Gina Luminiţa Scarlat

Spiritual, Anthropological Paradigms in the Patristic Tradition: *the Church* and *the Divine Liturgy*

Abstract

Stirred by St. Maximus the Confessor¹ and his plan as revealed in *Mystagogy*, Father Dumitru Stăniloae has looked into the theme of man as church and also into the topic of one’s *liturgy* in his paper on *Spirituality and Communion in the Orthodox Liturgy*, ing his examination on samples of philocalic texts written by Byzantine authors who lived in different periods. The current paper focuses on the research of two anthropological, spiritual paradigms recurrent in the Greek patristic tradition, namely *the church* and *the Holy Liturgy*, as well as

of the semantic correspondences between the liturgical terminology and the spiritual life. The current research embarks upon the patristic period and the first half of the second Christian millennium, insisting upon the comparative analysis of the meanings of the selected Greek patristic texts. Its aim is to bring to the fore the terminological transfer from the sphere of the liturgical life into the hermeneutic context of spiritual life, with a view to insisting on the way how the spiritual meanings of the personal liturgical life have evolved through their recontextualization.

Keywords
Liturgy, Spirituality, symbol, anthropology, recontextualizations, semantic variability, hermeneutical opening

1 Introduction

Due to their fundamental role in spiritual formation, the Church and the Holy Liturgy have been used as anthropological paradigms in writings where the Holy Fathers wanted to express the meaning of human life as an act of supreme devotion and service to God. Ever since the apostolic period, the Holy Liturgy, in its primary form, has stood for the center of the Christian life, being the divine way through which Christ manifests His presence in the middle of newly established communities. Christian monasticism knows different forms of organization in the fourth century when it witnesses an ever-growing tendency to share the Lord in Liturgy and life sacraments but above all, to internalize the experience of His presence. The patristic hesychasm until then centred around saying out loud Jesus’ monologic prayer, brings now to the fore the analogy between the spiritual life and the Holy Liturgy, thus leading to an understanding of one’s inward experiencing Christ as an inner liturgy. From the fourth century onwards, there appear the first patris-
tic reflections on the understanding of the Holy Liturgy as a form of spiritual life whose sole purpose is the mystical union with Christ. The Holy Liturgy is perceived as a paradigm of spiritual life, which leads to a transfer of liturgical terminology in its descriptions.

The theme of the church as an anthropological model expresses the human vocation to receive the presence of God in oneself and to serve Him throughout one's lifetime and through one's inner self experiences. The semantic analogies between the place of God's worshipping and man and their constituent parts connote, through an allegorical interpretation of the church, with the anthropological, spiritual purpose of transformation through grace, co-operation with God and union with Him. As a paradigm of clerical life, the theme of the Holy Liturgy comprises the significance of the personal liturgy, which further entails new matching meanings between the place of worship, its elements and the very Liturgy, and man as a whole, with his entire body and soul. Its main objective is to continually grow and preserve a habit of placing oneself in a personal relationship to Christ the Lord, primarily through prayer.

Although they did not write liturgical interpretations, philocalic fathers reflected on the importance of liturgical spirituality in order to cleanse of passions and perform an act of consecration. Intended to explain and reveal their understanding of the Holy Liturgy from the perspective of spiritual life, there is a specific hermeneutic pattern recurrent in their works. Not insisting on the explanation of the liturgical practice does not mean ignoring it. These fathers create analogies and suggest a synonymity entailed between the parts of the soul and the components of the place of worship, i.e., between the inner workings of the mind and the Holy Liturgy. Christ is the supreme liturgist who supports man's efforts to attain a resemblance to Him. Prevailing in these authors' reflections is the act of performing a spiritual endoscopy, i.e. spiritual life seen as a service to God within one's heart and soul.
2 The Biblical Premises of the Analogies between the Liturgical Space and Man, or the Divine Liturgy and One’s Spiritual Life

The spiritual-allegorical biblical interpretation of the place of worship and the liturgy service represents the premise of including certain ecclesiastical and liturgical terms into the hermeneutics of spiritual life.

Jesus Christ, Savior of humankind, denoting to His body as „temple” (John 2, 19; 21: Ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἔλεγεν περὶ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ) committed to setting off ecclesial anthropology, i.e. perceiving man as a church. Saint Peter the Apostle speaks of the „hidden man of the heart” (I Pt 3, 4: ὁ κρυπτὸς τῆς καρδίας ἁνθρωπος) whose adornment is held as the prettiest in the sight of God. Saint Peter’s metaphorical language is but a paraphrase of the Old Law as embodied by the spiritual meanings of the New Testament, which places self-sacrifice on an equal footing to man’s commitment to God.

Saint Apostle Paul dissociates the human person in keeping with the criterion of its psycho-physical conformation, into the „outward man” (ὁ ἐξω ἡμῶν ἁνθρωπος) and the „inward man” (ὁ ἐσωθεν/ τὸν ἐσω ἁνθρωπον, II Co 4, 16; Rom 7, 22) by using a symbol-based language. In anthropo-ecclesial patristic formulations, their denotations are semantically analogous to the place of worship and its most essential elements.

