The Logos – means of transmitting the divine-human message

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Dans le sens biblique, la parole représente la voix de Dieu, l'enseignement divin destiné à germer dans la conscience humaine tandis que dans le sens humain, le Logos représente la mesure humaine et un critère du jugement de ses actes au Jour du Jugement. Les gens sont responsables d'accepter et répandre la Parole de Dieu par leurs propres actes et paroles: "Or, je vous dis que les hommes rendront compte, au jour du jugement, de toute parole vaine qu'ils auront dite; Car tu seras justifié par tes paroles, et par tes paroles tu seras condamné" (Matthieu 12, 36-37).
En vertu de l'image divine refletée en nous et precisément due à la grâce divine révélée par les Sacrements, la Parole de Dieu est invitée à faire Sa demeure dans nos êtres et à changer nos vies.
Ainsi, en analysant les acceptions bibliques du terme Logos, nous observons le fait que La Bible nous révèle quatre hypostases de ce mot.

Mots-clés : Logos, Parole de Dieu, grâce divine

The priest's message to the believers and the religion teacher's to the students is the Word of God. It can be found in the Holy Scripture and in the Tradition and it is always present, remaining unchanged until the end of time, as the Savior Himself said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass".

In virtue of the image of God reflected in all of us but mostly due to the divine grace shared through the Holy Sacraments, the power of words may abide and work inside each one of us.

By sending His Holy Apostles to preach the Gospel to the nations and to fulfil the purpose of the Holy Sacraments, the Saviour assured them that He will be with them all eternity. He commanded his disciples to preach at first, then to baptize, teaching them that doctrine gives birth to faith, yet faith has to be completed and fulfilled by the act of baptism, for "faith is the door towards receiving the Sacraments". The growing faith is born, maintained and developed through the Preached Word and through receiving the Sacraments. Accepting God's Word and the Holy Sacraments represent a testimony of faith because "…faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see" (Hebrew 11, 1).

Preaching renders believers conscient of the redeeming reality and efficiency of the growing divine grace shared through the Holy Sacraments. Thus Sermon is important both before and after the Holy Sacraments in order to render the faithful always attentive and receptive to his spiritual progress.

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In the biblical sense, the word represents God's voice, the Divine teaching ready to fructify in our human conscience while from a human point of view, the Word represents human measure itself and also a judgemental criterion of his acts at the Last Judgement. People are responsible for understanding and receiving God's Word through their own personal acts and words[1]: "But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgement for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12, 36-37).

1. The Logos – God's means of creation

By the confession of our Lord Jesus Christ, we find out that "No one has ever seen God". Nevertheless, He chose to reveal Himself to His rational creation through human words. God, in His Infinite Wisdom has chosen the word and human speaking as means of reavealing Himself and getting in touch with man.[2] Thus God reveals Himself through word and this form of revelation started from the precise moment of God's talking to Adam in the Eden garden and the preaching of the proto-Evangel immediately after our ancestors' expulsion from Eden (Genesis 3, 2).

This way of expressing the will of God through words continued through His prophets and chosen ones of the Old Testament still it was crowned with glory and perfectly fulfilled only in Christ the Lord, the Embodied Word of God. From the first commandment given by God to our forefathers in paradise to the last chapthers of Revelation, it appears as an expression, an advisedly reiterative imperative written on the pages of the Holy Scripture: "And the Lord said…", "Thus says the Lord", "Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying". This sacred expressions highlight the connection that the Lord has established by word of mouth with "the image of His glory" – the man. The Lord has spoken directly to His chosen ones: "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying…" (Isaiah 6, 9).

Not only is the word of God spoken but it is also transformed into action and fulfilled, it is the Word that becomes action. Therefore separation can not be made between His Word and His Work for His Word always turns into action. The mission of God represents almost a different kind of expression while His creation as well as His word appear differently depicted. The word of God brigs into existence the absent, the non-existent elements[3].

