THE MORAL DIMENSION OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S PERSONALITY

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Abstract: The life and work of Saint John Chrysostom, the most revered Eastern Father, have – as we have already seen – mystical and especially deep moral connotations. As far as the Holy Hierarch is the author of the Divine Liturgy, his commentaries on terminology are becoming precious values for all the branches of Theology. His personal example actuates both monastics and married people on the path of philanthropy and fulfilling the good.

Keywords: Saint John Chrysostom, Christ, Church, Eucharist, Moral.

1. "It is more useful for us to love the silence" … Methodological difficulties

The monophasic[1] approach represents a temptation in which not few researchers of the life and work of Saint John Chrysostom have fallen into. Therefore, following their interest, some defined the great ascetic as *"misogynist"*[2], others as *"anti-Semite"*[3], and others as *"impulsive and inconsequent"*[4]. To others, on the other hand, it served their purpose to *"improve"* the life and work of Saint John Chrysostom, with their own views and – why not?! – their own character flaws.

[1] The monophasic state expresses a singular way of aggregation at a certain time. In our context the term used, that of *"monophasic approach"* means the logical error formulated by presenting a singular side of someone's personality and transforming it into a general judgement, cancelling, or minimizing all the other spiritual sides of that person.

[2] This accusation is brought to Saint John not only by the adepts of feminism nowadays or those of ordaining women, but also by his contemporaries, men and women. Among the latter we point out empress Eudoxia, the rich noble women in her entourage, as well as the especially influent category, *virgines subintroductae* – the order of the virgins and the widows – nuns who lived under the same monastic roof with the monks. The influence of these nuns was so great that their intrigues were able to determine the election or the dismissal of the clergy, fact confirmed even by the divine Chrysostom: *"Many widows have broken homes, have dissolute marriages, and often they were caught stealing, getting drunk and making other ugly deeds"* " [Sfântul IOAN GURĂ DE AUR (Saint John Chrysostom), *Despre Preoție* (*Treatise on the Priesthood*), ed. Basilica, București, 2015, transl. Pr. Dumitru Fecioru, p. 142]. Somewhere else he says: *"The group of the virgins is more imperial than others. There have already started to invade the group of these saints thousands and thousands of women full of innumerable sins. This is why here the grief is even bigger"* (Sfântul IOAN GURĂ DE AUR, *Despre Preoție..,* p.146). Referring to the hypothesis of ordaining the woman, Saint John the Golden Mouth trenchantly exposes the point of view of the Holy Church: *"But, when we are talking about standing at the top of the church, when we are talking about giving away the caring for all those souls, women should get away from such a high responsibility, and even the most part of men!"* (Sfântul IOAN GURĂ DE AUR, *Despre Preoție..,* p.83).

[3] A "very popular" theme nowadays, despite its stupidity. Probably some "politically correct" researchers will never forgive the Holy Father for *The Homilies against the Jews.* Among them, some more obtrusive ones, like Steven Katz, have tried, totally exaggerated, to link the anti-Jewish preaches of Saint John to nothing else than the extermination policy led by Hitler. See: Steven KATZ, *Ideology, State Power, and Mass Murder/Genocide*, in rev. *Lessons and Legacies: The Meaning of the Holocaust in a Changing World*, ed. Peter Hayes, North-western University Press, Evanston, 1999, p. 52. The same author, Katz (name which can denote a possible mythical membership to a Jewish priestly tribe), puts another "radical stamp" on the entire patristic work of the Church: "*Paradoxically, this particular hatred thus becomes a cardinal virtue: the more one hates, the more pious one is. Hatred is a sacramental activity. To hate Jews is for the church fathers a Christian mitzvah. Make no mistake – every major church father is a great hater of Judaism and the Jewish people*" (Steven KATZ, *Ideology, State Power, and Mass Murder/Genocide...,* p.51).

[4] Steven RUNCIMAN, *Teocrația bizantină* [The Byzantine Theocracy], Ed. Nemira, București, 2012, transl. Vasile Adrian Carabă, p. 54.

