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Liturgical Renewal in Contemporary Orthodox Thought in Romania: A Preliminary Assessment

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*The Romanian Orthodox Patriarchate's liturgical renewal movement has a spontaneous character, but without a well-defined agenda. This paper examines some of the reflections from renowned Romanian theologians about the liturgical renewal in the Orthodox Church and explores how they define the notion of liturgical reform, how they perceive the idea of change in worship, and what a liturgical renewal might look like. Moreover, it examines some concrete reforms that have already been put into practice, but without specific authorization from the Romanian Church hierarchy. The purpose of this approach is to find a starting point for an official synodal and academic debate on the possibility to implement a systematic liturgical reform at an institutional level.***

Keywords: *Liturgical Reform, Romanian Orthodox Church, Liturgical Studies, Byzantine rite, Missionary Leitourgikon.*

Introduction

After the fall of Romania's communist regime, the reactivation and establishment of Orthodox Theology Faculties in state universities generated an impetus for theological reflection and research. In this context, a new generation of theologians took up the work of *Liturgiewissenschaft* by revaluating the background of Romanian liturgical studies[1] and synchronizing their research with the results and directions of the international academic liturgical scholarship. Thus, in recent decades, important

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[1] For an overview of Romanian liturgical scholarship in the 20th c., see: Laurențiu Streza et alii, "Studies in Liturgical Theology in the Romanian Church in the 20th Century," in *Orthodox Theology in the 20th Century and Early 21st Century: A Romanian Orthodox Perspective*, ed. Viorel Ioniță (Bucharest: Basilica, 2013), 547–648. Although at the end of the 19th c. and in the 20th c. the Romanian Church had some remarkable liturgists, such as Vasile Mitrofanovici (1831–1888), Teodor Tarnavschi (1859–1914), Petre Vintilescu (1887–1974) and Ene Branişte (1913–1984), there was never a proper Romanian school of Liturgics, unlike the Church of Russia which had a formidable school of liturgical history and archaeology before 1917.

primary sources for the study of the Christian liturgy were translated into Romanian, alongside many works of renowned international liturgists dealing with the history and theology of Orthodox worship. Especially, translations of the works of A. Schmemann, J. Meyendorff, P. Meyendorff, N. Uspensky, J. Mateos, R. Taft and Th. Pott, among others, ignited a renewed interest in liturgical studies for Romanian Orthodox theologians and clergy. In addition, Romanian scholars have begun publishing editions of liturgical manuscripts and writing valuable works on different aspects of the history of the Byzantine rite and the medieval Byzantine-Slavic liturgy of the Romanians.[2]

Moreover, on a more practical and pastoral level, the establishment of Romanian Orthodox parishes in Romanian émigré communities in the West led to a series of exchanges between the Romanian clergy and Catholic academics and pastors. This led the former to become familiar with the principles of *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento* echoed by the Second Vatican Council. At the same time, the Romanian clergy abroad engaged in dialogue and liturgical exchanges with ministers belonging to other Orthodox Churches, especially of Greek tradition, which manifest a more pronounced interest for a Eucharistic revival and for encouraging the active participation of the laity in the liturgy.[3] Furthermore, the desire for a liturgical rebirth was impelled by the special pastoral and liturgical needs of the Orthodox communities abroad, which determined a more dynamic approach to worship and tradition.[4]

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[2] Among the most prominent Romanian liturgists of the new generation whose works have influenced the revival of Romanian liturgical research I mention H.Em. Bishop Petru Pruteanu, Nicolae Preda, Ciprian Streza, Cezar Login.

[3] For an overview of the state of contemporary liturgical renewal in the Church of Greece, see: Stefanos Alexopoulos, "Liturgical Renewal in the Church of Greece: Past, Present, Future?," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 61, no. 1–2 (2016): 209–23; and: Pavlos Koumarianos, "Liturgical Rebirth in the Church of Greece Today: A Doubtful Effort of Liturgical Reform," *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata* 3 (2007): 119–44. For the Serbian Orthodox Church see: Nina Gibetić, "Liturgical Renewal Movement in Contemporary Serbia," in *Inquiries into Eastern Christian Worship*, eds. Bert Groen, Steven Hawkes-Teeples and Stefanos Alexopoulos (Leuven-Paris-Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2012), 393–414.

[4] For example, the initiation of adult converts into the Orthodox Church in the Diaspora has encouraged the recovery of the celebration of Baptismal Liturgies in the Romanian communities from abroad; for such a rite which is celebrated in many Romanian parishes in the Diaspora (although it is not officially approved by the Romanian Holy Synod) see: Petru Pruteanu, "Liturghia baptismală. Schema rânduielii cu comentarii istorico-liturgice," https://www.teologie.net/2013/04/19/liturghia-baptismala-schema-randuiel-

Thus, the number of Romanian theologians and ministers who express interest in a liturgical renewal or reform has significantly increased. Despite this fact, the Romanian ecclesiastic authorities are still reluctant to officially discuss and implement an agenda of liturgical reform. A reason for this reluctance may be the concern that such an initiative would encourage radical views in the Church, both "conservatives" who set themselves up as "defenders" of Orthodoxy and seek an opportunity to justify their schismatic tendencies, and "liberals" who will thus feel empowered to call for profound changes in the Church, not just liturgical.[5] Waiting for an official point of view of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church concerning a series of current liturgical issues, the movement for 'liturgical renewal' manifests itself in a spontaneous manner, generally on a parish level, through the implementation of some 'partial reforms', in an inconsistent and sometimes amateur manner. In those communities where parish priests have favoured the principles of liturgical renewal, one may observe a more frequent reception of the Holy Communion among the laity,[6] the celebration of the Divine Liturgy with

ii-cu-comentarii-istorico-liturgice/, accessed October 15, 2022. Moreover, the necessity of celebrating the divine services in improvised spaces or in worship buildings rented from local Catholic or Protestant Christian communities, where there is no iconostasis or a minimal iconostasis is improvised, made it easier to increase the attention of the faithful to the acts performed by the minister. One may also observe an active participation of the laity in liturgical singing (because of the scarcity of professional cantors), while in some parishes girls act as altar servers or acolytes (for photos that attest the practice in the Romanian Orthodox Metropolitanate of Germany, Central and Northern Europe, see: Petru Pruteanu, "Hirotonia diaconiţelor în Bisericile Ortodoxe din America," https://www.teologie.net/2019/06/06/hirotonia-diaconitelor-in-bisericile-ortodoxe-din-america/, accessed October 15, 2022). Furthermore, there seems to be a greater interest, even on the part of the higher hierarchy, to implement the aloud recitation of the prayers by the minister, to animate frequent Communion among the laity (without the obligation of confession before each Communion), and to discourage clericalism (see, for example, the pastoral teachings of H.Em. Serafim Joantă, the Romanian Metropolitan of Germany, Central and Northern Europe, "Înnoirea, principiul fundamental al vieţii spirituale ortodoxe," https://mitropolia-ro.de/innoirea-principiul-fundamental-al-vietii-spirituale-ortodoxe-stein-23-05-2016/, accessed October 15, 2022).

[5] See: Mihail K. Qaramah, "Reforma liturgică în Biserica Ortodoxă Română, între dorinţă şi împlinire," in *Biserica Ortodoxă şi provocările viitorului*, eds. Mihai Himcinschi and Răzvan Brudiu (Alba-Iulia–Cluj-Napoca: Reîntregirea-Aeternitas-Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2020), 437.

[6] This is in contrast to the common practice in the Romanian Orthodox Church for the faithful to receive the Holy Mysteries only during the 4 major fasting periods of the liturgical year or not earlier than forty days since the last Communion. A recent survey conducted by the Youth Orthodoxy Association in February 2022 showed that at least

the holy doors open, the chanting of the Prokeimenon before the reading of the Apostolos and the transfer of the incensation before the reading from the Gospel during the Alleluiarion, the restoration of the liturgical homily after the readings during the Liturgy of the Word, the reading of liturgical prayers, especially the Anaphora, in an audible voice, the removal of the troparion of the Third Hour from the Anaphora and of the phrase "changing them [e.g. the bread and cup] by your Holy Spirit" from the epiclesis of the Anaphora of BAS,[7] the celebration of Baptismal Liturgies etc. However, without an official synodal and scholarly supervision of the renewal movement, there are instances in which some of the reforms are problematic and mere improvisations, such as the celebration of the rite of marriage within the context of the Divine Liturgy,[8] or the reactivation of ancient Liturgies, such as the so-called Liturgy of St James (JAS),[9] using unauthorized editions. Again, there are no synodal regulations on these matters.