The theophany of spreading the divine word reflects Its genuine authority. Unlike the words of men, God's word does not fade away once spoken. Nothing ceases to exist in the Lord. His word continues to spread and it is forever lasting.

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[1] Constantin Cucoş, *The religious education – theoretical and methodological guidelines*, Polirom Publishing House, 1999, p. 9.

[2] Pr. Prof. Dr. Nicolae Dură**,** *The Preaching and the Holy Sacraments. Their meaning in the redemption mission*, I.B.M.B.O.R. Publishing Company, Bucureşti, 1998, p. 39.

[3] *Ibidem*, p. 42.

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By the power of His word, God gave life to His creation, created the earth, the sky, the universe and everything related to them: "Listen, O heavens, and I will speak; hear, O earth, the words of my mouth" (Deuteronomy 32, 1). "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (Psalm 19, 1). The creative Word of God "stands forever" (Isaiah 40, 8) and through It, "all things achieve their purpose" (The Wisdom of Jesus Sirach 43, 30).

Through His word, God created man who testifies a re-creation when, corrupted by sin, he turns to God by hearing His word that remains unchanged until the end of all times. At His command appeared the notion of time and history and by accepting and following His word, history itself as well as man are heading towards the Divine Judgement. The Divine Word represents the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega, constantly present in the creation and history of the world.[4] For this reason, It marks the presence of man and gains profound meanings together with the Incarnation of Christ.

2. The Logos - The Incarnation and Revelation of Christ

The Holy Word represents the resource and the way towards God's revelation and His means of expression towards His creation. Thus the Word becomes "the light of the world" (John 8, 12) in order to proclaim the truth for "thy word is true from the beginning (Psalm 119, 160). The epiphany of the Lord and His expression through words is the consequence of the redemption and Revelation history. This message is dedicated to us, no controversy allowed, on the contrary, all men being indebted to accept it, to agree with it or to deny it in a responsible manner. The purpose of God's Word was to reveal His Will to people and allow them to discover His Holiness. This revelation and knowledge of the divine word "represents the basis for maintaining a deep and permanent connection with the Lord and of founding the Christian religion"[5].

Philaret, the Metropolitan of Moscow, identifies a subtle connection between the words of God from the beginnings: "Let there be!" that have given life to His creation and the prayer of the peaceful dove, Virgin most pure Mary: "Behold the maidservant of the Lord!" when the words of the creation brought the Savior into the world.[6] The Sacred Words have a profound unity of their own, they are closely related to the history of world salvation.

Jesus Christ, Son of the Father together with the Logos represent the origins of all creation while He is the reason of all things. The Prologue to the Gospel of Saint John as well as certain of the Pauline Epistles reveal a glimpse of this Sacrament that remains incomprehensible for the human mind untouched by grace: "All things were created by him. He created everything in heaven and on earth. He created everything that can be seen and everything that can't be seen. He created

[4] *Ibidem*, p. 51.

[5] Pr. Prof. Dr. Constantin Galeriu, *The confession of true faith through the Divine Liturgy*, in "Orthodoxy", no.1, 1981, p. 25.

[6] Pr. Prof. Dr. Nicolae Dură, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

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kings, powers, rulers and authorities. Everything was created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Colossians 1, 16 -17).

"But when the set time had fully come" (Galatians 4, 4), God has enabled the revelation of the "forever hidden Sacrament" as well as the revelation of the redemption message through Word, the Logos incarnated in history of He Who was True God and True man. The Redeemer represents the Word of God incarnate, the grain cultivated by Him on earth that germinated Christ's Church through His Word. The Word of God – The Logos has, thus, a name, meaning It became human, the mirror of the Holiness of God or the image of the Unrevealed God. It was the Word of God fulfilled for "Our helpless nature is in need for a healer. Not only is the Word revealing Itself to us but It also invades our nature and our tradition in order to change from the inside this opressed nature dominated by evil. In the same time, He sacrfices Himself so that the human nature should have fellowship with Him in the admitted limit"[7]. Thus the world has been christianized through word in order to achieve its salvation. God introduced Messiah to His prophets as The One who "In faithfulness He will bring forth justice… In his law the islands will put their hope" (Isaiah 42, 3-4).