Saint Paul the Apostle formulates his first theories on man seen as a place of God (a temple of the Holy Spirit, I Co 3, 16-17: Οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ναὸς θεοῦ ἐστε καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ ήικει ἐν ὑμῖν; εἰ τις τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φθείρει, φθείρει τούτον ο ὁ Θεός· ὁ γὰρ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἁγιός ἐστιν, οἵτινες ἐστε υμεῖς; 6, 19: ἦ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι τὸ σώμα ὑμῶν ναὸς τοῦ ἐν ἐν ὑμῖν Ἀγίου Πνεύματος ἐστίν, οὔ ἔχετε ἀπὸ θεοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἐστε ἑαυτῶν; II Co 6, 16: ὑμεῖς γὰρ ναὸς

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Θεοῦ ἐστε ζῶντος), whose inner spiritual activity transforms him into a „living sacrifice, holy and (well-)pleasing to God“ (Ro 12, 1: παραστήσαι τὰ σώματα ύμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἀγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ Θεῷ, τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ύμῶν)3. The phrases „living sacrifice“ (θυσίαν ζῶσαν) and „rational worship“ (λογικὴν λατρείαν) connote with man’s ability to comprehend and perform his spiritual service of worship as mediated by two fundamental terms intrinsic to any liturgical service. They reflect a close relationship between spirituality and the liturgical life, which is why the selected and re-contextualized liturgical terminology have become carriers of spiritual meanings, formally resounding to their meanings to understand a liturgical appropriation of the spiritual life. This biblical theme of yielding one’s whole self to God acquires a precious exegetical/hermeneutic value in patristic, spiritual-oriented literature.

Writing about „the glorification of God in body and spirit“ [I Co 6, 20: δοξάσα τε δή τὸν Θεόν ἐν τῷ σώμα τι ύμῶν, ἃ τινα ἐστιν τοῦ Θεοῦ], Saint Paul the Apostle lays the foundations of a hermeneutics of spiritual life emerged in the form of inner engagement, seen as an anthropological occurrence of the sacerdotal service at the temple.

Saint Peter the Apostle also contributes to the understanding of spiritual life as a personal service unto God by stating the figurative sense of the term sacrifice (cf., I Pt 2, 5: ἀνενέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας εὐπροσδέκτους τῷ Θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ).

The references in the New Testament pointing to the understanding of man as a church and of the spiritual life as a service unto God constitute the premise of introducing the anthropo-

3 Η ΚΑΙΝΗ ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ, Το πρωτότυπο κείμενο με μετάφραση στη δημοτική, Ελληνική Βιβλική Εταιρία, Αθήνα, 2003: Παρακαλῶ οὖν ύμᾶς, ἄδελφοί, διὰ τῶν οἰκτιμῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ, παραστῆσαι τὰ σώματα ύμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἀγίαν, εὐάρεστον τῷ Θεῷ, τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ύμῶν (...), p. 364.
ecclesial theme in patristic theology, which symbolizes a spiritual program of the Christian life. It is established on the reinterpretation of some fundamental liturgical terms from a spiritual perspective and their employment in statements about the spiritual life.

3 The Patristic Evolution/ Development/ Path/ Nature of Anthropo - Ecclesial and Liturgical - Spiritual Biblical Interpretations

On a special occasion avowing his Christian confession, the priest Lucian of Antioch († 312) used/ employed his chest as the Holy Communion Table, where his Christian disciples served the Divine Liturgy. This case, where the chest is identified with the altar, expresses an actual liturgical interpretation of man who gives himself up to God both physically and spiritually. The example of Lucian, the Martyr brings to the fore the man – church – liturgy relationship as discussed primarily by the philocalic fathers, experiencing God in the depths of their hearts.

In the IIIrd century, the anthropo – ecclesial theme was analyzed in the context of biblical-exegetical researches carried out by the Alexandrine scholar Origen (185-254). In the Commentary on the Gospel of John, he sees in the Lord’s body an expression or face of the Church: Ἀμφότερα μέντοις, τό τε ἱερόν, καὶ τό σῶμα τοῦ Ἄρσου, κατὰ μίαν τῶν ἐκδοχῶν τύπος μοι εἶναι φαίνεται τῆς Ἐκκλησίας (...) [X, 20., PG 14, 369CD].

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4 St. SYMEON THE METAPHRASTUL, The Lives of the Saints in January [7], PG 114, 409D: Ὅ δὲ τράφεται μὲν, ἐφὶ, τὸ δὲ τὸ ἐμὸν ἔσται στήθος ὑμῶν, οὐ μοι δοκοῦς ἐξ αὐτόποι ὕλης ἀτιμοτέρα γενησομένη θεῷ, ναὸς δὲ ἁγίος ὑμεῖς μοι γενῆσεσθέ, πανταχόθεν μεπεριστοὶ χισάμενοι; SYNAXARIUM ECCLESIAE CONSTANTINOPOLITANAE, opera et studio Hippolyti Delehaye, Bruxellis, 1902, Mensis October, 15, p. 197-141.
Analyzing the term „temple” which he used to designate the body of Jesus Christ our Saviour, Origen centres his arguments around the body – church relationship based on their common ability to receive/ carry/ take in spiritual content and presence: „Some will perhaps be cautious/ reserved to believe/ assume that all the elements of a temple [ναὸν] might relate to the body of flesh, no matter how they see it, which is why I shall seek the simplest solution and say that, in both cases, the temple [ναὸν] is referred to as «flesh» [σῶμα], because, similarly to the temple filled with the glory of God who dwels in it, «the first begotten of all creations» being the «image and glory of God», the body [σῶμα], that is, the Church [Ἐκκλησία] rightly receives the name of the temple [ναὸν] of God because it embodies within the image of divinity”\(^5\). Starting from the image of the temple symbolizing the body of Lord [ναὸς – σῶμα], Origen eventually perceives His body as a prototype of Church [σῶμα – Ἐκκλησία]. A reaction to this way of thinking can be seen at Saint Maximus the Confessor who, approaching the more general relationship temple - the body of God in terms of the more particular church – man relationship, devised a complex theory of the anthropologically understood church. Philocalic parents explain spiritual life in a variety of ways. The most common resemblance is with one’s “inner struggle” on an ascending path. The Holy Church and the Divine Liturgy have inspired the priests adhering to hesychasm as a spiritual practice, hence being especially fond of inner life. Based on the man – church relationship, some philocalic parents compare one’s spiritual life with one’s inner „service”. The most significant developments of this association contribute to the embodiment of a spiritual vision of man, seen as a liturgical space in which spiritual life is carried out as a liturgical service.

