



Athanasios V. Koliyfoutis

Tendencies and Directions in Modern Greek Theology during the 20th century as a framework for the formulation of the pastoral care of the Greek Church: a critical approach

Abstract

Our work focuses on highlighting tendencies and directions in modern Greek Orthodox Theology during the 20th century. We refer both to the "Westernization" of theological thought and its "Babylonian captivity" in spiritual tendencies of western intelligentsia in the first half of the 20th century, as well as to its gradual awakening and theological conversion during the second half of it. We point out the characteristic features of this movement, such as the "return" to the Fathers of the Church, theological research on sources of faith, thorough study of eucharistic ecclesiology and theology of the person or promotion of the philocalic asceticism of Orthodox ethos. Mo-



Athanasios V. Koliyfoutis, PhD in Theology, Post Doc Researcher Department of Theology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

nasticism flourishes spirituality of Orthodoxy in Greece and academic Theology is getting more and more developed rapidly in the two Universities of the country. However, at the end of the 20th century and under the influence of rapid socio-economic changes, Christians no longer receive the authentic message of the Gospel and pastoral communication between pastors and their flock seems to be postponed. To sum up, prosperity and decline, right path and deviation, progress and regression are proved to be the two sides of the same coin and vouch for the cross-resurrected identity of the Greek Orthodox Church.

Keywords

westernization, eucharistic ecclesiology, theology of the person, philocalic asceticism, pastoral care

1 The go between phases in the development of Greek modern Theology during the 20th century. The phase of westernization of Orthodox theological thought

Developments in modern Greek Theology during the 20th century forged the historical and theological framework, within which the pastoral care of the Greek Orthodox Church took its final shape. Schematically, we could say that from the "Westernization" of Orthodox theological thought and its "Babylonian captivity" in spiritual tendencies of western intelligentsia, especially in the first half of the 20th century, we are gradually moving to an awakening and theological conversion during the second half of it. In fact, thorough study of the literature leads to the conclusion that during the first period, an almost complete transfer of the western way of life and thought takes place in Greek theolog-

ical thought and indeed, "independently of the Orthodox ecclesiastical interpretation of life or often in opposition to it"¹. Uncritical approval of unprocessed borrowings, such as "neo-Kantian idealism, positivist apologetics and neo-scholastic structure of thought" in a transactional way, is combined with the establishment and operation of Greek theological schools according to western standards. Such schools are gradually alienated from standards of the Orthodox Church experience and life².

2 The historical context during the 20th century: Inherent difficulties and agents of expression of theological thought and pastoral care

At the same time, it should not escape our attention that during the 20th century the Greek state is almost in a constant state of war, which obviously affects and influences all factors of social and cultural life of a place. The Balkan Wars, the First World War, the minor Asia military campaign, the interwar period, the Second World War, the Occupation, the Resistance, the Civil War, the rise of postwar Greece, the dictatorship of the Colonels, and the postcolonial period are typical pages of the recent history of the Greek state that prove the truth stated above. In this historical context, pastors of the Orthodox Church had to keep alive the hope of God's people and manipulate their flock in Christ by educating Christians in the truth of the Gospel. We talk about pastors of a newly founded Church, which had just received its autocephaly from the Ecumenical Patriarchate and was going

¹ Σ. Γιαγκάζογλου, *Στο μεταίχμιο της Θεολογίας. Δοκίμια για τον διάλογο Θεολογίας και Πολιτισμού* (Αθήνα, Δόμος, 2018), p. 198.

² Δ. Πάλλης, Σχεδιάγραμμα πρόσληψης τῶν ἀρεοπαγιτικῶν συγγραφῶν στὴ νεότερη ἑλληνικὴ Θεολογία: Μὲ εἰδικὴ ἀναφορὰ στὴ γενιὰ τοῦ '60. *Θεολογία* 1(2014), pp. 301-326.

through the period, in which it had to be organized administratively, in order to respond pastorally to the challenges of such a period of time.

Bearing in mind the historical context, we can assume that an important role in the westernization of Orthodox theological thought and life during the 20th century was played by Christian brotherhoods, which were "assigned" the task of re-evangelization and catechism of Greek Orthodox people, although the official Church was in charge of it. They constituted Christian organizations, which were founded and operated according to protestant standards and undertook to feed the spiritual needs of Christian people. Their operation counted on Western rationalism, judicialism, puritanism and pietism, while they were used to projecting and emphasizing a self-sufficient code of moral behavior for believers, which aimed to recapitulate the whole content of the Orthodox faith³. Spirituality of believers was pastorally connected with their morals and the mystery of the holy confession was related to sterile duty, completely alienated from the soteriological framework of the Orthodox faith and life⁴.