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Talking strictly about "*one dimension*" – even the moral one – of someone's character, without approaching its multiple interferences, nuances, tension fluctuations, ties and rejections, that is without understanding the person (as life embodied uniquely and unrepeatably), we expose ourselves to the risk of profoundly altering the entire ensemble of spiritual stages of someone, many of them remaining for always secrets, inaccessible to research. Despite this, "the scientific dissection" of a personality or of a work is part of the modern process of research and is often used, probably taking more into account the benefits of eventual discoveries.

Saint John Chrysostom (347-407) impregnates his entire work with the sap of Christian moral. He is determined to do this because of several reasons. One of it would be the Church slipping towards clericalism, respectively the division of the ecclesial Body of Christ into two antithetic parts: the clergy and the people. The Roman state tended to assimilate the clergy with its own clerks. The archbishop's reaction was a dignified one, managing to impose, with a lot of effort, principles which, rather forced, the political leaders accepted, at least for a while. Here are some of the principles Chrysostom enacted: The state, in its quality of juridical consciousness of the people, must limit itself to its own area of activity, without obstructing in any way the mission of the Church; The state must obey the Church in matters of moral; The political and Church leaders must present themselves to the highness of the service they were called to by God and by His people. *"The field of the imperial power is one, and that of the priesthood power is another; and the last has primacy over the first"*[5].

Another reason would be the moral disorder which a part of the clergy and of the people was complacent in. After the edict of emperor Theodosius I, in the year 380, through which paganism was forbidden, many adepts of the old religions have asked for Christening, but only formally, in order to keep the rights and the liberties they had before. These converts by necessity kept on committing the abuses, with which they were used to, now standing on the "mask" of Christian, or – in the worst case – on the posture of bishops, priests and deacons. The brave hierarch did not let himself thrown off his balance. The promiscuity, the greed for ill-gotten gains associated with avarice, envy and dissimulation, the revenges were combated whether generally, through spoken word and in writing, or locally, through energetically measures, severe when the case. Anyway the most important and most efficient way of eradicating these vermin remained the example of his life which stirred even the admiration of his adversaries.

The third reason is connected with the ascetical-missionary trend that he followed, together with Saint Theotim I, Bishop of Tomis in Scythia Minor (the only hierarch who will defend him in the pharisaic Synod of the Oak, in the year 403) and with Saint Jerome. This trend, to which Saints John Cassian and Germanus, both from Scythia Minor (Dobrogea region, Romania) will adhere later, had as purpose to bring awareness to the people of God towards the exigencies of the moral Eucharistic-baptismal life, respectively towards the missionary duty of all the members of the Church to God and fellow men. In the end, as the Holy Hierarch said: *"About dogmas Christ rarely talks; because they do not even require a lot of work; still, about man's behaviour He talks numerous times; but, better said, always; that you have to constantly struggle in order to lead a virtuous life; this is why work is required"*[6].

In this work I shall struggle to bring to light, on two directions, the moral dominant of the chrysostomian mission, allowing the author of the vastest Christian work[7], as much as possible, to give an answer about himself (John 1, 22) and about us, as deed and desired goal.

2. *"Trampling over Death by Death"* … The Christening Life

[5] Sfântul IOAN GURĂ DE AUR [Saint John Chrysostom], *Omilii la Matei* [*The Homilies on Mathew*], *PG*, 57, col.81.
[6] Sfântul IOAN GURĂ DE AUR, *Scrieri III, Omilii la Matei*, *PSB 23*, Ed.IBMBOR, Bucureşti, 1992, transl. Pr. Dumitru Fecioru, p. 742.
[7] In the *Patrologia Graeca* collection, 18 volumes (47-64) belong to Saint John Chrysostom. It means that Saint John is the most prolific Christian writer.

