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## **EUCCHARISTIC SACRIFICE – DYNAMIC AND REAL UPDATE**

**Rezumat:** *În jertfa euharistică Hristos se descoperă pe Sine credinciosului și Bisericii ca Cel jertfit pentru păcatele lumii. Jertfa Sa este reală, dar descoperirea ei ca atare se face numai ochilor credinței. În felul acesta putem vorbi despre starea de jertfă continuă a Arhetipului divin care Se aduce jertfă în momentul prefacerii Darurilor la Sfânta Liturghie, iar oferirea elementelor euharistice de către credincioși demonstrează faptul că și aceștia sunt jertfa vie a celui „după chip”.*

*Lucrarea de față își dorește evidențierea raportului dintre jertfa de pe Golgota și jertfa euharistică, dar și a consecinței definitorii a dimensiunii de jertfă a Sfintei Euharistii: aceea că dacă Sfânta Euharistie este o jertfă în cadrul căreia Hristos nu jertfește singur, ci jertfește și este jertfit de către comunitate în frunte cu preotul mandatat divin, admitem că această preoție nu poate fi decât un mandat special, un har special care înfățișează limpede Preoția ca Taină, ca stare de har specială absolut necesară pentru săvârșirea Sfintei Euharistii. Totodată, am reliefat comuniunea deplină a credincioșilor cu Hristos, realizată prin Euharistie, care este și o comuniune deplină a credincioșilor între ei. Toți se întâlnesc în același Trup al lui Hristos; toți formează împreună extinderea Trupului lui Hristos. În acest sens Euharistia este prin excelență Taina unității.*

*În Euharistie, Jertfa lui Hristos are un sens activ ca act special de jertfă produsă acum în Hristos și în noi. Jertfa e reală, dar nevăzută. Ea e mijlocul prin care ne devine eficientă jertfa Crucii. Jertfa sângeroasă a lui Hristos e urmată de o stare permanentă de jertfă. Dar așa cum mântuirea obiectivă trebuie însușită subiectiv, tot astfel, foloasele Jertfei pentru întregul neam omenesc trebuie însușite de fiecare mădular al Trupului lui Hristos.*

*Protestanții au respins caracterul de jertfă al Euharistiei pe motiv că Aceasta ar micșora importanța Jertfei de pe Golgota pentru iertarea păcatelor oamenilor. Jertfa din Euharistie izvorăște din Jertfa de pe Golgota și se leagă neîntrerupt de sacrificiul sângeros al lui Hristos, dar nu se identifică. Aceasta nu este o repetare sau o prelungire a idoma a aceleia, ci o repetare reală a ei, deosebindu-se prin aceea că, prima dată Domnul și-a oferit ca jertfă viața Sa trupească în chip sângeros și vizibil, pe când, în*

*Euharistie, realitatea jertfei și prezenței lui Hristos e tainică, sacrificiul este nesângeros, iar săvârșitorul vizibil al Jertfei este preotul.*

**Cuvinte-cheie:** jertfă, anamneză, comemorare, transcendență, preoție sacramentală.

### **Introduction**

From the apostolic period until today Eucharist occupies the central place of Christian worship and faithful aspirations are moving to it. Being “the vital nerve of Church life”, it shows concretely that Christ remains permanently present in the world and in human persons<sup>1</sup>. In the light of Holy Sacrament of Eucharist is found and lives the vision really constructive of the orthodox theology which speaks about a real union between divine and human, between seen and unseen, between created and uncreated. Orthodox theology, exceeding the manichees dualism which separates the transcendent world from the immanent one, benefits from the premises to allow it to develop in a constructive way the relations between Church and world, Church and society, Church and creation, Church and culture or Church and history. The basis for this theology is the union in a pure and undivided image of the two natures in Jesus Christ and its expression the most striking is the Holy Eucharist. Eucharist, in the Orthodox conception, has a threefold aspect: of Mystery<sup>2</sup>,

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1. Nicolae Arseniev, *Mistica și Biserica Ortodoxă*, translated by Remus Rus, Ed. Iri, București, 1994, p. 147.