However, beyond the anthropocentric pastoral deviations mentioned above, which may be found in every period of time, we must not unilaterally exclude the evidence of God's grace in the making of history. Such a criticism confirms that the 20th century was not a spiritually dry and pastorally ineffective period of time at all. Important Saints and elders were brought out, established themselves in the consciousness of Orthodox people and left their sign on pastoral care of the whole Church; Enlightened

³ Σ. Γιαγκάζογλου, *ibid*, pp. 199-200. Cf. Α. Γουσίδης, *Οι χριστιανικές οργανώσεις: Η περίπτωση της αδελφότητας Θεολόγων η «Ζωή»: Κοινωνιολογική προσέγγιση, ανανεωμένη έκδοση*, (Θεσσαλονίκη, Πουρναρά, 1993), Β. Γιούλτσης, *Κοινωνιολογική θεώρησης των θεολογικών αδελφοτήτων. Θέματα της κοινωνιολογίας της Ορθοδοξίας* (Edited by Γ. Μαντζαρίδης) . (Θεσσαλονίκη, Πουρναρά, 1975), pp. 169-203 και Γ. Μαντζαρίδης, *Κοινωνιολογία του Χριστιανισμού, αναθεωρημένη έκδοση*. (Θεσσαλονίκη, Κυριακίδη, 1995), pp. 302-314.

⁴ *Ibid*.

prelates responded to their call and emerged as worthy shepherds supporting people in difficult times; Many anonymous clergymen struggled to feed hungry persons and relieve the sick and inveterate ones, as well as guide Christians to the truth of Christ; Saint Nektarios, the Saint of the 20th century, Saint Arsenios of Cappadocia, Saint Savvas of Kalymnos, Saint Siluanos of Athonite, Saint Anthimos of Chios, Saint Sophia of Kleisoura, Saint Philotheus Zervakos, St. Nicephorus the leper, St. Sophronius of Essex, St. Joseph the Hesychast and others shepherded people in a unique pastoral way, proving that we are not allowed to approach such an era unilaterally.

3 From the phase of the "Babylonian captivity" in spiritual tendencies of western intelligentsia to the theological awakening and conversion

After the Second World War, rapid changes take place in the field of theological thought of Greece, especially after the 1960s⁵. "Return" to Fathers of the Church, theological research on sources of faith in a wide range and their "purification" from elements of Western theology and spirituality make researchers comment on a sense of liberation of Orthodox Theology from Western theological intellectual forms. Eucharistic ecclesiology, theology of the person, the teaching on the distinction between essence and actions in God, the philocalic asceticism of the Orthodox ethos and the monastic tradition take their position at the center of Orthodox theological thought⁶. The demand for dialogue between Orthodoxy and people of modern world starts to gain more and more ground, scholastic theology seems to be receding in favor

⁵ Β. Φανάρας, *Ηθικής ιστοριογραφία. Τάσεις και εκφράσεις στην Ελληνική Θεολογία από το 1837 μέχρι σήμερα* (Θεσσαλονίκη, Το παλιμψηστον, 2006), pp. 108-111.

⁶ Σ. Γιαγκάζογλου, *ibid*, p. 200.

of Orthodox ontology and monasticism of Mount Athos seems to be going through a period of rebirth and renewal.

4 The contribution of monasteries to the pastoral guidance of Christians

As far as monasticism is concerned, a multitude of monasteries throughout Greece, such as the ones of Holy Trinity in Aegina, Logovarda in Paros, Saint John the Theologian and Evangelist in Patmos, Saint David in Evia, Agathon in Fthiotida, Saint Dionysios in Olympus, saint Raphael in Lesvos, saint Patapios in Corinth, saint Prodromos Makrinos in Megara, hermitages in Mount Athos, and so on emerged as healing and spiritual feedback centers for Christians and places of pastoral guidance by charismatic elders. The spiritual assistance of monasteries in all struggles of homeland liberation is also considered to be of decisive importance. In contrast to the decisive contribution of monasticism in many areas of the spiritual and social life of Christians during the 20th century, we can detect the survival of a spirit of senility as well, which constitutes an important pastoral problem of this period. This spirit was expressed in several ways. Sometimes in the form of Christians' guidance detached from decisions of the institutional Church. In other circumstances, in the form of a prophetic lust, or unrestrained and phobic futurology and conspiracy theory. And sometimes, it took the shape of a deviation from the cooperation of the official Church with the ruling authorities on critical issues of contemporary reality, such as the crisis of the coronavirus pandemic.