\(^5\) Origen, Τόν εἶς τὸ κατὰ Ἧσσαννην εὐαίσθειον ἐξηγητικῶν, X, 23., PG 14, 380D-381A.
3.1 The Greek Fathers and their Spiritual Assimilation of the Liturgical Vocabulary/Terminology in the First Millennium

The particular characteristics of the spiritual-liturgical thinking of the philocalic parents lie in their manner of recontextualizing the notions of liturgical „space” and „time”, and of ascribing new symbolic connotations to the liturgical language while preserving their truthfulness and being exclusively driven towards the discovery of deep spiritual meanings. This recontextualization, which involves a new referentiality, engages semantic changes in terms such as a church, objects and liturgical elements. They lose their primary, denotative meaning, acquiring, by compensation, similar or different anthropological meanings. The church is endowed with anthropological meaning, thus becoming a symbolic framework for the man called to the sanctification of life through his cooperation with God. For the philocalic Fathers, the Liturgy becomes one of the most symbolic icons of man’s inner spiritual activity due to their ability to change the perception of the time spent focusing on worship services into that of a time spent in the spiritual union to God. The notion of „liturgical time” receives the meaning of „rhythm and mood” experienced on a personal level independent of the real liturgical time, which is an internalization of it. The hypothetical liturgical transfer at the level of spiritual life becomes only partially metaphoric because the same significant event is recurrent in man’s meeting with God in the deepest and most profound inner self. People of genuine spiritual perceptiveness, the philocalic parents, reveal to us their thoughts imbued with the fire of divine grace and the inner transformation of the man who experiences the presence of the Holy Trinity.

3.1.1. Saint Macarius the Egyptian (4th century) transfers ecclesial and liturgical terms into anthropological formulations
connected to the spiritual activity in a manner that marks a deep understanding of man seen as a place of God’s worship. Hieromonsk Alexander Golitzin has noticed the existence of the analogy between soul and Church in Liber Graduum and in the macarian homilies, as well as the use of worship terminology recurrent in the passages where the Divine Liturgy was interpreted as an instantiation of spiritual experiencing and gradual metamorphosis of the true Christian during his time on earth which is continued in the eschaton. Homily 52 I sums up Saint Macarius’s entire spiritual, anthropo-ecclesial conception. Its content enables for an observation of the symbolic correspondences between man/ soul and church/ liturgy. Saint Macarius starts from the premise that all the church’s iconomy takes place for the human soul understood as the living and true church of God. The man of God bonds within himself four ecclesial-liturgical meanings: that of the church, that of the temple, that of the true altar and that of the living sacrifice. In the same bearing of Alexandrian interpretations, the cult and the Old Testament Law are presented as a shadow of the church of Christ, while the church is seen as the shadow of

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The Sacraments of the Holy Church are completed in the name of the soul, bound to become a holy temple of God and a church of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has been given to the Church so that through Baptism, Altar, the Eucharist, and all the holy/divine sacraments the faithful hearts may be stimulated by Him renewed and replanted by forbearance and re-focus on the spiritual life. Being thus renewed through the work of grace and embracing transformation [μεταβολήν] souls become apt to inherit eternal life. Based on the principle that the ones revealed are the likes and shadow of the hidden ones [τὰ φανόμενα τύπος καὶ σκιά εἰσι τῶν κρυφῶν], Saint Macarius grows the perception of man and of the heart, the center of inner spiritual life, as a church while the one pertaining to spiritual life is perceived as an inner Liturgy accomplished through grace on the altar of the heart [θυσιαστήριῳ καρδίᾳ]9. The purpose of the parable of the church is to enlighten on the spiritual meaning of the man summoned to temperance, rising to asceticism, purification, and the work of the Spirit to eventually become a place of the Holy Trinity.

The correspondences established by Saint Macarius according to the allegorical explanation of the spiritual meaning of man are the following:

- the living church [ζωσά ἐκκλησία] – the soul [ψυχῆ]
- the visible church [ὁρωμένη ἐκκλησία] – the inner man [σκιά ἐστι τοῦ ἐνδον ἄνθρωποι]
- the church of Christ [ἐκκλησία Χριστοῦ] – the man of God [ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος]
- the temple [ναὸς Θεοῦ] – the man of God [ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος]
- the visible temple [ὁ ναὸς ὁ ὀρώμενος] – the heart [τῆς καρδιᾶς]

• the actual altar [θυσιαστήριον ἀλήθινον] – the man of God [ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος]
• living sacrifice [θυσία ζώσα] – the man of God [ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος]
• the altar [θυσιαστηρίῳ] – heart [καρδίᾳ]
• the Holy Liturgy – the work of the Spirit in the soul [ἐνέργειαν τοῦ πνεύματος]

Saint Macarius has a double perception of the church [ἐκκλησία] in which one reads man’s calling to be a holy sanctuary which enables for life changing meeting with God. Unlike the first two correlations which show, in a general sense, the structural ecclesial understanding of the innermost human self, there is a third spiritual analogy which denotes the spiritual extent of human, personal accomplishment in relation to Christ. In the Word of Love, Saint Macarius specifies the meaning which enables the soul to be seen as the church of God, transferring the particular ability of the place of worship to gather onto the inner work of gathering thoughts [αὐτῇ γὰρ ἡ ψυχὴ συνάγει ὅλους τοὺς λογισμοὺς καὶ ἔστιν ἐκκλησία τῷ Θεῷ]10. The four meanings of the spiritual man [ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος] primarily express the nature of Christian asceticism which emphasizes man’s whole surrender to God. The analogy altar [θυσιαστηρίῳ] – heart [καρδίᾳ] is a meaningful translation of the spiritual meaning of the human self to embrace the renewing and transforming work of the Spirit [ἐνέργειαν τοῦ πνεύματος]. On a temporal – earth-bound level, the church communion with God becomes an image of the inner church that acquires the symbol value of the soul. The ecclesial – liturgical model eventually designates spiritual life whose purpose

is the transformation/ metamorphosis [μεταβολήν] of man under the epictic action of the Holy Spirit.