77% of the respondents (the survey had 1573 respondents) receive the Eucharist rarely or not at all; see: Asociația Ortodoxia Tinerilor, "[Studiu/sondaj] Cât se citește și se explică Biblia în parohiile ortodoxe românești și care este frecvența împărtășirii credincioșilor," https://serilebiblice.ro/studiu-sondaj-citeste-biblia-frecventa-impartasirii/, accessed August 23, 2022.

[7] The following abbreviations will be used to designate different Eucharistic formularies: CHR = the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom; BAS = the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great; JAS = Liturgy of St. James; PRES = the Byzantine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts.

[8] Although the communion of the newlyweds is historically, liturgically and theologically justified, it seems that in the Constantinopolitan rite it was only done with the Presanctified Gifts, during the Rite of Coronation which was celebrated immediately after the full Eucharist; see: Gabriel Radle, "The Rite of Marriage in the Archimedes Euchology & Sinai gr. 973 (a. 1152/3)," *Scripta & e-Scripta* 12 (2013): 194–95.

[9] It is not the place here to discuss at length the "reactivation" of JAS; however, I would point to some important aspects. Firstly, those advocating for the revival of this Eucharistic formulary within the received Byzantine rite consider that they would celebrate a primitive Liturgy of the Ancient Church, which is a doubtful affirmation. The mss. that preserve this formulary are no older than the 9th c. and the Church of Jerusalem had abandoned its Liturgy during the 13th c. in favour of the Byzantine rite of Constantinople. The modern editions which are currently circulating and celebrated are in fact extremely "Byzantinized" and clericalized. A major issue in celebrating this formulary nowadays is the use of the received Byzantine Prothesis rite, to remedy the absence of such a rite in JAS. Also, the Jerusalem Liturgy had variable antiphons for its ritual entrances, whilst at present there are two fixed hymns borrowed from the Byzantine rite: "Only-begotten Son" and "Let all flesh be silent". Moreover, the Anaphora of JAS makes clear references to the holy places and the Church of Jerusalem, where one finds its proper setting. Furthermore, when celebrating JAS today, what Lectionary should one follow? The Jerusalemite or the Byzantine? There are also innovations in the cur-

Romanian scholars also treat the subject of liturgical reform with reluctance and extreme prudence. This is probably motivated by the concern not to be in dissonance to the general silence of the Church hierarchy. Although the information is mostly scattered and incomplete, it is possible to gather valuable insights on the matter belonging to authoritative voices in the Romanian theological thought. In this paper, I review some reflections of renowned Romanian theologians about the liturgical renewal in the Orthodox Church to see how they define the notion of liturgical reform, how they perceive the idea of change in worship, and what a liturgical renewal might look like. The purpose of this approach is to find a starting point for an official synodal and academic debate on the possibility to implement a systematic liturgical reform at an institutional level. It should be noted that most of the reforms discussed in this paper focus on the Leitourgikon.

Petre Vintilescu

Fr. Petre Vintilescu (1887–1974) was one of the most important Romanian liturgists of the 20th century. His research was undoubtedly influenced by the liturgical movement from the West. Vintilescu capitalized on the results obtained by Western scholars on the history of liturgy and contributed to the significant task of revising the Romanian Leitourgion.[10] Although not all his suggestions were considered by the revisers of the Leitourgikon, it is important to see how he understood the goal of liturgical diorthosis:

> Do we want to have a Leitourgikon only as a monument of antiquity, so that we could look at it with a plain and exclusive archaeological interest, or should we take care of the links through which it maintains alive and undamaged the spiritual communion with the Liturgy, which is the centre of gracious irradiance? Especially for the ministers of the sanctuary, the Leitourgikon must be the primary and complete source for their instruction to fulfil their sacred office. It should not

rent practice of JAS, such as the celebration *versus populum*, observed especially in the Greek Church, but also in the Romanian Church. For a brief history of JAS see: Daniel Galadza, *Liturgy and Byzantinization in Jerusalem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 157–219.

[10] He contributed to the appearance of two editions of the Romanian Leitourgikon, published in 1937 and 1956.

> abound in gaps, which reduce their confidence in it and drive them for orientation to secondary sources.[11]

Vintilescu argues that only the secondary elements in the liturgy may suffer change, not those which have always constituted its essence.[12] He pays special attention to the principle of liturgical equilibrium, which seeks to maintain a balance between, on the one hand, the religious essence and the forms of expression of the liturgical worship and, on the other, the latreutic, sacramental and didactical functions of the liturgy.[13] He considers that, in the Orthodox Church, the liturgical equilibrium does not need to be sought or restored, being a value that has already been achieved and therefore must be preserved.[14] Nevertheless, he does not oppose the possibility of adapting the external forms of the liturgy to the needs of the contemporary world, since the liturgy is a living organism. However, he advocates for a careful supervision of the process by the ecclesiastical authorities and for a preliminary stage of preparation.[15]

Ene Branişte

Fr. Ene Branişte (1913–1984) was the most appreciated Romanian Orthodox liturgist of the 20th century.[16] In several articles he addressed the issue of liturgical reform, revision or renewal in the Orthodox Church.[17]

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[11] Petre Vintilescu, *Contribuţii la revizuirea Liturghierului român – Proscomidia. Liturghia Sf. Ioan Gură-de-Aur* (Bucureşti: Tipografia Cărţilor Bisericeşti, 1931), 62–63.

[12] Idem, *Liturghiile bizantine privite istoric în structura şi rânduiala lor* (Bucureşti: Tipografia Cărţilor Bisericeşti, 1943), 5.

[13] Idem, *Curs de Liturgică generală. Principiile şi fiinţa cultului creştin-ortodox* (Course support, Bucureşti, 1929–1930), 320.

[14] *Ibidem*, 353.

[15] *Ibidem*, 364–66.

[16] For more information in English on Branişte's pastoral and academic activity, see: Viorel Sava, "The Work of Fr. Dr. Ene Branişte in the Context of Contemporary Liturgical Research," *Analele Ştiinţifice ale Universităţii "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" din Iaşi. Teologie Ortodoxă* 2 (2012): 113–38; Ciprian Streza, "Father Professor Ene Branişte – The Liturgist, the Scholar, and the Priest. Reference Points for a Theological Bio-Bibliography," *Revista Teologică* 4 (2013): 46–60.

[17] Most of Branişte's articles on liturgical renewal have been re-printed Laurenţiu Streza, Nicolae Necula, Ciprian-Ioan Streza, eds., in: *Liturghia – sufletul etern al Ortodoxiei în rugăciune: studii de teologie liturgică* (Sibiu: Editura Andreiana, 2013); for citations the reader is referred to this edition. For a brief analysis of Branişte's views on liturgical reform, see also: Thomas Pott, *Byzantine Liturgical Reform: A Study of Liturgical Change in the Byzantine Tradition*, The Orthodox Liturgy Series 2, trans. Paul Meyendorff (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2010), 66–70; Pott supports his analysis only on one of Branişte's articles, namely "Le culte orthodoxe devant le monde contempo-

Branişte considers that "if there is indeed a general religious crisis in today's Christianity, one should look for its cause not in the imperfections of the liturgy, but rather in the state of the soul of contemporary humanity, mostly non-Christian or de-Christianized".[18] He argues that, when it comes to liturgical revision, one should take into account the principle of stability and uniformity of liturgy, which does not allow the suppression or modification of its forms depending on the subjective preferences of the celebrants. Branişte claims that:

> …the unbroken preservation of the essential forms of worship guarantees and maintains not only the uniformity of liturgical worship throughout Orthodox Christianity, but also its unity of doctrine, the homogeneity of Orthodox religious life (spirituality), the external unity of the Church, as well as the link of continuity with Christian origins.[19]

Branişte states that the Byzantine rite is not the creation of certain theologians, councils or of a certain generation, but both in its external forms and inner essence is the collective and anonymous work of the Orthodox Church in its entirety. He insists that "The Orthodox liturgy … is the soul of Orthodoxy in prayer, enclosing in itself with preciousness the tradition and valuable experience of the past, while remaining always receptive to the new forms and needs of the present".[20] This is why the Orthodox Church:

> …has not waited passively to be constrained by the pressure of our time to … suddenly adapt its worship to the necessities of the present hour. On the contrary, the Church carefully supervised with prudence and discretion the process of adaptation, which is real and still goes on, only that it takes place in a natural, slow and tacit manner, without being disturbed or interrupted by decisions or regulations made by the ecclesiastic authorities.[21]

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rain. Opinions d'un théologien orthodoxe roumain," *Societas Liturgica. Documents for Liturgical Research and Renewal* 18 (1970).