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Among the ways of knowledge that man has at his disposal in order to fulfil the dream of exploring the surrounding world, but especially the dream of understanding himself, such as: the sensitive intuition, the experience, the discursive reason – inductive or deductive – of the instinct enlighten by intelligence, or the highest form of the intellectual intuition – the faith[8], none of them can position itself outside life.

But even life itself cannot have a meaning unless it succeeds to tie itself through the unseen bonds of mystic, to the higher horizon of the divine love. This is why sacrificing the corrupt nature is an absolute necessity, heroic and transfixed. The Saviour, in the Priestly Prayer, affirms: *"I pray for them: I pray, not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine"* (John 17, 9). In the interpretation of Saint John Chrysostom the world the Lord refers to has the moral meaning of community of *"all those who live in wickedness"*[9]. Although between light and darkness there is no mingling (John 1, 5), the Kingdom of God did not leave this corrupt and hardened world in misbelief[10] nor will He leave it, but He will remain as an accessible paragon of moral life, of missionary witness and as refuge from generation to generation until the end of times: *"I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou should take them out of the world, but that thou should keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."* (John 17, 14-18).

The dimension of the moral, Christian life is revealed and has its roots in the restored human nature, renewed by the water of the Holy Christening (Tit 3, 5-6). Beyond this sacrifice does not await us the dissolution or the exile from the world where we once felt comfortable but on the contrary, we are warmed up by our participation, through christening, to the transfiguration of the cosmos and to the simultaneous experience of the Death and the Resurrection of Christ – God[11]. By approaching with seriousness and a lot of patience the profound meaning of the Christening pureness, the Christian eternalizes himself Eucharistic in and through Christ, remaining forever crucified towards sin (Rom. 6, 6): *"There are two deaths and two mortifications whereof the first is made by Christ in the Christening that we receive, and the second must be done by us, through our struggle, afterwards. If you died in Christening, you stay dead…. (If the Christened one) died once there (in the Christening), then he has to remain forever dead for the sin. The Christening death is the cause (of death towards sin)"*[12].

According to Chrysostom, the self-sufficient conception that the mere participation to the mystery of Christening would be enough for man to be saved is false and disadvantageous. Man can at any time, after the receiving of the Holy Mystery, lose his *"Christ-like form"* that he got through Christening[13]. In order to avoid the wandering, the Christened one must continuously exert the establishment in virtues and the search for the perfect wisdom (gr. *σωφροσύνη = wisdom understood as forbearance, reasonableness, restraint)*[14]. The Christian, cleric or layman, is a fighter

[8] Prof. Dr. Marin ȘTEFĂNESCU, *Filosofia Creștină – contribuție la înțelegerea filosofiei* [The Christian Philosophy – contribution on the understanding of philosophy], Ed. Universul, București, 1943, pp. 11-14.
[9] Sfântul IOAN GURĂ DE AUR, *Comentariu la Evanghelia după Ioan* [Commentary on the Gospel of John], 66, *PG* 59, col. 367.
[10] Sfântul NECTARIE DE LA EGHINA [Saint Nektarios from Egina], *Morala creștină* [Christian Moral], Ed. Doxologia, Iași, 2013, transl. Diana Cărburean, p. 214.

[11] Dr. Dr. H. C. Nicolae MLADIN, Metropolitan of Ardeal, *Studii de Teologie Morală* [Studies of Moral Theology], Editura și Tipografia Arhiepiscopiei, Sibiu, 1969, pp. 287-288.
[12] Sfântul IOAN HRISOSTOM [Saint John Chrysostom], *Comentariile sau explicarea Epistolei către Romani* [Commentaries or explanations on the Epistle to Romans], trad. Arhim Th. Athanasiu, București, 1906, pp.159-161, 169.
[13] Sfântul IOAN HRISOSTOM, *Comentariile sau explicarea Epistolei către Galateni* [Commentaries or explanations on the Epistle to Romans], trad. Arhim. Th. Athanasiu, Iași,1901, pp. 82-83.
[14] Sfântul IOAN GURĂ DE AUR, *Scrieri III, Omilii la Matei...*, pp.139-144.