2. Fundamental term through New Testament designates the Mystery of the Eucharist is the one of “*the table of God*” (ἡ τράπεζα τοῦ κυρίου): “You cannot drink the cup of God and the cup of demons – says Saint Paul to Corinthians – you cannot partake of *God’s table* and of demons table” (*I Corinthians* 10: 21). The significance of this denomination is related to the statement of the Savior that the bread which he gave to the Apostles at the Last Supper was his Body and the wine from the glass, his Blood: “Jesus, took the bread and blessed it, broke it and, giving to the disciples, said, take, eat, this is my Body. And taking the glass and thanking, he gave them saying: drink all from it, because this is my Blood, of the new law, which is spill for many for the forgiveness of sins” (*Matthew* 26: 26-28). Certainty of the real presence of Christ in the eucharistic bread and wine raised then the big problem of the transformation of the two elements in his real Body and Blood, despite the fact that after the transformation it retain their normal aspect of bread and wine. For a long the confessions of faith have been used to explain the eucharistic mystery the scholastic

of sacrifice<sup>3</sup> and of remembrance<sup>4</sup>. This study wants to highlight: of the report of the sacrifice from Golgotha and the eucharistic sacrifice, and of the defining consequence of the size of the sacrifice of Holy Eucharist: is a sacrifice in which Christ doesn't sacrificed himself, but sacrifices and is sacrificed by the community headed by priest divine mandate, we admit that the priesthood can only be a specific mandate,

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term of transubstantiatio, appeared in West in Hildebert the Tour, in 1134, and then at the council of Lateran in 1225 and formalized at the Council of Trident (1562). The concept suggests that what has turned into the Body and the Blood of Christ is only the *substance* of bread and wine; their exterior aspect of bread and wine, their accidentally aspect, remained untouched. But Orthodox theology could not be agree with this point of view that would mean only a partial transfiguration of eucharistic elements; therefore, it dropped the term in favor of "transformation" (μεταβολή, μεταποίησης, μεταστοιχείωσις), which suggests the complete transformation of the elements.

3. The second term through the New Testament designates the Mystery of the Eucharist is the one of "breaking of bread" (ή κλάσις τοῦ ἄρτου). After the event of Pentecost, the disciples "standing daily in the temple, and breaking the bread in the house, were taking together the food with fully joy and for the purity of heart ... and they were fully devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and in fellowship, in *breaking of bread* and in prayer" (Acts 2: 46, 42). Later this custom of "breaking bread" was made only "in first day of the Jewish week", when God revive, i.e. Sunday. ("In the first day of the week, gathering together for break the bread, Paul, who was going to leave next day, began to speak them..." – Acts 20: 7). If the term of "God's Table" suggests more the real Mystery of his presence in the bread and wine of the Eucharist, the term of "breaking the bread" suggests particular the sacrifice from the cross of the Saviour, reliving eucharistic by those who take part in communion. "Whenever you eat this bread and you drink this cup you proclaim the God's death until it comes" (1 Corinthians 11: 26).

4. The size of the Eucharistas anamnesis, i.e. memorial, commemoration covers not only the saving work of Christ as former work, but as future work concerning the His second coming. *Anamnesis* does not mean that the person or the commemorated work belong to the past, but just the opposite; it designates an act in which "the person or the commemorated deed is present, current, is actual brought *here* in current plan and now" – Pr. prof. dr. Dumitru Staniloae, *Teologia Euharistică*, în "Ortodoxia", XXX(1969), nr. 3, p. 344. A firm evidence that this is the authentic and fullcontent of *anamnesis* the fact that the Savior Himself committed Eucharist after the Resurrection (cf. *Luke 24: 30-31*) "as seenpresentation of His condition of His permanent bringing in the invisible plane" – Idem, *Teologia dogmatică ortodoxă*, vol. III, Ed. I.B.M.B.O.R., București, 1978, p. 98.

a special grace which clearly shows the Priesthood as a Sacrament, as special grace absolutely necessary for the communion of Holy Eucharist; of the full communion with Christ, performed by Eucharist, which is a full communion of believers among themselves. All meet in the same Body of Christ; all together form the expanding Body of Christ. In this regard the Eucharist is par excellence the Sacrament of unity<sup>5</sup>.

