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## **THE CHURCH'S ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WORLD – WITNESSING AS THE CHURCH'S METHOD**

The complex, polymorphous and fluid problematics of the ("post-Christian") present have presented the Church – the universal Body of Christ and us Christians, godlike personalities that are the reason-bearing limbs of that Body, with an unprecedented challenge[1] in the history of Christianity thus far, one that we cannot, even if we should wish to, ignore, overlook or suppress. As an answer to this dramatic challenge, we must offer a living and creative Christian answer – a personal-universal witnessing of the present Church generation, an answer articulated on the basis of the Church's universal traditional experience and a personal experience of faith as our active inclusion in that universal experience, if we wish to fulfill Christ's commandment – to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Mt 5:13, 14), to truly be Christians. Here we should immediately point out that the said word of Christ is not simply some spiritual or moral "suggestion" or "counsel" that may be situationally accepted or rejected by one's own free will, but an explicit Divine commandment concerning an active witnessing of theandric salt and the light of Christ to all people and nations, and to all of creation, which God personally commands as a necessary precondition for us to be Christians at all, and to call ourselves Christian. The entire history of the Church, which is, in fact, nothing other than the history of its world – a world that she transformed, through Christ's salt and light, into the Christian world, bears witness to the fact that there are no "Christians outside of the world," nor is there a "world outside of the Church." For, a theoretical concept and practice of Christianity by which, in abhorrence of the "sinful world," Christians isolate themselves into some sort of self-satisfied and righteous "holy remnant" and "island of the saved," is neither evangelical, nor ecclesiastical, nor Orthodox but, rather, "all too human," "religious," psychologizing, pietistic and utopian,[2] and, as such, foreign to the entire Living Tradition of Christ's Orthodox Church. Precisely due to the fact that this Tradition, through the entire theology of the Fathers, has forever rejected any dualistic understanding of man and the world as being in opposition to the truth of the man of God and the

world of God, along with any “religious” dualism, i.e., the introduction of dichotomous schisms and divisions[3] into God’s single creation (and, before all, divisions into “sacred and profane,” “spiritual and material,” “religious and secular,” with the first element of these dichotomous pairs being assigned to the sphere of “salvation,” and the second not only being forejudged as lost for being unclean and ephemeral, but also being consciously “left” to this fate).

The Church, in the words of Christ, truly is “not of this world” (Jn 8:23), being indeed His Body. However, precisely because of this, she has never been “outside of the world,” nor is she “outside of the world,” nor can she be. Why? Precisely because she – as the Body of the Logos Incarnate, Who with His Incarnation encompassed and saved all and everything – encompasses the entire world and, not only that but, again in the words of Christ, is the very life of the world (Jn 6:51). The Church is the Kingdom of God that – in the power of the Holy Trinity: the Father’s Love, the Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension of the Savior, and the Pentecost of the Comforter – cometh into the world and has already begun in the world.[4] Thus, Christ’s Church is not a “sacral,” “conservativist” and isolationist institution, but a consecrational-missionary and witnessing-active community whose sphere of action, *terra misionis* – is the entire world, the entire living and unliving creation.

That is why the Church – in engaging with “this world” of every historical epoch, which inevitably brings it into question at the very core[5] precisely because she herself “brings it into question” in the most radical way possible, as the “fallen world” that must be “overcome” and healed by the Kingdom of God – must be able to, from the fullness of her Living Tradition, her Liturgy and her theology, her holiness and her creativity, offer a creative response to the challenge of the epoch in which she lives, more exactly to the challenge of each and every “modernity.” The Church in history, the Church Militant (*Ecclesia militans*) on its historical ascetic journey and ascent toward Christ’s Second Coming, must, in the persons of its Christian men and women, in each generation, be able to, through Christ’s faith, which acts through acts of love (Gal 5:6) for the world, transformationally overcome the world (1 Jn 5:4) in order to win it for Christ and His Kingdom that is not of this world (Jn 18:36). “In the world but not of the world,”[6] that blessed unworldliness of the Church, that eschatological irreducibility of the Church exclusively to history represents the very precondition of her ability to fulfill Christ’s commandment regarding the transformation of each epoch and each world, the entire creation into the time and place of the revelation of the salvational Divine Truth that is the life of everything that exists (Jn 12:50), its power to transform each “world” into a Christian world, incorporating it into the cosmic-eschatological Body of Christ.

Christians, the limbs of the cosmic-eschatological Body of Christ, which encompasses the entire world and all worlds, all creation, Heaven and earth, should be the ascetic participants and blessed associates of that victory of the Kingdom of God over “this world,” by which the world is once again restored into God’s world and the New Creation: “For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world. And this is the victory that overcometh the world – our faith.” (1 Jn 5:4). Withal it is clear that the Faith of which St. John the Apostle so convincingly speaks in his First Epistle is not faith as “religion,” nor a faith among a multitude of other faiths, “one among the religions,” but, before all, hypostatic Faith as the Person of God-Man Christ, as well as Faith as blessed communion with Christ and, in Christ, with the Holy Trinity, i.e., Faith as the Body of Christ, Faith as Christ’s Church, Faith as Liturgy, Faith as “personal encounter and ontologically communicant communion (of God and man),”[7] Faith as “genuine cooperation and co-presence, and co-assimilation, and co-cognition of the Spirit of God and the spirit of man,”[8] Faith as the theandric Community of life that never dies (cf. Jn 11:26).

In each historical epoch, with its “zeitgeist” (which, as the “modernism” of its epoch, i.e., each individual historical epoch, always opposed to the “spirit of eternity”, i.e., the Kingdom of God), “this world” offers essentially the same challenge, brings into question Christianity as the Church for essentially the same reason, because the fallen world, being under the power of “the rulers of the darkness this world” (Eph 6:12), is always opposed to God, in the words of the Apostle: “Know ye not that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jm 4:4). On the other hand, the Gospel and the entire history of the Church testify and confirm that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (Jn 3:16) “for the life of the world” (Jn 6:51). This is that salvational dynamic and drama – “against the (fallen) world, and for the (Divine) world,” against the false life of a world estranged from God, and for its true life in communion with God, the soteriological drama and dynamic that stands at the foundation of the Church’s relationship with the world, the ecclesial sacramental ecology, in every historical epoch.

Any religious “sacralization” of the Church and Christianity emerging out of “revulsion against the impure world (matter, body)[9] represents, in fact, a separation from the world as a missionary field, an abandonment of God’s world and its everyday life to profanation and “secularization” and, thus, a betrayal of the Divine commandment to baptize all nations (Mt 28:19) and “preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mk 16:15). On the other hand, any assimilation and accommodation of the Church to “this world” and its spirit, and its ephemeral historical “fashions,” any “secularization”

of the Church represents, in fact, a loss of the Church's ability to actively and genuinely change the world and its history into a place of creative encounter, communion and cooperation of God and man.

### **Witnessing as a traditional method of the Church mission**

Therefore, in her engagement with "this world" of every historical epoch, the Church must always be, especially in regards to missionary activity and in the context of the issue of more "efficient" missionary activity vis-à-vis the world, aware of the danger of "uncritical accommodation to time and 'its needs'... without probing and in a superficial manner." [10] The Church must responsibly recognize this temptation, theologically name it and resolutely reject it, aware, on the basis of her two thousand years of traditional experience, that all surface accommodation and change of forms of Church life and Church service for the sake of Church "modernization" or its "better communication" with the world, or "accommodation to the historical moment," in fact "serves to fill her own spiritual void and to ease her conscience; whereas the frantic activity that naturally accompanies such a spiritual stance does not signify a healing from crisis but, rather – its hiding." [11]

On the other hand, as evidenced by the history of the relationship and interaction between ecclesial and secular culture, for example, from the Enlightenment to the present, it is obvious that "many of the changes and 'novelties' that were introduced [into Church life] were borne more out of fear of the world and its might than out of a feeling of victory over the world and its spirit." It is, thus, fear of the world, i.e., a feeling of powerlessness to enlighten the world with the Light of Christ, to change the world with Faith as the Victory of Christ, "that overcometh the world" (1 Jn 5:4), precisely due to a lack of such Faith in oneself or an unreadiness to witness that Faith to the world at any, even the highest cost – which stands as the inner source of the need to replace the ascetic feat of mission to the world with an opportunistic "modernization of Christianity" for the sake of alleged "success" or "efficacy" of ecclesial mission.

"The contemporary world," according to the champions of such "modernizations" over the past three centuries, "does not understand the language of the Church" – with the term "language of the Church" pertaining to either her liturgical language, i.e., the Divine Liturgy, her theological language (her theology), or the language of her sermon (her missionary preaching). Thus, according to them, the language of the Church, as the universal reasonable fruit of centuries of liturgical and God-knowing experience should be "modernized," i.e., "translated" into the language of this

world, which has not only renounced the genuine experience of Faith as knowledge of God but, in fact, directly negates and rejects the experience of Communion of God and man with its false “experiences” (be they philosophical, scientific, artistic, technological, etc.), while incarnating and sealing its negation and rejection of Faith as knowledge of God within its own language. And, as is well known, language is always the fruit of a specific way and experience of life and its ontology, from which it follows that the language of “this world” is the fruit of the life and ontology of “this world.” It is, thus, impossible to “translate” the ecclesial language of knowledge of God and Faith into the secular language of lack of knowledge of God and faithlessness, or into the language of Western metaphysics,[12] without, somewhere deep down, betraying the very essence of the Church’s language, i.e., the Church’s God-knowing and salvational experience – that is to say, Faith itself. On the contrary, in every situation and every dialogue with the world, the language of “this world” should be translated into the God-knowing language of the Church, because only such, and such a founded dialogue can Christianize, change and transform the world.

