



Babeş-Bolyai University

The Faculty of Orthodox Theology

„Isidor Todoran” Doctoral School of Theology

***THE MISSION OF THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX
CHURCH IN THE IBERIAN PENINSULA
DIASPORA***

Abstract

Coordinating Professor:

Rev. Prof. Valer Bel, PhD

PhD Candidate:

Rev. Vasile Pop

Cluj-Napoca

2022

Contents

ABBREVIATION LIST

INTRODUCTION

I. THE ORTHODOX DIASPORA, AN INSPIRATION FOR CHURCH MISSION

1.1 Diaspora – Ethymology, Terminology, Background

1.1.1 Diaspora – Biblical Signification

1.1.2 The Particular and Universal Character of Diaspora **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

1.1.3 The Ortodox Diaspora – The Missionary Signification of the Notion

1.1.4 The Relation between Mission and Diaspora

1.1.5 The Romanian Diaspora – A Notion

1.2 The Romanian Orthodox Diaspora

1.2.1 Extent, Organization

1.2.2 The ROC (Romanian Orthodox Church) and The Organization of the Romanian Diaspora

1.2.2.1 The Romanian Orthodox Diaspora until XX Century.....

1.2.2.2 The Organization of the Romanian Diaspora in the XX Century, until the 90s

1.2.2.3 The Organization of the Romanian Orthodox Diaspora from the 90s until Present

1.2.3 The European Romanian Diaspora - Characteristics

1.3 The Presence of Orthodoxy in the Iberian Peninsula

1.3.1 The Apostolic Mission in Spain and The Beginnings of Christianity in the Iberian Peninsula

1.3.2 The Beginnings of Orthodoxy in Spain

1.3.3 The Beginnings of Orthodoxy in Portugal

1.4 The Presence of Romanians in the Iberian Peninsula.....

1.4.1 Document Certification on the Romanians in Spain.....

1.4.2 Document Certification on the Romanians in Portugal

1.4.3 The Romanians in Andorra

1.5 Migration of Romanians in the Iberian Peninsula

1.5.1 Causes of the Migration

1.5.2 An Account of the Romanians in Spain

1.5.3 An Account of the Romanians in Portugal

1.5.4 Transnationalism and the *Brain Drain* Phenomenon – Mission Aspects Related to These

1.5.5 The Religious Context of the Romanians in the Iberian Peninsula after the 90s

II. THE MISSION OF THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

2.1 The Foundation of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolitan of Western and Meridional Europe

2.1.1 Mission Accents on Church Organization of the Romanians in Western Europe in XX Century

2.1.1.1 The Romanian Orthodox Eparchy of Western Europe

2.1.1.2 The Romanian Orthodox (Arch)Diocese for Western Europe

2.1.2 The Foundation of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolitan of Western and Meridional Europe

2.1.3 Missionary Involvement of the Metropolitan in Church Life of the Romanians in the Iberian Peninsula

2.2 Foundation Needs of the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Spain and Portugal

2.2.1 The Foundation of the First Romanian Orthodox Parish in Spain

2.2.2 The Organization of Church Life in Spain within the Period 2000-2008

2.2.3 The Foundation of the First Romanian Orthodox Parish in Portugal

2.2.4 The Organization of Church Life in the Portugal of the 90s until the Year 2008

2.2.5 Attempts to Recognize the Romanian Orthodox Church in Spain until the Year 2008

2.3 The Foundation of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Spain and Portugal

2.3.1 Missionary Argument

2.3.2 Election and Ordination of the First Romanian Orthodox Bishop for Spain and Portugal

2.3.3 Election and Ordination of the Bishopric Vicar Hierarch Ignatie Mureșanul

2.3.4 Election and Ordination of the Second Bishopric Vicar: Teofil of Iberia

2.3.5 Mission Accents on Founding/Organizing a Diocese in 2008

2.3.6 The Relationship of the Romanian Orthodox Eparchy in Spain (ROESP/EORSP) with the Spanish State and Diocese Recognition

- 2.3.7 The ROESP Relationship with the Roman-Catholic Church
- 2.3.8 The ROESP Relationship with the Romanian Embassy and Consular Offices in Spain
 - 2.3.8.1 ROESP Partnership with the Romanian Associative Environment in Spain*
 - 2.3.8.2 Parish Relationship with the Romanian Media in Spain*
- 2.3.9 Inter-Christian Relations in the Iberian Peninsula
- 2.4 Inter-Orthodox Communion and Mission in the Iberian Peninsula
 - 2.4.1 Communion and Participation in the other Orthodox Structures present in the Iberian Peninsula
 - 2.4.2 The Assembly of Orthodox Bishops in Spain and Portugal
 - 2.4.3 Inter-Orthodox Partnership at Parish Level
- 2.5 ROESP Participation to Bettering the Romanians' Communitarian Life
 - 2.5.1 Contribution to the Romanians' Integration in Spain
 - 2.5.2 Contribution to the Romanians' Integration in Portugal
 - 2.5.3 The Social Involvement of Romanian Communities
 - 2.5.4 Contribution to the Spanish Society
 - 2.5.5 The Cultural Contribution
 - 2.5.6 The Institutional Contribution
 - 2.5.7 ROESP Contribution in Preserving and Promoting Romanian Values in the Romanian Diaspora in the Iberian Peninsula

III. THE MISSIONARY ETHOS AND THE SHAPING OF THE MISSIONARY CONSCIENCE IN THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

- 3.1 Terminological Statement
 - 3.1.1 Christ's Ethos and/or the Apostolic Ethos
 - 3.1.2 The Historic Reality and the Orthodox Missionary Ethos
- 3.2 Missionary Ethos Specific to the Romanian Orthodox Diaspora
 - 3.2.1 ROESP Missionary Ethos Specifics
- 3.3 Missionary Ethos Development
 - 3.3.1 Eparchial Level
 - 3.3.3 Family Level
- 3.4 Missionary Conscience in the Iberian Peninsula
 - 3.4.1 A Need For Missionary Conscience

- 3.4.2 A Shaping of the Missionary Conscience in the Romanian Orthodox Diaspora..
 - 3.4.2.1 *Orthodox Parishes in Spain*
 - 3.4.2.2 *Orthodox Parishes in Portugal*
- 3.5 The Diaspora Parish
 - 3.5.1 The Parish – A cell of Church Mission
 - 3.5.2 The Foundation of a Parish
 - 3.5.3 The Missionary Framework
 - 3.5.4 The Legal-Institutional Framework
 - 3.5.5 Particularities of the Orthodox Parish in the Diaspora
 - 3.5.6 Lacks of a Parish in the Diaspora
 - 3.5.7 Missionary Imperatives at Parish Level (in the diaspora)
- 3.6 The Mission of a Priest in the Diaspora (The Iberian Peninsula)
 - 3.6.1 A Profile of the Missionary Priest in the Diaspora
 - 3.6.2 Preaching the word - Catechization
 - 3.6.3 The Liturgical Dimension of Priest Mission
 - 3.6.4 Social Contributions and Institutional Relations
 - 3.6.5 Dynamism and Communication
 - 3.6.6 Intermediation between Local Authorities and Parishes.....
 - 3.6.7 Statistics, Diagnosis and Prognosis at Parish Level
 - 3.6.8 A Presbyterian’s Mission in the Diaspora Parish
 - 3.6.8.1 *Presbyterian Meetings in the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Spain and Portugal*
 - 3.6.8.2 *Presbyterian Meetings at Deanery Level*
- 3.7 A Mission of Laity in the Iberian Peninsula
 - 3.7.1 *Laos tou Theou* – Laity as Part of the Body of Christ
 - 3.7.2 Laity’s Decisional Role to Parish Foundation
 - 3.7.3 Parish Integration and a Contribution to Integrating the Others
 - 3.7.4 Participation in the Ecclesial Cult
 - 3.7.5 Laity’s Role in Parish Activities (Social, Cultural, Didactic, Edilitary)
 - 3.7.6 Parish Financial Support
 - 3.7.7 Laity Counter-Mission at Parish and Community Level
- 3.8 *Kat’ oikon ekklesia* in the Diaspora
 - 3.8.1 Suite Church

