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HUMANITIES AND SPIRITUALITY IN ROMANIAN AREA. SPECIFIC FEATURES

Abstract: Unfortunately, we live in a post-Christian world. The idea of *religion* or *belief* is seen rather in terms of intransigence and of fundamentalism (so it seems to me that religion comes to us through the eyes of the media). *To be religious or faithful* is synonymous with exclusion of altered. Contrary, it is time to realize that the *true faith* or *religion* make humanity better, more social, closer to other. There is still a problem: reach we the consciousness of true faith or religion? God is a God of love or he is not at all.

I want in my essay to point out some principles by which to recognize the true value of *love religion* for the world, which receive the prefix “*post*”.

Key words: *monologue speech, exterior aesthetics, “prosopon”, dialog, consumism*

The structure of society presented to the eye of the third millennium contemporary man requires a humanity with more differentiated features from those of the earlier generations'. If during antiquity and the middle ages the differences from one century to another were quite small, now the difference between the beginning of the 20th century and the 21st century is immense. From clothes to the he thinks, the man of the 21st century is totally different from the one who lived a century ago.

But unfortunately we have to face a materially advanced society, especially by the aggressive introduction of IT systems, but spiritually diminished or to be more elegant, advanced only on the horizontal social structure. What are the characteristics of this human society and of the 21st century?

First of all, the man of this century tends to have a *comfortable intelligence*. In other words, he is not committed to his search. We could say that society has divided humanity into two: a very small elite that thinks for a huge mass of people sitting in comfortable armchairs in front of media and multimedia systems. Contemporary man is intelligent, but his intelligence is not due to studying hard. The elements of knowledge do not give him the human goal: the learning that leads to wis-

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dom. Contemporary society is not wise. It is intelligent and educated, but it does not have the wisdom that sketches out the holy structure of human beings.

We think that our society can be defined by *comfort*, which becomes the key word of this world. Things are clear and they apply to all structures. We shall give one example: comfort caused man not to enjoy cultivating the land, but to consider vegetables, which were a blessing of his hard work, mere products to be purchased. Recently, comfort has kept people at home, preventing them from going to the market and they started to order food online.

A second feature of this society in terms of our study is this: man of the third millennium has a *monologue speech*. In other words, the *dialogue between people* slowly disappears. It is very strange, because now people speak the most. Never in history have people made so much noise and wasted words. In Europe and America almost everyone has a phone in his/her pocket or purse. In the street one can see that more than half of the people are talking on the phone. What are talking on the phone? We happened to eavesdrop a few times. In fact, it was small talk, triffling. Verbal banality is another feature of the contemporary man and no one has the patience to listen to. It is a kind of monoacoustic speech when all talk, but nobody listens to. And there is a big difference: *people can hear one another, but no longer listen to one another*. Listening involves patience in order to get the other's message, to receive otherness as a dialogue form. To listen is to accept the dialogue and the opinion of the other.

Hearing without listening and without understanding is the model of consumer society. Politics and economy are the best examples. In election campaigns, in terms of ideology, each candidate almost overlaps other candidates. It is about the same kind of promise (welfare, happiness, health etc.) with small differences in tone or gravity. Therefore, people hear these words, but no one listens to them anymore, nor do they trust them, because they are false and unreal.

Another feature of the third millennium society is *the exterior aesthetics*. The world has become a large marketing arena. Sensitive elements, such as family, the relationship among young people, man in general are presented within the framework of these criteria. In order to be sold, a product needs to be recommended. In other words, we need advertising. We do not think we are able to fight it for long, because aggressive advertising can harm the human psyche.

Man in his inter-human relationship has become a *homo oeconomicus*, who turns everything into a strictly economic relationship payable and quantifiable. The relationship among people becomes strictly instrumental. This relationship is no longer based on brotherhood, but on a disjunctive otherness.

The man of the third millennium is characterised by the structure of *homo oeconomicus*. Everything is bought, everything is paid for, everything is quantifiable. Man and society have the value of goods or product. We can also say that man *depends upon rating*. Rating is the term invented by the media that can quantify the multitude of viewers or listeners of the station or program concerned. But as nothing is free, the rating increases or decreases the advertising value of a product. The show presented can no longer be qualified as good or bad, the show is assessed in

terms of rating, whether it gets low or high ratings, namely whether it is watched or not. In order to get rating, a show must shock people. The interesting thing is that the good does not shock us, only the evil does it. The good is natural for normal people, who live in the presence of God. In God's presence everything is natural and beautiful, it is normal and genuine. A spiritual father in Romanian Christianity said that "Orthodoxy is the nature of things.", the normality of life. The faithful man lives beautifully and beauty is natural.

On the contrary, the evil shocks, it creates a state of tension that leaves a strong impression on man and society. In this case, the media rating is based on the presentation of the elements which shock and which most often have negative connotations. An accident, a bomb attack, an earthquake, a great robbery, a sex scandal etc. Are elements that receive rating because people watch such shock elements. A cameraman will always shoot some people who are fighting rather than some who go to the church.