Fascination with modernity and a deep-seated fear of the intensity of its constant (“post-Christian” or even openly anti-Christian) changes and precedents (which often tends to develop into a spiritual-provincial, as Fr. Alexander Schmemmann called it, “inferiority complex” suffered by the Orthodox vis-à-vis the blinding glamor and potential of secular progress) are the source of all the “unceasing experiments with something ‘new’ in the Church,” especially concerning her relationship with the world. However, for a responsible Orthodox consciousness, such “experiments with something new” represent nothing more than “flight and renunciation of true responsibility regarding the past and the present, as well as the future.”[13] And, no matter how paradoxical it may seem at first glance, all the “modernizers” and “reformers” of the Church’s relationship with the world have, in historical reality, suffered a defeat of their concept and project of “modernization of Christianity,” due to “their inability to consider and transform the present with ecclesial universal eternity,”[14] because they “measure Eternity with time, instead of transforming time and that which is changeable – with that which is eternal and unchangeable.”[15] Having renounced the Divine and the eternal, the Divine as the criterion of all that is human and created in general, and Eternity as the criterion of everything temporal – such attempts essentially cannot even be contemporary to their own epoch, which is why they quickly fail and prove to be short-lived and anachronous, even in their own time (this pertains to all such attempts to “modernize” Christ’s Gospel and the Church’s mission, from “Christian enlightenment,” “Christian humanism,” and “Christian liberalism” to “Christian post-modernism” or “Christian globalism”).

In facing the “crisis” of each epoch, which is, in fact, just a manifestation of the perpetual eschatological “crisis” of this world, the eschatological judgment over this world that has, in the words of Christ, already begun with His Incarnation: “And this is the condemnation: that Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (Jn 3:19), the Church’s basic method is the witnessing of God-Man Christ, God the Logos Incarnate, the Son of God and the Son of Man.

Witnessing as a method of the Church’s mission emanates from “our new being and new life in the Body of Christ, by the grace of the Spirit the Comforter, and that is why that witnessing is, in the words of John the Apostle, about what we have heard, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled (1 Jn 1:1), i.e., witnessing about the experienced (= what we have experienced) and the lived (= what we have lived through). The words of Christ, read as excerpts from the Gospel on the holiday of the Church’s Holy Bishops and Shepherds, refer to this: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven... whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven” (Mt 5:16, 19).[16] In that sense, the Church has always been more effective in its missionary work in history when, in its witnessing or its creative mission to the world, it has favored confession over apologetics, i.e., “favored [existential] demonstration and witnessing over [rational] defense and proving”[17] of Faith.

Arguments of life in Christ, living arguments of martyrdom, of suffering and confessional witnessing of Faith, have always held a more decisive and prevailing significance for the Church than apologetic arguments of a rational and dissertational “defense of the Faith” from impiety and faithlessness. Primarily because, throughout history, apologetic arguments have been, as a rule, in the service of the rational-logical methods of this world and its way of thinking – and these methods themselves are precisely a fruit of this world’s fallen ontology, and all proof of Faith offered with the aid of methods immanent to the fallen way of life and thought are nothing more than attempts that are doomed to failure in the eyes of the “children of this world,” and its wisdom (1 Cor 1:20), which is, in the Apostle’s words, “earthly, sensual, devilish” (Jas 3:15), and which is, in the aspect of rational argumentation, “in their generation” (= in Modernity), always “craftier” than the argumentation of the children of the Kingdom (cf. Lk 16:8).

However, witnessing as a missionary method of the Church is guided by a different principle: it does not respond to this world’s theoretical arguments with “ecclesial theoretical arguments” but, rather, with living “Logos-based service (λογική λατρεία), our life in Christ,[18] which is “not some abstract ideology, but communion with Christ,”[19] a liturgical, God-knowing, ascetic, repentant life, a life of theosis.[20]



"We think that a genuine standpoint," said Saint Gregory Palamas, "does not manifest itself through words and meditation, but through deeds and living... It has been said that a word can be found to oppose any other word" – and that is where the human mind fruitlessly and hopelessly spins in the closed circle of fallenness, the dialectic of its "theses," "antitheses" and "syntheses" – "but what word can stand up to life?"[21] And these words concisely express the experientially proven method of the Church's living testimony: the Church has always opposed the false life and false experiences of "this world" with her life of liturgical and ascetic knowledge of God, triumphing over the world, not apologetically but through confession and witnessing, and winning it for the faith of Christ and the Kingdom of God.

The Church has never avoided facing the crisis of the world that it was supposed to change, due to its experiential knowledge that crisis – is the ontological state of the world until Christ's Second Coming. There is no other world than the "world in crisis"; it is a world that the Church loves, that it does not anathematize for its sinfulness but, rather, lavishes it with "works of love in Truth." Perhaps no one in modern Orthodox theology has expressed this salvational, transformational and missionary love of the Church for the world, in such a pastorally convincing and clear way, as Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann, the great Orthodox theologian and Church teacher of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

"I particularly feel that 'secularized' world as my own, while feeling the world that has proclaimed itself "Christian" as strange and hostile. For that secular world is the only real world. Christ came into the secular world, Christ spoke to it, the Church is in it and has been left for the sake of it. Every 'religious world,' including the 'Christian' one, can easily manage without God, but cannot live even for a moment without 'gods,' that is to say, without idols. Even the Church, and piety, and the ecclesial way of life, and faith itself can gradually become such idols...

With its very renunciation, the secularized world cries out for God. However, mesmerized with our own 'sanctity,' we do not hear this cry. Mesmerized with our own 'piety,' we condemn that world, separate ourselves from it with priestly tricks and hypocritically 'feel sorry' for people not acquainted with the charms of our 'churchliness'. And we fail to notice that we have fallen ourselves, and that we are failing all the tests – of spirituality, piety and churchliness. And it turns out that nothing in that 'secularized' world is to such an extent internally subordinated to that very world as the Church itself is...."[22]

Pastors and theologians of the Church before all, as well as Christians in general, have always erred, missed and betrayed their ecclesial task whenever they argued and matched wits with "this world" and their epoch

using methods and arguments of "religious reason," straining to prove the world's sinfulness and condemning it, from the heights of their supposed "salvation," to eternal perdition while, in fact, completely and irresponsibly abandoning it to the power of anthropolatric ideologies and manipulations. And, on the other hand, Church pastors and theologians have always triumphed over the world and won it over for Christ's "easy yoke" (Mt 11:30) whenever they have witnessed to it Christ's Love for the life of the world, liturgical love and sacrifice "in all and for all." [23]

At the same time, it is also important to note here that Orthodox witnessing in the contemporary world is not and must not be reduced to academic and symposial 'témoignage' (witnessing), as it is often termed in the West, especially in the current Ecumenical movement, with *témoignage* often being reduced to verbal declarations and statements 'on peace and equality and justice,' and the like." [24] Verbal *ex cathedra* evaluations, academic "diagnosing," as well as countless symposial "agreed statements" and "joint declarations" regarding the fact that the world and mankind are undergoing a "crisis" because they have deviated from faith in the Living God and from the Church, have no effect in history, without a readiness among Christians, and the clergy, the faithful, the pastors and the theologians of the Church to feel the wounds of that and such a world as "their own wounds"; without a readiness to take the cross of that world "upon one's own shoulders" and, together with Christ, carry it to Golgotha; without, together with Christ, "descending into the Hades" of that world, for the salvation of those in the "region and shadow of death..."

What is expected of contemporary Christians, as responsible members of Christ's Church, is neither aloof diagnosing of spiritual "illness" nor pronouncements of the "ruination of the world," nor panicked anathematizing of "this world" and its apostatic modernity, but a responsible witnessing of the Truth of God-Man Christ, and an unmasking of all the anthropolatric ideologies, falsities, misconceptions and injustices through the love of Christ. The basis of Christian witnessing in the modern world must be a liturgical love for that world, a love prepared to sacrifice for the life of the world, instead of a dualistic puritanism that, from the heights of its righteous self-satisfaction, abhors the "world (that) lieth in wickedness" (1 Jn 5:19) and anathematizes it, hating, along with sin, the sinners themselves, contrary to the example of Christ, Who came into the world for the sake of the sinners, to call them to repentance (cf. Mt 9:12-13).

This, of course, does not mean that there is no "gift of judgment," as one of the universal gifts of the Holy Spirit given to the Church for the salvation of the world, for "the saints shall judge the world" (1 Cor 6:2), [25] and not only the visible world, but also the invisible: "Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?" (1 Cor



6:3). The Church, precisely as “judge to the world,” to all its idol worship (1 Cor 6:9), its adultery (Mt 12:39), its wrong ways (Jam 5:20), is indeed its path to salvation[26] and its salvation. Not only does the Church have the power to “judge the world,” it is, in fact, her task and her duty, for she is, as the Incarnation of Christ extended through history, Christ extended through the centuries until the Parousia,[27] God’s Judgment of the world (see Rm 3:6), and not a judgment to perdition, but a judgment to salvation, according to the words of Christ: “For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world,” (Jn 12:47) and also, at the same time: “And yet if I judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me” (Jn 8:16).