[18] Ene Branişte, "Cultul ortodox în cadrul lumii de azi," in *Liturghia – sufletul etern*, 319.

[19] Idem, "Probleme de actualitate ale Bisericilor de azi. Dezvoltare (evoluţie) şi revizuire (adaptare) în cult, din punct de vedere ortodox," in *Liturghia – sufletul etern*, 292.

[20] Idem, *Participarea la Liturghie* (Bucureşti: România Creştină, 1999), 42; initially published in: Idem, "Participarea la Liturghie şi metodele de realizare," *Studii Teologice* 7–8 (1949): 567–81.

[21] Idem, "Probleme de actualitate," 309.

Therefore, in his opinion, a liturgical reform *in capite et membris* in the Orthodox Church "is not only impossible, but even useless and dangerous".[22] Branişte explains that the process of liturgical adaptation is the result of the equilibrium between three laws: (1) the law of organic development, which implies the natural evolution from simple to more complex forms, (2) the law of "retrograde movement", by which he understands the effort of the Church to select and simplify liturgical forms, and (3) the law of "metatheses", which signifies the change of the initial place or function of some liturgical units.[23] Branişte argues that the Church had never imposed a rigid ritual uniformity concerning the liturgical forms of secondary importance, maintaining that the Orthodox Church is guided by the principle of unity in the essentials and diversity in the non-essentials.[24]

The natural evolution of the liturgy supposes that while antiquated or anachronistic elements, which have become superfluous, are suppressed, other forms are being integrated into the liturgy or even ancient forms, which have fallen into disuse sometime in the past, can be re-adapted and brought back to life.[25] Thus, while considering that a "liturgical reform" is out of the question, Branişte admits that there is place for "a mere correction or adjustment of the traditional forms" of the liturgy.[26] However, Branişte believes that the responsibility to undertake major liturgical revisions should belong to a pan-Orthodox council. He even enumerates some proposals that were supposed to be discussed at a future pan-Orthodox synod[27]: unifying the church calendar throughout the en-

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[22] Idem, "Cultul ortodox", 315–16.

[23] *Ibidem*, 294.

[24] Idem, "Probleme de actualitate", 301–02.

[25] *Ibidem*, 288.

[26] *Ibidem*, 308. In another article he states: "The Orthodox Church managed to preserve its worship in the ancient forms, which are consecrated by tradition and slow progress, but natural and unforced, of religious life, forms that, however, no longer being understood and experienced in their true spirit, pose today problems of reinterpretation, adaptation and accommodation to the actual realities and needs of the contemporary faithful"; Idem, "Câteva opinii, atitudini şi propuneri în problema «revizuirii» cultului ortodox," in *Liturghia – sufletul etern*, 323–24.

[27] The pan-Orthodox council (officially referred to as the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church) was finally held in June 2016 in Crete. However, no agenda regarding an Orthodox liturgical reform was addressed by the council. For the documents of the synod, see the official website: https://www.holycouncil.org/, accessed August 1, 2022.

tire Orthodoxy, revising the dating of Pascha, readapting fast regulations, increasing the use of Old Testament lections in liturgical celebrations, encouraging a more conscious and active lay participation in the sacramental life of the Church, maintaining traditional forms in ecclesiastical art and architecture etc.[28] Branişte himself adds certain personal considerations and proposals of liturgical revisions, such as:

(1) the adaptation of the Typikon for parish use;

(2) the abbreviation of the prebaptismal exorcisms and formulas for the renunciation of Satan and the unification with Christ and the reduction of the number of the post-baptismal prayers for ablution and tonsure;

(3) the reduction of the number of scriptural readings in the Rite of Anointing the sick; even an abbreviated rite for this sacrament may be undertaken;

(4) the suppression of the Rite of Betrothal and of some of the prayers and litanies in the Rite of Coronation of the spouses;

(5) the introduction of the vernacular as liturgical language in those Orthodox Churches that still use ancient Greek or Church Slavonic;

(6) the reintroduction of Old Testament readings within the Liturgy of the Word; this will however imply the suppression of other elements in the Liturgy to avoid its excessive lengthening;

(7) the reduction of the Old Testament lections at the Vespers of Great Saturday and of the eve of the Nativity Feast;

(8) the recitation of the priestly prayers in a loud voice, especially the Anaphora; this would imply the suppression of some hymns that are currently chanted by the people or the choir during the silent recitation of the Eucharistic Prayer, such as the hymn „We praise Thee, we bless Thee…" or the Axion;

(9) allowing a priest to celebrate the Eucharist twice in a day, but only in the Orthodox diaspora, not in those parishes where there is a stable Orthodox community;

(10) restoring the initial practice of celebrating the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts (= PRES) in the evening[29], but the reception of holy communion must be conditioned by the abstention from any food or

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[28] Idem, "Câteva opinii," 339.

[29] In the Orthodox Church in Romania, the general custom of celebrating this office for receiving Holy Communion in the morning is still practiced.

drink beginning at mid-night (this rule should be also applied for those who wish to partake of the Holy Mysteries at a vesperal Liturgy).[30]

Furthermore, in an article in which he addressed the issue of liturgical innovations, among the practices that are wrongfully considered innovations, being in fact "returns to tradition or to the correct regulation of the past", Branişte mentioned the following: the revival of communal singing in the church, the proclamation of the Apostolos by the reader and of the Gospel by the deacon facing the people, and the removal of the Troparion of the Third Hour from the Byzantine Anaphoras.[31]

Regarding the more active participation of the faithful in the Liturgy, Branişte states that it is necessary to restore the central and fundamental place of the Liturgy in our spiritual life as the source of sanctification and salvation in the Church,[32] its ecclesiological and communal meaning as the corporate prayer of the Church,[33] and its sacrificial sense and aspect, in order that the faithful can rediscover and experience their royal priesthood in Christ.[34] Alongside prayer, devotional acts and virtues, lay participation in the Liturgy should manifest through communal singing, the offering of the bread and wine for the Eucharist, and especially the partaking of the Holy Mysteries.[35] Branişte insists that "a priest's primary duty is to do everything for the revival of a general frequent (as often as possible) communion of his spiritual flock"[36] and refers to the reception of Communion as the climax of the Liturgy.

Ion Bria

Fr. Ion Bria (1929–2002) is probably the most important Romanian Orthodox missiologist of the 20th century. Although he was not a liturgist, Bria addressed some principles of liturgical renewal in his writings. Under the concept of "liturgy after the Liturgy", he argued that the Orthodox Church should recapture the inner unity between liturgy,

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[30] Idem, "Câteva opinii," 337–43.

[31] Idem, "Despre inovaţii în săvârşirea serviciilor divine," in *Liturghia – sufletul etern*, 393–94.

[32] Idem, *Participarea credincioşilor*, 45–46.

[33] *Ibidem*, 50–51.

[34] *Ibidem*, 53–54.

[35] *Ibidem*, 54, 86–87.

[36] *Ibidem*, 100.

mission, witness and social diakonia.[37] Bria acknowledges a contemporary crisis of faith and the danger in the Orthodox Church to deceive itself by "covering up the crisis of faith with the sumptuous spectacle and formality of liturgy".[38] He relates that:

> …there are many churches today in which few people even receive Holy Communion as an integral part of the liturgy. Many people are not committed to mission and evangelism, because they do not understand the liturgical language, the depth and meaning of the rites … An extreme abstraction and a lack of contact with human reality and the physical universe are entirely contrary to the spirit of the liturgy.[39]

Furthermore, Bria resumes the following issues that require a liturgical renewal: (1) an incomprehensible language of the Orthodox worship, (2) the rigidity of the rites and ceremonies that can suffocate the living rhythm of the liturgy, (3) an overwhelming symbolism attached to liturgical objects and gestures, (4) the reduced participation of the faithful in the liturgy, favoured by the enclosure of the sanctuary and the silent recitation of the "priestly" prayers (especially the Anaphora), which leads to (5) a clericalization of the liturgical act.[40] Bria argues that liturgical renewal should aim to:

(1) Increase participation of the laity in the liturgy and especially a Eucharistic revival;

(2) Reaffirm the plurality of forms and expressions of liturgical art and spirituality;

(3) Develop new prayers and new forms of worship in order to respond to the concrete needs of the contemporary society;

(4) Rediscover the role of worship in all varieties of cultures without falling into a false inculturation and contextualization;

(5) Make the liturgy more comprehensible through cathecheses (which can precede the celebration of the Eucharist or other liturgical services).[41]

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[37] Ion Bria, "The Liturgy after the Liturgy," *International Review of Mission* 67, no. 265 (1978): 90.

