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The Mission of the Church in Relation to the Ecclesial and National Identity. Some Points of Reference

Abstract

The unity of the Church should reflect the everlasting unity of the Holy Trinity. The ecclesial unity is an expression of God, One in His Being and in which the Three Divine hypostases, that subsist eternally. The ecclesial unity can serve as basis of the religious identity of a nation and of a human person. The religious identity is not exhausted only in belonging to a specific space or community, but is related to our communion with God, in a time overwhelmed by His eternity.

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The religious identity gives birth to the national one; if the first engages the individual in his dialogue and communion with God, the latter puts us in dialogue and communion with our heirs and ancestors. The nation or ancestry represents the concrete and profound reality in which the individual becomes a person with an identity, a person acquiring a theological dimension, that is to say, that the individual starts having a creed, a confession, and a well-articulated purpose. The religious identity is jeopardized by harmful phenomena such as degrading, desacralization or syncretism, while the national identity is affected and degenerated by globalization and the aggressive policy of promoting the legitimate rights of the nation.

The mission of the Church on the religious identity must be based on the update of the catechetical dimension of the Church and, when it comes about the national identity, it must emphasize the anamnestic connection with our ancestors. The testimony and the Orthodoxy are the fundamental elements of the Orthodox mission, in front of ecclesial and national identity. The ecclesial identity is part of the individual's effort to get deified, and the national identity is the expression of the individual's accomplishment within his nation, on the economic plan with God.

1   Introduction: there is no Neutral State

Man and nation are the marks of the creation completed at the level of divine economy. Man is and will remain the crown of divine creation, and nation represents the communal and identity vocation of man as "anthropos" in the personal, free and responsible relationship between God and man; the latter represents himself as a dialogical and self-confessing person, but he also represents the nation to which he belongs. Man's call is not to be solitary, but open and fulfilled in communion; the community calling of man is an integral part of the being created in the image of God who tends to be similar to his Creator. The fact that God is at the same time Person and Communion of Persons as a "supreme structure of love" - as expressed by Father Professor Dumitru Stăniloae - makes the man, created in the image of God to be alike: a person and a person with a predisposition to being community-driven. Man recaptures the whole creation himself - according to the word of Saint Maximus the Confessor - but at the same time he is the expression of his people, the "face" of his people and through him, not only the identity of his people but also their survival is preserved. The relationship of man as a free and conscious person with his people is accomplished through the religiosity of man and race. Man transfers his religious experience of seeking and finding participatory unity with God at the community level of coexistence within his nation.

Thus, man, a religious being through his religiosity, builds his own identity and contributes to shaping the religious identity of his nation. The religious and the national identity circumscribe both man and God-given race; the religiosity of man is the foundation of his religious and national identity. The religiosity of a nation is both a foundation of national identity and a catalyst for the peculiarities of the free gifts of God flowing over a nation. The natural question arises: how does religiosity raise both the religious and the national identity of man and race? The answer to this question is based on two distinct, and at the

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same time, convergent levels: at the first level is faith, the central factor of religiosity that leads to the shaping of religious identity of man.

Faith is the one that unites us both with God and with our fellow men, the assumed and shared faith working by good deeds is that which generates the religious unity of the Church, is that which gives consistency and authenticity to the religious identity of man and race.

The second level is the historical-community; it represents the horizontal dimension of history, and it is shown in the dimension of the religious and national tradition that unites us and directly links us with our ancestors. It is the church and national tradition that nourishes, gives meaning and significance to the identity of the faithful man. Unbelief risks to alter both the religious identity of man and the national one. The unbeliever is a depersonalized individual, an individual who loses the teleological dimension as a gift of God, an autonomous individual in the relationship with God, who can manifest himself in either a detrimental and dangerous sufficiency, or in an anguish characteristic of the lonely man. At the same time, however, the man also distances himself from his fellow man of the same nation, from his brother of the same faith and nationality, becomes either a stateless isolate or a cheap "trophy" of souls merchants through proselytism.

Thus, faith and tradition represent the two existential realities that give consistency to the religious and national identity of man and people. That is why the mission of the Church must be well articulated and prioritized in relation to the two realities. The internal and external aspect of the mission must be corroborated in such a way that the ecclesial and national identity of man remains a priority but also a desideratum. The present study aims to identify some aspects of the missionary work of the Church regarding the ecclesial and national identity of the contemporary, desecrated, secularized and even de-Christianized man.