The Church has the God-given power and Divine commandment, obligation and task to, precisely for the sake of the world’s salvation, “judge the world,” however not as a mere “sacral institution” or infallible authority,” but as the self-sacrificial Body of the Savior Who “shall come in the glory of His Father” (Mt 16:27), Whose Second, all-glorious Coming the Church awaits and towards which she is moving on her historical pilgrimage. Thus, witnessing as a method of the Church’s activity in the world is, in history, a “manifestation of genuine identity, new being and life in Christ, in which there is always something martyrlly, something prophetic, something eschatological. It is a witnessing and annunciation of the coming Kingdom of God, but also of God’s Last Judgment, it is a witnessing of Christ’s Parousia. That is why such a witnessing, such a method of work and missionary activity in Orthodoxy is always accompanied by apocalyptic realities... Proof of that are the Holy Apostles, the Holy Martyrs and New Martyrs of Orthodoxy, and with them the Holy Fathers and Ascetics of the Orthodox way and life....”[28]

The Church’s witnessing in history has always met with strong opposition from “this world,” which the Church “judged” by facing it with the Kingdom of God, which had already begun within her, by measuring it and evaluating it through the criterion of the eschatological Kingdom of God that “is not of this world,” but which is the only goal and meaning of this world, its creation and its historical existence. And, from the first days of the Church, having been faced with the fundamental and uncompromising Christian witnessing of God-Man Christ as the only true God and Lord, and the Kingdom of God as the only true goal and meaning of history, “this world” has answered this ecclesiastical “challenge” – by persecuting the Church, by the imprisonment, torture and killing of Christians. That is how it was during the first three centuries of Christianity, all the way up to the Edict of Milan of 313 (whose 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary we celebrated in 2013), as well as in all the other centuries of Christian history (let us just mention here the most drastic examples of the French bourgeois revolution

of 1789, and the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, in which tens and hundreds of thousands of bishops, priests, deacons, acolytes, monks, nuns, as well as millions of Christian faithful were killed).

However, it should be emphasized that, in her “judgment of the world,” which has always been eschatological and prophetic, but also always humble and sober-minded, the Church has never “provoked or sought martyrdom, which would be a type of zeal not according to knowledge (Rm 10:2),” [29] for, in the history of the Church, true witnessing for Christ was “never meant to provoke anyone. Truth, the authentic witnessing of truth may appear to some as a provocation, but we must not fail to witness the Truth to the end for fear of Judaic reaction...” Why? Because, thanks to her bimillennial martyrly-confessional experience, the Church knows that “meekness and humility alone are not always good in themselves, i.e., appropriate, for, if not supplemented with other gifts of the Spirit, they may turn into indifference for the truth or unintended support for violence and injustice. That may also pertain to our indulgence of people, or to what Solzhenitsyn referred to as passive service to evil.” [30] The primary criterion for the Church in her sotiriological “judging of the world” has always been her graceful gift of discernment – of “test(ing) the spirits” (1 Jn 4:1-6), or what Holy Apostle Paul referred to in the Epistle to the Jews as “senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hb 5:14). Without graceful-ascetic practice in sober discernment between good and evil, truth and lie, justice and injustice, light and darkness, worship of God and idol worship, i.e., without a living ecclesial sacramental-holy-virtuous, liturgical-philokalian experience of engaged, active eschewing of evil and of doing good (1 Pt 3:11), genuine Christian witnessing in the modern world, as a “world in crisis” par excellence, is impossible.

Regarding the question of eschatological “judging of the world,” Fr. Alexander Schmemmann says: “The Liturgical experience and the spiritual Tradition were, truly, the genuine source and living content of patristic thought... The ultimate meaning of that patristic, eschatological view of the world can be expressed with a simple formula: in order to fully exist in the world, in order to be of “use” to it, in order to fulfill their historical, cosmic and every other function, the Church and Christians as a whole must be, concomitantly, wholly and not wholly of this world. This ‘not’ is in no way negativistic in its character, nor does it signify any sort of flight from the world, despal of the world, quietism, i.e., more succinctly put – it is in no way connected with ‘spiritual’ indifference toward the world. This eschatological ‘no’ is extremely affirmative in character because, before all, it means ‘yes’ to immersion into the Kingdom of God and participation in the Kingdom of God, in the spiritual reality that the Holy Spirit has already ‘initiated’ in this world, which is God-given already in the here and now, even though it is still to come.” [31]

In the Church's witnessing in the world, in each historical epoch, all Christians, both the clergy and the laity, have their place, role and responsibility, but the leading, most responsible and incomparable place and role, function and duty, obligation and obedience, is held by the Bishops of Christ's Church, who are, according to the patristic words of St. Justin of Ćelije, "called the eyes of the Church in the true sense, if their eyes are constantly directed at the Sun of Justice, without ever impairing their vision with dark deeds. Having received power in the Church," Abba Justin continues, "the bishop is successful in spiritual life, if he occupies himself with spiritual things... Thus, to these eyes of the Church – belongs the highest praise,[32] if their life is in harmony with the grace of the Holy Spirit." [33]

In his study, "From Ontology to Ecclesiology" (2003), Nikolaos Loudovikos says the same thing, albeit in a theologically more complex or "more philosophical" language, in tune with the spirit of the epoch, which demands complexity in place of simplicity, so that the theological thoughts of Orthodox theologians might be taken more seriously by the "intellectual community of scholars": "True Church unity in the person of the bishop does not occur suddenly (spontaneously) unless the Episcopal charisma acts existentially in the ascetic feat of 'assimilating' the 'Divine energy' of Christ as Bishop, which means in the attempt to become a charisma that consubstantially contains (instead of simply 'arranging,' 'coordinating' or 'administrating') all the other charismata within itself." [34] If it should happen that, instead of being a diune transmitter (according to chirotony) and personal (based on a personal feat of assimilating Christ) carrier of the grace of apostolic succession, the Bishop remains only the former, i.e., a transmitter of the grace and the uninterrupted order of the Church, then, as Church history shows, "in different times, different charismata have expressed her self-consciousness, as well as her unity – whether it was the Martyrs, the monks, the teachers, the bishops – as unity in Truth, without disturbing either the Church's universality or its bishop-centricity. On the contrary, there have been times when secondary charismata have, in the spiritual sense, overthrown the primary ones, when these had become undermined (weakened)," concludes Loudovikos.

### **Loss of the Christian experience of life and value system – the essence of today's spiritual-historical crisis**

The most characteristic feature of the civilizational process of today's "world in crisis" in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, whose contemporaries we are and to whose radical-secularist challenge we must respond as Christians, members of one Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12), is the loss of the

Christian (= Theandric = ecclesial = liturgical = graceful-ascetic) experience of life, of a Christian (= Theandric = ecclesial = liturgical = graceful-ascetic) worldview, a Christian (= Theandric = ecclesial = liturgical = graceful-ascetic) criterion of everything, a Christian (= Theandric = ecclesial = liturgical = graceful-ascetic) value system. And that experience of life, that worldview, that criterion of everything, that value system are not abstract categories, but a living Theandric experience and reality emanating from the central Christian experience and reality – the ecclesial experience of the Person of God-Man Christ, a deifying knowledge of God through the Church and her Sacraments and Holy Virtues, and before all through her Divine Liturgy, which is the “heart of God’s Church”[36] and the Sacrament of the Kingdom of God,[37] already revealed and begun here and now, in history.[38]

The loss of the Christian experience of life, worldview, criterion of everything and value system is the mark of the modern fall of the “Christian historical world.” After twenty centuries of her baptismal-resurrectional history, the Church finds herself once again in a situation of existing in a world that is no longer “hers,” that is no longer a Christian world, that defines itself as a “post-Christian” world, a “world after Christianity,” a world that no longer bases itself on Christian foundations and assumptions, that is either indifferent or openly rejects the Christian theory and practice of life, thought and action, i.e., Christianity as a whole, together with its theology and anthropology, ontology, ethics and esthetics, cosmology and ecology.

The essence of today’s spiritual-historical crisis is that “the world in which the Orthodox Church (= Christ’s Church) must live in today – both in the East and in the West – is no longer her world, or even a ‘neutral’ world, but a world that questions its very essence and existence, a world that is consciously and unconsciously trying to reduce the Church to values, life philosophies and worldviews that are fundamentally different, if not contrary to her view and experience of God, man and life. That is what makes today’s crisis incomparably more radical and decisive than the crisis brought upon by the fall of Byzantium in 1453.”[39]

During the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century, Orthodoxy was faced with what Fr. Alexander Schmemmann called the essential question of modern Christian history. This essential question, essential problem that the Orthodox Church and Orthodox Christians are facing, according to Schmemmann, “arises primarily from two historical processes that, precisely because they are new and unprecedented in the previous history of the Orthodox Church, form the epicenter of the deep crisis that permeates the entire life of our Church.”[40]

What are these two historical processes?

“The first historical process is the tragically spectacular disintegration, in succession, of old and organic ‘Orthodox worlds’ that were up un-

til a little more than half a century ago considered to be the indisputable, natural and stable 'home' and environment of the Orthodox Church. Even worse, that disintegration was accompanied by a transformation of those 'worlds' into a historical stage on which extreme and totalitarian secularism executed a brutal crime against Orthodoxy, against man's spiritual nature and calling.

The second historical process is the rapid and massive development of the Orthodox Diaspora in the West, which – no matter how 'accidental' in its origins – marks the end of the isolation of Orthodoxy 'in the East,' the end of its total identification with that 'East' and, thus, the beginning of Orthodoxy's new destiny in the West and in the context of Western culture...."[41]

Both of these historical processes are nothing more than "two dimensions, two 'expressions' of one and the same, radically new situation, unheard of in the previous history of Orthodoxy. It is a situation in which, on the one hand, Orthodoxy has been left without its historical home – the 'Orthodox world'; and which, on the other, saw a violent separation of Orthodoxy from 'culture,' i.e., from an entire structure of national and social life; in which, finally, Orthodoxy was forced to face 'the West'." [42]

But this "West" – which during the 1970s, at the time when Alexander Schmemmann wrote about it, occupied the Western hemisphere and formed the environment in which the "Orthodox diaspora," which as "one of the most important spiritual events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century cannot be seen as a mere historical accident" [43] but as an act of Divine Providence, lived and developed – expanded to the entire world and became a global, the only civilization. The Western liberal-capitalist democratic model achieved a civilizational victory, while the "communist world," the so-called Eastern Bloc disappeared from the historical scene, resulting in the post-Cold War reconfiguration of the political map of the world [44]: the bipolar world of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century disappeared, and we are now living in a "monopolar world," i.e., in the global West.