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for Christ: *"Christ does not command us to hate our soul just like that, for no reason, but to give it to the wars, the fights, the stabbings, the bleedings… Christ's apprentices must not confront only this natural death, but even the forced one, and not only the forced death, but also the outrageous one"*[15].

He does not hesitate to put at risk his most valuable assets, and even his own soul, in order to finish his mission/work given to him by the Lord: *"Work means the mercy, the prayers, the helping of those aggrieved and all those similar to these ones"*[16]. His impulse is not from the exterior – one coming from the social necessity – but the voice of God whispered relentlessly to the heart: *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me"* (Revelation 3, 20). Through Christening, the heart of the Christian is comprised in the dynamic of Christ's life, He who *"is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever"* (Hebrews 13, 8). The accomplishment of good is the endless continuation of the Christening; it is the mystery itself in its historical continuity. The personal weight in doing the good deed is the supreme moral duty and is a repayment in itself because, when doing the good, man finds his direction. *"Nothing else moves the one who does the good than his own impulse. This impulse which moves him is situated inside him and is the divine love. This moves his mind and his heart towards doing the good"*[17].

3. *"That I do not come to You as a careless, Christ my Lord"* … The Eucharistic Life[18]

Living within the Orthodox Church, the Spirit of Truth fulfils and maintains the continuity of Christ's Pentecost[19], meaning the full embodiment of God, in the person of the Saviour, to the maximum degree that the human being can reach, with the special moment of His Sacrifice *"for us and for our salvation"*[20].

This fact can be seen liturgically in the continuous presence of the Holy Eucharist in the Ark, on the table of the Holy Altar, which shows *"the permanent struggle of Christ in state of sacrifice to share Himself (as Eucharist) to the faithful"*[21]. The Holy Gifts are converting, through the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon them, during the Epiclesis[22]: *"This service was not set up by a man, or an angel, or an archangel, or other God created power, but by the Comforter Himself"*[23]. But this moment also represents the proof of the continuity of the Pentecost in the Church[24]. In a manner in which he allows for his real emotion to be observed, Saint John draws attention on the priceless love of God which effuses during the Holy Liturgy in endless rains of grace which sanctify and move from earth to heaven, through faith, every soul emptied of any worldly thought: *"Do you even consider that you are among people and that you are still on earth when you see the Lord standing in the front scarified and the priest staying near the Sacrifice praying, when you see that all get red by communing with the Holy Blood? Do you consider that you are still among people*

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[15] Sfântul IOAN GURĂ DE AUR, *Scrieri III, Omilii la Matei* ..., p.434.
[16] Sfântul IOAN GURĂ DE AUR, *Scrieri III, Omilii la Matei*...,p.437.
[17] Sfântul NECTARIE DE LA EGHINA, *Morala creștină*..., pp. 152-153.
[18] Pr. Dr. Mircea Cristian PRICOP, *Ortodoxie, etnicitate, identitate europeană* [Orthodoxy, Ehnicity, European Identity], Ed. Arhiepiscopiei Tomisului, Constanța, 2012, pp. 18-20.
[19] Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN , *Teologia Învierii în opera Sfântului Maxim Mărturisitorul* [The Theology of Ressurection in Saint Maximus the Confessor's Work], în *ST*, nr.7-8, 1968, p.522.
[20] Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN, *Învăţătura despre Duhul Sfânt în Ortodoxie şi preocupările ecumeniste contemporane* [The Doctrine about the Holy Spirit in the Orthodoxy and the contemporary ecumenic concerns], teză de doctorat [Doctoral Thesis], extras din *MA*, XVIII, nr. 7-8, 1973, p.114.
[21] Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Locaşul bisericesc propriu-zis, cerul pe pământ sau centrul liturgic al creaţiei* [The Actual Church Place, Heaven on Earth or the Liturgical Centre of Creation], în *MB*, nr.4-6, 1981, p.299.
[22] Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Spiritualitate şi comuniune în Liturghia Ortodoxă* [Spirituality and Communion in the Orthodox Liturgy], Ed.Mitropoliei Olteniei, Craiova, 1986, p.286 and the next.
[23] Sfântul IOAN GURĂ DE AUR, *Despre Preoție..*, p. 107.
[24] Mircea Cristian PRICOP, *The Relationship Between The European And Christian Identity From An Orthodox Moral Perspective*, in JRLS, 15, 2018, pp. 592-604.