2   The relationship between the unity of the Church and the religious identity of a nation

Church represents the holy communion of the Holy Trinity with the baptized believers who are committed in the Sacred Body of the Savior by the Holy Eucharist. St. Maximus the Confessor speaks of the fact that "The Church is called to reflect the Trinitarian communion, and it is full of the Trinity"[1].

Thus, the Church represents the Sacred Body of the Savior, the temple of the Holy Spirit, the direct communion with the Holy Trinity of the baptized.

By becoming a member of the Sacred Body, the believer acquires a new Christ-like identity, which does not overlap with one's personal life; life in Christ renews and completes the personal identity of man. All that the Savior has done for the salvation of man is concretely received by the man created and destined for salvation by God; the objective salvation by Christ is subjectivized, and the believer can choose according to his free will and his own will if he wants to become a believer in Christ or not[2].

Tradition is fundamental in Orthodoxy because it is both identity and renewal. From the life of the faithful man, the doctrine, all the mysteries and all the holy gift of God are kept. Not only are they preserved, but are renewed by the spiritual effort of man, by grace, faith and good deeds that become not only the constituent parts of interpersonal communion with God but also with others.

The Intra-Trinitarian communion becomes the supreme model of the believers' communion, while identity and renewal become for Christians and the Church two paradigms, two

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[1]   See Kenan Osborne, *A Theology of the Church for the Third Millennium: A Franciscan Approach*, Leiden, Brill, 2009, p. 88.

[2]   See Catherine E. Clifford, *For the Communion of the Churches: The Contribution of the Group*, Grand Rapids, MI, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010, p. 178.

principles of evident Christian value. They have the potential to be two paradigms of absolute value in the Trinitarian life, and in human life, they remain two paradigms as two limits open to perfection. Man - the image of God - can activate them with the ultimate goal of eternal communion with God through salvation, but their development is exclusive of man's own will. The Church remains the authority that preserves the criterion of the identity and renewal of authentic Christian life. Identity and renewal reflect the Trinitarian life and become a human being models for the man Christianized in the Church.

Identity is the image of God inherited in man, through him we know the will of God through revelation. In the image of God in man is reflected and is actually found the image of each Person of the Holy Trinity; man receives both those related to the Trinitarian unity of divine persons and the distinction without separation of the Three Divine Persons[3].

Orthodoxy asserts a human being's identity and a person's identity[4]. Between the physical and personal identity, there is a relationship. The relationship of the Holy Trinity is a model and prototype for the Christian's life in the Church. God - the Holy Trinity - in His being remains an untouchable, unchangeable depth, and from Him emanate powers and works that are different from His Being. They are countless because they spring from the deep, endless nature of the Trinity. These manifestations-works are subject to a change that does not affect the Divine Being. By being a Person, God is also the master of change. The divine being is not exhausted in God's gracious works.

Through the Sacrament of the Holy Trinity, we understand something - by revelation - about the identity and renewal of divine life. The Persons of the Holy Trinity possess the identical

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[3] Daniel B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective*, Grand Rapids, MI, Paternoster Press, 2003, p. 160.

[4] Andrew Louth, *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology*, London, Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2013.

being, but they also work together as persons, according to the word of the Savior: "I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 5:30). It is an identity of the will of each Divine Person who identifies himself with the divine being. The one that is making the third communion is love because God is love.

At the Trinitarian level, God remains unchangeable in His will; each Divine Person has an identical work and manifestation. At the economy level, however, each Divine Person has a special role and manifestation. The eternal birth of the Son, the eternal purging of the Holy Spirit, the incarnation of the Son in the "fullness of the time" (Galatians 4: 4), the shadowing of the Holy Mother by the Holy Spirit, the descent of the Holy Spirit at the Pentecost, the descent of the Holy Spirit at the Epiclesis are separate changes, but not changes that affect the Divine Being or the identity of the Persons. They remain distinct and unconfused, but in the full communion of the Holy Trinity that maintains and is maintained by the unity of the divine Being.

The renewal is the development through various external manifestations of the divine economy according to the Epiclesis prayer, which is the fulfillment of the promise made by God in the Old Testament, a promise that the Psalmist David asked with a broken heart: "Holy Spirit, renew an upright spirit within my inmost being" (Psalm, 50-11).