That spiritual-historical situation only serves to additionally sharpen Schmemmann's conclusions regarding the need for Orthodoxy, i.e., the Orthodox Church, to face the West, especially due to the fact that the "historical Orthodox world," i.e., the "historical" Orthodox countries, which, either willingly or by force, have been subjected to the process of "transition" and "integration" into the political-economic institutions of the global West, have at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century found themselves in the position of a global "Orthodox diaspora," dispersed throughout the global and globalist, neoliberal and neocolonial civilization of the West, which openly refers to itself as "post-Christian."

## Christian life in a post-Christian civilization

The basic feature of that “post-Christian” civilization of the West lies in the fact that, differently from the civilization of the “old” Christian West, it is no longer based on Christianity as the Church, more precisely on the Mystery of God-Man Christ, the Mystery of His Theandric Economy,[45] but on the anthropolatric ideology of Economics, on the chiliastic utopia of an “earthly kingdom.” Thus, the most dramatic possible spiritual crisis – the negation of the Incarnation of God the Logos and His salvational Economy, the antichristian lie of denying Jesus as Christ [cf. 1 Jn 2:22], lives and works within the very foundations of today’s economolatric civilization: the substitution of God-Man – with man-god, the Kingdom of God as the goal of man’s life – with the “kingdom of man.”

That is why any consideration of the current spiritual-historical crisis of modern man and his world – which is much deeper than the global economic crisis that is shaking the world and engaging the attention of the entire scientific and professional intellectual community, because the crisis of humanity itself “in the image and likeness” is also a crisis of the world as man’s God-given home, in which man is supposed to offer his cosmic Eucharist to God – must soberly, with a Pauline “testing of spirits,” also take into account that “hidden,” spiritual aspect of the crisis. The ecclesial consciousness, based on a universal graceful-ascetic experience of “distinguishing between good and evil,” knows that all of history, from the beginning of the world to Christ’s Second Coming, is the battleground of a gigantic “invisible struggle,”[46] in which the Church and Christians “wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” [Eph 6:12], meaning that the said forces, the “principalities, and powers and the ruler of darkness of this world, the spiritual wickedness in high places” are actively waging war against the man of God, made in God’s image and likeness, against the world as the Home of man’s cosmic Eucharist, against the Body of Christ – the Church that is the salvation of the world. For the Church’s liturgical-ascetic consciousness, that theomachistic, anti-human and unholy “demonic power is a real being that, through its powers, its passions, strives to disfigure God’s image in man and to turn God’s Body into its own ‘body,’ i.e., to turn the Church into its own demonic community, the anti-church.”[47]

In the theologically distinct words of Fr. Georges Florovsky, in which this great 20<sup>th</sup> century theologian and Church teacher succinctly sums up the patristic teaching on the nature and activity of evil in history, “evil is ‘non-essential,’ according to St. John of Damascus,[48] but it is real as an active force[49] and, moreover, it is in fact real in its results, destructive,



but completely definitive. Evil has a negating or destructive character, but it is completely real in its horrific devastation. Evil possesses a mysterious power to imitate creation, but the fruit of that imitation is – destruction. Evil destroys and debases, and if evil continues to exist, then so will continue all the destruction and debasement, and worse than that: debased existence passes into eternity and, without doubt, into Hadean eternity. Evil devours beings. Evil is the devastation of non-being, but a totally real devastation. Evil is more than the absence of being, evil is “true” non-being. Evil produces new realities in the world – false, but active and visible realities. Evil possesses false-creating power. Evil is able to add new characteristics to what God created: to create what God did not create, what God did not want to create, and God tolerates that not because of lenience or benevolence, but simply by His allowance. “God did not invent death... He created everything so that it might continue to exist” [Ws 1:13-14].<sup>[50]</sup>

In the words of Apostle Paul, each Christian, living in the Body of Christ, is called upon to oppose this demonic attempt at destroying God’s creation: “My brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” [Eph 6:10-11]. Or, in the even more explicit advice of Apostle James: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” [Jm 4:7]. The experience of active, heart-and-mind or “invisible” battle against evil as a real being,<sup>[51]</sup> against its energetic effects, before all within man (in his mind and heart),<sup>[52]</sup> is what constitutes Christian life itself in Christ, as well as the ascetic Church Tradition, whose most important aspects are compiled in ascetic anthologies – “books of the Gospel realized,”<sup>[53]</sup> such as, among others, “Otechnik,” “The Lausiac History” and “The Philokalia” <sup>[54]</sup> – which have, throughout Church history, stood as glossaries, readers and textbooks of the “basic rules and the method of a holy, evangelical, ascetic, that is, the true Christian life”<sup>[55]</sup> and as the “expert” literature of a true spiritual life – a life of struggle against sin and passion, a life of repentance (metanoia), a life of purification, enlightenment, of gaining the Holy Spirit<sup>[56]</sup> and of theosis,<sup>[57]</sup> not only for monks, but for all Christians (for there do not exist “two Christianities” – one for hieromonks and monks that have renounced the world, and another for married priests and the faithful living in the world – but one Christianity, one Church, one Church asceticism, for all are one in Christ, one Body of Christ [1 Cor 12:12]).

Today’s world functions as a single planetary marketplace in which everything is bought and sold: from physical territories, properties and objects, virtual “electronic money” and stocks, to identities and sovereignties, memories, souls, even the past and the present! The market economy principle has imposed itself as the universal and only possible principle of

not only the economic but the entire human life. The entire life of mankind and of each individual human on all meridians is subject to the impersonal and merciless laws and mechanisms of the market economy, the aggressive dynamic of supply and demand, production and consumption, input and output. The spirit of the modern consumer society, the "civilization of the objectification of man (turning man into an object)," is a spirit of avarice and lust, of an "insatiable hunger for things and their ownership." [58]

In fact, one of the basic features of modern civilization, the "fuel" of its progress and development, is precisely the artificial "cultivation" of that insatiable hunger in people, more precisely, the passion to own and consume, a hunger that cannot be sated either by ownership or consumption because, as we know from the Tradition of the ascetic Church Fathers, passion cannot be "sated": the more it is practiced, the more it intensifies and possesses a man, subjugates him, reduces his freedom, sucks his life energy, narrows the horizon of his godlike personality, deadens his senses of body and soul, passivizes his soul's intellectual powers, [59] disturbs the psychophysical balance of his personality, causes sickness of body and soul, ultimately leading him to complete spiritual and living ruin, even to physical death.

The above mentioned economolatric way of life, a life of idolatry of deified Economics, economic progress and increase of living standard, is being imposed upon the world's peoples and nations, willingly or by force, through all systems of civilization, by global political, economic and media elites, acting in the "shadow" of legal political institutions of civilization, but actually outside of their real control, engaged in "anthropological-social engineering," i.e., production of an ideologically desirable and "politically correct" society, a "new man" for a "new society," a man no longer "in the image and likeness of God" [Gen 1:26], but "in the image and likeness" of this world and its anthropolatric ideologies, his "prides, lusts and avarices," regardless of whether that world refers to itself as an "open society of the future" [60] or as the epoch of global triumph of liberal democracy as the "end of history." [61]

Such is the world that we, as Orthodox Christians, are living in in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Nevertheless, the living pastoral experience of the Church, its archpriests, pastors and spiritual fathers, testifies that, even within such a world, "the endless labyrinths of man's soul and being still remain" [62] open, hungry and thirsty; in that world, there still exists a thirst for the Truth, for the true life that boundlessly surpasses the said (neo)liberal economic logic and techno-metaphysics of the "free market," as well as the nihilism of the commercial dynamic and consumer mentality that transforms man from a personal actor of history into a faceless object – the victim of his own secularization, his own "lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes,

and the pride of life" (1 Jn 2:16). And, as a "consumer," it is he who is actually being spent, falling into an unhistorical way of being. In that way, through economolatric "brain (and soul) washing," through the imposition of idolatry of the false god of Money, the Mammon of "unstoppable economic progress" and "growth of living standard" whom one cannot serve if one serves the Living God (Mt 6:24), not only individual personalities but entire nations are stripped of historical consciousness,[63] of historicity, and "expelled" from history, falling victim to the so-called "end of (the old) history," while at the same time being led to a "new beginning" of the anthropolatric earthly kingdom. In that way, the geoeconomic ideology of the "free market," i.e., the religion of global economolatry, serves the apocalyptic undermining and destruction of the Theandric tissue of history as a meeting place of God and man, a place of encounter and cooperation between God and man,[64] with the goal of saving and deifying everyone and everything, so that "God may be all in all" (1 Cor 15:28).