### ***I. The report between the Sacrifice from the Cross and the Eucharistic Sacrifice***

Eucharist is not only anamnesis and commemoration of Christ death for the redemption of mankind, but also sacrifice, because by transformation the gifts of bread and wine become the Body and the Blood of Christ, and those who receive them are in communion with Christ Himself embodied, sacrificed through suffering and death, and revived, fully transformed and deified.

Bishop Kallistos of Diocleea analyzing Lent as a sacrifice to God notes, however, that “the sacrifice is not, primarily, a matter of renunciation, but of dedication. The main emphasis is not on what we deny ourselves, but what we offer to God and our neighbor. And the gift effect made to God – a gift that God accepts – is the restore of the personal relationship between ourselves and God. This is precisely the purpose of all sacrifices: the restoration of communion”<sup>6</sup>.

Sacrifice means the offering, but also participation of what is being offered as a sacrifice. Hence the ontological connection between the appearance of sacrifice and the sacrament or Mystery of the Eucharist, between which no one can make a strict separation. There is a reciprocity between Christ and community in bringing the sacrifice. Christ is bring as sacrifice when gifts are transformed, and the sacrificial involves an aspect of Mystery, because the community is sanctified by the descent of Holy Spirit. The aspect of sacrifice and of Sacrament

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5. Pr. prof. dr. Valer Bel, *Biserică și Euharistie*, în “Studii teologice”, XXXIV (1982), nr. 3-4, p. 239.

6. † Kallistos de Diocleea, *Postul Paștelui și societatea de consum*, în vol. “Cum trăim Ortodoxia astăzi”, translated by Doina Rogoti, Ed. Sophia, București, 2010, p. 59.

of the Eucharist are inseparable. Even as sacrifice it is a Mystery, because giving us to God, we raise up and we are in communion with His holiness and His blessing. And even as Mystery is a sacrifice, because God's Body that is given to us is in state of sacrificed and risen body and print us the sacrifice state, by which we rise and go forward to the resurrection<sup>7</sup>.

The Eucharist is a true sacrifice. At the Last Supper the Savior gave to His disciples, in sacramental form, in bloodless form, in the form of bread and wine, His very Body and Blood. The bloody sacrifice, sacrifice that would permanently replace all the bloody sacrifices of the Old Testament (*Hebrew* 10: 10, 12, 14), brought it Savior, sacrificing in real image on Golgotha day after the Last Supper. Sacrifice of Golgotha is a sin of offering, and the Eucharist is a sacrifice continually represented to God by Christ, for people's use (*Hebrew* 9: 11; 12: 24). Christ's killed Body and Blood spread on Golgotha for our for our sins, have the value of an atoning sacrifice. The Eucharist is an update of the sacrifice on Golgotha, made in the middle of the community. It is a current sacrifice, effective, real and genuine, with eternal value.

Although bloodless, the Eucharistic sacrifice is not really distinct from the bloody one from the cross. We don't sacrifice on the altar another body than the one who God the Word assumed by embodiment from the Virgin. Ignatius Theophorus says the following in this regard: "The Eucharist is the Body of our Savior Jesus Christ, the Body which suffered for our sins and which the Father, in his goodness, revived" (Epistle to Smyrnaeans VII, 1)<sup>8</sup>. On the other hand, the Eucharistic sacrifice is not a new offering in comparison with that on the cross, but the same sacrifice: "Is not sacrificed the exalted body of God the Word, come down from heaven – says Theognostus – but as said some of the Saints, even bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ, by the mystic service with faith, with fear, with longing and devotion, of those who were worthy of the divine priesthood, receiving the change from those in these, through the work and coming of the

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7. Pr. prof. dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia dogmatică ortodoxă*, vol. III, p. 104.

8. Cf. Pr. prof. dr. Ion Bria, *Tratat de teologie dogmatică și ecumenică*, Ed. România creștină, București, 1999, p. 186.