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and that you are standing on earth? Do you not consider that you have moved all of a sudden in the heaven, that you have taken out from the soul any bodily thought and that you look only with the empty soul and with the clean mind those of heaven? O, miracle! O, God's love for people! The Son, who stays high with the Father, is held in hands by all in that moment and gives Himself to everyone who wants to kiss Him and to receive Him. They all do this with the eyes of the faith. Do you think that all of these are worthy of despise or that they are like this, so you can behave proud towards them?"[25].

Overcalled *"The Fire Easter"*[26], the miracle of the Descent of the Holy Spirit is taking place authentically in every Holy Liturgy[27], it effects taking the shape of two complementary aspects of the same work: a) the purification of the priest and of the faithful participating to the Mystery of Eucharist in order to receive Christ, fact proven by the threefold enunciation by the priest, with direct reference to the moment of the Pentecost: *"O Lord, who at the third hour didst send down thy Holy Spirit upon thine Apostles, do not take Him from us, O Good One, but renew Him in us who pray unto Thee"*[28], and b) the consecration of the Holy Gifts, meaning their transformation in the Body and the Blood of our Lord, as says the prayer of the Epiclesis: "*Once again we offer to You this spiritual worship*[29] *without the shedding of blood, and we beseech and pray and entreat You: Send down Your Holy Spirit upon us and upon the gifts here presented…"*[30].

Commenting on these great mysteries of the ancestral faith, Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae considers that the constancy of the Pentecost in the Orthodox Liturgy represents the most important moment of the divine cult: *"And in order to see that the Spirit He shall invoke for the transformation of the gifts is not a Spirit with no connection with the Son, the priest first asks the Son to renew for him and the faithful the Spirit given to the Apostles and, through them, to the Church at the Pentecost, in the ninth hour (the third as it was counted at that time), the hour when the light and the heat of the sun is getting stronger. This moment of the Holy Liturgy is a renewed Pentecost in which it is admitted that the Holy Spirit will not be given again to the faithful without an effort from their part too, of renewal through prayer"*[31].

The fact that in the cult of our Church – a serving Church by excellence[32], having in its centre the fulfilling of the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist[33] - the consciousness of the *"Easter of Fire"* had always maintained itself unaltered, is proven by the content of old documents, according to which, next to the threefold enunciation by the priest in the *Anaphora*, there were also the prayers: *"Glory…"* followed by the Pentecost doxology: *„Blessed are You, O Christ our God… "*, then by *"Now and…"* together with the hymn of the Descent of the Holy Spirit: *"When the Most High came down and confounded tongues…"*[34].

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[25] Sfântul IOAN GURĂ DE AUR, *Despre Preoție..,* pp. 107-108.

[26] Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN Prof.Vasile BEBEŞELEA STERP, *Ecouri liturgice din etnogeneza românilor - colinda creştină din sudul Transilvaniei* [Liturgical Echoes from the Romanian Ethnogenesis – the Christian Carol from South Transylvania], Ed.Universității "Lucian Blaga", Sibiu, 2006, p.18.

[27] Sfântul IOAN GURĂ DE AUR, *De proditione Judae (Despre trădarea lui Iuda),* 1, 6, *PG*, 49, col. 380.

[28] ***Liturghier* [Liturgy Book], Ed.Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2006, p.81.