- 3.8.2 Church Premises Influence in Developing Mission at Parish Level
 - 3.8.2.1 *Developing Mission in Rented Church Premises*
 - 3.8.2.2 *Developing Mission in Granted Church Premises*
 - 3.8.2.3 *Developing Mission in Purchased/Built Church Premises*
 - 3.8.2.4 *Developing Mission in Improper Church Premises*
- 3.8.3 Romanian Orthodox Monasteries in Spain and Portugal – Mission Centres
 - 3.8.3.1 *Monastic Life in Spain – Missionary Motivation*
 - 3.8.3.2 *Complementary Mission and Pastoration*
 - 3.8.3.4 *A Need for Monasteries in the Iberian Peninsula*
- 3.9 Youth Apostolate in the Diaspora
 - 3.9.1 Parish Schools
 - 3.9.1.1 *Organization, Mission, Goal*
 - 3.9.1.2 *Difficulties, Lacks and Pastoral-Missionary Aspects in Relation to Children in the Diaspora*
 - 3.9.1.3 *Missionary-Pastoral Strategies and Projects segmented according to Age Groups: 3-7 and 8-13 Years Old*
 - 3.9.2 The Nepsis Brotherhood in Spania
 - 3.9.2.1 *Missionary Accents Referring to (Romanian) Youth Born in Spain*
 - 3.9.2.2 *Nepsis Youth Groups at Parish Level*
 - 3.9.2.3 *Nepsis Youth Meetings at Deanery Level*
 - 3.9.2.4 *The ROESP Nepsis Eparchial Congress*
 - 3.9.2.5 *The Romanian Orthodox Metropolitan of Western and Meridional Europe Nepsis Congress)*
 - 3.9.2.6 *The ROMWME Congress of Nepsis Coordinators*
 - 3.9.3 Eparchial Youth Camps: *An Alternative Week!*
 - 3.9.3.1 *Romanian Cultural and Spirituality Camps*
 - 3.9.3.2 *Thematic Camps*
 - 3.9.3.3 *Missionary Camps of Continuous Training*
 - 3.9.3.4 *Priest Camps*
 - 3.9.4 *The Need for Youth with a Missionary Profile*
 - 3.9.5 *Shown-up Lacks at Mission Level with the Youth in Spain*
 - 3.9.6 *The Influence of the Ethnic-Linguistic Element in the Mission Developed with Romanian Youth in Spain and Portugal*
 - 3.9.7 *The Need for Adapting the Religious Language to Youth Level. Solutions and Perspective*

IV. MISSIONARY CHALLENGES, SOLUTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES WITHIN THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX DIASPORA IN THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

4.1 The Orthodox Church, Christian Life and the Spanish Society

4.1.1 The Institution of the Family in the Orthodox Diaspora and Challenges within Society

4.1.2 Mixed Marriages

4.1.2.1 Factors Influencing Mixed Marriages

4.1.2.2 Mixed Marriages – ROESP Statistics

4.1.2.3 Exigences of Correct Approaches in Diaspora Problematics

4.2 Online Mission or Elements of Virtual Pastoration?

4.2.1 The Need for Online Mission and the Involvement of Church in the Virtual Environment

4.2.2 Virtual Space Compatibility with the Church Mission

4.2.3 Online Mission Complementary with Church Mission

4.2.4 The Internet – *A Missionary Support* in the Diaspora?

4.2.5 Limits and Lacks of Mission developed in the Virtual Space

4.2.5.1 Communication, Connection and Communion in the Priest-Believer Relationship

4.2.5.2 Virtuality and Virtue in the Missionary Plan

4.2.6 Online Mission during the Sars Cov 2 – Coronavirus Pandemics. Opportunities and Limits

4.3 Mission and Proselitism in the Iberian Peninsula

4.3.1 (Neo) Protestant Denominations* in Spain and Portugal

4.3.2 The Influence of the Sectarian Phenomenon on Pastoration at Parish Level

4.3.3 The Risk of Religious Syncretism and the *Stall Effect*

4.4 New Stages at the Migrationist Level Phenomenon in Spain. Statistics Aspects and Pastoral-Missionary Accents

4.4.1. Return to Romania

4.4.2 The Migration of Romanian Families from Spain to other Countries

4.4.3 The Risk of Family Breaking and Pastoral Difficulties emerged in the temporarily separated Families. Solutions

4.5 The Need for Cemeteries and Repatriation Programs

4.5.1 The Accute Need for Romanian Cemeteries in Spain

4.5.2 The ROESP Solutions to Problems related to Repatriation/Burial

4.5.3 Romanian Consular Office Solutions to Problems related to Decease and Repatriation

4.5.4 Incineration in Spain and the Problems arisen by this Practice in the Pastoration and Mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church

4.6 Mission in Hospitals in Spain

4.6.1 The Access of Priests in Hospitals – A Legal Basis

4.6.2 The Romanian College of Physicians in Spain – a Common Desideratum

4.7 Mission in Penitentiaries and Other Institutions

4.7.1 The Access of Priests in Penitentiaries. Regulations; Historical-Legal Accents

4.7.2 Religious Assistance and Pastoration of Orthodox Convicts in the Iberian Penitentiaries

4.7.3 Partnership between Romanian Orthodox Parishes and Elder Care Centres and Other Institutions

4.8 ROESP – 15 Years of Officiation and Mission in the Iberian Peninsula

4.8.1 The Romanian Cathedral in Madrid – Symbol of Romanian Orthodoxy in the Iberian Peninsula

4.8.2 The ROESP Premise in Madrid – Eparchial Centre of Mission and Coordination

ANNEX

CONCLUSIONS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ABBREVIATION LIST

ROMWME – Romanian Orthodox Metropolitan of Western and Meridional Europe

MOREOM – Mitropolia Ortodoxă Române a Europei Occidentale și Meridionale

ROESP – The Romanian Orthodox Eparchy of Spain and Portugal

EORSP – Episcopia Ortodoxă Română a Spaniei și Portugaliei

DECR – Department for External Church Relations (of the Moscow Patriarchate)