God's Word transformed the non-existence in existence. This eternal and life giving Logos incarnated as a Prophet and Preacher in order to teach the nations and to give hope to people. Through His incarnation, the eternal Logos "makes our human words revealed to His Divine Person"[8], or makes God being revealed through our human words. The words of Jesus aren't His words but those of the Father (John 12, 49), they are God's words (John 3, 34). By His preaching and His entire redemptive mission, man becomes part of the personal relationship between the Father and the Son: "… and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matthew 11, 27). Christ, the Word of the Lord, represents the Holy revelation of the Father, He is His supreme Revealer.

As True God, Lord of Lords, He was a preacher of the Eternal Truth, "In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth" (John 18, 37). Not only did He preach through words but through His entire mission. His miracles stand for a preach without words while preaching itself represents a miracle of the spoken word. His wonders depict circumstance acknowledgements while His preaching stands for eternal wonders: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass" (Matthew 24, 35). His entire evangelical mission is, in fact, a sermon of the Kingdom to come. By his words, the Savior opened the doors of His Kingdom to His followers and the hearts of those who would follow and fulfil His word. Through His words, the Lord gives strength to the mild and He allows them to live in unity with Him. The Redeemer

[7] P.S. Prof. Dr. Irineu Slătineanu, *Jesus Christ or the Logos incarnate*, Christian Romania Publishing House, Bucharest, 1988, p. 72.

[8] Pr. Prof. Dr. Nicolae Dură, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

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has spoken these words, promissing that He Himself will not cease to be and to come so that His words should have authority[9].

The act of incarnation represents the beginning of the redemption mission. This act signifies the beginning of love revelation, its descent and spread in the world. Through this act, the Son of God takes our image, Humbles Himself "taking the very nature of a servant" (Philippians 2, 7); He descends in the world and preaches for the world and out of love for the world. The touching meaning of the Savior's statement is revealed in the following verse: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, thet whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3,16). We witness here the decisive word of God for the world: His infinite love which testifies His Supreme Gift for us, His Own Begotten Son. The word that refers to this "gift" can also be found in the passage of the Bible where Jesus addresses the Samaritan woman (John 4, 10). Or, this testimony of Christ gives us a sudden hope and trust regarding the "destiny" of the world: "that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"[10]. The supreme gift embodied in the Son of God it is also present in the *eskhatos*, the world being thus destined not to perish but to have eternal life.

3. The Logos – means of interpreting the Gospel by the priest

The Logos has become the bridge between God and people, between the divine Revelation and the faithful or, most important, a meeting place of rational creatures and their Creator. The history of redemption represents, amongst others, God' preoccupation to reveal Himself, to make Himself understood as much as possible. Human speech has been wrapped in His Divine Word and "…the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isaiah 40, 8).

In the testamentary past, the divine word was gifted to God's people: the prophets. Their mission was to interecede in prayer between the desires of the children of Israel and God and also to preach the Word of God to the chosen people. The Revelation on Mount Sinai is the origin of the entire prophetic preaching. Prophets, minister themselves to spreading the Word of God. In other words, God needs people to send His message to the world[11]. Prophets testify that they are servants and vessels carrying the Word of God: "Thus says the Lord…" or "Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying…" or "Hear what the LORD says to you, O house of Israel…", "Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the LORD has spoken" (Isaiah 1, 2). Prophets themselves were completely aware of the divine work accomplished through them: "The Spirit of the LORD speaks through me; his words are upon my tongue" (2 Samuel 23:2), David, the Prophet used to say. Even though the prophets would receive the divine word as a gift, this

[9] Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloaie, *The vision of the Eastern Church regarding the image of Christ*. *Jesus Christ, God's Supreme Gift and Word to us*, in "Orthodoxy", no. 1, 1973, p. 12.