The shift of emphasis from the meanings of the visible church onto those of the inward life does not diminish the real importance of the place of worship and its liturgical order. Taken as models, they work as indicators of the interiorization of the spiritual work carried out in the church. The semantic translation of the Holy Liturgy through a form of somatic asceticism combined with a mental one, - the purpose of which is to embrace the divine work that fulfills spiritual human interiority-, makes the Christian aware of accomplishing the spiritual purpose of life and of avoiding automatisms.

Macarius’s comparisons are a lexical formula conceived of with a view to raising awareness on the meaning in which the man is called to assume the life received.

3.1.2 Saint Basil the Great († 379) semantically equates man with the place of worship as a result of his spiritual life. In the treaty Of the Holy Spirit, he explains the „place” of the Holy Spirit concerning the man who gives himself wholly to God: „The Spirit is truly the place of saints”. Moreover, the saint [ὁ ἅγιος] is the right place for the Spirit, because he offers himself as a dwelling [ἐνοίκησιν τὴν μετὰ Θεοῦ] and becomes His temple [ναὸς αὐτοῦ]” [XXVI.].

The anthropo-ecclesial expression used by Saint Basil is of biblical origin, and the temple quality of the Holy Spirit is acquired through a Christian life. In the Ascetics [The Little Rules], the Cappadocian parent develops the spiritual meaning of the phrase „expressive service” [λογικὴ λατρεία] in Romans 12, 1, semantically identified with divine living, so pleasing to God.

Both explanations are about the service of God through spiritual life in the spirit of the Holy Apostle Paul, who used the terms temple and service figuratively, favoring this type of interpretation and giving it new depths.

11 St. Basil the Great, ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ, XXVI, 62., PG, 32,184A.
12 Id., ΟΡΟΙ ΚΑΤΑ ΠΛΑΤΟΣ ΚΑΤ’ΕΡΩΤΗΣΙΝ ΚΑΙ ΑΠΟΚΡΙΣΙΝ, 230, PG 31, 1236BC.
3.1.3 Saint Epiphanius of Salamis († 403) uses the anthropo-ecclesial symbolism in poetic forms with reference to the Mother of God whom he refers to as the „heaven and temple and throne of divinity“ [ὑφανός καὶ ναὸς καὶ θρόνος τῆς θεότητος, PG 43, 492B], „the thoughtful table of faith“ [νοερὰ τῆς πίστεως τράπεζα, 493B], „virgin candlestick“ that casts darkness away, making the light shine [λυχνία παρθενική, 496B], „altar of sacrifice“ [θυσιαστήριον, 497A] which carried „Christ-like a table“ [τραπεζοφόροσα τὸν οὐράνιον ἄρτον Χριστόν, 497A] giving Him to the world for the forgiveness of sins.\textsuperscript{13} The metaphors of Saint Epiphanius, imbued with elements of the ecclesial vocabulary, denote an understanding of the qualities and calling of Virgin Mary through their meanings, which she has assumed since her entry into the Temple in Jerusalem. In this case, one can speak of a personalization of ecclesial terms, as compared to their use in objective formulations, which is the most common.

3.1.4 Saint John Chrysostom († 407) employs the phrase „rational cult“ [λογικὴ λατρεία] to denote the virtues brought to God through the soul [PG 63, 3., 92], and through the absolute sacrifice [body and soul] offered to God, i.e., martyrdom in its own and spiritual ascetic sense.\textsuperscript{14} His explanation serves to carry on the meaning of the spiritual life of reasonable worship previously established by Saint Paul, the Apostle. Concerned with the liturgical life and spiritualization of Christians, St. John has included liturgical notions into the terminology of spiritual life due to comprehending the common spiritual purpose shared by the Holy Liturgy and Spirituality.

\textsuperscript{13} St. Epiphanius of Salamis, ᾿Εγκώμιος εἰς τὴν ἅγιαν τὴν Θεοτόκου, PG 43, 493B-497A.

\textsuperscript{14} St. John Chrysostom, Ἐρμηνεία Eἰς τὴν πρὸς Ἐβραίους Ἐπιστολὴν, ἐκτεθεῖσα ἀπὸ σημείων μετὰ τὴν κοίμησιν αὐτοῦ XI, 3., PG 63, 93.
In his semantic equivalence of *man* and *church*, St. John repeatedly uses the word „ναός“, particularly for the denotation of spiritual space which it acquires and encompasses. By urging for prayer in any place, St. John Chrysostom reaches a pragmatic solution for his theological vision: „You are the church of God, ye shall not look for a place“ [Ναός εἶ τοῦ Θεοῦ, μὴ ζήτει τόπον]15. In a different context, by comparing men with angels and by using the icon of the church, St. John intended driving them towards a stage of spiritual becoming. „Cherubs have become the chariots of God. Let us become the Church of God“ [ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα ναός]16. When asked about God and the reason „why it is said He lives in us“ [Διὰ τί ἐνοικοῦσ;], Saint John replies: „Because we are his Church [Ότι ναός αὐτοῦ γινόμεθα]“17. The God-loving Christian is like a church inhabited by God and referred to as a living space where His sanctifying presence manifests.