[29] For a wider explanation of the term *λογικὴ λατρεία, rationabilis cultus* (understood by the Holy Fathers Basil the Great and John Chrysostom as worship with the mind) and the debate about the translation of it in Romanian *(spiritual worship, spoken worship, rational worship)* see also: Fr. Ioan ROMANIDIS, *Teologia patristică* [Patristic Theology], Ed. Bibliotheca, Târgoviște, 2012, transl. Ion Marian Croitoru, pp.25-36 and notes 6-8, 15-18 și 28.

[30] ***Liturghier*, Ed.Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2006, p.82.

[31] Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Spiritualitate şi comuniune...Op.cit.,* p.284.

[32] Pr. Prof. Petru REZUŞ, *Slujirea ca funcţie esenţială a Bisericii* [The Service as Essential Function of the Church], în *Ortodoxia*, nr.4, 1966, pp.580-593. The same idea is reflected in the study of Lect.Ioan ICĂ, *Sensul şi specificul Ortodoxiei româneşti* [The Meaning and Specificity of the Romanian Orthodoxy], în *Ortodoxia*, no.4, 1971, pp.620-640.

[33] Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă* [Orthodox Dogmatic Theology], vol.III, Ed.IBMBOR, Bucureşti, 1978, p.91.

[34] Pr. Prof. Dr. Petre VINTILESCU, *Liturghierul explicat* [The Explained Liturgy Book], Ed.IBMBOR, Bucureşti, 1998, p.252.

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Getting back to the meaning used by the Father overcalled *"the Demosthenes of Christians"*[35] in the words of the second prayer before the Holy Eucharist (used as subtitle of the present work) that is that a Christian must not present himself as a careless when uniting with the most holy Body and with the life giving Blood, we have to mention that the careless does not mean in the Chrysostomic thinking only the state of palsy of the spiritual functions or irresponsibility. Chrysostom sees the careless in the boldness of considering Christ "private propriety", a thesaurus earned for who knows what "merit", a "magical object" which you got and you hide in the most hollow hole of your selfish being, being completely indifferent to the prayers, the feelings, the sorrows and the joys of your brothers in Christening. Thus, in the eyes of the Saint, careless means not taking into account the scary command of the Eucharist: the spiritual sacrifice. *"But what is "the spoken worship"? The spiritual worship, the life (the citizenship) in accordance with Christ…"*[36].

The authentic and unique *spoken sacrifice* which the community of God raises, through the priest, to each Epiclesis is equivalent with the spiritual mission of the one who receives the communion with Christ. According to the author of the Holy Liturgy, it consists of the moral impulse settled in the daily life. The impulse of good springs from the heart (overwhelmed with grace) of the faithful, irradiating especially in these four directions, as once upon a time the Paradise was washed by the four rivers: moderation (*σωφροσύνη*), mercy (*έλεημοσύνη*), gentleness/clemency (*έπιείκεια*) and the obliviousness of evil (*άνεξικακία*)[37].

The Eucharist is not and can never be, from the perspective of the moral, an exterior act to the human being but the man who does not love his fellows can perceive it as being useless to him, extraneous, hostile even. *"These people manifest their wickedness spontaneously and they never want to return to virtue and protect not only those who are part of the wickedness, but also those who dare to give voice for it"*[38]. He who understands the true meaning of the Holy Eucharist is the Christian who has set himself to support the unremitting growth of his spiritual life through the love towards his fellows (*philanthropia*) and through serving all those in need (*diakonia*). This is because the Holy Eucharist does not unite us only with the Saviour but also among us, through the bond of the brotherly love: *"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread"* (I Corinthians 10, 16-17). It is the Mystery of the Church, the life and communion destiny giving Eucharistic love[39].

4. *Glory to God for Everything…* Conclusions

The life and work of Saint John Chrysostom, the most respected Father of the East[40], have – as we have seen – especially profound mystical and moral connotations. As the holy hierarch is also the author of the Liturgy, his explanations on the theme of terminology become inestimable values for all the branches of Theology. His model animates monastics as well as those married in the love of people and the accomplishment of good.