Divine identity[5] is the irreducible uniqueness of the divine being possessed by the three persons who have identical intra-Trinitarian manifestations and make God to be all Good, Love and Light. All these remain humble pious thoughts about the Holy Trinity. Orthodoxy does not dare to rationalize what is above reason.

Divine identity derives from God's confession-assertion: "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14). Man cannot give the Holy Trinity

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5   A. Krawchuk, T. Bremer, *Eastern Orthodox Encounters of Identity and Otherness: Values, Self-Reflection, Dialogue, Palgrave*, New York, Macmillan, 2014, p. 308.

another name. The divine identity, which is taken for the Trinitarian unity, represents the name, person, and divine being, and it becomes a paradigm for spiritual life[6].

The change, according to the theologizing of Saint Maximus the Confessor, refers to the distinction between the reason of work and beings and the way they exist. According to St. Maximus, change is a manifestation that is inconsistent with existing reason, it is a way of existence with what is meant by existence, that is, the sufficient, effective and final reason of the latter, being the purpose of deified existence. In the case of divine life - God being His cause and purpose in Himself - there can be no change or shadow of moving (I Corinthians 4: 7). Scripture speaks of renewal as an external manifestation of God to believers, not to Himself. The renewal of man through the work of God does not affect the rationality of existence. Concerning man, identity and renewal are strictly Christological because if God is the Spirit, He is at the same time a Word, and the Word has become flesh and has taught us all that is necessary for salvation.

In Christ there are two hypostatically united natures - divine and human - and His Person can explain to us what identity and renewal mean because Christ is the Model and Maker of identity-renewal in Himself. Thus, Jesus Christ is the absolute identity and renewal, pouring them out as a gift over humanity through the objective salvation of the Savior through the enhypostasis of human nature in the hypostasis of the Divine Logos.

The Dionysian teaching about the divine paradigms, followed by the Maximian doctrine about the reason and the role of existence, is the theological references to the understanding and confession made in Jesus Christ. Thus, we can see clearly that the unity of the Church given by its Head, Jesus Christ,

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6   Gibson Winter, *Religious Identity: A Study of Religious Organization*, New York, MacMillan, 1968.

naturally stems from the unity of the Holy Trinity, which includes both the being and the divine persons, with their intra and extra-Trinitarian manifestations.

The religious identity of a nation derives directly from the unity of the Church, and this identity constantly renewed by the grace and work of the Holy Trinity is taken for the religious unity that becomes the foundation of the national unity of the nation.

3   National identity and its role in the salvation of man

The nation has an undeniable originality, starting from its morphology to its universalization for the whole world. It was conceived in Europe for its own peoples' identity since the 14th and 15th centuries, and in the XX century, it became a way of identifying a people. Reflections of postmodernism on the nation can show us the secular elements that the nation acquires in its strictly conceptual sphere[7].

For Zygmund Bauman, the nation is something in the dimension of the imaginary and not of the real; however, he makes a connection between the state's protected borders - on the map and on the ground - and its inner life, in the social dimension that takes place through an ensemble of laws. For postmodernists, the nation is an "imaginary community" because it exists as an entity to the extent that its members "self-identify" mentally by feeling themselves as a collective body. The national identity as a form of manifestation at the social level is correlated with the language, history[8], and forms of religious manifestation of a nation. In other words, the three are the hallmarks of national identity, being in a continuous

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[7]   Jean Baechler, *Grupurile și Sociabilitatea* (Groups and Sociability) in Raymond Boudon (ed.), *Tratat de sociologie* (*Treatise on Sociology*) București, Edit. Humanitas, 2006, p. 105.

[8]   Zygmunt Bauman, Tim May, *Gândirea sociologică* (*Sociological Thought*), București, Edit. Humanitas, 2008, p. 199.

process of substantiation and representation, the purpose of which being their intergradations into a national sphere.

The whole set of interpretations and reinterpretations that come from the religious and linguistic sphere of a nation form its national identity. The criteria underlying the legitimacy of national identity are natural, spiritual and historical. The natural ones are those of race and ethnicity, the spiritual ones are those found in national religions and national languages, and the historical ones refer to the territoriality of a nation[9].

The national identity of states has dominated history at both analysis and conflict level. The definition of national identity includes elements related to the spoken language, the space in which a nation lives, clothing, food, and, last but not least, the confessed and practiced the religion of a nation. In fact, all of human history discovers and analyzes the overwhelming influence of religion on all the other elements mentioned above[10].