Holy Spirit; not by other body than that of God, but pretending to be the same, incorruptible and not corruptible being”<sup>9</sup>; “Sacrifice of Christ in Eucharist is no other sacrifice than that from Golgotha – highlights also Father Stăniloae – but one and the same which stood and stands, as stabbed Lamb, forever in front of Father”<sup>10</sup>.

Between the sacrifice on the cross, eternal sacrifice from heaven and the Eucharistic sacrifice on earth is an organic conditioning: “Continual sacrifice of God from heaven and its revelation on the altar during Liturgy, increase from the Sacrifice on the Cross, or is its continuation, without having in this continuation a bloody character”<sup>11</sup>. Father Stăniloae responds to the issue difficult to understand and depicted as Christ in heaven is at once a *sacrifice* and *glory* state: “If after human hypostasis God is subjected to time, so that at the Last Supper have lack of time to be in the sacrifice on the Cross, by the divine existence mode («after divine hypostasis that God») before Whom time does not mean anything, had right from the moment of the Incarnation dug in Him all the sufferings that He would suffer later, as the sacrifice of the Cross. God still living was in the state of sacrifice, was a real sacrifice as was later found on the Cross”<sup>12</sup>. Thus we can understand how according to the human way is eternal as a sacrifice, and by the divine way is simultaneously in glory in front of Father.

Sacrificial aspect should not be considered as a repetition (like the Roman-Catholic conception), or as a renewal or addition of bloody sacrifice from Golgotha, but as an *update* of Christ’s sacrifice. This update of the sacrifice of Christ must be understood as a *sacrificium aeternum* as an “eternal sacrifice of the Lamb” and which is not a “static event in the sky, but... an event in eschatological perspective” in the

9. Teognost, *Despre preoție*, 73, în “Filocalia”, vol. IV, translated by pr. prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, Tipografia Arhidiecezană, Sibiu, 1948, p. 274.

10. Pr. prof. dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Euharistică...*, p. 350; see also Idem, *Dumnezeiasca Euharistie în cele trei confesiuni*, în “Ortodoxia”, V (1953), nr. 1, p. 95: The Eucharist can not be a repetition or a prolongation of sacrifice in the form of the one from the cross, but it is not another sacrifice, but is “the same that brought the Spirit to the Holy Supper and the same that continually brings it in heaven”.

11. *Ibidem*, p. 96.

12. *Ibidem*, p. 95.

sense that “what happened on Golgotha never ended, but continues forever and ever”<sup>13</sup>.

Eucharistic Sacrifice is the same as that from Golgotha, is the activation, and not its repetition; the difference is just only the aspect: bloody on cross, bloodless on the shrines. One and the same Christ is sacrificed in both, only that in One is visible, in Other unseen, in One in painful aspect, in the other without pain. And One and the Other are “burning of all” that the Son brings to God for salvation of the world<sup>14</sup>. In its essence, the Eucharistic sacrifice is the same Sacrifice like the one from the Cross. The difference lies only in the fact that, on the Cross, Saviour sacrificed Himself and died, while in the Holy Eucharist He is sacrificed by the priest, in bloodless image, in the form of bread and wine, secretly, without dying. Through the Sacrifice from the Cross Christ brought the objective salvation of the world, reconciling it with God (*Romans* 5: 10-11, 16), and the Eucharistic Sacrifice is bring with the purpose of the personal acquiring of the joys of the Cross, namely for the subjective salvation. Unlike the Sacrifice of the Cross which was brought once, the Eucharistic one, without being another Sacrifice, is always brought, until the end of time.

What is the essence of the bloody Sacrifice from the Cross is the turning of the lamb which is not stabbed in one which is stabbed. We have, however, an act of transformation in Liturgy; the bread which is not sacrificed is transformed into what was stabbed, ie in exactly the body of God, The truly sacrificed. The Liturgy, assuming a transformation – the essence or the characteristic mark of Sacrifice – is an offering, within the meaning of the word. Bread is not transformed into a fantasy or a symbol of resurrection (ie in sacrificed bread), but in terms of true sacrifice, ie in the slain body of the God Himself<sup>15</sup>.