[38] Idem, *The Liturgy after the Liturgy. Mission and Witness from an Orthodox Perspective* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996), 23.

[39] *Ibidem*, 28.

[40] *Ibidem*, 41.

[41] *Ibidem*.

Nicolae Necula

Fr. Nicolae Necula (1944–2017) was a professor of Liturgy at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Bucharest. Necula considers that the desire for a liturgical renewal, or an adaptation of the liturgy to the requirements of the contemporary society, belongs to those who perceive the Orthodox liturgical services being too long and tedious, thus requesting their curtailment. Although he considers that in the Romanian Orthodox Church "the issue of accommodating the worship to the demands of the contemporary world … has not created a crisis", he admits that in the Romanian Church "one can talk about the necessity of a liturgical renewal", but "not as a reform, restructuring or abbreviation of the liturgy, but as an attempt to respond to certain needs or even spiritual crises caused by the secularized influences of our time." He proposes several solutions to this issue: (1) the revivification of liturgical life, through a responsible and diligent celebration of the services, (2) the intensification of mystagogical catecheses, in order to make the symbolism and doctrinal meaning of the liturgy more intelligible to the faithful, (3) the revival of frequent communion among the lay belivers, but with the necessary preparation through fast, confession and absolution of sins, and (4) the liturgical worship must become the framework for the manifestation of philanthropy and social work.

Necula considers that liturgical uniformity is mandatory in the Romanian Church. He perceives any variety (understood more as innovation or liturgical anomaly) as being a prejudice to the cult, which he considers as a homogeneous unitary whole. Although he evidently opposes a "reform", he accepts certain liturgical revisions or adjustments, such as the suppression of the kathismas at Verspers and Matins, of the canons and certain small litanies at Matins, of the canons of the Rite of Anointing the sick and of the Office of Burial, the removal of the Troparia and Kondakia after the Entrance with the Gospel book and of the litanies for the catechumens from the Liturgy of the Word.[42]

[42] Nicolae Necula, *Tradiție* și înnoire în *slujirea liturgică*, vol. I (București: Trinitas, 2014), 11–33.

Laurențiu Streza

H.Em. Laurențiu Streza (b. 1947), archbishop of Sibiu and Metropolitan of Transylvania, is professor of Liturgy at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Sibiu and the president of the Subcommittee for the diorthosis of liturgical books, within the Theological and Liturgical Commission of the Romanian Holy Synod. Streza states that the content of Tradition, of which the divine worship is a part, "is permanent, because it is always new and dynamic. It becomes static when it is no longer grasped and assumed through life."[43] He claims that "the concern of the faithful or even of theologians for the formal aspect of the worship expresses primarily their insensitivity to the content of Tradition". In his opinion, this means that:

> …the incapacity to experience the infinite richness of the ecclesiastical Tradition and the crisis of formalism cannot be overcome by shortening the ritual, as even some orthodox suggest, or by changing the external forms – as the West has done, abolishing the cult altogether –, for this would mean an adaptation of the external ecclesiastical framework to the poverty of faith of a certain historical moment; thus, we reach the loss and destruction of the environment in which the fullness of the faith in Christ is communicated.[44]

However, Streza admits that, although the essential forms of worship are immutable, the secondary may experience change, which may consist in elaborations or reductions. In the latter category are liturgical language and music and the number of scriptural readings proclaimed in the divine services.[45] Regarding a more active and conscious lay participation in the liturgy, Streza recommends reading the Anaphora in a loud voice, underlying the importance of a deep spiritual preparation for receiving communion. Thus, for the Liturgy to reach its purpose, he argues that, besides the celebrant priest, "someone else, who has prepared especially for this, must also partake of the Holy Mysteries".[46]

Among the main characteristics of liturgical worship, Streza gives priority to uniformity and stability, while he perceives diversity as a consequence of liturgical innovations. He considers that "the uniformity

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[43] Laurențiu Streza, "Caracterul dinamic și cel statornic al cultului ortodox," *Revista Teologică* 4 (1995) 50.

[44] *Ibidem*, 50–51.

[45] *Ibidem*, 53–54.

[46] *Ibidem*, 55.

and stability of worship contributes to the preservation of both the faith unity of the entire Orthodoxy… and the internal unity of every national Church".[47] Thus, according to Streza, the unity of liturgical worship becomes an element of national cohesion, at least in the case of the Romanian Church.[48]

Viorel Sava

Fr. Viorel Sava (b. 1963) is professor of Liturgy at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Iași. In his opinion, the unsatisfactory results of the liturgical reforms in Western Christianity have determined "a certain degree of prudence within the Orthodox world, particularly when one discusses the reform and adaptation of the divine office". He argues that in Orthodoxy, the term "renewal" is preferred, rather than "reform", because "renewal is an inner process and is synonymous with the concept of deepening", while the term "reform" points to an outside intervention in fashioning the external *forms* of liturgical worship.[49] He further states: "In the Romanian Orthodox Church there are not many voices that are supporting and calling for a reform of the divine office. Such calls are coming particularly from the Romanian diaspora and are triggered obviously by the context of their own ministry".[50] Sava considers that the movement for liturgical reform is determined by the present generation's lack of time to attend the long liturgical services of the Church in the post-modern "age of speed". Thus, he argues that the liturgy does not need any "revision" or "reform", but rather *we* need a spiritual "reform" or

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[47] Idem, "Păstrarea unității în săvârșirea cultului divin și importanța ei pentru unitatea Bisericii Ortodoxe Române. Combaterea inovațiilor și practicilor liturgice necanonice," *Mitropolia Ardealului* 2 (1989): 30.

[48] *Ibidem*.

[49] Sava, "The Work of Fr. Dr. Ene Branişte," 121. For the concept of "liturgical deepening," Sava recalls a statement made by Patriarch Daniel of Romania, during a theological symposium in 2012: "In a recent official address by His Beatitude Daniel, the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, during an international symposium dedicated to the Sacrament of the Holy Unction … in Bucharest, May 2012, he stated that in the Orthodox understanding, divine office development does not mean alienation from the apostolic liturgical tradition of the early Church, but rather the deepening of the same tradition though the experience of the Church pleroma (Gr. Πλήρωμα), all within the context of faith and prayer community and communion". *Ibidem*, 121–22.

[50] *Ibidem*, 122.

conversion.[51] Although he recalls, just as Vintilescu or Branişte, the principle of immutability of essential liturgical elements and the possibility of changing or adapting the non-essential, he argues that, in the experience of the Church, the process of liturgical adaptation did not mean abbreviation (which he tends to perceive as innovation), but development and enrichment.

Petru Pruteanu

H.Em. Bishop Petru Pruteanu (b. 1979)[52] is currently docent at the Catholic University of Portugal and one of the most vocal voices among the contemporary Romanian liturgists who advocates for an Orthodox liturgical renewal. According to Pruteanu, liturgical renewal is a natural phenomenon, but can only occur under certain conditions. Firstly, it is necessary to establish the causes and purposes of any change (this implies a serious research of liturgical history); secondly, the missionary and spiritual impact of the "renewal" on the faithful must be monitored; thirdly, those responsible with the process of renewal must benefit from a recognized spiritual authority.[53] Pruteanu argues that "the current liturgical practice corresponds entirely to the letter of Tradition (which should be understood as dynamic), but only to a small extent to its spirit, because in order to respect Tradition there is a need for spiritual people, not formalists".[54] He further stresses that the entire Tradition of the Church has a dynamic and contextualized history which should not be neglected. Pruteanu reproaches those who strongly oppose a liturgical reform for their "indifference and, especially, their laziness to adapt, to contextualize and to «clean off the dust»".[55] He states that "it is easy to introduce new elements in the liturgy, but it is much more difficult to remove other

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[51] Viorel Sava, "Inovaţiile în cult–singularizare liturgică," *Analele Ştiinţifice ale Universităţii «Al. I. Cuza»*, *Iaşi. Teologie* 5, (1999–2000): 75–84.

[52] P. Pruteanu was born in the Republic of Moldova. Although he was tonsured as a monk in the Romanian Orthodox Church (and has Romanian citizenship), he presently activates under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate as Assistant Bishop to the Spanish-Portuguese Diocese of the Patriarchal Exarchate in Western Europe.

[53] Petru Pruteanu, "Interviu despre „înnoirea liturgică," https://www.teologie.net/2016/08/04/interviu-despre-innoirea-liturgica/, accessed August 01, 2022.