5 Other forms of pastoral action of the institutional Church

All these changes take place in a period of time in which, due to the conditions we have described above, the pastoral approach of the Orthodox Church depends on building up its relationship

with the state and its pastoral work is primarily spent on supporting the people from suffering and the unbearable consequences of wars. Education and dignified survival of the clergy, the formation of the constitution of the Church and its social organization and activity are highlighted in dominant pastoral actions during this era⁷. At the same time, a large number of catechetical schools were established, which were experiencing an impressive growth⁸.

On the other hand, it appears that the Greek Church is trying step by step to get out of the prolonged introversion of the previous period. This is also confirmed by the decision of ecclesiastical bodies to strengthen the oral preaching of the Gospel to the flock, which is conducted by local priests, or the establishment of special religious, moral and social journals, which aim to spread elements of paternal literacy to the Orthodox flock. The Holy Synod of the Greek Church publishes the official journal called "Ekklesia" in 1923, as well as the scientific magazine "Theology". Local dioceses are proceeding with the publication of their own journals, such as the metropolis of Thessaloniki, which releases "Grigorios Palamas", the metropolis of Pella "the Preacher", the metropolis of Drama the "Guardian of People's Children", the metropolis of Mantinea "the news of the Church", the metropolis of Philippi and Neapolis the "Saint Peter", the metropolis of Mytilene "the shepherd" and so on⁹. The "migration" of these treasures that were recovered from the fund of the sacred inheritance may have indicated the intention of the Orthodox Church to take problems of modern people into consideration and open up a communication channel with new age. Perhaps it was an opening, even if timid or daring, towards the modern world, society and culture, with the aim of their rebirth and rebaptism in

⁷ Γ. Κονιδάρης, *Εκκλησιαστική Ιστορία της Ελλάδος. Από της ιδρύσεως των Εκκλησιών αυτής υπό του αποστόλου Παύλου μέχρι σήμερον. Τομός Β'* (Αθήνα, Γρηγόρη, 2011) p. 277.

⁸ Χ. Παπαδόπουλος, *Η Εκκλησία της Ελλάδος. Απ' αρχής μέχρι του 1934* (Αθήνα, Αποστολική Διακονία, 2011), p. 253.

⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 254-255.

the spirit of Orthodox Theology. Of course, as we have mentioned above, this opening mostly consisted in the realization of the social work of the Church and the acquaintance of the members of its crew with treasures of the paternal tradition.

6 The development of academic theological thought.

In this context we have to include the development of academic theological thought in the field of theological schools of the country, as well as development of pastoral science at all, which also found fertile ground during this period¹⁰. Important academic teachers write and defend their doctoral dissertations on innovative topics for the time. Starting from the School of Theology in Athens, Nikos Nisiotis, Fr. Ioannis Romanidis, Ioannis Zizioulas, Konstantinos Skouteris, Christos Giannaras and Panagiotis Nellas take the lead in presenting topics that aim to highlight the Roman spirit of Orthodox anthropology, epistemology and ecclesiology¹¹. At the same time, professors Ioannis Mesoloras, Amilkas Alivizatos, Ioannis Kornarakis and Alexandros Stavropoulos teach the course of pastoral Theology to their students and become the presenters of new theological directions in the field of practical Theology in Greece. On the other hand, the faculty of Theology in the University of Thessaloniki follows steps described above, with its own academic staff get activated in similar publishing efforts. Professors Antonios-Emilios Tachiaos, Georgios Mantzaridis, Panagiotis Christou, Savvas Agouridis and Ioannis Fountoulis get involved in the investigation of issues related to the area of patrological research, byzantine tradition, dual methodology of Fathers of the Church, Eucharistic Theology and so on¹².

In addition, archbishop Ieronymos Kotsonis, metropolitan of Tyrol and Serentiu Panteleimon Rodopoulos, Christos Vantsos and

¹⁰ Ibid, pp.256-270.