13. Gerardus von der Leeuw, *Sakramentales Denken*, Johannes Standa Verlag, Kassel, 1959, p. 225-226; see also pr. prof. dr. George Remete, *Sfintele Taine în contextul dialogului ortodox-luteran*, Ed. Reîntregirea, Alba-Iulia, 2009, p. 341-342.

14. Pr. dr. Vasile Coman, *Liturghia este jertfa nesângeroasă a Mântuitorului*, în “Mitropolia Ardealului”, 1964, nr. 6-8, p. 541.

15. Pr. prof. dr. Ene Braniște, *Explicarea Sfintei Liturghii după Sfântul Nicolae Cabasila*, Ed. I.B.M.B.O.R., București, 2011, p. 90.

In both cases the sacrificial material has undergone a transformation, in the Sacrifice from the Cross, the turning made like instead of the Lamb which was not stabbed to have a stabbed one and, in the Sacrifice of the Liturgy, the transformation makes like instead of bread which is not sacrificed, to have the Body of Christ, the one slain on the Cross. Therefore sacrifice is reckoned not as made from bread, but in the Body of Christ. Rightly so, it is called a sacrifice not of bread, but of God's Lamb.

It follows that, although the sacrifice from the Liturgy is a true sacrifice, it is not yet a sacrifice distinguished in number from the sacrifice on Golgotha, but is identical to that, in Liturgy the sacrifice doesn't consist in a slaughter of the Lamb in the moment of consecration, but in the transformation of bread into the Lamb once slain, so there is a transformation, not a slaughter<sup>16</sup>.

Churches do not sacrifice Christ again, Christ offered once and for all permanents as a dynamic current the state that has occurred in Him, by offering as sacrifice. Christ is in permanent state of offering "in heaven", as head of the Church, so in an inner communion with the Church, constantly filling the Church, in His condition of providing<sup>17</sup>.

### *I.1. Eucharistic sacrifice, basis of sacramental priesthood*

Assertion of a real sacrifice, expiatory in the Holy Eucharist impose with necessity the sacramental priesthood conclusion (special), as committed mandated of this sacrifice. Saint Ignatius Theophorus, direct descendant of the Holy Apostles, develops this teaching about the connection between the Eucharist and the Priesthood, saying that there are no eucharistic theology variants, because "One is the cup for union with His Blood; one is the altar, as one is the bishop, with the priests and deacons"<sup>18</sup>. However, Saint Ignatius states that committing this sacrifice is the attribute of the clergy<sup>19</sup>, as expressly specified that

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16. *Ibidem*, p. 91.

17. Pr. prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Euharistiei...*, p. 353.

18. Sf. Ignatie Teoforul, *Epistola către Filadelfieni*, în vol. "Scrierile Părinților Apostolici", col. "Părinți și scriitori bisericești", nr. 1, Ed. I.B.M.B.O.R., București, 1979, p. 179.

19. Pr. prof. dr. George Remete, *op. cit.*, p. 346.



all “what you do, make it according to God’s will”<sup>20</sup>, well “nothing can be done without the bishop approval”<sup>21</sup>, stating that anyone is “apart from the altar is not clean; in other words, the one who does anything without bishop, without priests and deacons that hasn’t a clean conscience”<sup>22</sup>.

Every Christian can and should bring sacrifices, whose wealth is based on the belief of the one who sacrifices, but the supreme sacrifice for the whole Church is achieved only by the established priest on account of the community and thus only through it pleases God to receive it. Similarly, “the grace of the Sacraments, about this sacrifice, of the general sacrifice of Christ, as response to the epiclesis of entire community by the bishop or priest, only by this gives it”<sup>23</sup>, explains us father Stăniloae.

Saint Cyril of Alexandria emphasizes the distinction between community sacrifice and the Eucharistic sacrifice committed by the established priest on the account of community: “There is a difference between our general priesthood of gifts-making (spiritual sacrifices) and between special priesthood which Christ communicates to us as sacrifice in seen faces, as we may share from the power of His sacrifice, in order to bring our offerings”<sup>24</sup>. We find here two different plans: which undertake the faithful is part of the subjective of the Christian sacerdotal effort, and ministry of priest and bishop stands on the object plan of salvation, because this was the will of Christ (*Matthew* 28: 20), they attracted also in the quality that they have and the community in prayer and sacrifice that isn’t of them, but of the community.