[54] *Ibidem*.

[55] Petru Pruteanu, "Tradiție, înnoire și inovație în Sfânta Liturghie, partea I," https://www.teologie.net/2017/11/17/traditie-innoire-si-inovatie-in-sfanta-liturghie-partea-i/ , accessed August 01, 2022.

which are older, even though their preservation is sometimes accidental or even meaningless". He also points out that the idea of returning to the "early practice of the Church" is absurd, because this would mean to ignore the dynamic evolution of the liturgy and its contextualization.[56]

Unlike most of his predecessors, who considered that a potential liturgical reform is the responsibility of a Pan-Orthodox Synod (or, in a smaller degree of the Local Orthodox Councils), Pruteanu argues that:

> Realistically, we understand that no liturgical reform or renewal depends on, and cannot be entrusted to, a local or ecumenical or Pan-Orthodox Synod. History shows us that Synods took very superficial interest in liturgical worship and, in the best of cases, limited themselves to prohibiting certain abuses or giving the necessary dogmatic interpretation in a polemical context (see for example Canon 32 of Trullo). The Second Vatican Council did not make concrete liturgical reforms, but only grasped their necessity, fixed principles, constituted commissions, the rest being carried out by specialists in the following years and later approved by Pope Paul VI.[57]

Giving the fact that conditions for a relative pan-Orthodox consensus on the revision of liturgical formularies, as well as a general progressive and qualified preparation of the clergy and faithful for a reform are hard to achieve, Pruteanu argues that, for the moment, a possible solution could be the composition of alternative formularies of the Leitourgikon, Euchologion and other liturgical books on the account of liturgical research and various pastoral-missionary contexts. He considers that this task can be undertaken by well-prepared liturgists (individually or in teams), without an official hierarchical authorization, so that revised formularies can be discussed by academics and ministers and even introduced in public worship, so that the vivid Tradition of the Church can assimilate what is proper and necessary for its liturgical life.[58]

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[56] *Ibidem*.

[57] Petru Pruteanu, "«Tradition» et «traditionalisme» dans la célébration de la liturgie," in *Tendances et directions dans les recherches actuelles des théologiens orthodoxes roumains de la diaspora*, eds. Ciprian C. Apintiliesei and Constantin Pogor (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2022), 287 (my translation).

[58] *Ibidem*, 287–88.

The *Missionary Leitourgikon*: a proposed reform

In 2019, Pruteanu published with the blessing of H.Em. Vladimir of Moldova (Moscow Patriarchate), the *Missionary Leitourgikon*, which contains the revised texts of the Byzantine Eucharistic Liturgies (CHR and BAS), Vespers and Matins, Liturgies of the Presanctified Gifts (PRES and an adaptation of the Typika service) and other services and prayers. The name of this Leitourgikon was inspired by one of the missionary methods of the Russian Orthodox Church, known as "missionary liturgy"[59] (e.g., a divine service during which the priest recites the prayers aloud and makes theological explanations for the faithful[60]). Pruteanu claims that:

> …this Leitourgikon is a trial version of a project of re-editing liturgical texts in accordance with the ancient ordos and practices of the Church, which have been adapted to the missionary realities and needs of our time and place where we live and minister, after a thorough research of the history and textology of the liturgical ordos. Each liturgical element or text mentioned here … has at least one historical witness in the rich Tradition of the Church; this is the primary principle that characterizes this work.[61]

However, some liturgical texts or practices prescribed in this Leitourgikon are Pruteanu's personal adaptations and even creations. While most of them are legitimate and in accordance with the spirit of Tradition, some are debatable. It is important to mention that, although this Leitourgikon is intended as an edition for students and theological debates, Pruteanu claims that "with the blessing of the Diocesan Bishop, the ordo proposed here may be used in worship, and the missing elements here will be taken from the official Leitourgikon".[62] This affirmation is important, and the blessing of H.Em. Vladimir, Metropolitan of Moldova, gives legitimacy to this liturgical renewal enterprise. Many clerics from Romania, and especially from the Romanian diaspora, have consulted this Leitourgikon and some of them use it in worship. Below I provide a list of the main changes/revisions proposed in the *Missionary Leitourgikon*:

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[59] *Litughierul misionar*, ed. Petru Pruteanu (Chișinău: s.n., 2019): 3.

[60] See the: "Concept of the Missionary Work of the Russian Orthodox Church," issued on the 27th of March, 2007, https://web.archive.org/web/20141220134347/http://xn----7sbzamhkhkpaf1p.xn--p1ai/index.php/item/kontseptsiya-missionerskoj-deyatelnosti-russkoj-pravoslavnoj-tserkvi, accessed August 12, 2022.

[61] *Ibidem*.

[62] *Ibidem*, 4.

a) General principle

– the priestly prayers are placed at their natural and logic place, before the ekphonesis, which is the doxological conclusion of a prayer[63]; most prayers are to be recited aloud;[64]

b) Vespers and Matins

– most of the priestly prayers are redistributed at the end of litanies;[65]

– the Royal Office which precedes Matins[66] is supressed; because an incensation is currently performed during this brief service, for the beginning of Matins, Pruteanu proposes that the former office should be replaced with the tripsalm of the First Hour or even with the entire Hour;

c) Prothesis

– the formula "The Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world, is sacrificed for the life and salvation of the world", recited by the priest when he cuts crosswise the artos extracted from the first prosphora, is replaced by Isa. 53, 5 (LXX);[67]

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[63] In the last edition of the Leitourgikon of the Romanian Orthodox Church (2012), in the ordo of the Divine Liturgy, the prayers are placed before their ekphonesis, unlike previous editions where the prayers were placed before the petition "Help us, save us, have mercy upon us…". However, the editors of the Leitourgikon prescribe that if the deacon is present, then the prayers should be said silently during the litanies; if the priest celebrates without a deacon, then the prayers of the antiphons and trisagion should be said after the ekphonesis, when the choir sings the respective hymns; see the explanation in: *Liturghier* (București: EIBMO, 2012), 598. This "revision" is clumsy, for it does not safeguard the logic structure of the prayers.

[64] For a scholarly challenge of the current practice of secretly reciting the liturgical prayers (especially the Anaphora) aloud see *Γεώργιος Φίλιας, Ὁ τρόπος ἀναγνώσεως τῶν εὐχῶν στὴ λατρεία τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας* (Ἀθήνα: Γρηγόρη, 1996); Robert F. Taft, "Was the Eucharistic Anaphora Recited Secretly or Aloud?: the Ancient Tradition and What Became of It," in *Worship traditions in Armenia and the neighboring Christian East*, Avant Series 3, ed. Roberta Ervine (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press / St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, 2006), 15–57; for a moderate approach see: Gregory Woolfenden, "Praying the anaphora: aloud or in silence?," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 51, nos. 2–3 (2007): 179–202.

[65] However, at Vespers the first three prayers in their current distribution remain to be recited silently during the recitation of Psalm 103. Also, at Matins the first six prayers are still to be recited during the Hexapsalmos.

[66] For this office, see: Vassa Larin, "The Origins and History of the Royal Office at the Beginning of Matins," *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata* 3, no. 5 (2008): 199–218.

[67] According to Pruteanu, the new formula is more suitable than the older one, because "all liturgical commentaries say that «the sacrifice of the Lamb» takes place during the

– the categories of saints commemorated when extracting the nine additional particles are regrouped as follows: (1) prophets; (2) apostles; (3) sanctified martyrs; (4) holy bishops; (5) martyrs; (6) venerable men and women; (7) holy unmercenaries; (8) holy emperors and rulers/voivodes; (9) the saint of the day, the holy and righteous Ancestors of God, the holy myrrh bearers and all the saints;[68]

– the reconstruction of an alternative redaction of the rite, celebrated with only one prosphora (the Lamb), without the extraction of additional (commemorative) particles, according to the more ancient practice.[69] After the preparation of the Lamb and chalice, the priest recites a new intercessory prayer for those who are commemorated, asking that "they may become partakers of the grace which will come upon these gifts [cf. the epiclesis of CHR], so that they would be sanctified as living and pure members of Your Church and be sited on the right side together with Your most pure Mother, with the prophets, apostles etc. [cf. BAS]".

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epiclesis, not the Proskomide" (*Ibidem*, 48, n. 3). Indeed, St. Nicholas Cabasilas argues that "the sacrifice is accomplished neither before nor after the consecration of the bread, but at the very moment of consecration itself"; Nicholas Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, trans. Joan M. Hussey and P.A. McNulty (London: SPCK, 1966), 81.