Unfortunately, the world of media rating makes us not grieve when we hear of a negative situation, but see it as a film in progress. We can no longer distinguish between reality and fiction. Everything is part of the show. And death has become a statistic. We have become so insensitive that that collective death by natural disaster (for example, the earthquake in Italy) is only a statistical piece of news. People watching the news only know the figure (16 dead people) and they do not know the drama. A bomb attack draws attention to the figure of the dead, not to the drama of each man who lost his life.

Another feature of the contemporary man of the third millennium is fear. The man this century is very fearful. He is imbued with fear from the moment he wakes up in the morning until bedtime and this does not stop then, either. It is the fear of otherness. People are afraid of one another and everything is promoted mainly by news channels, which create panic in the collective subconscious. Everyone is afraid of the other. As Jean Paul Sartre put it "l'enfer c'est l'autre" or "hell is other people". Fear made us withdraw into ourselves and have no dialogues anymore, just monologues. And when we are engaged in a dialogue, in fact we have a monologue, because everyone speaks, but nobody listens.

In the Romanian language there is a big difference between the verb *to hear* and the verb *to listen*. Everyone hears, but not everyone listens. To listen means to think, to reflect upon what the other says. Everyone talks to everyone but no one listens. We do not listen to one another anymore, so we have no dialogue. Dialogue implies that you hear the other and you listen to his message carefully and then you give him the answer. You have seen many talk shows You have seen many television talk shows on television on different topics. Some of them are of greatest interest. You could see that the moderator does not want an answer and a conclusion to this issue, but a *dialogical monological discourse* of his guests. He just wants to stir up the atmosphere without providing a meaningful and effective answer. This is an example of dialogical monological discourse when everyone speaks, but nobody listens.

In fact, we think that everything reduces itself to another aspect of life in the third millennium:

advertising. We are addicted to advertising. But advertising is false by the fact that it does not present life in all its extension, but only its hedonistic and consumerist side. In advertisements man has to be handsome, healthy and joyful. But everything is just appearance. Unfortunately, advertising rules our lives because we need models, examples, which, if we do not find in real life, we take from the unreal or virtual life. Most of the times the virtual world, the world behind the screen is a false and uncultured, nonreligious and amoral one.

Finally, we should like to emphasize something that we believe that characterizes the society of the third millennium: people have lost ... their faces. The first dimension of Christianity is the anthropological problem of *face* or *prosopon*. The Christic man is the man who sees face to face, who looks into the other's eyes. The consumer society made us not look in the eye. Why should we not look us in the eye? Because we became faceless and without an appearance. We are statistical figures rather than persons and *prosopon*. We are faceless anonymous. Romanian theologian Dumitru Stăniloae and Serbian theologian Iustin Popovici insist on the issue that man is divine image.

If we do not have a face, we are not different from animals. We are mere animals subject to biological instincts. We are born, we grow, reproduce and die. We fight for food and to make a home or a nest, like any animal. We have a little more intelligence than animals and that is all. Or man is an *anthropos*, an *ana-trepo*, a "looker upward", toward the skies. So his existence is connected to the "upward", by that "*excelsior*" Augustine was searching for.

What can we do in this situation we find ourselves by dependence on the material, sensuality and virtual imaging? We must go back to our creational reality, to the purpose for which we were created. We need to rediscover in ourselves the look and the face. We are not individuals, but persons. Theology is reluctant to talk about individuals, about the in-divide or the monad. Man is a person, i. e. a being in dialogue and relationship with others and with the creation. Man is responsible for his vocation as a priest's creation.

The world is a cathedral in which humanity is called to serve a cosmic liturgy. People are iconic persons, people with dialogal faces, who can give each other a smile and light through the look and the word. People need to speak more directly, looking at each other and loving each other, rather than using IT means, which keep them anonymous, with all their frustrations.

The man of the third millennium needs to rediscover his divine roots, unless he wants to disappear into the earth that swallows him and turns him into nothingness. The political, economical and religious world must rediscover the divine meaning of man and society. St. Maximus the Confessor said that in every reality there is a divine reason, a divine logos, which does not let us turn into nothingness. If we reconsider the world in terms of the divine reasons of creation, we could solve the problem of ecology. The Earth is enough for everyone. It can feed everyone. The difference lies in the fact that some people live very well and produce huge waste which if shared, would ensure that each should not suffer from hunger, thirst or cold.

We need a deeper religiousness involving the reality of the divine presence among us. It is necessary for us to acknowledge that a God who incites us to violence, to kill the other, who has a different faith than ours, is not a real God. It is a reflection of our own pride and the lack of interpersonal love.

In this respect we think that Romania can provide this example of coexistence. No one felt oppressed near a Romanian, because we have a Christic view of the other's reality. Otherness is one of the definitions of our people.

In conclusion, we believe that we are called to become persons again, faces and looks, in order to rediscover one another and to learn to love one another again. We have been created by the same God and we cannot lose this divine purpose of our lives, because otherwise we shall lose our identity as humans, as lookers toward the skies or as seekers of *excelsior*.

