

Priest Theodore Papanicolaou, *The Vision of Death in the Light of the Holy Fathers of the Church*, published in France on April 2nd, 2015 by Parole et Silence publishing house in Paris, was translated from French into Romanian by Paula Ilas, Doxologia Publishing House, 2016, Iași with the blessing of His Eminence Teofan, Archbishop of Iasi and Metropolitan of Moldova and Bucovina

Of Orthodox faith, Theodore Papanicolaou is a protopresbyter at the Greek Orthodox Protopresbyterate of Bordeaux – France, and in his work, suggestively subtitled “an essay on Orthodox spirituality,” in his capacity as a preacher of the just faith, he reflects on death from an Orthodox perspective, showing that from the point of view of experiencing the just faith, man’s life does not end with his death, but continues beyond death, which is a new beginning. This essay on Orthodox spirituality, whose starting point, fundamental to Orthodox faith, is represented by death and resurrection, urges readers to immerse themselves into the beauty and wisdom of Orthodoxy, which, through Christ the Dead and Risen, has restored man’s connection with God, and through Christ, death has become our passing to resurrection.

Protopresbyter Theodore Papanicolaou puts forward an exercise of great clarity and a very topical reflection on the status of death in contemporary societies. Thus, in its almost 300 pages divided in ten chapters, preceded by a foreword and introduction and ending with conclusions, *The Vision of Death in the Light of the Holy Fathers of the Church* intends to dwell on the essence of death in Orthodoxy, showing its use in man’s life.

In the Foreword, His Eminence Emanuel, Metropolitan of France, urges the readers to immerse themselves in this book so as to discover the essence and meaning of death in man’s life.

Chapter I, entitled *Pagan and philosophical conceptions of death* and divided in four subchapters, talks about the idea of death as it was regarded

Priest Theodore Papanicolaou, *The Vision of Death in the Light...*

and understood in Classical Antiquity and in Modernity, in the form of the orphic myth of the Olympian religion.

Chapter II, suggestively entitled *Death* comes into the world, starts with the life of the first humans in Heaven and goes on with their falling, with God's judgment, the coming of death into the world, the death of the soul and the death of the body, God's allowing of death, and the end of man on earth, showing that the decay of the body is, in fact, a blessing.

In its nine subchapters, Chapter III, *Divine hope*, deals with the necessity of Christ's resurrection as our resurrection for immortality and eternal life.

Chapter IV, *Pascal liturgy*, shows the victory over death of Christ, who "turned hell into Heaven", thus becoming "The Master of life."

Chapter V, *The body of glory*, presents the burial ritual in the Old Testament, the deification of humanity through Christ, through whom death becomes "a word".

Chapter VI, *From death to resurrection*, deals with the meaning of death today, as a feeling of fright, and explains the fact that death is "the gate to eternity."

Chapter VII, *The second coming into being*, talks about the meaning of "passing" that death has in man's life.

Chapter VIII, *Christian death*, explores the meaning of death in Christian faith.

Chapter IX, *The life of Christ*, focuses on the idea that the disaster caused by death in our life helps us restore our life in Christ.

Chapter X, *Burial rituals*, shows the great care of the Church for the dead and explains the key moments in the funeral service.

Finally, in his Conclusions, the author shares a few thoughts and occurrences related to death from his own experience as a priest.

As a conclusion, we can say that *The Vision of Death in the Light of the Holy Fathers of the Church*, written by Priest Theodore Papanicolaou and translated into Romanian by Paula Ilas, represents an exceptional tool in today's world, a world that, through various trends, is trying to distort the true meaning of life and death. Thus, a person who wants to live a life in Christ starting with his/her life on earth, can understand the meaning of death, and can turn death into the gate to eternal life, to his/her resurrection in the Kingdom of God.

Rev. Ph.D. Stud. Sergiu Nicolae Succurro