CCE – Coordination Centre for Education in Western and Meridional Europe

CCE – Centrul de Coordonare Pedagogică în Europa Occidentală și Meridională

ROCMBI – The Romanian Orthodox Church Mission and Biblical Institute

IBMBOR – Institutul Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române

FREES – The Federation of Religious Evangelical Entities in Spain

FEREDE - Federación de Entidades Religiosas Evangélicas de España

RLCC – Romanian Language, Culture and Civilization Courses

LCCR – Limbă, Cultură și Civilizație Românească (cursuri)

FJCS – The Federation of Jewish Communities in Spain

FCJIE – Federación de Comunidades Judías de España

NAFS – The National Association of Funeral Services

PANASEF – Asociación Nacional de Servicios Funerarios

DSCSR – *Dumitru Stăniloae* Centre for Studies and Research

CDS – Centru de Studii și Cercetare *Dumitru Stăniloae*

ROEI – The Romanian Orthodox Eparchy in Italy

EORI – Episcopia Ortodoxă Română a Italiei

OLRL – The Organic Law of Religious Freedom

LOLR – Ley Orgánica de Libertad Religiosa

NRA – The National Romanian Archives

ANR – Arhivele Naționale ale României

RER – Religious Entities Registry

RER – Registro de Entidades Religiosas

NIS – The National Institute of Statistics

INE – Instituto Nacional de Estandística

WCC – World Council of Churches

EHI – *Eudoxiu Hurmuzachi Institute*

IEH – Institutul *Eudoxiu Hurmuzachi*

OYE – **The Orthodox Youth Encounter**

ITO – Întâlnirea Tinerilor Ortodocși

ICS – **The Islamic Commission in Spain**

CIE - Comisión Islámica de España

PEA – **The Portuguese Evangelical Alliance**

AEP – Aliança Evangélica Portuguesa

OSB – **The Official State Bulletin**

BOE – Boletín Oficial del Estado

RLI – **The Romanian Language Institute**

ILR – Institutul Limbii Române

Key Words:

mission, pastoration, Orthodox diaspora, missionary ethos, parish consciousness, missionary perspectives, pastoral-missionary priorities, the Iberian Peninsula;

INTRODUCTION

The Orthodox Church mission in diaspora is a widely known theme of research, nowadays, among theologians and clergy. If we keep in mind the extent of missionary work of the Local Orthodox Churches in diaspora, we will notice an intensification of it during the last 25-30 years, firstly generated by the migration of believers from their native country to Western ones. The great number of Romanian communities in diaspora has determined the Romanian Orthodox Church *to follow* its sons wherever they live and work, founding, in short time, many parishes and eparchies. These parishes, as Church missionary cells, have contributed, in time, to the formation of larger administrative-Church structures, such as the eparchy or the archdiocese. This spiritual maternal concern shown to *the limbs in Christ's Body* makes diaspora become a missionary land of real importance for the entire Orthodox Church, and just for this reason, the Great Pan-Orthodox Council had on its agenda the subject of diaspora and also that of the mission of the Church in the world.

The Area of Research of the current paper is the mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church within diaspora (-Orthodox Romanian!-) in the Iberian Peninsula, developed in the Iberian countries by the Romanian Orthodox Eparchy of Spain and Portugal.

The Topic of Research regards, on one hand the pastoral-missionary activity developed by the Romanian Orthodox Eparchy of Spain and Portugal *via* parishes, priests and their believers, and on the other hand, the impact of the Romanian Orthodox Church Mission on diaspora of the Iberian Peninsula, the relationship with the other Orthodox Churches present here and, more especially, the missionary and pastoral strategies which the Church applies and assumes in its mission on the Iberian Peninsula.

The State-of-the-Art of the Romanian Orthodox Church mission in the diaspora is in (a still) incipient stage, given the actual magnitude (recent!) of the Romanian Orthodox Diaspora. The interest for the mission and pastoration of Romanians in the diaspora has increased a lot during the last 10-15 years, once with the emergence of more than 700

parishes, Europe only, without taking into consideration the ones in America or other parts of the world.

About the mission of the Church, in general, valuable works have been written with a great relevance and importance for the mission of the Church in the diaspora, thus we mention here some of the most representative titles: Reverend Professor Valer Bel wrote about *Misiunea Bisericii în lumea contemporană*¹ (*The Mission of the Church in the Contemporary World*), and about *Misiune, parohie, pastorație. Coordonate pentru o strategie misionară*² (*Mission, Parish, Pastoration. Coordinates for a Missionary Strategy*); the volume *Misiunea Bisericii în Sfânta Scriptură și în istorie*³ (*The Mission of the Church in the Holy Scripture and in History*), coordinated by Rev. Prof. Ioan Chirilă, PhD, then the treatise *Misiologie creștină*⁴ (*Christian Missiology*) of His Eminence Nifon Mihăiță. We also hereby mention Father Gheorghe Petraru's works, *Misiologie Ortodoxă*⁵ (*Orthodox Missiology*) and *Teologie fundamentală și misionară. Ecumenism*⁶ (*Fundamental and Missionary Theology. Ecumenism*), to which we may add other dissertations and studies of missionary theology or having pastoral-missionary importance: His Eminence Anastasios Yannoulatos wrote *Misiune pe urmele lui Hristos: studii teologice și omilii*⁷ (*Mission while following Christ: Theological Studies and Homilies*), Father Ilie Moldovan wrote on *Ortodoxia misionară, stâlp de lumină în lumea contemporană*⁸ (*Missionary Orthodoxy, A Light Pillar in the Contemporary World*), Professor Miguel Alvarez wrote the treatise *Teologia de la Mision*⁹ (*The Theology of Mission*), Father Gheorghios D. Metallinos wrote about *Rolul și lucrarea Ortodoxiei astăzi*¹⁰ (*The Role and Work of Nowadays Orthodoxy*) and the work *Parohia – Hristos în mijlocul nostru*¹¹ (*The Parish – Christ among Us*), where he extends on some aspects regarding the mission in

¹ Pr. Prof. Dr. Valer BEL, *Misiunea Bisericii în lumea contemporană*, Editura Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2010.

² Pr. Prof. Dr. Valer BEL, *Misiune, parohie, pastorație. Coordonate pentru o strategie misionară*, Editura Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2006.

³ Pr. Prof. Dr. Ioan CHIRILĂ (coord.), *Misiunea Bisericii în Sfânta Scriptură și în istorie*, Editura Renașterea, Cluj Napoca, 2006.

⁴ Prof. Dr. † Nifon MIHĂIȚĂ, *Misiologie creștină*, Editura Asa, București, 2005.

⁵ Pr. Prof. Gheorghe PETRARU, *Misiologie Ortodoxă, I. Revelația lui Dumnezeu și misiunea Bisericii*, Editura Pamfilius, Iași, 2002.

⁶ Pr. Prof. Gheorghe PETRARU, *Teologie fundamentală și misionară. Ecumenism*, Editura Performantica, Iași, 2006.

⁷ † Anastasios YANNOULATOS, *Misiune pe urmele lui Hristos: studii teologice și omilii*, Traducere Diac. Dr. Ștefan L. TOMA, Editura Andreiană, Sibiu, 2013.

⁸ Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN, *Ortodoxia misionară, stâlp de lumină în lumea contemporană*, Editura Mitropoliei Olteniei, Craiova, 2009.

⁹ Miguel ALVAREZ, *Teologia de la Mision*, CTP Press, Cleveland-Tennessee, 2019.