¹¹ Σ. Γιαγκάζογλου, *ibid*, pp. 203-205.

¹² *Ibid*, pp. 205-206.

Alexandros Gousidis are elected professors in the field of Pastoral Studies and devote themselves to highlighting and developing aspects of pastoral Theology and canon law. Along with their colleagues academics of the University of Athens, they attempt to highlight the importance of the cooperation of Pastoral Theology with social sciences. They formulate the principle of a pastoral approach of functional social groups and at the same time, they defend the necessity of a dialogue between Pastoral Theology and sciences of Psychology and Psychiatry in the context of an Orthodox pastoral Psychology. It is obviously an attempt to extend knowledge of those who put pastoral treatment in practice, taking advantage of scientific tools of other social sciences. According to Church Fathers such a practice responds to the widening of pastoral care and constitutes an irrefutable criterion of correct shepherding. Therefore, academic Theology gave a "helping hand" to the pastoral approach of Greek Orthodox Church, so that it could respond successfully to the pastoral challenges of the current situation.

7 Pastoral deviations at the end of the 20th century: The attempt of manipulation of the Church by the state.

However, gradual ideologicalization of Orthodoxy, as well as gradual transformation of Orthodox Church from the body of Christ into a legal entity of public law and the underestimation of the sacred Canons in comparison with laws led to the appearance pastoral problems that stemmed exactly from the progressive consolidation of such a Western model of thought and life, mentioned above¹³. Besides, we must not forget that representatives of political life of the country made an effort in the greater part of the 20th century, to dominate administratively, manipulate legislatively and exploit practically over the official Church,

¹³ Π. Βασιλειάδης, *Η Ορθοδοξία στο σταυροδρόμι* (Θεσσαλονίκη, Παρατηρητής, 1992), pp. 91-127.

in order to achieve their political goals and ambitions. Obviously we talk about a major pastoral problem, which the Church had to overcome, in order to ensure the necessary freedom to organize its internal affairs according to Christian Orthodox principles and to carry out pastoral work according to the dictates of the Gospel. However, pastors' decision to modify the basis of their pastoral approach from sacred canons to secular methods, was characteristic throughout this period.

We can distinguish three periods, during which the relationship between the State and the Church was established during the 20th century. From 1852 to 1923, where there is a regime of unbridled politicism and obvious involvement of the political orders in the selection of bishops of the Church. From 1923 to 1974, significant changes take place in the charter of the Church, which grants the power of choosing bishops to the Holy Synod of the Hierarchy of the Church of Greece, although the State insists on playing an interventionist role in ecclesiastical affairs. Finally, from 1974 until today, the normality in the administration of the Church has been restored to a large extent and hierarchy seems to take over the fate of administration in its own hands¹⁴. The transposition of metropolitans, the illegal sentencing of metropolitans without the charges against them being examined by synodical courts, the age limit of metropolitans or illegal provisions on the replacement of bishops and the declaration of their widow's throne constitute characteristic aspects of this period. Unfortunately it turns out that bishops or groups of bishops did not respond to the administration of the Church according to the spirit of the holy Canons. The involvement of government's ministers in the preparation of the list of candidates for the prelacy, the possibility of local or other administrators to play a major role in the selection of singers of the ecclesiastical hymns and sacristans in parishes, the right of the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs

¹⁴ I. Θεοδωρίδης, 2003. Η εκλογή των επισκόπων κατά τους καταστατικούς χάρτες της Εκκλησίας της Ελλάδος. Κρίσεις και σχόλια με βάση την κανονική παράδοση της Εκκλησίας (Θεσσαλονίκη, Aristotle Univeristy of Thessaloniki, Master Thesis) pp. 133-134.

to choose the bishop from the tripartite body, the establishment of an Aristonian Synod or the position of the bishop of the Armed Forces, the anti-canonical and against Christian ecclesiology distinction of the holy Canons into doctrinal and administrative ones, the selection of the members of the Church councils by the respective minister and many others are included as well in our comments we presented above¹⁵.