3.1.5 The Eastern theologian of the Church, Saint John Cassian († 435), whose entire work is written in Latin, talks about the importance of fasting and reaches a conclusion that explains its spiritual ultimate purpose within anthropo-ecclesial boundaries: „Labor enim carnalis spiritus contritioni coniunctus acceptissimum Deo sacrificium dignumque sanctitatis habitaculum puris mundisque recessibus exhibebit“18. The result of asceticism is the very manifestation of the sacrifice pleasing to God. The idea of the heart as the place of God is stated as follows:

16 *Id., Ἀπελθόντος τοῦ ἐπισκόπου μαρτύρων ἡμέραν ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ ἐπιτελέσαι, ἔλεχθη ἡ ὀμιλία ἐν τῇ πόλει εἰς μάρτυρας, καὶ περὶ κατανύξεως καὶ ἐλεημοσύνης*, 1, *PG* 50, 646.
17 *Ibid., ΟΜΙΛΙΑ ΕΙΣ ΕΥΤΡΟΠΙΟΝ ΕΥΝΟΥΧΟΝ ΠΑΤΡΙΚΙΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΥΠΑΤΟΝ*, 8., *PG* 52, 403.
Certainly, it is not just the corrupted body, but especially the pure heart [cor mundum] that becomes the God’s dwelling [habitaculum Deo] and temple of the Holy Spirit [templumque Spiritus]”\textsuperscript{19}.

The meaning of the divine place is limited to the heart, perceived by Eastern spirituality as the spiritual center of the human being. As opposed to Saint Macarie the Egyptian whose monastic environment he knew him, Saint John Cassian establishes a different semantic equivalence for the heart [cor – habitaculum Deo; templumque Spiritus]. Despite their differences, the common element in the two analogies is the emphasis placed on the interiorization of God’s experience.

3.1.6 To Saint Mark the Ascetic (5\textsuperscript{th} century) the ascension of spiritual awakening, overcoming the limits imposed by the carrying out of catharhic and thought to construct commandments as well as proving one’s pure thoughts to Christ, all are a form of sacrifice. This is the stage when the baptismal grace is felt and works in those who are aware of their spiritual calling: \textit{But this grace is in us, with its face hidden, ever since Baptism, and it will only reveal itself to us long after having trodden down the path of commandments and chosen the healthy thoughts [ἡμῶν λογισμοῦς τῶν ἁρχιερεῶν Χριστῶ ως θυμία, 996A] of our nature, not the ones were bitten by the beasts bringing them before Christ, the High Priest, as sacrifice (...) And the temple is the holy place of the soul and body, which is built by God [Ναὸς δὲ, τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος θεόκτιστον τέμενος, 996B]. Finally, the altar [θυσιαστήριον] is the table of hope placed in this temple. On it, the mind sacrifices the thought, this first-born [πρωτογενῆς λογισμὸς ... ύπὸ τοῦ νοῦ ἀναφερόμενος θύεται] of every occurrence just like a firstborn cub is used as a repenting sacrifice performed for the one who brings it, provided that it is unstained.}

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Ibid., De coenobiorum institutis, V, 21, PL 49, 239B.}
But this temple too has a place on the inside of the iconostasis. It is there that Jesus has entered as a Forerunner [Evr 6, 20] on our behalf, and lived within us ever since Baptism, provided that we are not vile Christians [II Co 13, 5]”. This place is the innermost, the most hidden and the most sincere room of the heart, a room which, if it does not open through God and through rational and compassionate hope, none of us can really meet The One dwelling there and no one can tell if the sacrificed thoughts [λογικαί θυσίαι, 996C], had been received or not. (...) Once the faithful heart opens through the above-mentioned hope, the Heavenly High Priest [ἐπουράνιος ἀρχιερεύς] receives the first-born thoughts of the mind and burns them down in the divine fire, of which he says: „It is fire that I came to throw into the world, and I wish it were lit” [Lc 12, 49]20.

By the means of a symbolic language he designs, Saint Mark gives us another perspective on inner spiritual awakening: mind, thoughts, heart have become key anthropological words; altar, sacrifices are „, are key symbolic-liturgical terms , and Christ the High Priest and the divine fire are the theological ones to which the first two categories converge.

As an ecclesial paradigm to express the vision of spiritual life, Saint Mark would rather prefer the temple and the old testament cult as revealed by God to Moses, to which he adds Saint Paul the Apostle’s ecclesiastical-liturgical anthropology researches.

The semantic analogies established by Mark the Ascetic between man, place of worship, and service, are the following:

- temple – soul [ναός – ψυχή]
  - body [ναός – σῶμα]
- sacrifice – thoughts [θυμία – λογισμοῦς]
- liturgist – mind [νοῦς ἄναφερόμενος θύεται]

20 St. Mark the Ascetic, Ἀπόκρισις πρὸς τοὺς ἀποροῦντας περὶ τοῦ θείου Βαπτίσματος, PG 65, 996AC; Πρὸς Νιλόλαον νουθεσίαι ψυχωφελεῖς, 5., PG 65, 1036CD.
The established semantic correspondences express a basic understanding of man as a holy place created by God. The mind’s offering of its thoughts as a sacrifice brought to Christ, the High Priest, is one and the same with personalizing the meaning of the Holy Liturgy from the perspective of which man is a spiritual-liturgical being.