It is necessary that Christ, the eternal Bishop and the only Priest to come out to meet those who through prayers and sacrifices want to soar. He descends into the community plan, as we ascend to Him, but do not

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20. Sf. Ignatie Teoforul, *Epistola către Filadelfieni*, p. 179.

21. Idem, *Epistola către Policarp*, în vol. “Scrierile Părinților Apostolici”, col. “Părinți și scriitori bisericești”, nr. 1, Ed. I.B.M.B.O.R., București, 1979, p. 188.

22. Idem, *Epistola către Tralieni*, în vol. “Scrierile Părinților Apostolici”, col. “Părinți și scriitori bisericești”, nr. 1, Ed. I.B.M.B.O.R., București, 1979, p. 172.

23. Pr. prof. dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Din aspectul sacramental al Bisericii*, în “Studii teologice”, XVIII (1966), nr. 9-10, p. 554.

24. Cf. Idem, *Iisus Hristos, Arhiereu în veac*, în “Ortodoxia”, XXXI (1979), nr. 2, p. 223.

realize the meeting only the community which through the sacramental priesthood exceeds subjectivity. "The Church is Christ as a sacrifice and as Bishop (as subject of sacrifice) with us as sacrifices and priests (as subjects of sacrifice), raised in this state by Him, making Him and us, or together, the community through the visible priest, common, that far from cancel the subjectivity and our sacrifice, it enhances and lead to its fulfillment by the achievement of community"<sup>25</sup>.

We infer that a community without sacramental priesthood, unable to get out of its subjectivity in acts of worship, does not have the quality of Church<sup>26</sup>, but also have highlighted the fact that no bishop or priest is not saved outside the community, and in their acts (priest and bishop) must necessarily attract the community. By bishops and priests, believers overcome their subjectivity, live the feeling that to God have access especially by community and God gives His bounties, by the demands of the entire community, by Church<sup>27</sup>.

## ***II. Sharing of real Eucharistic Sacrifice produce the full union of man with Christ***

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ has an infinite saving power for man and cosmos, and that because it had no legal, of exchange as equivalence between sin and punishment, but it has an ontological value of rehabilitation of the image of God in man. The sacrifice of the incarnate Logos is based on boundless love for the one created in His image<sup>28</sup>. In Holy Communion<sup>29</sup> focuses the whole relational process between God

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25. Idem, *Legătura dintre Euharistie și iubirea creștină; Preoția slujitoare și preoția subiectivă generală*, în "Studii teologice", XVII (1965), nr. 1-2, p. 29.

26. Pr. prof. dr. Vasile Citirigă, *Preoția credincioșilor în Biserică și în societate*, Ed. Ex Ponto, Constanța, 2004, p. 55.

27. Pr. prof. dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Din aspectul sacramental...*, p. 555.

28. Pr. lect. dr. Tucă Nicușor, *Hristologia reflectată în imnografia ortodoxă*, Ed. Arhiepiscopiei Tomisului, 2004, p. 165.

29. "It is called the Eucharist, because through it we are in communion with God's divinity. It is also called Communion and it really is, because through it we are in communion with Christ and we participate to His Body and to His Divinity"– Sf. Ioan Damaschin, *Dogmatica*, IV, 13, translated by pr. dr. Dumitru Fecioru, Ed. Scripta, București, 1993, p. 268-269.