The first serious and characteristic split of the pastoral Church took place during the years 1916-1917, when the national division in relation to Greece's participation in the First World War was extended to the Church as well. Greek bishops of the new countries, with spiritual dependence on the Ecumenical Patriarchate, recognized the revolutionary government of Eleftherios Venizelos, that was established in Thessaloniki, while at the same time, the Holy Synod of the autocephalous Church of Greece proceeded to anathematize him. Then an ecclesiastical assembly was set up, which elected the Higher Ecclesiastical Council consisting of the hierarchs of the new countries. When King Constantine left and Venizelos returned to Athens, the supreme ecclesiastical court presided over by the Metropolitan of Thessaloniki Gennadios imposed severe punishments on bishops, who did the "anathema" and turned against Venizelos' revolution. More specifically, he sentenced the metropolitan of Athens Theokletos and the one of Larissa Arsenius to be deposed, while he installed the metropolitan of Kitius Meletius taking the advantage of an Aristinian Synod¹⁶.

Finally, as evidenced by the study of the relevant literature, the greater part of the 20th century was full of both conflicts and divisions as well as relations of "beneficial cooperation" between political orders and hierarchs. Many of them sometimes deviated from the fundamental goals of their pastoral practice and sought

¹⁵ X. Ανδρέοπουλος, *Σχέσεις Εκκλησίας και Πολιτείας στην Ελλάδα κατά την Επταετία 1967-1974* (Θεσσαλονίκη, Aristotle Univeristy of Thessaloniki, Doctoral Thesis, 2016).

¹⁶ Γ. Κονιδάρης, *ibid*, pp. 264-266

to serve personal ambitions, and sometimes with pastoral conscientiousness, they worked to ensure greater and greater administrative autonomy of the Greek Church. From a pastoral point of view, a key component of the pastoral work is connected with the spirit of peace and the modification of the shepherd to a shepherd of peace, who is called by the Christ to heal the divisive tendencies of society and act as a unifying factor of its heterogeneity¹⁷. Under such circumstances he responds to the necessity of joining Christ's rational sheep to the unity of the flock of the Church, within which He unites everyone and everything with unbroken bonds.

8 The pastoral care of the Greek Church in a new social context

Step by step cultural discoloration of societies combined with religious diversity, modern religious syncretism that promotes individual religiosity and superstition, as well as the necessity of people to receive rational answers to their existential questions, in contrast with any authority, alienated Christians from the body and the genuine spirituality of Orthodox Church¹⁸. Obviously, broader crisis of intellectual values, as a culmination of social inequalities and economic upheavals, emphasis of postmodernism on the subjectivity, skepticism and personal expression

¹⁷ Fr. A. Γκίκας, *Μαθήματα ποιμαντικής* (Θεσσαλονίκη, 1997, Δεδούσης), p. 79.

¹⁸ Π. Βασιλειάδης, *Μετανεωτερικότητα και Εκκλησία. Η πρόκληση της Ορθοδοξίας* (Αθήνα, Ακρίτας, 2002), pp. 19-20: "Already in the pre-modern era "with the appearance of the Enlightenment, secular science replaced religion in terms of certain public knowledge, something which made sacred stories fall to the level of the most uncertain knowledge, and religion to an individual affair. That is why one of the primary ideals of modernism was the complete separation of the State and the Church, but also more generally, the pushing of religion into the private sector of human activities, and the declaration of the secular sector as free from all religious influence...".

of human being, as well as depersonalization of society, which promoted the necessity of increasing production and consumer spirit, contributed decisively to the prevalence of such a reality. The splitting of the united body of Christ into clerics, laymen and monks· the removal of lay element from the administration of the Church· the over-centralized way of forming and operating its structures· the underestimation of the parish as a molecular entity of the Church that constantly accomplish indestructible unity of all Christians in Christ· and their passive participation in the liturgical life of such a body, without any suspicion of the connection of this life with the ethos of the Church and its extensions, are undoubtedly some aspects of this new reality. In this context, pastor was transformed from a mystic and inspirer of his flock towards spiritual struggle against passions to a presenter of an incomprehensible, most of the time and to most people, spiritual discourse that has been disconnected, as autonomous, from its spiritual reference. Moreover, he seems to incarnate the role of a law enforcement officer, controller, rebuke and social comforter, who has to respond to the organization of a charitable project alienated from the spirit of Christ's love. The legalization of pastoral ministry, i.e the one-dimensional perception of the sacred Canons as legal texts and the exercise of Pastoralism in a judicial manner, as well as the practice of antinominism, that demands the exercise of Pastoralism in the absence of the sacred Canons, are, in several cases during the 20th century, characteristic deviations of pastoral ministry of Greek pastors and proof of the secularization of their role¹⁹.