Increased living standards, as shown by the example of the most economically developed Western countries (both those located in the geographic West or the geographic East), in no way contributed to the "resolution" of man's deepest existential problems and dilemmas, such as the question of the meaning of man's personal and common life in history: "Even secularized man cannot abstain from asking the most profound question about himself, about the bases and ultimate goals of his existence in history." [65] On the contrary, as statistical data based on serious scientific research has consistently shown over the past decades, the number of those suffering from acute and chronic depression is proportionally greater in countries with the highest living standards than in poorer countries,[66] as is the divorce rate (along with the percentage of those living in extramarital unions),[66] and the rate of drug addiction. "Western man's intemperate activism, originating in his inordinate lust for things and for acquiring knowledge, as well as the unnatural-for-humans speed imposed upon him by the technology of civilization, have produced in him deep stresses, fatigue and illnesses, both physical and psychical-nervous." [68]

Due to the fact that the individual is a subject of history, i.e., a node of the historical life of every human society, the individual person's spiritual illness carries over into the life of the community which that person builds in history. A sick society is always a society (spiritually, morally) of the sick individuals that constitute it. Thus, a historically (spiritually, morally) sick society cannot be healed with laws, political, legal, economic, media and educational actions "from above," but exclusively through a spiritual-moral renewal of its members, which is, of course, possible only through life in Christ, through a life of repentance and purification in the Church, through the moral feat of facing one's own sinfulness and self-restraint in one's own

carnal desires, in the prophetic words of Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn concerning the moral renewal of contemporary society.[69]

The modern-day culture, founded on the cult of reason and rational knowledge, and the technical-technological civilization that developed out of it “has from the beginning spread and sought to conquer the entire world through violence. Its characteristic lust for things and the technical civilization that grew out of it have produced a one-dimensional man, alienated not only from his Prime Source (i.e., God, according to Whose image and likeness he was created) but also from nature itself (i.e., God, our God-given Home in which we should gratefully serve God).”[70] The more modern man owns and spends, using technical means as aids in mastering creation and sating his hunger for possession, the more profound is his inner feeling of essential non-possession and lacking; the more he masters nature technologically, the more he alienates himself from it, and vice versa.

All this points to a deeper truth, contained in the tragic spiritual-historical events of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: that in each historical epoch, as a being created “in the image and likeness of God” (Gen 1:26-27), man needs much more than mere “bread” and entertaining-consumeristic “games without frontiers.” Just like the men of centuries past, modern man also needs the eternal and the everlasting, that which cannot be bought or sold, that Evangelical pearl for which he would sell everything he has (Mt 13:45), that which cannot be “spent,” the unspendable treasure of salvation and theosis, Water from which he will never thirst (Jn 4:14).

What is it that makes man’s life meaningful and higher than mere existence and survival, a life of true being? It is a conscious and responsible life in the Truth, but not in “one of” the human truths, or even in all the summed up human truths, but in the Truth of the Living God, for that Truth itself is the Life (Jn 14:6) that does not die, eternal life (Jn 3:15). And where is it possible to find life in the Truth? In the only place where that Truth resides – in Christ’s Church, which is His Body, for the Christian Truth is not abstract but living and hypostatic, it is the Person of God-Man Christ, Who said: I am the Truth (Jn 14:6), in her dogmas and her worldview, which is always and primarily – liturgical, because it emanates from the Liturgy, which is the Sacrament of the Church and the Sacrament of the Kingdom of God, by which the Church is what it is.[71] The Truth of the Church is the “Person, the Incarnate Son and Logos of God, Who is the Universal Truth Incarnate. The Truth of the Church is the Person of Our Lord Jesus Christ.”[72] The Christian Truth is not cognized as a set of logically true or scientifically proven facts, but is accepted as a living and experiential knowledge of God, before all through the Holy Eucharist and Communion with the Body and the Blood of the Incarnate Logos, the hypostatic Truth itself. “God-Man is the Church, and the Church is God-Man,”[73] which is why “those who are

outside of the Church (= the Body of Christ), are outside of the Truth,"[74] because they are "outside of Christ" and, thus, outside of the Theandric "Faith of the Truth" (2 Thes 2:12) in which "nothing is by man, and everything is by God-Man." [75] Life in the Truth is Life in Christ, a life of participation in Christ, a life of "co-corporeality" in His Body, [76] a liturgical, Eucharistic, Sacramental, Holy-Ascetic, God-knowing life.

Truly, as a sacramental cosmic and supracosmic event, which subsumes the entire world, all history, as well as the Eschaton – "the eschatological fullness of the unity of everyone and everything by Christ in God," within itself [77] – the Liturgy cannot "avoid" witnessing its true purpose to the world: life in communion with God. That is why it is no surprise at all that, throughout the history of the Church, it was the Church liturgists who had the most vivid feel for the pulse of the historical moment, who vividly felt the problem of the relationship between contemporaneity and supratemporality, i.e., Eternity, the tension between the relative truths of the reigning cultural-civilizational environment in which they lived and the eternal Truth of the Church, by which they lived, living in the Body of Christ, in Christ.

### **The universal contemporaneity of traditional theological experience and thought**

Along these lines, we shall try to show how two unsimilarly similar Church liturgists, theologians and pastors – St. John Chrysostom (350-407), [78] Patriarch of Constantinople in the 4<sup>th</sup> century in the East, and Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann (1921-1983), [79] distinguished liturgist, ecclesiologist and Dean of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in New York, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century West, felt and theologically considered, with their sharpened pastoral sensibility that fully emanated from the living liturgical-eucharistic experience of the world and history, the complex problematics of the "basic Christian antinomy," [80] the strained and tense relationship between the Church and the world, the transformed New Creation and the untransformed "old creation," the New Man in Christ the New Adam (1 Cor 15:45) and the "old man" in the first Adam (Rm 6:6).

Here it is important, in the briefest possible manner, to show the more than obvious similarity that exists between the historical and cultural-civilizational circumstances of the Late Antique and the present "(post)modern" and (neo)liberal civilization, only with signposts pointing in opposite directions. At present, this similarity presents the Church with a task that may most easily be described as: the feat and the cross of witnessing and constructing a Christian identity in an environment that challenges, rejects, represses or is, at best, indifferent to that identity.

The Late Antique world was a pre-Christian world, on the cusp of Christianity, that, amidst great opposition and battle against Christ and His Church, was moving toward Christ and Christianity, while today's modern world is a post-Christian world that is moving away from Christ and Christianity and is, in the process, fiercely opposed to Christianity, challenging its ontology, its ethics, its esthetics, its liturgical cult, its culture of transforming the world with the life, truth and beauty of Christ.

However, we are not going to go into historical details related to the said epochs, but shall rather try to propose the Liturgy of the Church (which rightly carries the name of St. John Chrysostom, even though he is not its sole "author"), her ontology and ethics, i.e., the Asceticism of the Church emanating from the Mystery of Christ – the First Liturgist and the First Ascetic of the Church, the eschatological-historical witnessing of the Liturgy – as the basis for providing the answer to the burning problems of the post-Christian contemporaneity[81] that refers to itself as "modernity" or even "post-modernity," whose humanistic universalism makes all past religions, ideologies, cultures and civilizations obsolete, superfluous and unnecessary – including Christianity itself.

Here, of course, it is important to pay heed to an important fact related to terminological-semantic preciseness. "Modernity" is a category that belongs to "this world," to the modes (= ways, from the Latin "modus" – "modo" – "by the measure," "by the tempo," "by the tone/melody," "by the way," "by the rule") of each epoch, to the timestream "in which there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecc 1:9). Only the Living Tradition is contemporary to each epoch, for it is in the tradition that God's Truth (which is not the "truth of the past" but, as Georges Florovsky puts it, "the Truth revealed in the past," which nevertheless stands forever, and which continues to be revealed in the present, and which shall continue to be revealed in the future, in the process of the continuation of the Living Tradition of the Church) is revealed, and it is supratemporal.

The currentness of the Fathers draws its perpetuity from its supratemporality, from Divine Eternity. Only those who are in communion with that Divine supratemporality, i.e., who have "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16), "the mind of the Church – Christological, Holy Trinitarian, ecclesiological, heart-and-mindful, Divine, universal and prayerful,"[82] the universal mind of the Church Fathers,[83] can be "current" to every epoch in their thought. The Fathers are, thus, above the dichotomy of "modernity" and "anti-modernity," they are, in that sense, more modern than (every) "modernism," "post-modernism" or "neomodernism," as Fr. Georges Florovsky concludes in his famous essay "The Lost Scriptural Mind": "When I read the ancient classics of Christian theology, the fathers of the church, I find them more relevant to the troubles and problems of my own time than the production of modern



theologians. The fathers were wrestling with existential problems, with those revelations of the eternal issues which were described and recorded in Holy Scripture. I would risk a suggestion that St. Athanasius and St. Augustine are much more up to date than many of our theological contemporaries. The reason is very simple: they were dealing with things and not with the maps.”[84]

In that sense, St. John Chrysostom is “more up to date” to the currency of the 21<sup>st</sup> century world and society and its problems, the entirety of its problem, just as he was, in an essential and methodological way, up to date with the currency of the 16<sup>th</sup>, or the 17<sup>th</sup>, or the 18<sup>th</sup> or the 19<sup>th</sup> century – more so than all the “up to date” interpreters and experts for the interpretation of fragments of various epochs. Why do we say “fragments”? Because the (post)modern mind, which has become alienated from knowledge of God, thus losing the only real source of all true human knowledge, has become incapable of considering and interpreting the entirety of life and being. How can the entirety be apprehended by a mind that has become spiritually blind for the “beginning” (protology) and the “end” (eschatology) of all that exists, for the One Who is, according to the universal and consenting experience of the Church, “the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and the Omega” of everything (Rev 21:6), Who is “the Beginning and the Hearth and the source of the community”[85] of all creation? That and such a (post)modern mind (which is actually nothing more than a civilizationally “modernized” Cartesian-enlightenment mind of the new century), having become blind for perceiving the Creator of all, for the mysterious presence of the Creator’s uncreated logoi[86] in all creation and in each individual creature, the blessed presence of the Uncreated in the created,[87] which unify all creatures in a single symphony of meaningful existence[88] according to the will of the Father in Christ by the Holy Spirit, no longer knows either the origin, the goal or the meaning of everything that exists, which is why it cannot consider everything that exists as a meaningful whole, because the entirety of reality can be interpreted only by a mind with a blessed, Holy-Spiritual experience of the whole. And the experience of the entire creation as Oikos, Home, is possible exclusively and solely from that which is the Wholeness of Heaven and earth, history and the Eschaton – from the Body of Christ and in the Body of Christ, Christ’s Church, which is larger and higher and more encompassing than the world, “which surpasses Heaven itself,”[89] which contains within herself not only the entire cosmos, not only the visible but also the invisible world, “all worlds” (as the Venerable Justin of Ćelije, enraptured by the Mystery of the Church, liked to exclaim in divine inspiration), “life, immortality and eternity, and theandricity.”[90] That is because graceful-ascetic knowledge of God is the source of all other human knowledge – self-knowledge (anthropology) as well as knowledge of the world (cosmology, ecology).

