



Daniel Munteanu

## Editorial

This year is an anniversary for the *International Journal of Orthodox Theology*. We have reached in 2019 the 10th year of our existence as an open-access journal, i.e., ten successful years along which we publish many significant contributions to the international orthodox and ecumenical theology.

All the more is the joy to publish in the first issue articles of world-known theologians. Most of the articles were presented during the first international conference of IOTA (International Orthodox Theological Association), that took place in Iași, Romania, between the 09<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, writes about „The unity of the Church is the gift of God and a co-responsibility of the clergy and the lay faithful“. Here, His Beatitude Daniel underlines that



Prof. Dr. habil. Daniel Munteanu, University of Walachia, Târgoviște, Romania, Coordinator at the Doctoral School of the University “1<sup>st</sup> December 1918” of Alba Iulia, Romania, PD at the Otto-Friedrich University of Bamberg, Germany

our society needs religious and moral values marked by the truth of faith, the liturgical life, and the mystic-ascetic experience of the Church. A renewal of the Orthodox Theology is necessary. This can occur “by intensifying the connection of contemporary theology with the theology of the Holy Fathers, with the liturgical and mystic-ascetic (phylocalical) spirituality of the Church.” At the same time, “the Most Holy Trinity is the source, model, and purpose of panorthodox unity and synodality in the Church.”

The host of the international IOTA-Conference, His Eminence Metropolitan Teofan, the Metropolitan of Moldavia and Bukovina, underlines in his „Welcome Address” the link between theology and spirituality. Contemporary theology is on the one hand oriented to Christ as “the model, the prime and ultimate basis for the knowledge of God and the creation,” on the other hand contextual, i.e., an “answer to the particular needs of the time.” Real theological wisdom is spiritual wisdom, the knowledge of the will of Christ (Colossians 1: 9-10).

In his inaugural lecture at the IOTA-Conference, His Eminence Metropolitan Kallistos Ware speaks about “Synodality and Primacy in the Orthodox Church.” Here he describes true theology as an experience of truth and as a “sense of wonder.” Ecclesial community is deeply marked by the Eucharist. “It is the Eucharist that holds the Church together and makes it one Body in Christ. Ecclesial unity is not imposed from above by the power of jurisdiction, but it is created from within by communion in the sacramental Body and Blood of the risen Christ”. The Church can be therefore described as a “eucharistic organism”: “the Church makes the Eucharist, and the Eucharist makes the Church.” Due to this liturgical aspect, synodality and primacy are to be understood “primarily in a mystical and sacramental context.”

The President of the IOTA, Prof. Dr. Paul L. Gavrilyuk, writes about “Encountering God: Spiritual Perception in the Bible, Tradition, and Film.” He deals in his paper with the central questions: “*what does it take to perceive God?*”. He shows that

“similar to communication with human persons, our communion with God crucially involves an experiential dimension, which presupposes a form of perception. Recall the biblical prophets receiving the ‘word of the Lord.’ We rely on the reports of the prophets and, therefore, on testimony. However, the prophets themselves received the word from God and, therefore, at some juncture, a form of perception is involved in this communication.” Prof. Gavriilyuk presents also the Spiritual Perception Research Project: “*Spiritual Perception’ is an umbrella term that covers a range of perceptual powers that make divine-human communication possible.* In the first phase of our project, we explored how different authors in the Christian tradition from Origen of Alexandria to John Wesley, Karl Rahner, and Hans Urs von Balthasar understood spiritual perception.”

Archpriest Prof. Dr. Andrew Louth investigates in his article the historical roots of the concept “orthodox” as well as with its contextual and political implications: “The use of the term ὀρθόδοξος has a long history; already in the second century ὀρθόδοξος was used to describe the belief of the Church, that called itself ‘Catholic’: in contrast to the heretical beliefs of groups that had broken away from the Church, the Catholic Church which proclaimed and defended the Orthodox Faith, meaning true belief or opinion, ὀρθή δόξα. (...) The first time the Byzantine Church *identified* itself as Orthodox was at the end of the Iconoclast controversy, and the promulgation of a document called the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*”.

Prof. Dr. Elena Ene Draghici-Vasilescu writes about: „Pseudo-Dionysius and the concept of Beauty.” She shows that „Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite compares the experience which constitutes the object of his treatise *The Mystical Theology*, that of spiritually and intellectually gaining access to the knowledge of ‘mysterious things,’ with the process of carving a statue (ἄγαλμα)”.

Steven Nemes, a Ph.D. student in Systematic Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary and Adjunct Professor in the College of

Theology at Grand Canyon University, USA, writes about “The intelligibility of the cosmos and the existence of God in Dumitru Stăniloae’s *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*.” For him “in the opening chapter of his *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, Dumitru Stăniloae proposes a close connection between the intelligibility of the cosmos and the existence of a transcendent Intelligence which brings it into being. The object of this essay is to investigate this proposed connection - more specifically, whether the inference from intelligible being to intelligent cause is valid - and to note its significance for Stăniloae’s natural theology more generally as well as for the problem of ‘irreligious experience’.”

Last but not least, Daniel Munteanu, Professor at the University Walaia of Târgoviște, Romania, and Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of Orthodox Theology, underlines the meaning of pedagogy in the orthodox tradition, based on the theology of Clemens of Alexandria. Clemens of Alexandria, the first theologian who elaborate a genuine Christian ethics, is appreciated as an ingenious promoter of education. In his writings, the *παίδευσις* motif is central. Clemens exercised a decisive influence on *Christian spirituality and mysticism*. Without him, the mystical theology of Evagrius Pontikus, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus Confessor and Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita is unthinkable. He is also the first Christian theologian who writes about apophatic theology and the spirituality of hesychia. We find in Clement of Alexandria the beginning of the hesychastic tradition, i.e., the spirituality of uninterrupted prayer as union with God. Constant prayer leads to the union of man with God. *Vita contemplativa* and *vita activa* are inseparable. Through prayer, human beings attains a clarity of vision and understanding that Clemens calls *clarity of righteousness*.

Due to this very rich theological and spiritual content of the first issue of IJOT in 2019, I wish our readers at the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary a constructive and fruitful lecture!