[10] Pr. Prof. Dr. Constantin Galeriu, *Jesus Christ, the Redeemer and our Supreme teacher,* in "Orthodoxy", no. 1, 1983, p. 40.

[11] Pr. Prof. Dr. Nicolae Dură, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

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word would become part of their nature as a nourishment that strenghtens the spiritual life of those who speak the Words of God.

The prophet is merely a tool by which God transmits His message to people. Therefore, the prophet Micaiah, aware of the fact that the Lord knows his thought and that it has to be transmitted forward, he says: "what the LORD says to me, that I shall speak" (1 Kings 22, 14). The prophet Jeremiah is assured by the Lord: "I have put my words in your mouth" (Jeremiah 1, 9) and Isajah receives the same heavenly message: "And I have put my words in thy mouth…" (Isaiah 51:16). Given that the nation of Israel was the one who was prepared and chosen to receive the Redeemer, it was her voice that was chosen to transmit the biblical message. From Patriarchs to prophets, God expresses His Will in the Hebrew language[12].

The purpose of the prophetic sermon was to change the life of Judeans and to turn them to the Lord. Thus, their words were "true" (Psalm 118, 140) and "revealed with fire" (1 Corinthians 3, 9-15). The Divine Word invaded and purified the hearts of those who have received Him because His Word is like "fire" (Jeremiah 23, 29).

In the New Testament, Christ advises men to be wise and to fulfil His word. When His word is overlooked, the lack of wisdom is always present. (Jeremiah 8, 9). Through word, God calls people to engage in a personal dialogue with Him. Through faith and humility we can feel and hear the permanent voice of the Lord as a Divine Person calling our hearts. The divine words are addressed to each person anytime, anywhere and these words inspired by God sustain our life through His power. Thus, these words of the Lord are good and very useful (Isaiah 39, 8).

The servants of the Church, according to their sacred mission, have the religious duty to explain the meaning of the divine Word and of the Holy Sacraments to the faithful as well as the religious implications resulted from their awareness in order to reflect in them the image of Christ. The appropriate manner for achieving this sacred mission is to encourage them to take part at the Divine Liturgy where God can be revealed through Word and Sacrament to those who are willing to live in intercommunion with Him. The sermon and the Eucharist as two complementary forms of the ecclesiastical mission, it is not permitted to neglect the sermon during the Liturgy or the sermon shouldn't diminish the value of the Eucharist.

When the priest proclaims Christ, not only is the Holy Grace present through him but Christ Himself is present, he himself being a Christopher. The words of Christ proclaim the truth: "I am the way" (John 14, 6). By fellowship with the Eucharist Christ "each one of us has this truth marked and sealed in our hearts"[13], as St. Basil the Great teaches us.

The sermon can not be perceived in the same way as the Sacraments, still it is always necessary in order to prepare the believers for receiving the redemptive

[12] Pr. Prof. Petru Rezuş, *The Christian teaching with respect to the word as means of expression of the three confessions,* in "Orthodoxy", no.1, 1959, p. 50.

[13] St. Basil the Great, *Commentary on the 14th Psalm,* citing Pr. Prof. Dr. Nicolae Dură**,** *op. cit.*, p. 153.

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grace by embracing the Holy Sacraments with dignity and true conscience of the value of the respective Sacrament for "Only by this inseparable union between the Word and the Sacrament, are we able to truly understand the meaning of the statement that the Church is the only one that preserves the true meaning of the Scripture"[14]. Through the Holy Sacraments of the Church, the faithful receive not only the power of Christ that gives us strength to fight sin and encourages us to grow in virtue but it also brings us closer to God and His wisdom. Through the Holy Sacraments, the priest as well as the believers, receives "the Spirit who is from God. The Spirit helps us understand what God has freely given us" (I Corinthians 2, 12). Invested with this divine power, the preacher priest becomes a servant of the Holy Spirit Who gives life and not a servant of the letter that kills (II Corinthians 3, 6).