## **A draft analysis of the burning problems of the post-Christian world from the perspective of Orthodox Christian theology**

In the following chapters, "The Liturgy and the Person – Christology and Christian Anthropology," "The Liturgy, the World, the Eschaton – Ecclesiology and Christian Ecology," and "A Return to a Liturgical Experience of the World and Man – the Basis of the Church's Mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," we shall try to analyze the general features of some burning problems of the post-Christian world or civilization, from the perspective of Orthodox Christian theology.

We shall do this, before all, from the aspect of the relationship between, on the one hand, Orthodox traditional Christology – the experience of knowing the Person of God-Man Christ, the Archetype (τὸ Ἀρχέτυπον) according to which man was created in the beginning,[91] the Church's participation in Him and communion with Him, i.e., the cosmic dimensions of man's godlike personality as a microcosm,[92] and, on the other, modern anthropology, which sees man as a being "in the image of the world," i.e., "in the image of himself," viewing him and treating him as a functional part of a utopian-chiliastic "open (civil) society," a new humanistic collectivism "without an alternative," worshipping the idol of abstract and ideologized "human rights" while denying man the most basic and inalienable human right personally granted to him by the Living God at creation – consciousness of his own identity "in the image of God" (Gen 1:27) and of the way of realizing his godlike humanity as a realization of the "likeness of God,"[93] of blessed assimilation to God by way of existence (τρόπος ὑπάρξεως, *modus existentiae*), of theosis through God's uncreated energies, of gaining Christ-nature, Christ-mindedness, Christ-being.[94] And this is realized, before and above all, through the Divine Liturgy as the "Sacrament of Sacraments,"[95] the Pan-Sacrament of the Church, which fulfills with itself "the entire spiritual and supernatural Economy of the Incarnation of God the Logos,"[96] which is the most original "living by Christ" and "in Christ,"[97] by which, in partaking in the Liturgy, Christians attain "Divine homogeneity." [98]

The second question with which we shall deal in examining our topic "Orthodoxy and the Challenges of Modernity" is the position of traditional Orthodox Christian ecclesiology – the experience of the Church as the cosmic and historical-eschatological Body of the New Adam, the Home of God[99] – the Home of the New Creation, vis-à-vis the burning problem and crisis of the world, the home of God and of man, as a "macro-anthropos" ("man-writ-large"),[100] which is suffering due to man's deviation from the Living God. We will, in the process, consider the problem of "ecological

crisis" as a spiritual-historical phenomenon that runs much deeper than the mere "pollution of the environment," "disappearance of the ozon layer" or "global warming" accompanied by the "massive melting of ice in the Arctic and the Antarctic," i.e., as a material manifestation of man's profound spiritual crisis, the crisis of man's relationship with God, his neighbor and all of creation, within the framework of a technological civilization "not in the sense of use but of consumption of the world, which is being imposed upon people through systematic brainwashing and the subordination of man's life to the ideals of impersonal individual pleasure." [101]

The third question that we shall consider in the concluding chapter of our work is the question of the bases and the basic principles of the Church's witnessing and mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The experience of the Church Fathers from all epochs of Church history clearly indicates that the Church's witnessing and mission in all times are impossible without a repentant return and ascetic absorption into the traditional liturgical experience of the world and of man, which is, at the same time, an eschatological experience of history.

In his classic work, "For the Life of the World – the Sacramental Philosophy of Life" (1973), one of the most important and "watershed" books in 20<sup>th</sup> century Orthodox theology, Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann precisely identified, from a liturgical-eucharistic perspective, the epicenter of the modern world's spiritual crisis: "The only real fall of man is his noneucharistic (= unthankful, ungrateful) life in a noneucharistic (= unthankful, ungrateful) world." [102] Today's post-Christian globalist civilization, perhaps more so than any other in the history of the world, is a civilization of noneucharistic life in a noneucharistic world and, as well, of man's nonascetic life in his nonascetic world, a dechristianized world that is, amidst man's spiritual passivization, no longer moving towards God, because man, as the reasonable epicenter of that world, has lost his hunger and thirst for God, [103] and has stopped moving towards God and offering that world as a return gift-eucharist of his love to God the Creator, the Giver of Life and of everything.

Thus, without a humble and sober, active and creative return to the liturgical Church Tradition and the ascetic experience of the Church Fathers, the diune Tradition and experience "that never grows old," [104] and which, through all history up to Christ's Second Coming, remains an eternal signpost for the man of every epoch, even the contemporary ("modern" – "post-modern") one, it is impossible to provide an effective answer to the burning question of the crisis of contemporary man and his world.

The ascetic experience of the Fathers, i.e., the "renunciation of the (fallen) world," commanded to us by God-Man Christ Himself ("If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow

Me..." – Mt 16:24), "lies in the very nature of the Christian philosophy of life and means a radical change of relationship with the world and with oneself, and a change of the way of life, behind which lies a demand for freedom that only the Holy Spirit can grant." [105] Withal, that "freedom that only the Holy Spirit can grant" in the Church, as the Holy Fathers experienced and understood, is actually the realization of the original God-given "image of God" in man, and man's assimilation to God, theosis in the Body of Christ.

Concomitantly with the ascetic progress of "renouncing the world" and "following Christ" along with "carrying one's cross," which is of constitutive importance for Christian life, comes also, within the Church, the liturgical progress of a renewed, sacramental, graceful attainment of the world as the New Creation for Christ, which is accomplished, before all, in the Divine Liturgy of the Church (as well as in all other Church Sacraments), which is itself the graceful source of salvation of all creation, because it is the chronotope ("place-and-time") of the sacramental inclusion of the body of the world (cosmos) into the Body of Christ.

Without a renewed immersion into the historical-eschatological experience of the Divine Liturgy, the Mystery of the Church, which is the "seal and the crown of every Divine Mystery" and the "ending and perfection of all the Sacraments and ministries," [106] we cannot understand the Church as the Sacrament of the Kingdom of God that has already begun in the world, which "makes us the contemporaries and witnesses not just of Christ's death on the cross but also of His Second Coming, witnesses of the fulfillment of everything in Christ," [107] nor the world as a potential "sacrament" in Christ. [108]

We are going to deal with these all-encompassing liturgical-ascetic, sacramental-holy-virtuous aspects of the Church's witnessing in the contemporary world, as well as with providing an answer to the aggressive challenges of the post-Christian present in the third and the fourth chapters of our work ("The Liturgy and the Eschaton – the Sacrament of the Kingdom of God" and "In the World But Not of the World... – the Liturgical Ethos of Orthodoxy in Facing the Challenges of Modernity").

The witnessing of the Liturgy, the liturgical Church Tradition, but also the ascetic Tradition of the Fathers, is a single witnessing in Christ, for "Christ is not divided" (cf. 1 Cor 1:13) into a Christ of the Church Liturgy and a second Christ of Church asceticism, [109] nor can He be divided, just as there can be no division of the single universal experience, the experience of His Body – the Church. The Holy Eucharist of the Church is the revelation that "Eucharistic participation, in the first place ascetic activity... of a crucificial orientation, is activity marked by pain in search of the grace of the consubstantial aggregation of all beings in the image of Trinitari-

an consubstantiality.”[110] This diune ascetic-liturgical experience of the Church, the experience of renouncing the world for the sake of Christ and the renewed attainment of the world in Christ, obliges us, in this ecclesial generation, to “focus on this world with theological love, because, through the Eucharist [and the Holy and universal Asceticism of the Church – auth. note], we meet God everywhere in that world: He is present both in the worst disasters and in the beautiful flower.”[111]

At the same time, a return to the true traditional experience of the Divine Liturgy always represents a return to the true personal and universal feat and asceticism of the Holy Fathers, both the physical (asceticism) and the intellectual (theology). Any attempt at a solely intellectual “return to the Fathers,” without a personal return and inclusion in their liturgical and ascetic experience, which is the universal experience and treasure of the Church, without attainment of “the mind of the Fathers” which is “the mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16), which is impossible without an ecclesial, self-sacrificial, ascetic and kenotic “shedding of one’s own soul’s blood” in walking with Christ, i.e., any mere scholarly treatment of the Fathers as “Christian philosophers” of old and their works as “ancient intellectual heritage,” as Fr. Georges Florovsky, author of the term “neopatristic synthesis”[112] and one of the experiential initiators of that renewal movement in 20<sup>th</sup> century Orthodox theology, warns us, will be nothing more than an impotent “intellectual project or feat,”[113] without either the gracefull vigor, ascetic strength or ethical authority to transform the world with the Light of Christ.