As a consequence of such pastoral distortions, we can realize why distinct gradations in the stratification of the flock and the way, in which Christians began to approach the mystery of faith and relationship with their shepherd, took place. That's why

¹⁹ Fr. Γ. Καψάνης, *Η ποιμαντική διακονία κατά τους ιερούς κανόνες* (Αθήνα, Άθως, 2003), pp. 19-20.

other people being "consistent" with the spirit of syncretism described above combine aspects of Christian teaching with disparate elements of other religious traditions. Moreover we can find out the ones, who turn to their spiritual father, expecting him to respond to the role of an de-sanctified pastoral counselor, who works in the context of a social-welfare activism in imitation of Western pastoral models. Some others belong to the so-called "purists" who follow the creeds of the faith but do not associate with those who do not share the same point of view, under the influence of a strong individualistic spirit, that promotes the view of the Church as a private healing institution.

Conclusions

To sum up, at the dawn of the 20th century a westernization of the Orthodox faith consists of "loans" from Western Theology to the Orthodox tradition. Then, a theological conversion takes place which aimed at broadening the acquaintance of the flock with the spirit of the Fathers. However, at the end of the 20th century and under the influence of the socio-economic changes that we briefly highlighted above, the channel of communication between shepherds and their flock does not seem to remain open, so that the signals of the Gospel message can reach the flock in a loud and clear way. As we mentioned above, the Orthodox Church is said to emit an anachronistic, incomprehensible or in any way, a difficult to understand message, that fails to give Christians a "taste of God" and reasonably, gives the pastoral work a sense of unfruitfulness. However, when pastoral care of the Orthodox Church rests on the laurels of the past and counts on an "absolute self-sufficiency" and "demonic omnipotence", then its message of salvation takes on a stereotypical dimension and the task of disciplining Christians is disconnected from its Christ-centered perspective²⁰.

²⁰ Δ. Αρκάδας και Δ. Μπεκριδάκης, *Λόγος σκληρός, κεφάλαια τοξικής θεολογίας* (Αθήνα, εξάντας, 2001).

This is exactly the pastoral challenge for pastors at the end of the 20th century. The necessity of a spacious and ecumenical pastoral dialogue with otherness seems to be absolutely urgent, which will carry out the anthropology of the Church in the modern society. In this way It will be proved that no one is excluded from such a dialogue, which aims to revive the transformative life proposal of Orthodoxy in the postmodern world, which almost everyone is being trapped in new impasses in. For the achievement of such a perspective, the implementation of a multidimensional pastoralism on the part of the shepherding Church is absolutely required. Thorough organization of its philanthropic and social work and the pastoral care for the profound people of the time and the vulnerable social groups was a characteristic trend of Pastoralism in Greece during the 20th century. Even though this work was on several occasions experienced by the flock as autonomous and disconnected from love of Christ, that gave birth to it and always sustains it. However, the inspiration of everyone being involved in arts and modern culture with the regenerative and renovating spirit of Orthodoxy's life proposal obviously doesn't respond to the target at all.

The overcoming of introversion in the context of an "open" and extended missionary action of the Orthodox Church combined with the understanding, confession and spreading of faith in Christ, as a response to the new dilemmas of the post-modern world, constitutes an undeniable pastoral requirement, that was not implemented, as it should have been, in the context of the 20th century. Successful treatment of neophanic sects, syncretism and parareligious movements of the 20th century, as a basic pastoral task in every society, presupposes pastoral vigilance and even greater systematization and organization, which has not been achieved until now. Modernization of pastoral work and its adjustment to perceptual patterns and the way of functioning of our postmodern world are definitely connected with utilization of internet in everyday pastoral practice of the Orthodox Church, which now constitutes the new social environment of everyone. For the successful implementation of all pastoral re-

quirements described above, preparation and pastoral specialization of modern pastors is particularly important. In fact, they are the ones who, in addition to the grace of God that precedes and promotes pastoral work, must also acquire the basic scientific knowledge, which can vouch for the success of such a work. Therefore, a preparation of shepherds is absolutely required, which seems to be served by the actions of the Foundation for Pastoral Education of the holy Archdiocese of Athens, which, according to our research, was founded to implement such pastoral goals.

The presence of a multitude of Saints in every age, including the 20th century, and worthy pastors who experienced in practice the sacrificial character of their priesthood, proves that the possibility of realizing such a perspective always remains alive and continuous in the body of Christ.