and man in it; This process reaches the maximum degree possible in earthly life. By Eucharist union between God and man “is climactic in the sense that we cannot make any distinction between what is ours and what is of Christ”<sup>30</sup>. However, Christ unites with us as Person and us with Him as individuals, ensuring our relationship of communion with Him: “It can’t be imagined the person if there isn’t communion. Person doesn’t live alone; it has connections, relationships, lives in communion. If it’s a passionate relationship, then we cannot speak of communion. Therefore we say that human hypostatic principle is activated by an ascetic life and lived in the sacraments of the Church”<sup>31</sup>. By the Eucharist, the believer grows through the other Sacraments, in them exercising their mood and ability to sacrifice and enriching, as person in dialogue with the Person of Christ, life, with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Human participation in Church, according to the teaching of Saint Gregory Palamas, is not a static phenomenon, but a dynamic reality. It is not the result of a set gift, which man receives once and for all and then keep it in a firm and right behavior; is the result of his personal communion with the uncreated divine grace. Through Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist, the Christian is renewed and integrated into the body of the Church through the Holy Spirit work which is responsible for the human free choice to be dressed in the uncreated and eternal divine grace.

Access to Eucharist is given by Baptism and Chrismation, not only of Baptism, because we cannot receive Christ in ourselves, only by the Spirit. Only by the Spirit, we have access to Christ, who doesn’t give Himself to us and doesn’t work in us only through His Spirit but also through the free will of the person who decides to comply his life with receiving of the eternal gifts. Sacrament of Chrismation gives us a power which prepares us for Eucharist and for the confession of faith in Christ. Nobody, however, cannot confess with such power and sacri-

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30. Pr. prof. dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Drumul cu Hristos prin tainele și sărbătorile Bisericii Ortodoxe*, în “Ortodoxia”, XXVIII (1976), nr. 2, p. 411.

31. Hierotheos, mitropolit de Nafpaktos, *Persoana în tradiția ortodoxă*, translated by prof. Paul Bălan, Ed. Bunavestire, Bacău, 2002, p. 221.

ficial on Christ, in the communion of his fellows and his own life, as one who directly experiences Christ, being in communion with His Body and Blood of Holy Spirit filled, from His Church. "Through repeated communions forward we active advance in our mysterious death, before our real death and, thus, we progressively advancing towards our new state in the infinity of God's life"<sup>32</sup>.

Compared with the other Sacraments – that unite us with Christ invisibly through His work – Eucharist achieved the full union with His very Person in perceptible form. It is an entrench of the personal meeting with Christ the One sacrificed, risen and glorified. If to the "fullness of time" Son of God chose to show to humanity by human nature appropriated, after the Ascension He descends with the human nature maximum transfigured, through the Holy Eucharist, in even our human nature. Eucharist brings the deified human nature of Christ, His Body and Blood, in human ontology for Christ to become owner of our nature, to regather us in Him. Thus, through Holy Communion is fulfilled human vocation of image of the Divine Logos and the one of gift of God's creation.

Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is the sign, the certainty and the anticipation of our own real presence up there, inaugurated sacramental presence in communion of the adopted Spirit by the Father, even now, in Eucharistic cooperation and communion<sup>33</sup>. By communion with the Body and Blood of Christ, our body itself is raised to the rank of the body of Christ and therefore is designated for resurrection and heavenly glory. After we were in communion we cannot look to our body as something inferior and contemptible, or as a simple tool of tasted pleasure, because on such, we committed a sacrilege against the Body of Christ<sup>34</sup>.

By communion with the Body and Blood of God is done the same consanguinity and transfiguration of Christ with those who are in com-

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32. Irineu Pop-Bistrițeanul, *Chipul lui Hristos în viața morală a creștinului*, Ed. Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, p. 184.

33. Boris Bobrinskoy, *Împărtășirea Sfântului Duh*, translated by Măriucași Adrian Alexandrescu, Ed. I.B.M.B.O.R., București, 1999, p. 292.

34. Pr. prof. dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Taina Euharistiei, izvor de viață spirituală în Ortodoxie*, în "Ortodoxia", XXXI (1979), nr. 3-4, p. 508.

munion with God. And this, thanks to Christ's humanity penetration of uncreated divine energies of the Holy Spirit who rests and shines and from Christ – The man, ie from the Son of God embodied. And this makes it possible to penetrate our human nature with the same divine energies of the Holy Spirit<sup>35</sup>. Christ has transformed His humanity through its union with divinity and He transfigured His united body with the Word, and after His ascension He gives us His Body, as eating it, to turn into Him.