¹⁰ Pr. Gheorghios D. METALLINOS, *Rolul și lucrarea Ortodoxiei astăzi*, Traducere Pr. Constantin PETRACHI, Editura Egumenița, Galați, 2014.

¹¹ Gheorghios D. METALLINOS, *Parohia – Hristos în mijlocul nostru*, Traducere Ioan I. ICĂ, Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 2004.

diaspora, especially mentioning the Greek Orthodox Diaspora. Similarly, in the volume *Tradiția Canonică și Misiunea Bisericii*¹² (*The Canonical Tradition and the Mission of the Church*), coordinated by Father Patriciu Vlaicu and Father Răzvan Perșa, we find precious reference on the importance of the mission of the Church, seen through the eye of canonical Tradition. His Beatitude, Patriarch Daniel of the Romanian Orthodox Church wrote *Misiune pentru mântuire. Lucrarea Bisericii în societate*¹³ (*Mission for Salvation. The Work of the Church in Society*); Alexander Schmemmann, in his work *Biserică, lume, societate*¹⁴ (*Church, World and Society*) and Father Dumitru Popescu in his works: *Hristos, Biserică, Societate*¹⁵ (*Christ, Church, Society*) and *Hristos, Biserică, Misiune. Relevanța misiunii Bisericii în lumea contemporană*¹⁶ (*Christ, Church, Mission. The Relevance of Church Mission in the Contemporary World*) lays important emphasis on the Church mission in the world and in society; in the same context we mention Father Gheorghios Kapsanis' works: *Probleme de Ecclesologie și Pastorație*¹⁷ (*Problems of Ecclesiology and Pastoration*), Metropolitan Emilianos Timiadis': *Preot, Parohie, Înnoire. Noțiuni și orientări pentru teologia și practica pastorală*¹⁸ (*Priest, Parish, Innovation. Notions and Orientation for the Pastoral Theology and Practice*), Father Mihai Himcinschi's: *Biserica în societate, Aspecte misionare ale Bisericii în societatea actuală*¹⁹ (*The Church in Society. Missionary Aspects of the Church in the Actual Society*), Father Dorel Man's: *Pastorație și duhovnicie*²⁰ (*Pastoration and Spirituality*) and the volume *Teologia Ortodoxă în secolul al XX-lea și la începutul secolului al XXI-lea*²¹ (*Orthodox Theology in the XX Century and the Beginning of XXI Century*), which refers, among other things also to developing missionary studies. To these works and titles, we also add: Father Cristian Sonea, who wrote on *Apostolat și*

¹² Pr. Conf. Dr. Patriciu VLAICU, Asist. Dr. Răzvan PERȘA (eds.), *Tradiția Canonică și Misiunea Bisericii*, coll. *Studii Nomocanonice* 1, Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2018.

¹³ † DANIEL, Patriarhul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, *Misiune pentru mântuire. Lucrarea Bisericii în societate*, Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, București, 2009.

¹⁴ Pr. Alexander SCHMEMMANN, *Biserică, lume, societate*, Traducere Maria VINȚELER, Editura Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2006.

¹⁵ Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru POPESCU, *Hristos, Biserică, Societate*, Editura IBMBOR, București, 1998.

¹⁶ Pr. prof. Acad. Dumitru POPESCU, *Hristos, Biserică, Misiune. Relevanța misiunii Bisericii în lumea contemporană*, Galați, Editura Arhiepiscopiei Dunării de Jos, 2011.

¹⁷ Arhim. Gheorghios KAPSANIS, *Probleme de Ecclesologie și Pastorație*, Traducere Nicușor DECIU, Editura Anestis, București, 2015.

¹⁸ † Mitropolit Emilianos TIMIADIS, *Preot, Parohie, Înnoire. Noțiuni și orientări pentru teologia și practica pastorală*, Traducere Paul BRUSANOVSKI, Editura Sofia, București, 2001.

¹⁹ Pr. Mihai HIMCINSCHI, *Biserica în societate. Aspecte misionare ale Bisericii în societatea actuală*, Editura Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2006.

²⁰ Pr. Dr. Dorel MAN, *Pastorație și duhovnicie*, I, Editura Renașterea, Cluj Napoca, 2009.

²¹ Pr. Prof. Dr. Viorel IONIȚĂ (coord.), *Teologia Ortodoxă în secolul al XX-lea și la începutul secolului al XXI-lea*, Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, București, 2011.

responsabilitate. *O viziune teologică asupra misiunii laicului*²² (*Apostolate and Responsibility. A Theological Vision on the Mission of Laity*), *Paradigme misionare. De la Edinburgh la Sinodul din Creta*²³ (*Missionary Paradigms. From Edinburgh to the Council in Crete*) and the study *Premise hristologice și eclesiologice ale participării laicilor la misiunea integrală a Bisericii*²⁴ (*Christological and Ecclesiological Premises of Laity's Participation to the Integral Mission of the Church*), Father Stelian Tofană: *Componentele și exigențele misiunii Bisericii, după Epistolele Pastorale*²⁵ (*The Components and Exigences of Church Mission According to the Pastoral Epistles*), Father Ștefan Iloaie: *Misiunea Bisericii în contextul secularizării*²⁶ (*The Mission of the Church in the Context of Secularization*), Florin Frunză's study: *Misiunea Bisericii și instituțiile Statului*²⁷ (*The Church Mission and the State Institutions*) and others.

About the mission of the Orthodox Church in diaspora – in general – we find papers of great importance both in Romanian and in other international languages – we hereby mention the titles: *Misiunea sacramentală a Bisericii Ortodoxe în context european*²⁸ (*The Sacramental Mission of the Orthodox Church in European Context*), *Las Iglesias cristianas ortodoxas*²⁹ (*The Christian Orthodox Churches*) – Prof. John Binns' book; *Diaspora Ortodoxă Română din Europa Occidentală după Al doilea Război Mondial. Aspecte istorice și canonic-juridice*³⁰ (*The Romanian Orthodox Diaspora after the Second World War. Historical and Canonical -Judicial Aspects*) by Pavel Emanuel Tăvală, and the recent volume *Diaspora Românească. Mărturii și evocări*³¹ (*The Romanian Diaspora. Testimonies and Evocation*); to these, we may add also the paper written by me: *Diaspora ortodoxă română:*

²² Pr. Cristian SONEA, *Apostolat și responsabilitate. O viziune teologică asupra misiunii laicului*, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2015.

²³ Pr. Cristian SONEA, *Paradigme misionare. De la Edinburgh la Sinodul din Creta*, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2016.

²⁴ Pr. Cristian SONEA, „Premise hristologice și eclesiologice ale participării laicilor la misiunea integrală a Bisericii”, în: *Laicii și misiunea creștină: realitate istorică, vocație personală, necesitate eclezială*, Pr. Ioan VICOVAN, Emilian-Iustinian ROMAN (Eds.), Editura Doxologia, Iași, 2014, pp. 423-435.

²⁵ Stelian TOFANĂ, „Componentele și exigențele misiunii Bisericii, după Epistolele Pastorale”, în: *Misiunea Bisericii în Sfânta Scriptură și în istorie*, p. 88-97.