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[35] Mihail Psellos, *De Gregorii theologi charactere iudicium, accedit eiusdem de Ioannis Chrysostomi charactere iudicium ineditum*, Ed. Paul Levy, Leipzig, 1912, 46 *apud* Jaroslav PELIKAN, *Tradiția creștină* [The Christian Tradition], vol. II, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2005, transl. Rev. Nicolai Buga, p. 271.

[36] „*Tí δέ έστι τήν λογική λατρεία; Ἡ πνευματική διακονία ή πολιτεία ή κατά Χριστόν / Quid vero est rationabilis cultus? Spirituale ministerium, vita secundum Christum".* Sfântul IOAN GURĂ DE AUR, *Omilia XX la Romani*, *PG*, 60, col. 597.

[37] Sfântul IOAN GURĂ DE AUR, *Omilia XX la Romani*, *PG*, 60, col. 597.

[38] Sfântul IOAN GURĂ DE AUR, *Contra celor ce luptă împotriva celor ce duc viață monahală, I, PG, 47, col. 332.*

[39] See: Rev. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN, *În Hristos și în Biserică: Iubirea euharistică generatoare de viață și destin românesc*, [In Christ and Church: The Eucharistic Love, Wellspring of Life and Romanian Destiny], Ed. Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2011, 395 p.

[40] Steven RUNCIMAN, *Marea Biserică în captivitate* [The Great Church in Captivity], Ed. Sophia, București, 2013, transl. Mihai-Silviu Chirilă, p. 72.

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Although he is an excellent moralist his keeps himself away from encouraging the rigidity of a set of moral laws which multiply endlessly. The Pharisees had 631 laws and innumerable other smaller prescriptions which the ordinary man had had to know and respect *ad litteram* in order for him to be able to consider himself "righteous"[41]. The Saviour denounces those kinds of legal habits: *„But woe unto you, Pharisees! For ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone… Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! For ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers"* (Luke 11, 42-46). And Saint Paul the Apostle, a former Pharisee, proves the torpidity of the Judaic moral system, through the memorable expression: *„the letter kills, but the spirit giveth life"* (II Corinthians 3, 6). The moral system proposed by Saint John is a spiritual one, having its spring in the love of God and the mirroring of this eternal fresh spring in the daily behaviour of each of those who bear the name of Christ.

His moral method is very eloquently presented in the homily *"In Vain, Every Mortal Is Worried",* in the last eschatological dialogue between God and the world:

"- Why, God, do You not speak about the other evils?

- *Because I do not judge the sin but the inhumanity. I do not sentence those who have sinned, but those who have not repented. I sentence you for your inhumanity because though you have had such a great cure, mercy, still you have deprived yourselves from such a great beneficence. Thus, I rebuke your inhumanity, as root of all evil and disbelief. I praise the love of people as root of all virtues. I damn some to the endless fire, to others I offer the Kingdom of Heavens"*[42].

The personality and the writings of Saint John Chrysostom resembles today with the antic myth of the mountain temple: Everyone admires it but no one goes inside it. "*It is too high and inspires fear*", some would say; "*From down here you can see it better*", others would say; "*The road to it is long and hard*", sigh others; "*The mountain on which it is located is inaccessible!*" frown others.

In order to stimulate the interest of the priests, the students and the Christian believers towards this coryphaeus of faith, our obligations become obvious:

1. To prepare an academic team able to yearly select and eventually edit themes of public interest from the works of Saint John Chrysostom.
2. To publish, distribute and popularise the chrysostomian teachings whether in the classic format (brochures, handbooks, *etc.*)[43], or online, as accessible as possible.
3. To form university, high school, parish, monastic, *etc.* study and mission groups, having as object the acquirement, the thoroughness and the transfer of knowledge about the life and works of Saint John Chrysostom.
4. To act in the direction of the practical guidance of students and of the faithful to a virtuous life following the example of Saint John Chrysostom.

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