3.1.7 **Saint Cyril of Alexandria († 444)** integrates into spirituality and comments on Pauline’s urge from the *Romans* 12, 1 concerning the appearance of the body as a living and pleasing sacrifice to God [θυσίαν ζώσαν καὶ εὐφρεστον τῷ Θεῷ], understood as rational service in the spirit [λογικὴν καὶ ἐν πνεύματι λατρείαν], which he places about the verses *I Pt* 2, 5 and *II Co* 2, 15, which have as common idea the bringing of the man of God as a spiritual sacrifice. He continues the apostolic and patristic interpretation of that verse, highlighting the spiritual significance of the anthropological offering to God as a service to Him. His explanations denote semantic stability in relation to previous patristic reflections.

3.1.8 In *Epistle* 130, **Saint Barsanuphius († 540)** from Gaza develops the theme of ecclesial-liturgical anthropology within the confines set by Saint Paul’s conception [cfr., *Ro* 12, 1] and the explanations recurrent with Saint Mark the Ascetic: Hence, *burn incense from this fire so that God may receive the good fragrance of your incense* [θυμίασον, ἵνα ὀσφρανθῇ σοι τῶν θυμασμάτων] *and bring it before His Father with the life-giving Spirit for it to make a shelter within you, in your church* [παρασοὶ ποιήσῃ ἐν τῷ σῷ ναῷ], where you appear before Him as a

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21 *St. Cyril of Alexandria, Περὶ τῆς ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ προσκυνήσεως καὶ λατρείας, I., PG 68, 169A-B; 197B-C.*
living sacrifice, holy, well-pleasing to Him \[\overset{\omega}{} \text{παρέστησας σαυτὸν αὐτῷ θυσίαν ζῶσαν, ἀγίαν, εὐάρεστον αὐτῷ}\]\(^{22}\). The reference to the cult of the Old Testament in *Epistle* 201 does not prevent Saint Barsanuphius from expressing the heights of the Christian service in symbolical images: \((\ldots) \text{to serve Him in holiness and righteousness in all the days of your life} [\text{Lc} \ 1, \ 75], \text{in the altar of the inward man} [\text{ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τοῦ ἔσω ἀνθρώπου}], \text{where one brings mindful offerings to God} [\overset{\omega}{} \text{νοηταὶ θυσίαι προσφέρονται τῷ Θεῷ}], \text{Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh, where the fattened calf is sacrificed and sprinkled with the honest blood of the righteous Lamb (\ldots)}^{23}. \text{Emphasis is placed on the inner life of God understood as a continuous service.}

The expression \textit{in the church of the inward man} [\text{ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ ἔσω ἀνθρώπου}] used in *Epistle* 241 within the context of explaining the spiritual meanings of the Holy Liturgy signifies in a kernel the vision of man understood as a church in which the inner spiritual work of God’s service is accomplished\(^{24}\). The term \textit{λειτουεργία} used in the context of explaining how the body steered according to the needs \[\text{τὸ δὲ κυβερνάν τὸ σῶμα}\] becomes an instrument of personal service \[\overset{\omega}{} \text{ὑπηρεσίαν τῆς λειτουεργίας}\]\(^{25}\), expresses an understanding of Christian life in the liturgical sense.

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\(^{23}\) Ibid., p. 636.


The spiritual-symbolic analogies established by Saint Barsanuphius are the following:

- church – man \[\text{ἐν τῷ σῶ ναώ}, \text{Ep. 130}\]
  \[\text{inward man/ soul [τῷ ναῷ τοῦ ἔσω ἀνθρώπου, Ep. 241]}\]
- sacrifice – man \[\text{θυσίαν ζῶσαν, Ep. 130}\]
  \[\text{– thoughts [νοηταί θυσίαι, Ep. 201]}\]
- altar – inward man/ soul \[\text{ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τοῦ ἔσω ἀνθρώπου, Ep. 201}\]

Saint Barsanuphius continues the patristic anthropo-ecclesial vision, within the context of explaining the paradigm of Christian, spiritual living. With reference to the symbolic meanings of the notions of church and sacrifice, they show constancy as compared to the previous equivalences. The expression living sacrifice \[\text{θυσίαν ζῶσαν, Ep. 130}\] recurrent with Saint Macarius expresses a common anthropological conception. The phrase mindful sacrifices \[\text{νοηταί θυσίαι, Ep. 201}\] partially differs from that of Saint Mark the Ascetic \[\text{λογικαί θυσίαι, PG 65, 996C}\] as it signifies a common vision on innermost spiritual living.

The semantic equivalence of the altar with the human inner self \[\text{θυσιαστηρίου τοῦ ἔσω ἀνθρώπου, Ep. 201}\] is, unlike the one recurrent with Saint Macarius \[\text{θυσιαστηρίῳ καρδίας, Hom 52 I}\], a way of articulating spatiality by the means of an ecclesial term, i.e. the soul. The analogies established by Saint Barsanuphius express the human calling to serve God.

3.1.9 Contemporary with the hermit saints Barsanuphius and John, Dorotheus of Gaza († 560/ 580) commented on the troparion sung during the Feast of Lord’s Resurrection as comprised of Saint Gregory of Nazianz’s (330 – 389/390) theological expressions and established connections between the
Cappadocian theologian’s urge „to bring ourselves as fruits (offerings)” [καρποφορήσωμεν ἡμᾶς αὐτούς] and that of Saint Paul the Apostle in Epistle to the Romans to bring the body as a living sacrifice to God [Ro 12, 1], while explaining how to undertake the transforming anthropological path, accomplished through the disposition described in Epistle to the Galatians 2, 20: „I no longer live, but Christ lives in me”. The liturgical relationship sacrifice – transformation is recurrent in the commentary of Abba Dorotheus, seen in the context of spiritual life as a continuation of man’s assessment as a spiritual-liturgical being.

3.1.10 In his introduction to the interpretation of the Divine Liturgy [Mystagogia] Saint Maximus the Confessor (580-662) developed on the theme of man as church and on inner spiritual life as an innermost form of service to God.