²⁶ Pr. Prof. Dr. Ștefan ILOAIE, „Misiunea Bisericii în contextul secularizării”, în: *Renașterea*, XVII (2006), 11 (199), pp. 2-4.

²⁷ Florin FRUNZĂ, „Misiunea Bisericii și instituțiile Statului”, în: *Inter*, I (2007), 1-2, pp. 89-90.

²⁸ Pr. Lect. Dr. Sorin ȘELARU, Pr. Lect. Dr. Patriciu VLAICU (coords.), *Misiunea sacramentală a Bisericii Ortodoxe în context european*, Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, București, 2013.

²⁹ John BINNS, *Las Iglesias cristianas ortodoxas*, Traducción Aureliano MARRERO MUNOZ, Editorial Akal, Madrid, 2009.

³⁰ Pavel Emanuel TĂVALĂ, *Diaspora Ortodoxă Română din Europa Occidentală după Al doilea Război Mondial. Aspecte istorice și canonic-juridice*, Editura Universității Lucian Blaga, Sibiu, 2009.

³¹ Pr. Constantin OPREA, Diac. Constantin-Ciprian BLAGA (Eds.), *Diaspora Românească. Mărturii și evocări*, Editura Crimca, Suceava, 2021.

*accente istorice, misionare și aspecte pastorale actuale*³² (*The Romanian Orthodox Diaspora: Current Historical, Missionary and Pastoral Accents*) and others. About the mission of Orthodoxy in the Iberian Peninsula and, especially, about the mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church on the Iberian Peninsula, currently, there is a very limited number of written papers, the actual status of research resuming to articles and short papers published in different volumes of authors or journals. Lately, we have been assisting to an increasing interest towards the mission of the Orthodox Church on the Iberian Peninsula, especially Spain. In this sense, we remind of a very important paper coordinated by Professor Francisco Diez de Velasco, on the mission of the Orthodox Churches in Spain: *Las Iglesias Ortodoxas en España*³³ (*The Orthodox Churches in Spain*), and to this we may add studies and articles on the mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the Iberian Peninsula, developed via the Romanian Orthodox Parishes here and pertaining to the Romanian Orthodox Eparchy of Spain and Portugal: Rev. Daniel Șimon, *Monografia Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române a Spaniei și Portugaliei*³⁴ (*A Monography of the Romanian Orthodox Eparchy of Spain and Portugal*), Roberto Carlos R. Gonzalez's study, *La Iglesia Ortodoxa Rumana en España*³⁵ (*The Romanian Orthodox Church in Spain*), then on the mission and apostolate of youth in the diaspora: *Misiunea Bisericii și Apostolatul tinerilor în MOREOM*³⁶ (*The Church Mission and Youth Apostolate in ROMWME*), moreover, the article written by me on the presence of Orthodoxy in Spain and the mission of the Church: *Mărturii spaniole despre prezența Ortodoxiei în Peninsula Iberică*³⁷ (*Spanish Testimonies on the Presence of Orthodoxy in the Iberic Peninsula*) and *Ortodoxos, su vida, su fe*³⁸ (*The Orthodox, Their Life, Their Faith*), to which there is to add a special corpus of articles (more than 400 referring to the Romanian Orthodox diaspora in Europe and almost 100 regarding the diaspora in the Iberic Peninsula) missionary pastoral theology, articles to find in *Apostolia*, a Review of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolitan of Western and Meridional Europe, many of these being quoted also in the present thesis. The decisive contribution of the present thesis to the current state-of-the-

³² Pr. Drd. Vasile POP, „Diaspora ortodoxă română: accente istorice, misionare și aspecte pastorale actuale”, in: *Teologie și Viață*, 2017, 5-8, pp. 74-89.

³³ Francisco DIEZ DE VELASCO (coord.), *Las Iglesias Ortodoxas en España*, Editorial Akal, Madrid, 2015.

³⁴ Pr. Daniel ȘIMON, „Monografia Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române a Spaniei și Portugaliei”, in: *Autocefalie și responsabilitate*, † P.S. Varlaam MERTICARIU (coord.), Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, București, 2010, pp. 176-179.

³⁵ Roberto Carlos RODRIGUEZ GONZALEZ, „La Iglesia Ortodoxa Rumana en España”, in: *Las Iglesias Ortodoxas en España*, pp. 149-218.

³⁶ Pr. Vasile POP, Protos. Siluan ȘANDOR, Pr. Florin VOINEA, „Misiunea Bisericii și Apostolatul tinerilor în MOREOM”, in: *Apostolia*, martie 2015, 84, pp. 40-43.

³⁷ Pr. Drd. Vasile POP, „Mărturii spaniole despre prezența Ortodoxiei în Peninsula Iberică”, in: *Ortodoxia*, XI (2019), 1, pp. 83-93.

³⁸ Pr. Vasile POP, „Ortodoxos: su vida, su fe”, in: *Torrent Informatiu* ianuarie 2013, 20, pp. 3-4.

art of the Orthodox Church mission in Spain and Portugal is represented by the fact that it gathers bibliographic data (books, studies and articles in Romanian, Spanish and Portuguese), field data and data from documents issued by ROESP (circulars, reports, pastorals, etc.) in a single work that brings important clarifications, emphasis and missionary-pastoral nuances regarding the mission and work of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the Iberian Peninsula.

The argument of the research emerges precisely from the importance of the mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the diaspora, where the challenges of the time and the encountered pastoral missionary context call on the Church to come up with missionary solutions and current and impactful pastoral strategies. A great impetus in taking on this research is the fact that the current work is the first doctoral thesis on the mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the diaspora in Spain and Portugal, where Romanian Orthodoxy has been present for almost 50 years. Given that there is no other similar work on the ROESP mission in the Iberian Peninsula, it is absolutely necessary to research the activity of the Romanian Orthodox Church in this part of the Romanian diaspora, where missionary challenges are not only among the most diverse and difficult, knowledge of the current situation being of great support, in the future, for those who will make a mission here, giving them the opportunity to constantly develop and improve the missionary work of the Romanian Orthodox Church within the diaspora of the Iberian Peninsula.

Topic and Title Choice. My concern for the mission of the Church is an older one, which has appeared since my student days. The BA thesis, the research paper for a Performance Scholarship received from Babeş-Bolyai University in 2010, are both papers on the Church's mission, the Dissertation and the current PhD Thesis continued these concerns and research in the Church's pastoral mission spectrum, but focusing on the mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the diaspora, especially the Romanian Orthodox diaspora in the Iberian Peninsula, therefore, taking into account the above, and the fact that I have been working as a Romanian Orthodox priest in the diaspora since 2012, but also the advice received from Prof. Valer Bel, PhD, my mentor throughout my research on the mission of the Church (for BA, Performance Scholarship project, Dissertation, PhD Thesis), I agreed that the research topic should be focused on the mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Spain and Portugal, and the thesis is entitled:

Misiunea Bisericii Ortodoxe Române în diaspora din Peninsula Iberică – EORSP.

The Mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the Iberian Peninsula Diaspora - ROESP

The Research Aim is to highlight the existing missionary climate in the Romanian Orthodox Eparchy of Spain and Portugal, to describe the presence of Orthodoxy in the Iberian Peninsula from a missionary-pastoral point of view, and to capture the impact that Romanian Orthodoxy has for the Romanian Orthodox here.