[68] It should be noted that the commemoration of holy angels and the holy cross has been removed (according to S. Muretov, these commemorations at the Prothesis were taken from the prayer of the litya; Серге́й Дми́триевич Муретов, *О поминовении Бесплотных сил на проскомидии* (Moscow, 1897), 85–121; for the theological implications of the commemoration of the angels at the Prothesis, see: Petru Pruteanu, *Liturghia Ortodoxă – istorie şi actualitate* (Bucureşti: Sophia, 2013), 82–87. The redistribution of the nine orders of saints proposed by Pruteanu may solve some previous incongruences, such as the repetition of certain saints in different orders or the situation where the saint whose Liturgy is celebrated (St. John Chrysostom or St. Basil the Great) constitutes an entire order (!).

[69] For the multiplication of the commemorative particles, see: Marco Mandalà, *La protesi della liturgia nel rito bizantino-greco* (Grottaferrata: Scuola tipografica italo-orientale S. Nilo, 1935), 107–47; Γεώργιος Κεσελόπουλος, *Η Πρόθεση. Μελέτη Λειτουργική, Ιστορική-Θεολογική: 8ος-15ος αιώνας* (Λευκωσία: Κέντρο Μελετών Ιεράς Μονής Κύκκου, 2018), I: 278–302. The recovery of the ancient practice would also solve the issue whether the additional particles are to be consecrated together with the Lamb or not. According to the present-day practice, only the Lamb is considered to be consecrated during the Eucharist; for the discussion regarding this subject see: Михаил Асмус, "К вопросу об освящении поминальных частиц за Божественной Литургией," Вестник ПСТГУ. Серия *I:* Богословие. Философия 14 (2005): 5–22 and Mihail Khalid Qaramah, "The Byzantine Prothesis: Hypotheses on the Eucharistic Consecration of the »Commemorative Particles«," *European Journal of Science and Theology* 16, no. 4 (2020): 5–14.

– the Prayer of the Prothesis gains a Christological addressing; the phrase "bless these gifts here set forth before You" is replaced by "show Your face upon these that are set forth before You";[70]

– a special prayer for the blessing of the prosphora remains, which are destined to be distributed as antidoron, is included;[71]

d) Preparatory Prayers before the Liturgy

– the hymn "O Heavenly King", recited by the celebrant before the initial blessing of the Divine Liturgy, is replaced by the Troparion of the Third Hour (and its psalmic verses), which is consequently removed from the Anaphora;[72]

e) The Divine Liturgy

– it is recommended to keep the holy doors of the sanctuary open throughout the Divine Liturgy;

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[70] There is still some confusion in current practice on whether the priest should or should not make with his hand the sign of the cross over the gifts when pronouncing these words. A rubric in the present-day Romanian Leitourgikon prescribes this blessing, although this act was not generally observed in ancient practice or was even prohibited (see, for example the canon 12 attributed to Nikephoros the Confessor); for this subject see: Mihail Qaramah, "Rugăciunea punerii-înainte din rânduiala Proscomidiei bizantine," *Studii Teologice* 2 (2015): 262-65. By replacing the petition for the blessing of the gift with the phrase "show Your face upon these that are set forth before You," Pruteanu clearly desired to provide a solution to the confusion regarding the epicletic character of the prayer. However, the new variant is equally a consecratory petition, which is found in Prothesis prayers of Egyptian origin (see: *Ibidem*, 233–36). In addition, such prayers have a Christological addressing.

[71] This prayer is a new creation; in the traditional Byzantine rite, such a prayer is not known. For antidoron, see: Robert F. Taft, *A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. The Communion, Thanksgiving, and Concluding Rites*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 281 (Roma: PIO, 2008), 699–719. In the Romanian Orthodox Church (and only there), it is customary for the celebrant to bless the antidoron during the singing of the Axion (at the Anaphora). The priest takes the bowl containing the antidoron and makes with it the sign of the cross before the Mysteries laying on the altar, saying "Through the prayers of the Theotokos, bless, O Lord, this bread, the antidoron of Thy saints" (*Liturghier*, 178); for the practice of blessing the antidoron in the Romanian Church see: Nicolae Preda, "La Divina Liturgica e la prassi eucaristica nella Chiesa Ortodossa Romena, riguardo specialmente al pane usato nell' Eucaristia," in *Congiunge, non separa! Convegno Eucaristico Scientifico. Esztergom 27–29 novembre 2018* (s.l.: NEK Titkárság, 2019), 94–100.

[72] About the interpolation of this troparion, which disturbs the internal unity of the Anaphora, see: Stefano Parenti, *L'anafora di Crisostomo. Testo e contesti*, Jerusalemer Theologisches Forum 36 (Münster: Aschndorff Verlag, 2020), 345–56.

– small litanies may be reduced to their initial petition ("Again and again, in peace, let us pray to the Lord");[73]

– optionally, the prayer of the Gospel ("Shine in our hearts, O Master…") may replace the prayer of the second antiphon, which is duplicated in the current opisthambonos prayer. Pruteanu considers that the change would facilitate the perception of the former prayer as a preparation for the community to hear the entire set of readings;

– certain formulas of the dialogue between the priest and the deacon are supressed;[74]

– scriptural readings are proclaimed facing the congregation;

– the incensation before the Gospel reading is made only in front of the Altar or around the Holy Table at most, during the singing of the Alleluiarion;[75]

– the ektene is abbreviated;[76]

– the litany for the catechumens is supressed (if they are not present);[77]

– the commemorations recited by the priest at the Great Entrance[78] are reduced;

– the litany after the transfer of the gifts may be reduced to its initial petition (the aiteses litany may be thus omitted at this moment);

– the "kiss of peace" is reactivated as a greeting exchange between the celebrant and the congregation;[79]

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[73] For the development of the small litanies from a simple invitation to prayer to its current form, see: Juan Mateos, *La célébration de la parole dans la liturgie byzantine. Étude historique*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 191 (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1971), 31–33.

[74] Such as the dialogue after the epiclesis, which interrupts the fluency of the Anaphora. This dialogue is absent from the Greek Hieratikon. The reason for its insertion here is not clear.

[75] For this incensation see: Mateos, *La célébration de la parole*, 135–39.

[76] The *ektene* does not belong to the structure of the Liturgy, being an element proper to liturgical penitential processions (see: *Ibidem*, 153–55).

[77] In Romanian liturgical practice, the proclamation of this litany is still customary even if there are no catechumens present. For the history of the litany for the catechumens and their dismissal at the end of the Liturgy of the Word, see: *Ibidem*, 156–58.

[78] These commemorations interrupt illogically the Cherubic Hymn. The first mention of a primary simple form dates from the 13th c.; see: Robert F. Taft and Stefano Parenti, *Il Grande Ingresso. Edizione italiana rivista, ampliata e aggiornata*, Ἀνάλεκτα Κρυπτοφέρρης 10 (Grottaferrata, 2014), 404 et passim.

[79] For the history of the kiss of peace in the Divine Liturgy, see: *Ibidem*, 605–35.

– the phrase "changing them by Your Holy Spirit" is supressed together with the third blessing over the Holy Gifts in the epiclesis of BAS;[80]

– after the phrase "Especially for our most holy, pure, blessed, and glorious Lady…", said by the priest, the choir may recite only the verse "Rejoice, O Full of grace…" and omit the Axion;[81]

– the diptychs end with a final general commemoration intoned by the deacon;[82]

– the current diaconal bidding before the commixture, "Fill, master, the holy cup", is replaced with "Unite, father, the holies", and the response of the priest, "The fullness of the Holy Spirit", with the formula "The union of the Body with the Blood,[83] in the Holy Spirit";

– of the Troparia said by the deacon/priest when he places the particles in the chalice, only the hymn "O Christ, our Pascha" is maintained;

– the Postcommunion prayer is reattached to its ekphonesis, after the thanksgiving litany;[84]

– additional and alternative opisthambonos prayers are included for Sundays, regular days and feasts;[85]

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[80] For the insertion of this phrase in BAS, see: Parenti, *L'anafora*, 356–59.