The correspondences established between the three parts of the place of worship and the psycho-somatic, anthropological elements, represent the perpetuation of the patristic anthropo-ecclesial conception that denotes man as a spiritual being, called to attain the image and likeness to God through spiritual living.

The semantic correspondences established by Saint Maximus the Confessor through the contemplative interpretation [θεωρία] of the place of cult and of man, are the following:

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27 St. MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, Mystagogia, 5., PG 91, 681D-684A; 6., 684A.
Saint Maximus provides the most developed explanation of the conception of man as a spiritual-liturgical being. The correspondences between the ecclesial and the anthropological terms also bring to the fore the spiritual functions in keeping with the tripartite view of spiritual life as theorized by the monk Evagrius Ponticus (345-399). While explaining the soul’s resemblance to the holy church in a spiritual sense, Saint Maximus highlights the analogies between the components of the soul [mind/ νοῦς, reason/ λόγος] and those of the church [ιερατείον, ναός], according to the criterion of their ranking in keeping with their spiritual role. The emphasis is placed on the role of the soul in its inward union to accomplish the mystery that is performed on the divine altar of the mind [πρὸς τὸ τελούμενον ἐπὶ τοῦ θείου θυσιαστήριον μυστήριον, PG 91, 5., 981D].

The spiritual denotation of the whole man and of the soul as church where spiritual life is mediated in liturgical terms signifies or intends to look into the anthropo-ecclesial theme from a

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spiritual perspective based on the belief that the *church made by hands* [χειροποιητος ἐκκλησία] is a *spiritual model* through the *divine symbols* [θείων ποικιλίας κατὰ σύμβολον οὐσα παράδειγμα, 681D] it contains and is thus meant to lead the soul to the heights of Christian living [5., 681D-684A].

Not only is the man seen structurally, i.e., as a *church only*, but also as a spiritual project through which he accomplishes himself in his relationship to God. The inward Liturgy is an anthropological projection of the Holy Liturgy and it holds as its ultimate purpose the spiritual transformation of man through prayer, in relationship with God, in order to become in His likeness.

The symbolic similarities between man and church, spiritual life – the Holy Liturgy best suit the mystical anthropology of Saint Maximus the Confessor. He is the critic of the Holy Liturgy, who insisted on acknowledging personal participation during its service and on describing it as an icon that becomes internalized through spiritual life. Saint Maxim shares with Saint John Cassian the idea of the inner anthropological topos of the presence of God, although the names used to denote it are different. For Saint John Cassian, the place of the divine presence in man is *the pure heart* [cor mundum] while for Saint Maximus, this is *the pure mind* [μόνος ὁ καθαρὸς υπάρχει νοῦς] 29.

As far as the semantic comparison between the related terms is concerned, one can notice a recurrence of the term ἐκκλησία for *man*, in the general sense [ἄνθρωπος] and for the *soul* [ψυχή] in the particular sense, in the writings of Saint Macarius of Egypt.

A novelty in keeping with the previous accomplishments of the anthropo-ecclesial theme is the introduction of the structural relation *iereateion/sanctuary – soul* [ἰερατείον – ψυχή]. During Saint Maximus, the term ναός correlated to the *body* [ναός – σῶμα] undergoes a process of resemantization used to designate a structural section of the place of worship. The signifi-

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29 *St. Maximus the Confessor, Πρὸς Ὁλασσιὸν τῶν οἰσιτατων πρεσβυτερον καὶ ἱγουμένων περὶ διάφορων ἄπορων τῆς θείας γραφῆς, 31., PG 90, 369D.*
cance of the altar [θυσιαστήριον - νοῦς] differs from the ones recurrent with Saint Macarius of Egypt and Saint Barsanuphius of Gaza, but, similar to both of them. Saint Maximus uses it to denote the innermost space of the spiritual living. The hermeneutic approach made possible by means of alternative interpretations express, as with previous theologians, the investigative spirit of the author who senses new meanings.

3.1.11 Saint John of Sinai [John Climacus /of the Ladder] (cca. 597-649) bears in the biblical-liturgical language a psychospiritual explanation of philocalic life. In his writing To Shepherd, Saint John of Sinai had equated both the work of the spiritual confessor and the act of bringing believers to God with a „liturgy” which enables them their likeness to the angels [Τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ μόνον ἀεὶ τὸ ἔργον τῶν θείων λειτουργῶν, PG 88, XIII, 1193]30: „This and only this is the eternal work of those who serve God” [Τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ μόνον ἀεὶ τὸ ἔργον τῶν θείων λειτουργῶν, PG 88, XIII, 1193]31. In the footnotes, Father Staniloae would call that work „a never-ending cosmic liturgy”32.

Due to the similarities between the objectives of the spiritual life and the Divine Liturgy, Saint John Climacus prefers the term „liturgy” to render the high priest’s pastoral - spiritual mission. The text is also valuable for its references to the liturgy performed by priests and angels alike as referred to in patristic comments of the Holy Liturgy, seen as an essential part of religious life, which is why the author introduces the relationship of liturgy – purification – offering to God.

In another formulation, which can be understood both as a description of the stages of the spiritual life and as the partaking

30  Sfântul Ioan Scărarul, Proș ton poimen. Dògòs, XIII, PG 88, 1193D.
31 St. John Climacus, Proș ton poimen. Dògòs, XIII, PG 88, 1193D.
in the Divine Liturgy, Saint John uses two symbolic elements, taken from the terminology of the place of worship: the Holy of Holies [Ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων] and the Holy Table. The pastoral mission of the spiritual father is to lead those entrusted to him to the point of „revealing” Christ „resting on the mysterious and hidden Table” [τῶ Χριστῶν αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τῆς μυστικῆς αὐτῶν καὶ κρυπτῆς τραπέζαν ἀναπαυόμενον δεικνύειν]33.