Only true life in God-Man Christ, Who gave His life for the life of the world (Jn 6:51) can transform the life of this world in an effective and vivifying way. And a true (= witnessing) life in Christ, in the Church, and by Christ in the world, according to Nicholas Cabasilas, “is demonstrated by the light of good deeds, that is, love,”[114] before all by the light of holiness in Christ and the Holy Relics, the light of holy martyrdom, holy confession, holy pastoralism, holy theologizing, holy miracle working in the Church...

Only the Christian who becomes a true “co-resident in the Body of Christ”[115] through the liturgical-ascetic life of the Church, who with his life, his thought and all his activity co-crucifies himself to Christ and co-ressurrects with Christ in His Body, thus becoming a gracefull partaker in Christ’s crucificial-ressurrectional Victory over “this world” for the life of everyone and everything, who attains Christ’s Nature and “the Love of Christ” (Eph 3:19) for the world, can, with his Christian witnessing – his own ecclesial life and deeds in Christ, change and transform the world, before all in himself, and then around him, into the New Creation, the Home of Theandric koinonia and synergy, a creative and joyful cooperation of the Living God and living people of God, which will last forever, just as the Kingdom of God-Man will last forever.[116]



## NOTES

[1] Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann, "The Essential Question" ("Суштинско питање"), *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West* (Православље на Западу – Црква, свет, мисија), (Cetinje: Светигора, 1997), p. 6.

[2] Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann, "The Orthodox World – Past and Present" („Православни свет – прошлост и садашњост”), *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West*, pp. 78-80.

[3] Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann, "The World in Orthodox Thought and Experience" ("Свет у православној мисли и искуству”), *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West*, p. 79.

[4] See: Alexander Schmemmann, "Ecclesiological Notes," ("Еклесиолошке белешке”), *Наш живот у Христу, Христов живот у нама*, (Belgrade: Образ светачки, 2008), p. 229.

[5] Schmemmann, "The World in Orthodox Thought and Experience," *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West*, p. 91.

[6] Alexander Schmemmann, "The Historical Crisis of Orthodoxy," *Наш живот у Христу, Христов живот у нама*, p. 309.

[7] Vladimir Lossky, "Faith and Theology," ("Вера и богословље”), *Православна теологија*, ed. Radovan Bigović (Belgrade: Theological Faculty of the Serbian Orthodox Church, 1995), p. 81.

[8] Bishop Atanasije Jevtić, "Faith As True Knowledge" ("Вера као истинско познање”), *Живо Предање у Цркви* (Vrnjačka Banja – Trebinje: Братство Св. Симеона Мироточивог – Видослов тврдошки, 1998), p. 119.

[9] Protopresbyter Georges Florovsky, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," ("О васкрсењу мртвих”) *Црква је живот – изабране беседе, есеји и студије*, trans. and ed. Matej Arsenijević (Belgrade: Образ светачки, 2005), p. 288.

[10] Metropolitan Amfilohije (Radović), "The Kollyvades Movement, Spiritual-Liturgical Renewal and Greek Church Brotherhoods ("Покрет кољивара, духовно-литургијски препород и грчка црквена братства”), *Гласник Српске Православне Цркве*, No. 3 (March 1976), 45-53.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Cf. Alexander Schmemmann, "The Hartford Appeal," *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West*, p. 242.

[13] See Metropolitan Amfilohije (Radović), "Philokalian Renewal in the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and Its Spiritual Fruits (Φιλοκαλική Αναγέννησι τοῦ XVIII καὶ XIX οἱ Πνευματικοὶ καρποὶ της), (Athens: 1984).

[14] Amfilohije (Radović), "The Kollyvades Movement, Spiritual-Liturgical Renewal and Greek Church Brotherhoods," *Гласник Српске Православне Цркве* (March 3, 1976), pp. 45-53.



[15] See Metr. Amfilohije (Radović), Φιλοκαλική Ἀναγέννησι τοῦ XVIII καὶ XIX οἱ Πνευματικοὶ καρποὶ της.

[16] Bishop Atanasije Jevtić, "Witnessing as a Method of the Church" ("Сведочење као метод Цркве"), *Живо Предање у Цркви*, p. 157.

[17] Ibid., p. 156.

[18] St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 20:2 on the Epistle to the Romans*.

[19] Metropolitan Hierotheos (Vlachos), "The Orthodox Ecclesial Mind" ("Православни црквени ум"), *Црквени живот* 6/2004, ВДС Архиепископије Београдско-Карловачке, p. 35.

[20] Protopresbyter Georges Florovsky, "Saint Gregory Palamas and the Tradition of the Fathers" ("Свети Григорије Палама и Предање Отаца"), *Црква је живот - изабране студије, есеји и чланци* (Belgrade: Образ светачки, 2005), p. 566.

[21] St. Gregory Palamas, *The Triads* I, 1:13.

[22] Protobresbyter Alexander Schmemmann, "From the Diary 1973-1983" ("Из дневника 1973-1983"), Folio 7, *Наш живот у Христу, Христов живот у нама*, p. 689.

[23] The Divine Liturgy of Our Holy Father John Chrysostom, *Божанствене Литургије* (Belgrade: Манастир Ћелије, 1978), p. 58.

[24] Atanasije Jevtić, "Witnessing As a Method of the Church," *Живо Предање у Цркви*, p. 157.

[25] Ibid., p. 159.

[26] On the ecclesial aspects of the Christian path to salvation, see: St. Theophan the Recluse, "The Conception of Christian Life in the Sacrament of Baptism" ("Како се зачиње хришћански живот у Светој Тајни Крштења"); "Clothing Oneself in Power from Heaven for Deeds of Piety in Repentance and Holy Communion" ("Заодевање силом са Неба за дело богоугађања у Покајању и Причешћу"); "The Way to Salvation" ("Пут ка спасењу"), *Светигора* (1996), esp. pp. 19-64, 67-69, 142-152.

[27] On the topic of the Church as the Body of Christ in history, see Archimandrite Dr. Justin (Popović), "The Church – The Theandric Tradition" ("Црква – Богочовечанско Предање"), *Догматика Православне Цркве*, III (Belgrade: Манастир Ћелије, 1978), pp. 459-545.

[28] Atanasije Jevtić, "Witnessing As a Method of the Church," *Живо Предање у Цркви*, p. 158.

[29] Ibid., p. 160.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Alexander Schmemmann, "The Orthodox World – Past and Present," *Православље на Западу*, p. 75.

[32] St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Song of Songs*, Homily 7, PG 44, col. 917, 920.

[33] Justin Popović, *Догматика Православне Цркве*, III, p. 467.

[34] Nikolaos Loudovikos, "From Ontology to Ecclesiology" ("Од онтологије до еклисиологије"), *Богословље*, fol. 1-2, year XLVIII (LXII), (Belgrade: 2003), pp. 127-128.

[35] Ibid., p. 128.

[36] Bishop Atanasije Jevtić, "Thoughts and Facts on the Holy Liturgy – Eucharist and Holy Communion" ("Мисли и подаци о Св. Литургији – Евхаристији и Причешћу"), *Христос – Нова Пасха – Божанствена Литургија – Свештенослужење, Причешће, Заједница Богочовечанског Тела Христовог*, ed. Bishop Atanasije Jevtić (Hilandar-Ostrog-Tvrdoš, Belgrade-Trebinje: 2009), p. 561.

[37] Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann, *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom* (Света Тајна Царства, Евхаристија) (Hilandar Monastery: 2002), pp. 21-37.

[38] Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral Amfilohije (Radović), "The Meaning of the Divine Liturgy" ("Смисао Божанске Литургије"), *Христос – Нова Пасха – Божанствена Литургија – Свештенослужење, Причешће, Заједница Богочовечанског Тела Христовог*, ed. Bishop Atanasije Jevtić, p. 175.

[39] Alexander Schmemmann, "The Essential Question," *Православље на Западу – Црква, свет, мисија*, p. 6.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Protopresbyter John Meyendorff, "The Orthodox Church and the Western World" ("Православна Црква и западни свет"), *Сведочење свету* (Kraljevo: Bishopric of Žička, 2007), p. 190.

[44] Samuel Huntington, "A Multipolar, Multicivilizational World" (Мултиполарни, мултицивилизацијски свет"), *The Clash of Civilizations* (Сукоб цивилизација), (Podgorica-Banja Luka: ЦИД – Романов, 2000), p. 29.

[45] See St. John of Damascus, "Concerning the Divine OEconomy and God's care over us, and concerning our salvation, An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith" ("О Божанској Икономији и Његовом старању о нама, те о нашем спасењу, Тачно изложење православне вере"), *Источник знања* (Belgrade-Nikšić: Јасен-Бијели Павле, 2001), pp. 235-237.

[46] Venerable Nicodemos the Athonite, *Unseen Warfare* (Невидљива борба), (Belgrade: 1987).

[47] Metropolitan Amfilohije (Radović), „Spiritual Life According to the Alphabetical Patericon" ("Духовни живот по алфавитном Патерику"), *Богословље*, Fol. 1 and 2 (Belgrade: Orthodox Theological Faculty, 1978), p. 2.

[48] Saint John of Damascus, *Against the Manicheans* PG XCIV, 1597.

[49] The italic in the quote is ours (auth. note).

[50] Protopresbyter Georges Florovsky, "The Idea of Creation in Christian Philosophy" ("Идеја стварања у хришћанској философији"), *Црква је живот – изабране беседе, есеји и студије*, p. 151.

[51] Ibid., p. 152.

[52] Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos, "The Freedom of Mind, Ethos of Freedom and Freedom of Ethos, the Person in Orthodox Tradition" ("Слобода ума, Етос слободе и слобода етоса, Личност у православном Предању"), *Господе, ко је човек? – православна антропологија и тајна личности* (Belgrade: Образ светачки, 2003), pp. 332-338.