By the secularization of man and especially by his de-Christianization and desecration, the idea that the modernization of man must lead to the disappearance of spirituality, of any genuine religious approach has been accredited. In reality, things are the other way round; it is known that our Orthodox Church has experienced a period of flowering with the emergence of the modern national state. Any attempt to diminish the national identity such as cross-nationalization between the nation and the borders in the new European globalist context must be avoided. The abolition of borders does not mean the abolition of a nation's identity consciousness, proof being free, across-border migration that has not led to the disintegration of nation consciousness to any of the peoples of Europe.

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9   Lazăr Vlăsceanu, *Sociologie şi modernitate* (*Sociology and modernity*), Iaşi, Edit. Polirom, 2007, p. 122.
10   Bemard Vaiade, Cultura [Culture] in Raymond Boudon,ed., *Tratat de sociologie*, p. 522

The danger comes from the ideological secularization of a united Europe, which can lead to the unification of national identities in a globalizing way that affects the national peculiarities of a people in the EU.

National identity implies an axiological identification and deep empathy with those belonging to the same nation, which is seen in the shared history, in the common spirituality, in the uniqueness of the spoken language. The national identity is taken for everything that is "home". "Home" is living and expressing special feelings; defining "home" construction is extremely difficult. National identity also involves a whole amalgam of experiences, reactions, etc. It produces a kind of common resonance between those who do not know each other directly. A dangerous obstacle to national identity was represented by any multi-national empire that wanted a flattening, uniformity of identities, but by divine will and prophecy, they instead of disappearing were even better outlined[11].

Christianity in general and Orthodoxy, in particular, have played a decisive role in shaping national identity. The proof of this fact is the survival of the Romanians' national identity during the Austro-Hungarian rule despite all the prohibitions, which shows that the identity consciousness of the Transylvanian Romanians with their brothers in Wallachia and Moldavia was stronger than all imperial restrictive and anti-national laws.

National identity today, in post-modernity is jeopardized by the whole secular ideology of forced and illogical encouragement of national minorities in an attempt to segregate the national unity of the Euro-Atlantic peoples. National identity must survive these secular attempts through authentic, value-cultural, and especially religious manifestations. The latter are the most frequent forms of manifestation of the national

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11   *Ibidem*, p. 382.

identity, so national identity also has a role in the salvation of man.

The call for the salvation of man is not solitary, but communitarian. Namely, it is personal and at the same time communitarian-national. Man is saved in his nation because both man and peoples will be assessed and judged. Therefore, the prophecy of God flows over man and his nation. That is why understanding this truth helps us value the importance of the national identity of man in the effort of gaining salvation.

4   Missionary solutions to the challenges of religious and national identity

The secularized post-modern society leads to the total desecration of contemporary man and a relativization of his values. We are facing a confusing reductionism. Starting from modernity, the Church has been excluded from the public sphere, its competence in delivering a public objective discourse has not been recognized, and religiosity has been reduced only to the subjective private space of man. The phenomenon of desecration or the tendency of contemporary man to liberate the profane from the sacred authority is well represented by secularization[12] or, in other words, led to the process of secularization. Secularization has attained all spheres of contemporary life so that "the desecration of social structures and political order are realities whose extent cannot

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[12] Mihai Himcinschi, *"Secularizarea - o problemă contemporană" (Secularization – a contemporary issue)*, in: *Revista Teologică*, 93 (2011),nr. 2, Universitatea „1 Decembrie 1918" Alba Iulia, Facultatea de Teologie Ortodoxă, p. 121.

be hidden"[13], realities which first of all affect, from a missionary perspective, the relationship of society with the Church.

Desecration is a phenomenon derived from the paradigm of modernism and post-modernism with a strong impact on Christian values and life[14], representing a real danger[15]. Reaching the point of "absence of a Creator in the world"[16], "Faith in God and His Supernatural Revelation are expelled from all spheres of activity as being anachronistic; faith becomes irrelevant, it is unobjectivized; faith becomes a "religious opinion" or a "religious feeling"[17].

From the social point of view, de-Christianization first reached the upper classes of society, intellectuals, and scientists, and later came to be found in the folk and workers' strata, being much more related to industrialization and urbanization. "But the link between modern secularization and Christianity was not as transparent as the sectarian theology wants it to be understood"[18].