Through the main **objectives** of this research, we want to show:

- the beginning of the Romanian Orthodoxy in the Iberian Peninsula, its organization and impact for the Romanians residing in the Iberian States;
- the religious life of Romanians here and their role in society and in the Church;
- the internal (and external) mission of ROESP in the Romanian diaspora in Spain, Andorra and Portugal;
- shaping the missionary ethos and missionary consciousness at local, regional and diocesan level;
- missionary-pastoral strategies applied by ROESP in the mission with young people and children from parishes plus the projects carried out (parish schools, Nepsis, youth apostolate, camps, presbyterians' mission, laity's mission etc.);
- knowledge of the existing challenges regarding the pastoral care, mission and church life of the Romanian Orthodox parishes in Spain and Portugal;
- the mission carried out outside the church: in hospitals, penitentiaries, residences, centres, the relationship with the authorities, with the Roman Catholic Church and with the Orthodox parishes of other Orthodox Churches present in the Iberian Peninsula, etc.;
- missionary perspectives in the future;

Thesis Structure

The present paper is structured in 4 chapters, which investigate the mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Spain and Portugal from the beginning until now with emphasis, nuances and particularities, specific to the mission of the Church in the Iberian Peninsula diaspora. Therefore, in Chapter 1, I have made an attempt to make some terminological clarifications regarding the diaspora, then I presented the situation of the Romanians come to Spain and Portugal and the causes of their migration as well as the context of daily life in Spain, the need to form a Romanian Orthodox Eparchy in these 2 Iberian States, the election of the first Romanian Orthodox Bishop, etc.

In Chapter II, I addressed the mission of the Church in time and space, the formation of the Romanian Orthodox Eparchy of Spain and Portugal, its internal and external mission, missionary accents related to the parishes and priests of this eparchy, the inter-Orthodox communion between the Spanish Orthodox Churches, the importance inter-Orthodox and

inter-Christian collaboration for the mission of the Church, the contribution brought by ROESP in the Spanish society and the Romanian communities, etc. In Chapter III, I tried to define the Orthodox missionary ethos and to present the particularities of the Orthodox missionary ethos in the Eparchy of Spain and Portugal, the shaping of parish consciousness, missionary aspects and peculiarities of the diaspora parish, the mission of the laity, presbyterians' mission, youth apostolate, parish schools, and so on. In Chapter IV, I tried to capture the priorities and missionary challenges of the diaspora with concrete examples, but also certain specificities of the mission in the diaspora: the problem of mixed marriages, elements of online mission, Christian family and Spanish society, proselytism in Spain, the mission of the Orthodox Church in hospitals, penitentiaries and other institutions, new stages of the migration phenomenon in Spain and the missionary implications, etc.

Research Methodology

In elaborating this paper, I used specialized works about the mission of the Church in the world and in the diaspora, foreign bibliography, articles and studies on the diaspora, interviews, reports, but also realistic data from the field and the 10 years personal experience as a priest in the Romanian Orthodox Eparchy of Spain and Portugal.

Emphasis and Limits

The Orthodox Diaspora represents a Church mission effect, and, beyond the canonical problems it raises, we must see the living work of the Orthodox Church which, for reasons originally external to it (migration) came to be lived and increasingly present in lands where, until a few years ago, Orthodoxy was known by hearsay or from books. The mission of the Church in the diaspora is an evolutionary process, still active, which developed from the spiritual need of those who left far from their country and from the need of a real spiritual life. In the diaspora, the Orthodox Church faces more intensely the challenges of secularization and its effect on its believers, but the mission it carries out is one of adaptation and sometimes atypical, if we take into account the mission in the native country. Although the number of Romanians living in Spain is currently declining, one thing is certain: they will be a safe presence for many years to come, and this is argued by the fact that those currently living in Spain and Portugal are stable families, with children born and raised in these States. A decisive aspect for the Eparchy of Spain and Portugal will be the mission it carries out with these young people and children born here, so the mission of the Church in the Iberian Peninsula lays an accent on youth mission and the future of the Orthodox Church in these lands.

The mission of the Church in the diaspora is never a topic that can be satisfactorily approached only from the office or the desk in the library, but, in addition, it is necessary to know the reality in the field, a realistic knowledge of life in the diaspora and confront the mission here.

Every priest in the diaspora must make mission a priority. If the diaspora priest is not a missionary, he has no chance of success in his work and cannot understand and assume the life of the Church and its mission in the diaspora, that is why the expression *priest in the diaspora* is (it must be!) eminently missionary, and the subchapters below try to argue this statement through the evolution of church life in the Iberian Peninsula, and concrete examples of the priest's mission in the diaspora. We hope that this approach in the field of Missiology will bring more information and light on the mission of the Church in the Orthodox diaspora in general and in the Romanian Orthodox Eparchy of Spain and Portugal in particular. This research is one of the first steps regarding the mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the West, and the first on the topic of ROESP mission in the Iberian Peninsula is intended to be just the beginning of the research on the mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the Iberian Diaspora.

The Particular and Universal Character of Diaspora

If, in the beginning, the concept of *diaspora* had a particular character referring only to Jews *spread/scattered* outside the borders of Israel, this being exclusively a biblical concept, today it has a universal character referring to all ethnic groups outside the borders of the countries they belong to. At present, the diaspora, as a notion, assumes, in addition to ethnic and sociological-cultural aspects, also religious, political, economic ones etc., and these aspects have been, in turn, shaped -during the last two centuries- by the dynamics of migration³⁹. When we refer to the religious aspect, we can speak of an Orthodox, Catholic, Islamic diaspora, etc. By *Orthodox diaspora*, we mean all church communities organized outside the territory of an autonomous or autocephalous Church, which, from a canonical point of view, depend on the Mother Churches from which they came, that is, they continue to remain under the jurisdiction of the Churches from which they detached⁴⁰. In addition to this aspect, in turn, the Orthodox Diaspora can be organized taking into account the ethnic

³⁹ Arnold AGES, *The Diaspora Dimension*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973, p. 10, also see: Remus Gabriel ANGHIEL, Istvan HORVATH (Coord.), *Sociologia Migrației. Teorii și studii de caz românești (The Sociology of Migration. Romanian Theories and Case Studies)*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2009, pp. 11-14.

⁴⁰ Liviu STAN, „Ortodoxia și diaspora. Situația actuală și poziția canonică a diasporei ortodoxe” (Orthodoxy and the Diaspora. The Actual Situation and the Canonical Position of the Orthodox Diaspora), in: *Ortodoxia*, 1963, 1, p. 3.

principle, so we have expressions such as: Romanian Orthodox Diaspora, Russian Orthodox Diaspora, Serbian Orthodox Diaspora, Greek Orthodox Diaspora etc.

The Orthodox Diaspora – The Missionary Signification of the Concept

The Orthodox Diaspora is the strongest proof of Church mission, but also the strongest argument of the Church missionary work in the two areas of its manifestation: *ad intra* and *ad extra*. The Orthodox diaspora is also the living proof of the missionary work of the Orthodox Church in the world, which has gained worldwide proportions through migration and mission⁴¹.