This transformation of ours has a fundamental role in our progress toward an enriched life with a superior perspective of eternity. "Our blood is controlled by the impulse to maintain, through the material pleasures and by selfish conservation, a life which is submitting to end, through the decomposition process which it maintains through these pleasures. Because of this, it is necessary to pass in our blood, the blood of Christ clean from any enslaving towards bodily pleasures and in which was overcome to the fear of death, so that imprinted the urge to give by death to God, source of endless life and thereby entered in the endless life of the resurrection"<sup>36</sup>.

In the Eucharistic assembly, the Word of God is addressed to man and to creation not as interpellation from outside as it does in the Old Testament, that as "body", i.e. inside our own experiences, in quality as we have as part of creation. For this reason, the Word of God does not dwell in human spirit as a rational knowledge or in human soul as an inner mystical experience, but as a communion within a community. It is very important to emphasize that Christ Himself is revealed as truth not in a community, but as a community. Thus, truth is not something "expressed" or "heard", is not related to affirmation or logic, but something that is, i.e. an ontological truth: communion itself becomes Truth<sup>37</sup>. Essential basis of the presence of the Word in creation is the Incarnation, the statement that "*the Word became body*" (John 1: 14).

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35. Pr. prof. dr. Dumitru Radu, *Tainele inițierii în mistica sacramentală a lui Nicolae Cabasila*, în "Ortodoxia", XL (1989), nr. 3, p. 10.

36. Pr. prof. dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Jertfa lui Hristos și spiritualitatea noastră prin împărtășirea de ea în Sfânta Liturghie*, în "Ortodoxia", XXXV (1983), nr. 1, p. 105.

37. Ioannis Zizioulas, mitropolit de Pergam, *Ființa eclesială*, translated by pr. dr. Aurel Nae, Ed. Bizantină, București, 2007, p. 123-124.

So, He speaks of His body and says it is *"the real food"* (John 6: 55), indicating the future contact between Incarnation and Eucharist.

Christ makes association between bread and body, saying that *"the bread which I will give for the life of the world is My body"* (John 6: 51), thereby indicating that as the human body assimilates bread and units with it for its life support, so, the same body will assimilate the body of Christ, for supporting the spiritual life. Thus, the "human food – bread and wine – becomes in Holy Eucharist possibility of eternal life", ie possibility of created unity with uncreated, becomes and proves fact of life identified with the cosmic Body of God the Word, the Body and Blood of Christ. In the ecclesiastical Eucharist is celebrated what was committed and by "shadowing" of Spirit on the Holy Mother of God which will perform the whole creation when *"all will be again united in Christ"* (Ephesians 1: 10).

### ***Conclusions***

In the Eucharistic sacrifice Christ discovers Himself to the believer and to the Church as the sacrifice one for the sins of world. His sacrifice is real, but its discovery is therefore only in the eyes of faith. In this way we can talk about the state of continuous sacrifice of divine archetype which is brought as offering in the moment of transformation of the gifts in the Holy Eucharistic, and the offering of the eucharistic elements by believers demonstrates that they are the living sacrifice of the one "after image".

In Eucharist, the sacrifice of Christ has an active effect as a special act of sacrifice produced now in Christ and in us. The sacrifice is real, but unseen. It is the means by which the sacrifice of the Cross becomes efficient to us. The bloody sacrifice of Christ is followed by a permanent state of sacrifice. But as objective salvation must be subjectively appropriated, so, the uses of Sacrifice for the entire human race must be appropriated by each member of Christ's Body.

Protestants rejected the sacrificial character of the Eucharist on the grounds that this would reduce the importance of the sacrifice from Golgotha for the forgiveness of sins. The Sacrifice of the Eucharist flows from the sacrifice of Golgotha and binds uninterrupted from the

bloody sacrifice of Christ, but doesn't identify it. This is not a repeat or an extension like that, but a real repeating of it, differing in that the first time God has given His life as a sacrifice bodily and visibly, while, in the Eucharist, the reality of sacrifice and the presence of Christ is mysterious, sacrifice is bloodless and the visible celebrant of sacrifice is the priest.