The Church is the only one that preserves the true meaning of the Scripture. Hence, the first part of the Divine Liturgy represents the beginning of the epiclesis and the eucharistic ritual for It represents the Sacrament of the Word, the ritual that will find its fulfillment and culmination in the blessing and sharing of the eucharistic gifts to the believers[15]. Thus, the Sacrament of Word is indispensable to spreading the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and also to testify the Truth preached by the Holy Spirit Who sanctifies us.

4. The Logos – means of human communication

From Genesis, the first book of the Bible, we learn that, from the beginning of time, God Himself has endued man with the gift of speaking, inspiring his nature with the need to discover human reason, to name the created beings and to express in words the surrounding reality and the meaning of things (Genesis 2, 19-20). Thus God has established between us and Him the dialogue of love through words and things. We have to communicate through gifts and words because "the Lord talks to us and makes us communicate with each other through His gifts and words for God has opened our hearts towards receiving the gifts and words and has made us responsible for our actions of accepting or denying His gifts and words. Therefore people become charitable and communicative through the words of Christ"[16].

God created us in order to have fellowship with each other and share thoughts, ideas, feelings, experiences that can be transmitted mainly by speech, by word. By reaching others through words, by questioning the meaning of words, people prove that they feel something missing in their lives and can not overcome it on their

[14] Alexandre Schmemann, *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom,* Anastasia Publishing House, 1993, p. 74.

[15] Pr. Prof. Ilie Moldovan, *God's Word in the Scripture and Tradition,* in "The Metropolitan Church of Moldova and Suceava", no. 3, 1989, p. 29.

[16] Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloaie, *The vision of the Eastern Church regarding the image of Christ*. *Jesus Christ, God's Supreme Gift and Word to us*, in "Orthodoxy", no. 1, 1973, p. 7.

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own. They confess that in order to be truly successful in this life, they depend on the help that others are able to give them, as father P. Florenski used to say: "The word isn't complementary to human beings, it isn't a random feature characterising man from the discharge of which he would remain unchanged in essence but a definitory feature. Moreover, the word is the human being itself since man has discovered himself through word. The expression "man and his word" isn't proper. The man is the word itself but under the aspect of him discovering himself and being involved in different actions. And the human activity (…) is essentially eloquent(…). We speak through our actions"[17].

The priest professor Belu used to consider that questioning one's life determines, on the one hand, a modest, humble attitude, a dissatisfaction towards oneself and on the other hand, an attitude of respect, affection and reaching him who addresses the question[18]. Man suddenly observes himself as a human amongst humans, a person amongst other persons. Therefore religion explains human beings in relationship with other humans and with the God Almighty. In Her loving revelation to us, the life giving Divine Person calls to life our human nature "in his own image" that grows spiritually in intercommunion of love with the Divine Person and with other human beings. God's voice resonates in the pages of the Holy Scripture and calls man in Person by his name: "Adam, where are you?" (Genesis 3,2).

Unfortunately, man desired a self discovery rather than the knowledge aquired through the dialogue with God, attitude that affected his relationship with the Lord for communication requires obedience, therefore humbleness. When God talks against man after his decay, annihilating the existing relationship with him, man chooses to hide in nature. The only way of hearing God's voice is through admonition without having the chance to see Him[19]. God's reconciliation with His creation has been made possible once more through Word that incarnated not only to be heard but also to be seen, believed and fulfilled for the confession of faith and the redemption of soul; man having the eternal responsibility as one who has grasped the sacred origin of the word, to praise Him Who created him for eternity as David, the prophet testified: "In God (I will praise *His* word), In the LORD (I will praise *His* word)" (Psalms 56, 10).

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[17] Ioan Bizău, *The language as the fundamental institution of human nature*, in Studia Universitatis Babes-Boliyai, Orthodox Theology, XLV, no. 1-2, 2000, p. 140.

[18] Prof. D. I. Belu*, The Logos and Its ethical function,* în "The Metropolitan Church of Moldova and Suceava", no. 7-8, 1971, p. 457.

[19] Pr. Prof. dr. Dumitru Stăniloaie, *God's immortal appearance,* Craiova, p. 50.

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