnation and of the refuse of the history and of the moral values -, or in one in which the biological reality is maximized – respectively the materialist-dialectic ethic.

²⁶ Sfântul Macarie Egipteanul, *Omilii duhovnicești, Omilia 44, 1*, trad. Pr. prof. Constantin Cornițescu, în vol PSB 34, Ed. IBM al BOR, Buc, 1992, p. 260.

²⁷ *Ibid*, *Omilia 44, 2*, p. 261.

²⁸ *Ibid*, *Omilia 44, 3*, p. 261.

In the theandric way moral life means a life in which the psycho-somatic dimension of the man is integrated in the divine-human metabolism of the Person and Work of Christ. The man participates with his will and liberty (restored, ontologically reborn through the Holy Sacraments) to the rebuilding of the world and of his existence through a work which is in the same time the saving work of God in and through men. The moral teandricism means bringing into a unique and unitary work, the work of God in the human work:

“As in the everyday life, writes Saint Macarios, nobody can, with his own powers, walk and cross the sea, if he hasn't a light ship, made from wood, the only one able to walk above the waters – and if somebody tries to walk on the waters of the sea, he sinks and perishes – likewise, neither the soul can walk and cross the bitter sea of the sin, and the dangerous abyss of the cunning powers and of the darkness of the passions, but only by receiving the light Ghost, heavenly winged of Christ which crosses over all the cunningness, which leads directly to the heavenly shore of the rest, to the Emperor's city. And as those who get on the board of a ship, they do not pull out water from the sea for drinking, neither they take their clothes and the food from it, but they bring them in the ship from outside it, from the dry land, likewise the souls of the Christians, they do not receive from the present age, but from above, from heaven, heavenly food and spiritual clothing. Living what comes from there, from above, and getting on board of the ship of the Good and Life Giver Ghost, they pass over the opposite and cunning powers of the Principalities and of the Powers. And like all the ships, with which the en can cross the sea, are made from wood, in the same way the souls of the Christians strengthened with the different gifts from the Ghost, they pass over all the evil”²⁹.

Therefore, the moral life as theandric way and work, it is a *spiritual life* – namely that life which the Ghost of Christ generates (provokes) in man, which is sustained by the heavenly food and which the strengthened man (ontologically reconstructed) works with the gifts of the Ghost. It is a divine life inside and in the limits of the human nature and it is a human life at (through) the measures of the divine life.

²⁹ *Ibid*, Omilia 44, 6, p. 262-263.

“Because for me to live is Christ and death is a gain”

(Philippians 1: 21)

“Because you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God...
Christ is your life”

(Colossians 3: 3-4).

The moral life, as spiritual life, means *life in Christ*. It is all about living Christ, about an organic possession of His divine-human life, about an inwardly building through Christ and in Christ, it means the Christ-ification of the man. The man must grow up and enter in all the perfections of Christ, to unite himself with Him according to the grace, to live Christ, the fullness of His Godhead as life, as soul of him, as final sense of him. The Holy Trinity and His divine and unspeakable work was given to us through the Incarnation, the deifying life was given to us in Christ. That's why He remains the Cornerstone from the angle of the existence outside of which any living, any value, any access to God and eternity collapses. Here is a confession in this sense of Saint Iustin Popovici for whom the God-Man is the origin, the meaning and the finality of all:

“Stop you, all the universes, all the existent worlds and all the beings! Let's cease all the hearts, all the minds, all the nations, all the eternities! Because without Christ all of these are hell to me; a hell next to another hell; all of them are countless and endless hells both in height and in width. The life without Christ, the death without Christ, the Truth without Christ, the sun without Christ, the universe without Him – all of them are a worrying nonsense, a unbearable torment, a suffering of Sissify, a hell! I don't want either the life, or the death without You, my Most Sweet Lord! I don't want either the truth, or the righteousness, or the heaven, or the eternity! No, no! I want only You, only You to be in everything, in everybody and above all!... If there is no Christ I don't need the truth; it is only hell. Also hell is the justice and the love, the good and the happiness; God Himself, if there is no Christ, is a hell. I don't want either the truth without Christ, or the justice without Christ, or the love without Christ, or God without Christ. I don't want anything from all of these, by no means! I will accept any kind of death; you can kill me however you want, but without Christ I don't want anything.

Neither myself, nor God Himself, nor anything else between these two; I don't want, I don't want, I don't want!³⁰

“But the ones that were profitable to me, these ones I have reckoned them loss for Christ. And even more: I reckon everything as a loss in comparison with the height of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for Whom I have deprived myself of everything and I look at everything as to garbage, for achieving Christ” (Philippians 3: 7-8).

Therefore, the moral life, as life in Christ, means to love Christ, the God-Man, as the universal sense of all those created by God, as the blessed target for which everything has been created. And it can be done only *through* Church and into Church.

³⁰ Arhimanditul Iustin Popovici, *op. cit.*, p. 191.