[81] The singing of the Axion and of the alternative Marian hymn "All of creation rejoices in you…" (for BAS) in this moment, which interrupts illogically the Anaphora became widespread in the 15th c.; see: Robert F. Taft, *A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. The Diptychs*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 238 (Roma: PIO, 1991), 118–19 and Parenti, *L'anafora*, 360–66. The verse "Rejoice, O Full of grace…" is first mentioned after the *ekphonesis* "Especially for our most holy…" in CHR in ms. *Sin. gr. NE/МГ 22* (9th–10th c.) and in BAS in ms. *РГБ* 27 (10th c.) and was initially supposed to be silently recited by the celebrant; see: Parenti, *L'anafora*, 443–48; for ms. *Sin. gr. NE/МГ 22* see: Gabriel Radle, "Sinai Greek NE/МГ 22: Late 9th/Early 10th Century Euchology Testimony of the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom and the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts in the Byzantine Tradion," *Bolletino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata* 8 (2011): 169–221 (here 220); for ms. *РГБ* 27 see: Josef Koster, *Das Euchologion Sevastianov 474 [X/XI Jhdt.] der Staatsbibliothek in Moskau* (Thesis ad Lauream, Pontificio Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1996), § 20.2.

[82] The deacon says "Remember, O Lord, the people here presented and those who are absent with good cause, those who have asked us to pray for them, unworthy though we may be, those whom each of us calls to mind and all your people". For the history of the diaconal diptychs of the living, see: Taft, *Diptychs*, 134–64.

[83] This phrase seems to be inspired by the corresponding formula in JAS; see: B.–Ch. Mercier, *La liturgie de saint Jacques: édition critique du texte grec avec traduction latine*, Patrologia Orientalis 26.2 (Turnhout: Éditions Brepols, 1974), 228.

[84] For this, see: Taft, *The Communion*, 486–93.

[85] For the *opisthambonos* prayers, see: *Ibidem*, 592–698.

f) PRES

– this office is to be celebrated only at its proper time in the evening; the faithful may keep only a six hour fast before receiving the Holy Mysteries;[86]

– the rubrics clearly state that the chalice is consecrated through the contact with the consecrated Lamb (previously dipped into the Blood) with the wine mixed with water;[87] the following formula is prescribed to be recited when the priest performs the commixture: "The union of the Body and Blood of Christ with the precious chalice, for sanctification and transformation through the Holy Spirit";

g) The Typika office

– The Typika office is to be celebrated according to its original purpose, as a divine service of Holy Communion for the fast days when the Eucharistic Liturgy is not celebrated.[88] In order to prevent the abuse of celebrating the evening Liturgy of the Presanctfied Gifts in the morning, as it is the common practice in the Romanian Orthodox Church, Pruteanu restores the Typika as a service for the distribution of the reserved Eucharist at noon, or even in the morning, because the liturgical text of this rite does not necessarily link the celebration with a particular time of the day. However, Pruteanu takes a step further and introduces in the structure of the Typika elements proper to the Byzantine PRES. The purpose was to adapt the office for a priestly celebration. The resulted ordo has the following structure:

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[86] The six hour fast was prescribed by the Bishops' Conference of the Russian Orthodox Church in the document "On the Participation of the Faithful in the Eucharist," which was approved on February 3, 2015; for the document see: http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3981166.html (accessed December 8, 2022).

[87] For the consecration of the chalice at the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, see: Alphonse Raes, "La Communion au Chalice dans l'Office des Présanctifies," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 20 (1954): 166–74; Nikolai Uspenskii, *Evening Worship in the Orthodox Church*, trans. P. Lazor (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 145–51; Alexopoulos, *The Presanctified Liturgy in the Byzantine Rite: a Comparative Analysis of its Origins, Evolution, and Structural Components* (Leuven-Paris-Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2009), 258–63.

[88] For the history and purpose of the Typika Office, see: Mateos, "Un Horologion inédit de Saint Sabas, le codex Sinaiticus Graecus 863 (IX^{e} s.)," in *Mélanges Eugène Tisserant*, Studi e testi 233 (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1964), 54–55 (text of the rite), 64–68 (commentary); Alexopoulos, *The Presanctified Liturgy*, 80–90; André Lossky, "Typiques et Présanctifiés: deux offices byzantins de Communion," in *Rites de communion: Conférences Saint-Serge, LVe Semaine d'Études Liturgiques; Paris, 23 - 26 juin 2008*, eds. A. Lossky and Manlio Sodi, Monumenta Studia Instrumenta Liturgica 59 (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2010), 255–66.

Ecclesiastical initial blessing

Great synapte + Prayer "of the first antiphon": "O God, great and praised, through the life giving death of Your Christ…"[89]

Ps. 102 (*in the meantime, the priest unfolds the antimension, makes tree prostrations and places the consecrated Lamb on the diskos*)

Small synapte + Prayer "of the second antiphon": "Remit, pardon, forgive, O God, our offences…"[90]

Ps. 145 (*at the end of the psalm, the priest transfers the diskos to the Prothesis table; then, the choir says "Glory…"*) + the hymn "Only-begotten Son…" (*the priest prepares the chalice*)

Small synapte + Prayer "of the third antiphon": "Holy Master, infinitely good..."

The Beatitudes (*the priest performs the incensation, just as at the Great Entrance*)

The Entrance with the Presanctified Gifts, in silence

The final three repetition of the refrain of the Beatitudes + 3 prostrations

The antiphon "The Heavenly choir…"

The Creed

The litany of supplication

Prayer before Communion: "O God of ineffable and unseen mysteries…"[91]

The Lord's Prayer

Prayer "O God, You alone are compassionate and good…"[92]

Prayer "Lord Jesus Christ, hear us from Your holy dwelling place…"[93]

The call to Communion

The fraction, commixture and zeon

Communion and Post-communion rites (*as in PRES*)

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[89] In fact, it is the first prayer of the faithful in PRES.

[90] This prayer is proper to the Typika office.

[91] The prayer has the same function in PRES.

[92] The prayer is found in the same place in PRES.

[93] The prayer precedes the call to Communion in both the Byzantine Eucharistic Liturgies and in PRES.

Thanksgiving litany and prayer (*as in PRES*)

Opisthambonos prayer: "Thou Who receive the sacrifice of praise…"[94]

"May the name of the Lord…" (x3)

Psalm 33

Prayer at the Prothesis table: "Lord our God, You have guided us to these most holy days…"

Final blessing and apolysis.

Although during the Great Lent the Typika is celebrated after the Ninth Hour, the "restored" service is to be preceded just by the Third and Sixth Hours, either if it is celebrated at noon or in the morning. If scriptural readings from the Apostolos and Gospels are prescribed for the day, they should be read during the Sixth Hour, immediately after the reading from the Prophets.

One may argue that the "Byzantinization" and "clericalization" of this initially monastic Palestinian service were not sufficiently justified. Was such an "adaptation" truly needed, in order to retrieve the original function of the Typika service?[95] Probably, it is too soon to offer a definitive answer, since one should first evaluate the missionary impact of such a rite and this can be carried out only through its celebration in worship. However, in terms of the layout of the "renewed" rite, some borrowings from the received formulary of PRES, which has its own issues, may seem to clutter the structure of the Typika service. For example, in PRES the Prothesis and the Entrance of the Presanctified Gifts

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[94] This opisthambonos prayer is found in the 8th c. Cod. *Barberini* gr. 336 (and other subsequent mss.), where it is prescribed for PRES; see: Стефано Паренти, Елены Велковской, *Евхологий Барберини Гр. 336* (Омск: Голованов, 2011), 458–59 (Greek text).

[95] It should be mentioned that in 2011 the bishops of the Byzantine Catholic Church in the United States approved a revised ordo of the Typika, in order to be used as a service of Holy Communion, which can be celebrated without a priest. In this case, the reserved Eucharist is distributed by a deacon. This revised rite may be taken as a pertinent model for reform, although it itself can be subject to improvement. The overall simplicity of the office is maintained. The following changes have been made to the received rite: after the Beatitudes (with inserted Troparia), the Prokeimenon of the day is sung, followed by the readings of the day (the Gospel reading is preceded by the Alleluiarion); after the prayer "Most holy Trinity, consubstantial power…", the community says "One is holy…", a preparatory prayer for Communion and then the Presanctified Gifts are distributed (for the office see: https://mci.archpitt.org/liturgy/Typika.html, accessed August 29, 2022).

initially had a genuine practical purpose: the preparation of the gifts in the Skeuophilakion and their transfer from there to the altar, done by the deacon. This is no longer the case in the current practice. Presently, the Prothesis ritual is done by the priest in the sanctuary and the Entrance rite is reduced to a small movement of the priest carrying the gifts, that begins and ends in the same place: the sanctuary. The new route has almost nothing to do with the initial function of the entrance procession. Another issue in PRES is maintaining the dismissal "Angel of Peace" petitions in the precommunion litany, a moment in the celebration of the current rite when, presumably, no one is dismissed.[96] These old issues of PRES have become now issues of the proposed Typika ordo.