[53] As Abba Justin Popović refers to them – Venerable Justin Popović, in the Introduction to the Serbian translation of the *Lavsaicon* (Bitolj: 1933).

[54] *Philokalia* I-V (Mount Athos: Hilandar Monastery: Vol. I 1996, Vol. II 1998, Vol. III 2001, Vol. IV 2003, Vol. V 2008).

[55] Ven. Justin of Ćelije, "Introduction," *Lavsaicon*, I-II (Bitolj: 1933).

[56] St. Seraphim of Sarov, *Христос васкрсе, радости моја*, (Cetinje: Светигора), 1997.

[57] See Archimandrite George Kapsanis, *Theosis: The True Purpose of Human Life* (Обожeње као циљ човековог живота) (Belgrade: Хиландарска задужбина, 2006).

[58] Metr. Amfilohije (Radović), "Spiritual Life According to the Alphabetical Patericon," *Богословље*, Vol. 1 and 2, p. 6.

[59] Protopresbyter George Metallinos, "Orthodox Spirituality – Church Life in the Holy Spirit" ("Православна духовност – црквени живот у Духу Светом"), *Црквени живот* 5/2003 (Belgrade: ВДС Архиепископије Београдско-Карловачке), p. 11.

[60] See Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (Отворено друштво и његови непријатељи) (Belgrade: 2004).

[61] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (Крај историје и последњи човек), (Podgorica-Banja Luka: CID- Романов, 2002), p. 19.

[62] Metr. Amfilohije (Radović), "Spiritual Life According to the Alphabetical Patericon," *Богословље*, Fol. 1 and 2, p. 15.

[63] On the significance of historical consciousness for the life of the godlike man and of historical nations, see: Dr. Žarko Vidović, *Orthodoxy's Engagement With Europe* (Суочење Православља са Европом) (Cetinje: Светигора, 1998); Dr. Žarko Vidović, *History and Faith* (Историја и вера) (Belgrade: Завод за унапређивање образовања и васпитања, 2009), Dr. Žarko Vidović, *Faith Is Also an Art* (И вера је уметност) (Belgrade: Завод за унапређивање образовања и васпитања, 2009).

[64] Georges Florovsky, "The Work of the Holy Spirit in Revelation" ("Дело Духа Светога у богооткривењу"), *Црква је живот* (Belgrade: Образ светачки, 2005), pp. 178, 179.

[65] Metr. Amfilohije Radović, "Orthodox Theology and Education" ("Православно богословље и образовање"), *Увод у православну философију васпитања* (Cetinje: Светигора, 2009), p. 189.

[66] For example, this is testified by the fact that "suicides and depressions cost Japan 37 billion dollars annually, with 32,000 people in Japan committing suicide during 2009," as reported by Radio BBC News in Serbian, September 7, 2010, 14:00 CET.

[67] Let us consider, for example, the latest data presented in the investigative report "The Family Is Ringing Alarm Bells – The number of new marriages in Serbia is decreasing each year, by which we are successfully keeping in step with Europe," by Bojana Crnčević („Породица звони на узбуну – у Србији се из године у годину склапа све мање бракова и по томе успешно пратимо Европу," Бојана Црнчевић), published in the *Вечерње новости* daily (September 26, 2010, p. 11). In presenting the alarming data, based on the latest scientific-statistical research of the Serbian State Bureau of Statistics, the article claims that "Serbia's divorce epidemic does not lag behind Europe's." Over the previous 20 years, the number of new marriages in the European Union declined by 28.6%. According to the data presented in this article, the number of divorces in Serbia is rising while the number of new marriages is declining. Over the previous 20 years (1991-2009), the number of new marriages fell by 34.14%! Namely, there were 57,704 new marriages in 1991, and only 36,853 in 2009, while the number of divorces jumped from 8,372 (compared to 57,704 new marriages) in 1991, to 8,505 (compared to 36,853 new marriages) in 2009. In other words, the percentage of divorces rose by 59% (!) from 1991 to 2009. "Divorce is now a 'normal' thing and all barriers have fallen. Marriage itself is undergoing transition," says Vera Despotović-Stanarević, a psychotherapist from the Belgrade Marriage and Family Advisory Service. Another consequence of that imposed "mental (and spiritual) transition" is that many young people today "resist marriage as an institution that limits them and, as a result, many couples with children live in extra-marital relationships." In other words, one of the effects of the modernizing transition is the undermining of the Christian family as a "small church" and the basic cell of society. As the article concludes, "a similar 'anti-marital revolution' is occurring in Europe, with more than half of the children born in Slovenia, Estonia, France and Sweden in 2008, being born out of wedlock."

[68] Metr. Amfilohije Radović, "The Encounter of the Modern West with Eastern Soteriologies" ("Сусрет нововековног Запада са источњачким сотириологијама"), *Основи православног васпитања* (Vrnjačka Banja: Св. Симеон Мироточиви, 1993), p. 113.

[69] Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, "Repentance and Self-Limitation in the Life of Nations" ("Покајање и самоограничење као категорија националног живота"), *Теолошки погледи*, no. 2 (1975), pp. 82-91.

[70] Metr. Amfilohije Radović, "The Encounter of the Modern West with Eastern Soteriologies," *Основи православног васпитања*, p. 110.

[71] Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann, "Theology and the Eucharist" ("Богословље и Евхаристија"), *Наш живот у Христу, Христов живот у нама*, ed. and trans. Matej Arsenijević (Belgrade: Образ светачки, 2008), p. 471.

[72] Protopresbyter George Metallinos, "The Difference Between Orthodoxy and Heresy According to Philokalia" ("Разлика између Православља и јереси по Добротољубљу"), *Црквени живот* 8/2006 (Belgrade: ВДС Архиепископије Београдско-Карловачке), p. 20.

[73] Archimandrite Justin Popović, "The Church – The Theandric Tradition" ("Црква – Богочовечанско Предање"), *Догматика Православне Цркве*, III (Belgrade: Манастир Ћелије, 1976), p. 459.

[74] Ibid., p. 460.

[75] Ibid.

[76] St. Athanasius the Great, *Against the Arians*, II, 61 PG 26, col. 277B.

[77] Atanasije Jevtić, "Liturgical Life – the Essence of Christian Life" ("Литургијски живот – срж хришћанског живота"), *Бог Отаца наших* (Hilandar Monastery: 2000), p. 335.

[78] On the personality and works of St. John Chrysostom, see: Georges V. Florovsky, "St. John Chrysostom – Life and Works" ("Св. Јован Златоусти – живот и дела"), *Источни Оци IV века* (Vrnjačka Banja: Братство Св. Симеона Мироточивог, 1997), pp. 317-325; Protopresbyter John Meyendorff, "Saint John Chrysostom" ("Св. Јован Златоусти"), *Увод у светоотачко богословље*, II (Vrnjačka Banja: Пролог, 2006), pp. 98-120; Hieromonk Atanasije Jevtić, "Saint John Chrysostom – Life" ("Свети Јован Златоусти – живот"), *Патрологија*, Folio 2: *Источни Оци и писци 4. и 5. века од Никеје до Халкидона* (Belgrade: Orthodox Theological Faculty, 1984), pp. 214-241; Bishop Dr. Jovan (Purić), "Life and Works of St. John Chrysostom" ("Живот и дело Св. Јована Златоустог"), *Философија васпитања у делу Св. Јована Златоустог* (Ostrog Monastery: 2009), pp. 19-110.

[79] On the life, person and theological works of Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann, see: Matej Arsenijević, "A Brief Biography of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, the Basic Bibliography of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann" ("Кратки животопис о. Александра Шмемана, Основна библиографија о. Александра Шмемана"), in: Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West* (*Православље на Западу – Црква, свет, мисија*), (Cetinje: Светигора, 1997), pp. 287-302; Matej Arsenijević, "Ascendance into Life – Fr. Alexander Schmemmann 1921-1983" ("Усхођење у живот – о. Александар Шмеман 1921-1983"), *Наш живот у Христу, Христов живот у нама* (Belgrade: Образ светачки, 2008), pp. 707-766.



[80] Alexander Schmemmann, "The Historical Crisis of Orthodoxy," *Наш живот у Христу, Христов живот у нама*, p. 309.

[81] For our view on the relationship between the historical circumstances of Chrysostom's time and his theological thought, see: Bishop Jovan Purić, *Theological Foundations of the Pedagogy of St. John Chrysostom* (Богословске основе педагогије Св. Јована Златоуста), (Foča-Ostrog: 2009). Also, Chrysostom's approach to modernity is examined, but from a pedagogic perspective, in: Bishop Dr. Jovan Purić, *The Philosophy of Education in the Works of St. John Chrysostom* (Философија васпитања у делу Св. Јована Златоуста), (Ostrog: 2009), pp. 55-112.

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*Translated by Aleksandar Pavić*

## Summary

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### **The Church's engagement with the world – witnessing as the Church's method**

The aim of the article is to point out the most tradition methodology of the Church's engagement with the world - methodology of witnessing her faith. This methodology is manifested through Church's liturgical language, i.e., the Divine Liturgy, as well as in the Church's theological language or theology. This existential demonstration or witnessing is more effective than Church apologetics evident in rational defense of faith. The article emphasizes further that the liturgical language is not separated from the theological one, because traditional experience of the Divine Liturgy always includes the true personal and universal feat and asceticism of the Holy Fathers. By being immersed in the liturgical life, one is also immersed in liturgical and ascetic experience of the Holy Fathers, which is universal experience of the Church.

**Keywords:** Methodology, Liturgy, theology, witnessing, crisis, Post-Christianity.