It should be noted that: “Beyond the problem of overlapping jurisdiction, which is, in fact, a canonical problem, but which, from a missionary point of view, does not hinder the work of the Church and its mission in the world, the Orthodox diaspora is the place of manifestation of the Church mission coordinates: the evangelization, the sacramental incorporation into the Body of Christ, the right faith etc. Although the mission of the Church seems to have certain geographical places as destination, its final destination has always been different: the salvation of man, or, more specifically, the Kingdom of God, in other words, the moving of man from this world to the eternal Kingdom of the Holy Trinity”⁴².

If we take the word *diaspora* in its proper sense (referring to the Jews outside the borders of Israel!), we can say that the Savior sent some Apostles, disciples and later the Apostle Paul on a mission in the diaspora: *Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing each in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you* (Matt 28: 19-20). This text includes, in itself, the entire apostolic mission, as well as its essential components, namely, the evangelization: *Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations*, the sacramental life/the officiation of the Holy Mysteries and the exhortation to persevere in faith and

⁴¹ Cf. John BINNS, *Las Iglesias cristianas ortodoxas (The Christian Orthodox Churches)*, pp. 39-43: „Una consecuencia de ello es que la emigración ha diseminado la Ortodoxia, y que esta se ha convertido en una Iglesia de ámbito mundial, un proceso conocido como la «diaspora»...” (p. 39) (“A consequence of it is that the immigration has disseminated Orthodoxy, and this has converted itself to one universal Church, a process known as the «diaspora»...”).

⁴² Pr. Drd. Vasile POP, „Diaspora Ortodoxă Română...” (The Romanian Orthodox Diaspora...), pp. 74-75.

holiness⁴³. Similarly, in Mark's Gospel, we find attested this ultimate and at the same time universal reference: *And he said unto them, Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature* (Mk 16:15). Similarly, in the Evangelist Mark, we have the proof that the Apostles responded to Jesus' request and that they fulfilled the Lord's mission: *And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with **them** and confirming the word through the accompanying of signs* (Mk 16:20). The expressions: *all the world* or *to every creature* show the universality of the mission, not only in certain territories, but throughout the world. The mission of the Church has not been constrained/limited by the geographical space or the ethnic element⁴⁴, nevertheless, these two can customize and "beneficially nuance the mission and pastoral care of a Local Church, as is the case of the current Orthodox diaspora, divided (ethnically and territorially) into several metropolitans/Russian, Greek, Romanian dioceses, but united in the same faith, sacramental work and preaching of the Gospel"⁴⁵.

The Orthodox Diaspora may be considered a new missionary challenge for the XXI century Orthodox Church in that it calls the Church into the world and takes it out of possible national and ethnic boundaries, placing it in a truly apostolic framework of mission and preaching, therefore, "the missionary scenario in the diaspora is unpredictable, always atypical and that makes the missionary work take place in a multi-religious, multiethnic or sometimes even hostile environment to the missionary attempt of preaching into a certain geographical area"⁴⁶.

1.1.4 The Relationship between Mission and The Diaspora

The mission of the Church is to send it into the world, in order to expand the Kingdom of God, inaugurated by the Savior Jesus Christ on earth. The mission is based both on the Savior's explicit command to His apostles: to preach the Gospel to all creatures and to baptize each and every in the name of the Holy Trinity, and, especially, on the visible sending of the Son (*missio Filii*) and the Holy Spirit (*missio Spiritus Sancti*), willed and initiated by the Father: *Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you* (John 20:21). The mission belongs to the very being of the Church and is based on the preaching of the Gospel throughout the world and *to every creature* (Mark 16:15). Thus "the existence of the Church is actually related to her commitment to preaching the Gospel and the Truth, and to unity

⁴³ Pr. Prof. Dr. Valer BEL, *Misiunea Bisericii în lumea contemporană (The Church Mission in the Contemporary World)*, p. 87.

⁴⁴ Claude GEFFRÉ, „Theological Reflections on a New age of Mission”, in: *International Review of Mission*, vol. 71, 1982, 284, p. 482.

⁴⁵ Pr. Drd. Vasile POP, „Diaspora Ortodoxă Română...”, p. 75.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 76.

fulfillment, the unity of many with One, or the unity of men with God”⁴⁷. The Church exists and has the triune unity for which Christ prays and thus also bears testimony on it, but “her testimony is not a message unrelated to her life, but is the whole articulation of her existence in a completely different way, dictated and sanctified by the trinitarian «as»⁴⁸. Due to the fact that it is united “as” the Holy Trinity is united, the Church possesses a *kenotic* way of existence, thus becoming a living appearance of God, an obvious theophany in the world, and in history. The Church no longer lives alone, but the Holy Trinity lives in it⁴⁹, therefore it has the mission to preserve unity and introduce into unity those outside the Church, both through the Mystery of Baptism and through the sustained effort of preaching the Gospel and offering the Holy Mysteries, - in other words - the Church has, in the world, the mission to give a testimony of “unity”. To this unity, *all nations (through each and every member)* of the earth are invited (παντα τα εθνη) (Matt 28:19), and the mission or the preaching is to be spread “in all world” (εις τον κοσμον απαντα), a fact which exposes in the light the universality of the mission of the Church and of the Gospel⁵⁰. The Church, according to her being, cannot cease to be evangelical and missionary and “in this sense, the life of the Church and the mission are inextricably linked to one another ... the Church's participation, as Christ has sent it, into the world, or in His service, is to become truthful in its missionary activity in all aspects: - evangelization, testimonia and pastoral care”⁵¹.

The diaspora - we may say - is a reflection of the Church mission in the world, it actually represents the same mission of the Church, but under some different territorial,

⁴⁷ Pr. Vasile POP, *Misiunea Bisericii Ortodoxe Române în diaspora din Peninsula Iberică (The Romanian Orthodox Church Mission in the Iberian Peninsula Diaspora)*, p. 16, teză de disertație (Dissertation), Cluj Napoca, 2016, (nepublicată- not published). Held in the session of June 2016.

⁴⁸ Arhim. Vasilios GONDIKAKIS, *Intrarea în Împărăție (Entering the Kingdom)*, Traducere Pr. Ioan ICA și Protos. PAISIE, Editura Diesis, Sibiu, 2007, pp. 50-51, because the unity of the Church in trinity makes her able to become an organic partaker of the divine and happy life. If we see the Church, we see the Holy Trinity; this view is Heaven, the earnest of future life and of the Kingdom. It is a sight revealed to the one baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Trinity unites us all in the Body of Christ, but *the union of all*, for which the Church prays, is not to be understood as an assembly of fragments of Christian communities, but as an extension of the trinity, as a trinity hierurgy (the holy work of the Trinity in the world). Therefore, the mystery of unity, as understood and lived by the Church, is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, by Which we are united as by a unifying power.

⁴⁹ A parallel referring to Saint Apostle Paul's confession in (Gal 2:20): *it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.*

⁵⁰ Mircea BASARAB, „Misiunea Bisericii și globalizarea” (Church Mission and Globalization), in: *Misiunea Bisericii în Sfânta Scriptură și în istorie (The Mission of the Church in the Holy Scripture and in History)*, pp. 168-169.