It is not clear why certain reforms were preferred and other possible reforms were not considered, especially since Pruteanu, as already seen, did not shy away from applying a series of brave renewals. Here are some examples of revisions regarding the Divine Liturgy, which may be taken into consideration for another edition of the *Missionary Leitourgikon*:

> – the restitution to the deacon of some of his ancient liturgical responsibilities, namely the preparation of the bead and cup (at least in the reconstructed Prothesis rite),[97] the execution of the censing during the Cherubic Hymn,[98] the transfer of the gifts[99] and the distribution of Communion;[100]

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[96] The "Angel of Peace" petitions are characteristic to the Byzantine dismissal litany. Taft assumes that the Urtext of the precommunion litany in the Byzantine rite consisted of the following petitions: "Having commemorated all the saints…", "For the precious Gifts offered…", ["Help, save…",] "Having asked for the unity of faith…"; see: Robert F. Taft, *A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. The Precommunion Rites*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 261 (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Orientale, 2000), 94. The *aiteseis* represent the concluding litany of Vespers. Alexopoulos argued that "soon after the communion of presanctified gifts was attached to the end of vespers, it attracted structural elements of the precommunion ritual of the full liturgy, amongst others, the precommunion litany", which text was adapted to fit the context of the Presanctified Liturgy and was added to the pre-existing dismissal petitions (Alexopoulos, *The Presanctified Liturgy*, 242).

[97] See: Mandalà, *La protesi*, 74–86.

[98] See: Taft, Parenti, *Il Grande Ingresso*, 305–08.

[99] See: *Ibidem*, 370–71.

[100] See: Paul Gavrilyuk, "The Participation of the Deacons in the Distribution of Communion in the Early Church," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 51 (2007): 255–75.

– the limitation of the incensation before the Great Entrance only at the Prothesis table, over the gifts,[101] such as the incensation during the Alleluiarion, according to the revised version, just in front of the Holy Table, over the Gospel;

– the omission of the ektene (after the Gospel and homily), since it is not proper to the structure of the Liturgy of the Word;

– the removal of all the commemorations at the Great Entrance, in order not to abruptly interrupt the Cherubic hymn;

– the abandonment of the practice of waving the veil (aer) over the bread and cup during the Creed is maintained, as the act seems to be no older than the 15th c. and has contradictory symbolisms applied to it;[102]

– the complete removal of the verse "Rejoice, O Full of grace" and Marian Troparia from the Anaphora, in order to restore the unity of the Eucharistic Prayer at that point;

– the reactivation of the ancient practice according to which the senior cleric gives communion to the other concelebrants and receives in turn from the hand of another;[103]

– the transfer of the aiteseis litany, which has a dismissal function, at its single logical place in the Eucharistic formulary, after the communion rites.[104]

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[101] See: Taft, Parenti, *Il Grande Ingresso*, 308–14.

[102] For this liturgical act, see: *Ibidem*, 669–72.

[103] On this subject see: Taft, "Receiving Communion – A Forgotten Symbol?," in *Beyond East and West. Problems in Liturgical Understanding* (Rome: PIO, 1997), 133–42.

[104] Based on the account of the *Apostolic Constitutions* VIII, 8, and Chrysostom's *Homily in II Corinthians*, Mateos assumed that the *aiteseis* litany was first said for the catechumens at the end of the Liturgy of the Word, but also concerned all the other classes that were to be dismissed before the Eucharistic Liturgy (Mateos, *La célébration*, 168). Later, Taft argued that, because around the end of the 4th c. those who felt unworthy to receive the sacrament were leaving the church at communion time, an inclination Prayer was added to the structure of the Antiochene-type precommunion ritual, while the 'Angel of Peace' biddings (a traditional element of Antiochene dismissal rites), were attached to the precommunion litany, to give a blessing to the departing non-communicants (Taft, *The Precommunion Rites*, 102–03). Thus, the litany was first introduced in CHR and BAS before the Lord's Prayer. Then, the litany was duplicated after the Great Entrance, probably after the pattern of PRES, where the litany after the Entrance and before the Lord's Prayer is the same (see: Taft, Parenti, *Il Grande Ingresso*, 542–546). Instead, Pruteanu considers that both the "Angel of Peace" litany and the inclination prayer in CHR were transferred towards the end of the Divine Liturgy (before the *Sancta sanctis*) from elsewhere. He argues that in a first phase (probably towards the end of the 6th c.), penitents were allowed to assist at the Great Entrance, and then dismissed through the

Thus, there are some methodological aspects that need clarification. Firstly, when reforming a rite, which form is to be preferred: the more ancient or the predominant? Secondly, at which point the duplication or recovery of historical patterns can be replaced by fresh creativity? Thirdly, to what extent can elements from other liturgical traditions be borrowed and integrated into the received Byzantine rite?

However, the *Missionary Leitourgikon* represents a great step ahead in the process of liturgical reform in the Orthodox Churches in Romania and the Republic of Moldova, having already influenced liturgical practice in some parishes. As a result, it will certainly have to be considered in the process of revising the official editions of the Leitourgikon used in these churches.

Conclusions

From what has been presented in this paper, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1) The presence of ideas and principles of the liturgical reform movement in the Romanian Orthodox Church is not a new challenge of the 21st century since they can be found in the discourse of some Romanian theologians from the last century, even during the time of the communist regime. However, until recently, there has been a clear prudence among Romanian liturgists in employing the term "reform" to designate corrections and changes made to the liturgy, although this is what a liturgical reform means. The disregard for the term was motivated by a desire not to associate a possible Orthodox reform of the liturgy with the principles and results of the Western reform movement. Obviously, this approach was rather superficial and polemical.

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same litany and inclination prayer (before the kiss of peace). In a second stage of evolution (probably in the 7th c.), penitents were granted permission to attend the Anaphora, so the litany and dismissal prayer were transferred after it, but, by virtue of inertia, the litany remained to fill the gap between the Cherubic hymn and Creed (Pruteanu, *Liturghia Ortodoxă*, 133–34). However, Pruteanu admits that of the two positions of the *aiteseis* litany, the one after the Anaphora is to be preferred, given that its presence in the received Byzantine Liturgy after the Great Entrance is rather clumsy (*Ibidem*, 137). Regardless of which hypothesis is correct, the dismissal litany did not belong to the primitive configuration of CHR and BAS (Taft, Parenti, *Il Grande Ingresso*, 566). Given the primary function of the litany, it should be placed after the communion rites, where one finds the first petition of the "Angel of peace" litany, joined to the exhortation "let us commend ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God".

2) The majority opinion assigns the responsibility for implementing an agenda of liturgical renewal to the pan-Orthodox Council and, to a lesser extent, to local Synods regarding those aspects that are appropriate to the local liturgical tradition and context. However, given the current inability of Orthodoxy to reach a consensus on various ecclesiastical topics that do not involve as much responsibility and effort as a liturgical reform, this seems a difficult goal to achieve in today's circumstances. Thus, opinions are emerging in support of a liturgical reform based, for the time being, on the initiatives of individuals or groups of liturgists and gifted ministers with a proven scholarly and pastoral-missionary work.

3) The Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church can no longer overlook the increasing and pertinent preoccupations of some clerics, theologians and faithful who are deeply rooted in the liturgical life of the Church regarding the need of reforming certain rites. A normal step that the Church authority can take is to implement those reforms that have already been informally put into practice and which have strong historical, theological and pastoral rationales. Some reforms and changes may have an optional character, which can help to free liturgy from the captivity of rubricalism and sterile uniformity. For Church authority to prevent and remedy exuberant reform initiatives, it is essential to establish an official agenda for liturgical renewal, whose implementation should be carefully supervised by hierarchy and scholars.

It would be extremely helpful if the Romanian Patriarchate would establish and support an *Institute for liturgical research and reform*[105]. The institute would include litugiologists and experienced ministers, as well as scholars of other theological and even socio-human disciplines, anchored in the liturgical life of the Church (e.g., philologists, Byzantinologists, researchers in social history). Furthermore, renowned liturgists from abroad could be engaged in the work of the institute and could provide feedback. The institute's tasks would include: setting an agenda for liturgical reform, initiating projects for researching the history of the Byzantine-Slavonic liturgy of the Romanian Church, organizing scientific conferences on various topics concerning the history and theology of worship, revising liturgical books, and guiding clergy in various special situations that may arise in their liturgical ministry.

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[105] A similar proposal was made by Alexopoulos, "The State of Modern Greek Liturgical Studies and Research: A Preliminary Survey," in *Inquiries into Eastern Christian Worship*, 390–92.