In English, the term "de-Christianization" was used to mean the detachment of Christians from the Church and less as a loss of faith. "We would say that these "Christians without the Church"

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[13] Idem, *Misiologie şi Ecumenism* (*Missiology and Ecumenism*(, *Partea I, Curs an III – sesiunea februarie-martie*, Universitatea „1 Decembrie 1918" Alba Iulia, Facultatea de Teologie Ortodoxă, p.130.

[14] Gheorghe Istodor, *Introducere în Misiologia ortodoxă* (*Introduction to Orthodox Missiology*), Bucureşti, Edit. Do minor, 2009, p. 255.

[15] Idem, *Iubirea creştină şi provocările contemporane (Christian love and contemporary challenges)*, Bucureşti, Edit. Sigma, 2006, p. 115.

[16] Idem, *Misiunea creştină ca activitate permanentă şi practică (Christian mission as a permanent and practical activity*), Bucureşti, Ed. Sigma, 2006, p. 228.

[17] Idem, *Dialogul dintre ştiinţe si religie din perspectiva Misiunii Bisericii (The Dialogue between sciences and religion from the perspective of the Church's mission*), Bucureşti, Ed. Do-minor SRL and Ed. Rawex Coms SRL, 2010, p. 79.

[18] Simona Nicoara, "*Controverse, opinii şi dezbateri despre profilul secularizarii" (Controversies, opinions and debates about secularization*), in: *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, No. 10, 2005, p. 74.

and the sectarian phenomena could count for a "de-Christianization" that emphasizes the institutional character and the tax records of church taxes. Closer to the French meaning would be the term *leakage*, with a common use since the 1830s to the end of the nineteenth century. *Ad litteram*, it would mean "waste", "loss" of religious practice, especially in the industrial basins of Wales, but also in Ireland where "cabaret religion" would cause missionaries to turn *pubs* into preaching places. We will add that this loss occurs through a kind of mild contamination of "bad habits" without the intervention of provocative agents"[19].

De-Christianization is the separation of man from God, and this subject has been widely debated since the 1963 conference in Lyon. Because of this idea, there is "the double danger of giving this composite notion (i.e., de-Christianization) a sort of historical autonomy, as if it did not penetrate into the Christian texture because of a Christianization plot and a chain of de-Christianization (if we want to call it that way) but because it is a constructed notion to give *a priori* (...) to the analyses *a posteriori* by virtue of the idea that the historian is accustomed to the image of the de-Christianization (nature, scale, phenomenon dynamics) based on documents, often supporting ambivalent readings, the image of a Christian passing through life, which mixes the greatest impulses of faith with deviations, superstitions, apathy"[20].

In conclusion, both the desecration of man and his de-Christianization have had a significant impact on human culture

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19 Bernard Plongeron, "La dechristianisation a-t-elle une histoire? Note pour une réflexion méthodologique", in *Christianisation, dechristianisation*, Actes de la Neuviènne Recantre d'Histoire Religieuse teme à Fontenrand les 3, 4 et 5 octobre 1985 organizé par le Centre de Recherches d'Histoire Religieuse at d'Histoire des Idees (Université d'Angers), le Centre Culturel de l'Onest (Abbaye Royale de Fonterand) et la Societé Française d'Histoire des Idee set d'Histoire Religieuse, Press de l'Université d'Angers, 1986, p. 97.

20 *Ibidem*, p. 98.

in modernity and post-modernity. In the West, more than anywhere in the world, man has increasingly focused on a kind of religiosity, as he cultivates a desecrated culture and, more than that, a deeply non-Christian culture. The two phenomena led to a violent de-culturalization of Christianity. In this context, human relationships have been artificially altered, and the revealed truths and Christian morality have been refuted. In this context, more than ever, a serious religious, theological, historical and cultural education as well as a healthy discernment to separate the wheat from the chaff are necessary, and to understand what is necessary or unnecessary for the faith and for the purpose for which man has been created - the salvation of the soul.

Pseudo-religious syncretism is not a functional mechanism useful in the transition to a new order, representing a new compromise between opposing powers. Instead, being a contradiction, it is an expression of conflicting interests, including the protest against the dominant, religious and secular power. As a synthesis, pseudo-religious syncretism is interpreted as an instrument of oppression, creating a false unity and concealing social conflicts.