⁵¹ Pr. Prof. Dr. Valer BEL, *Dogmă și propovăduire (Dogma and Preaching)* Editura Dacia, Cluj Napoca, 1994, p. 144.

ethnic, social, linguistic aspects. The message of the Gospel is cultivated unchanged, but depending on the particularities of the diaspora; the way the word of God is preached and spread can be different, or even atypical in some places.

The Diaspora challenges the Church to get out of the territorial womb and to go out into the world in an apostolic way, becoming responsible, from a missionary point of view, and not only, of its communities in the diaspora. Current history and reality show us that the Local Orthodox Churches have always assumed the diaspora communities, even if, sometimes, late, from a structural point of view, or in an improper way, from a pastoral-liturgical point of view. The Orthodox diaspora did not emerge as a result of planned or deliberate/premeditated manner, like *plantatio ecclesiae*, but in a spontaneous way and influenced by different economic, political, social factors (migration) etc. In relation to the mission, the diaspora presents itself as part of the dynamic aspect of the Church mission and appears as a *sign* of the times that invite the Church to articulate its mission according to the reality of time through assumption, adaptation and in-culturation, but in such a way that always to: lead/bring the world into the Kingdom of love of the Most Holy Trinity. The Church does not cease to be missionary, and the (Orthodox) diaspora does not cease to be dynamic, developing particularities generated by history, socio-politics, economy and especially migration. The type of mission carried out by each Local Church in the diaspora is different, depending on the specifics of the territory and the social or economic stability of the communities, so we have several types of mission: support, defensive mission, atypical or, sometimes, we meet, in some ecclesiastical structures in the diaspora, all these assumed one by one, depending on the evolution of the respective community.

In the diaspora, on the same territories, several structures of some Orthodox Churches may coexist, but what unites them is the vocation of the missionary mandate, namely, the same apostolic mission received from Christ, and what separates them (ethnicity, language, customs) must be overcome by collaboration or joint participation in the missionary effort to save the whole world.

The mission belongs to the nature of the Church, and the Orthodox diaspora to the nature of the mission, which is why the mission carried out in the diaspora has never been seen as something optional, because this would no longer respect the great missionary commandment (Matt 28:19) and the universality of salvation. The Church assumes in a realistic and very serious way its mission in the diaspora, where the faithful, although no longer in the territorial-canonical *stable* of the mother Church, remain in the same flock of

Christ as members of the mysterious Body of the Church and humble, and particularly precious icons of the Kingdom⁵².

CONCLUSIONS

- The Romanian Orthodox Diaspora has formed in two ways or modalities:
 - the tracing of or redefinition of Statal borders after the two World Wars, a fact that led a large number of Romanians in different territories (Bessarabia, the Romanian territories in Ukraine, Serbia or Bulgaria etc) to leaving outside the borders of our country, and the second modality of diaspora formation is represented by the massive immigration, in several stages, the most solid being between 1990-2000.
- Being conscious of this aspect of massive migration, the Romanian Orthodox Church has been standing by the side of its spiritual sons ever since the beginning of their immigration to Western countries, ensuring them a vivid and fruitful pastoration through the priests sent to the great communities of Romanians residing in Western countries, where, step by step, there have been formed, beginning with 1970- 1980s, parishes and filiations.
- In the (Romanian Orthodox) diaspora, the Church is re-tracing the trajectory of the Primary Church and its apostolic missionary preaching in the sense that it starts the same as 2000 years ago, namely, having nothing visible (premises, centres, personal church buildings etc.) other than the desire to officiate, the yearn for Christ, and the disposition to assume a pastoration full of obstacles, similar to the Pauline one, but which involves a lot of sacrifice and heart: *and whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ* (Col 3: 23-24).
- The Evolution of the Romanian Orthodox mission is seen from its outing off a defensive position and going towards a new missionary dimension: diaspora. In the diaspora, the Church is not looking for a geographical conquest, having no intention of extent or mixture. Its goal is not to increase authority and influence over a territory or State, but to serve the world with love, to offer religious assistance and maintain those residing in the diaspora on the path of salvation, far away from their native country.
- In the Orthodox diaspora, in general, as well as in ROESP, the mission begins *in micro*, namely, at family and parish level, developing afterwards regionally (at deanery level) and

⁵² † Anastasios YANNOULATOS, *Misiune pe urmele lui Hristos: studii teologice și omilii (Mission while Following Christ: Theological Studies and Homilies)*, p. 121.

eparchially, nevertheless, keeping in mind the missionary-pastoral particularities of each Orthodox community.

- The priest is the *yeast* that makes grow and leaven the missionary dough in the diaspora, therefore, the assumption, dedication and seriousness are, besides the theological education, the absolute triplet necessary to a missionary profile in the diaspora. The mission and pastoration in diaspora are not only some simple options besides priesthood, but represent the most necessary works assumed by clergy in the parishes within the Romanian Orthodox Diaspora in the Iberian Peninsula.
- Laity has a decisive role in the diaspora mission. The work of salvation and, implicitly, the Church mission are not exclusively clergy work. Both clergy and believers must have a missionary profile and efficiently and decisively involve in the Church mission. Laity, as *holy priesthood... a chosen generation, a royal priesthood* (I Pet 2:5) has this duty towards the Church and towards the other, to endeavour to make missionary work vivid and fruitful. Believers, together with priests contribute to founding parishes in the diaspora, to increasing and maturing them and involve in all parish activities. Laity involvement in the parish cult is essential for the health of parish life, mentioning that this is supposed to be a communion participation, not an individual one, or a selfish-indifferent one towards the other Church members.
- A particular element in the diaspora is the one that the mission here represents Church future, it develops missionary-pastoral strategies destined to children and youth (The Parish School, Nepsis, youth parish groups etc.). the future of the Church in the diaspora depends very much on this orientation of mission towards young generations.
- The mission of the Church in the Romanian Orthodox diaspora in Spain and Portugal has several distinctive elements: the issue of mixed marriages, online mission, the external mission, the youth apostolate, the new migration phenomena and the dynamic character of the Romanian population here, moving, leaving, or returning, depending on the workplace etc., that is why the missionary-pastoral work and any strategy, in this sense, are built according to these particularities and challenges of the time, offering the mission here an increased capacity for adaptation and a special dynamism.
- The mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the diaspora is an evolving process, very active and adaptive, developed from the need of spiritual and religious assistance of those who left their country, and from the need of a real spiritual life. The missionary scenario in the diaspora is one - we can say - always atypical, and that makes the missionary work take

place in a multi-religious, multi-ethnic, or even hostile environment in some places of church life or pastoral care.

- In the Iberian Peninsula, ROESP is not limited to the mission in/through the church, but extends its pastoral missionary work to other institutions as well, carrying out a sustained missionary and pastoral activity in hospitals, penitentiaries, elder care centres, and other institutions, where, annually, it exceeds the threshold of 1000-1200 visits, attendances, services.
- The missionary imperative of ROESP within the Romanian diaspora, in the Iberian States, remains that of responding to the actual needs of the believer, member of the Body of Christ—the Church, and to guide him to the haven of salvation. The Church, like a loving mother, follows her sons in diaspora, pastoring them fatherly, and trying to bring *heaven to earth*, helping the Orthodox believer to feel the evidence of the reality of God's presence in his life and in the life of those around him.