The fear of pseudo-religious syncretism must be given more attention, as it can hinder inter-religious contacts. The unobserved nature of some forms of syncretism may, on the other hand, facilitate dialogue. Dialogue can be seen as a process involving decision-makers from two or more symbolic systems. Other questions to be asked are: To what extent does it influence the power relations in the religious traditions, the dialogue and the possible accusations of syncretism? Who is the religion in this dialogue? Is there participation of the laity? Is syncretism a problem in discussion and do the so-called syncretists have a stake in this dialogue?

Philosophical syncretism is a pre-Christian phenomenon that came to light at the end of the first century BC. and the beginning of the 1st century AD. At that time, Greek philosophical systems borrowed philosophical ideas from each

other, transforming themselves into syncretistic systems on the one hand or eclectic on the other. Philosophical eclectism represented a philosophical trend that combined all the ideas considered good, viable or right from different systems in order to create a solid philosophical basis. The main eclectical philosophers were Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC)[21], Marcus Terentius Varro (115-25 BC)[22] or Quintus Sextius (a.n. 70 BC)[23]. On the other hand, philosophical syncretism combined religious ideas from different philosophical systems, creating a new doctrine.

We can also speak of a religious mutation in the secularized and globalized world. We mean, in this sense, extreme radical or fundamentalist movements that have a radical character, or - at the opposite pole - we are talking about a mutation towards a diffuse, relativist, anonymous and syncretistic individual religiosity. To this is added the proliferation of parallel neo-religiosities of mystical-esoteric, magical or therapeutic nature that are completely autonomous from any institution or religious tradition. We see the disintegration of any religiosity,

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[21] Marcus Tullius Cicero was one of the most important Roman orators, philosophers, poets or letters writers who had a great intellectual and political influence over the last years in which Rome had the status of Republic. We would like to mention some of his important works, such as *De Republica*, *De legibus* or *De naturaDeorum*. Matthew Bunson (ed.), *A Dictionary of the Roman Empire*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 89.

[22] Marcus Terentius Varro is said to have been the most erudite of the Romans, and had a vast erudition in most of the fields known at that time. Ebenezer Cobham Brewer (ed.), *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press , 2014, p. 273.

[23] Quintus Sextius founded a school in Rome that studied Stoicism and Pitagoreism (Anthony Preus (eds) *Historical Dictionary of Ancient Greek Philosophy*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, p. 349.

a nihilistic mutation of religion characterized by the contradictory phrase "religions without God"[24].

Desecration, de-Christianization, and syncretism are dimensions of the process of secularization, of today's man, a state that affects both religious and national identity. Through authentic religious instruction, the Church can cultivate both the Orthodox and the Romanian national elements, the aim being to form a conscience of Orthodox and Romanian identity, the awareness of membership in the Church and the nation, leading to the shaping of an ecclesial and national unity for today's Romanian Christian.

5   Conclusions

The unity of the Church springs at the economy level from the everlasting unity of the Holy Trinity. Ecclesial unity is the expression of God who subsists eternally as Three Divine Hypostases of the One divine Being. Ecclesial unity is at the root of the religious identity of a nation and a person. Religious identity is not exhausted only in belonging to space and a community, but is related to our inter-communion with God, at a time overwhelmed by His eternity.

Religious identity gives birth to the national one; if the first place us in dialogue and communion with God, the second one puts us in dialogue and communion with our ancestors. The nation represents the concrete and profound reality in which the individual becomes a person with an identity, a person who acquires a teleological dimension, that is, he has a creed, a confession, and a well-articulated purpose.

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[24] See Valer Bel, *„Comunitatea mărturisitoare în contextual lumii secularizate şi globalizate" ("The confessing community in the context of the secularized and globalized world"*), in: vol. Simpozionul. *„Modernism, postmodernism şi religie"*, Constanta, 2005, Iasi, Edit. Vasiliana'98, 2005, pp. 33-34.

Religious identity is jeopardized by harmful phenomena such as de-Christianization, desacralisation or syncretism, while national identity is affected and degenerated by globalization and the aggressive policy of promoting the legitimate rights of the nation.

The mission of the Church on religious identity must start from the updating of the catechetical dimension of the Church, and about national identity, it must emphasize the anamnestic connection with our ancestors. Testimony and Orthodoxy are the fundamental elements of the Orthodox mission about the ecclesial and national identity. Ecclesial identity is part of man's efforts to become deified, and national identity is the expression of man's fulfillment within his own nation at the level of God's economy.