The heart-mind relationship, symbolically rendered in liturgical terms, expresses the understanding of spiritual life as an inward service to God: „It is one thing to oversee [ἐπισκοπεῖσαι] the heart more often, and another to lead the heart, through the mind [διὰ νοῦς] that rules and raises rational sacrifices to Christ as an archiereus” [ἀρχιερέως λογικάς θυσίας Χριστῷ]34.

In the writings of Saint John of Sinai there is a clear dissociation between the heart and the mind. The semantic analogy between mind and bishop [ἀρχιερέως – νοῦς] indicates the active role of the mind in the spiritual life and its superiority in relation to other structural-anthropological elements. Due to its coordinating function of the whole human activity, the mind is similar to the "bishop" who presides over the Eucharistic assembly, in order to better bring to light the theological structure of the human person, which has multiple spiritual correspondences. The expression rational sacrifices [λογικάς θυσίας] is used in the same sense as in the writings of Mark the Ascetic, being synonymous with thoughts. In another formulation, the complete sacrifice mentioned in the Old Testament is a symbol of the personal, spiritual sacrifice offered to God: “Make your burnt offerings [ὁ λοκαύτωμα] without blemish. Because otherwise you didn’t use anything”35.

Saint John’s employment of liturgical terms to explain the anthropological, spiritual, inward work expresses the comprehension of spiritual life as a service to God. From the perspective of

33 St. John Climacus, ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ ΠΟΙΜΕΝΑ, XIV, PG 88, 1197D.
34 Ibid., ΚΛΙΜΑΣ, XXVIII, PG 88, 1137B-C.
35 Ibid., ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ ΠΟΙΜΕΝ, XIV, PG 88, 1197C.
semantic analogies and the emphasis placed on the role of the mind in the spiritual life, he can be considered a continuator of the spiritual thinking of Saint Mark the Ascet.

3.1.12 The bishop John of Karpathos (ca. 7th century VII) takes up the theme of ecclesiastical anthropology in a formulation in which it speaks of the "altar of the soul" as the inner place for the clean sacrificial offerings of God's prayers: „May the fire of prayers to God and the holy meditation of the words of the Spirit burn forever the altar of your soul [θυσιαστήρυον τῆς ψυχῆς]“ [98].

The expression the altar of the soul [θυσιαστήρυον τῆς ψυχῆς] is similar in meaning to a formulation recurrent in the writings of Abbot Barsanuphius, i.e. the altar of the inward man [θυσιαστηρίου τοῦ ἔσω ἀνθρώπου] and both expressions are used to denote the inner space of spiritual living.

3.1.13 Saint John Damascene († 749) integrates the anthropological liturgical ecclesial symbolism in the praises addressed to Virgin Mary from the homilies, which poetically explain her fundamental role in the salvation of the world. In a way similar to Saint Epiphanius of Salamis, Saint John of Damascus uses metaphors also inspired by the ecclesial-liturgical vocabulary through which he praises the Mother of God. He thus denotes her as a „holy place of God” [ναός Θεοῦ, 10], „spiritual sacrifice” [τὸ νοητὸν θυσιαστριον, 8., PG 96, 693C], „shrine” [κιβωτὲ, 7., PG 96, 689B], „censer” [θυμιατήριον, PG 96, 689C], „lamp” [λυχνία, 8., PG 96, 696C]. In a formulation in which the Mother of the Lord is praised as a „place of worship” built for the Lord, based on a Psalm verse [Ἅγιος ὁ ναός σου, θαυμαστός ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, Ps 64, 5], Saint John of Damascus

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36 St. John of Karpathos, ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΥΣ ΕΝ ΤΗ ΙΝΔΙΑ ΜΟΝΑΧΟΥΣ ΓΡΑΨΑΝΤΑΣ ΑΘΌ ΠΑΡΑΜΥΘΕΙΤΙΚΑ ΚΕΦΑΛΑΙΑ Ρ’, 98, PG 85, 1856.
37 St. John of Damascus, Λόγος εἰς τὸ γενίσιον τῆς υπεραγίας Δεσποίνης ἷμῶν Θεοτόκου VII, PG 96, 689B-696C.
highlights the effects of that building on the Son of God and his people: Christ has built *the place of worship for his own body*, and people are referred to as the *dwellings of the living God* [Ἐξ οὗ ναοργῶν Χριστὸς ἐαυτῷ τὸ σῶμα, ναοὺς δείκνυσι τοὺς βροτοὺς θεοῦ ζῶντος, 7. 689C].

The correlations between *body/man – a place of worship* emphasize the idea that the human nature and the whole man have the capacity to fathom God, being structured in such a way as to achieve spiritual realization in communion with the Creator.

The anthropo-ecclesial symbolism in these expressions concerning the person of the Virgin Mary has the purpose of highlighting the mysterious way in which she took part in the incarnation of the Son of God.

### 3.2 The Continuity of the Patristic Anthropo-Ecclesial Vision and the Spiritual Liturgy in the First Half of the Second Christian Millennium

The translation of the spiritual life in terms of the Holy Liturgy related to the anthropo-ecclesial theme continues through the profound examples of the Byzantine theologians from the first half of the second Christian millennium.

#### 3.2.1 The theologian of divine light, Saint Symeon the New Theologian [949 – 1022], continues the Patristic tradition of perceiving man as a church and inner life as a service. He integrates the spiritual semantics of light-bearing cult objects into the anthropological plan, thus expressing the ideal of living in Christ.

He uses the word *ναός* as a term of comparison for *the house of the soul* [οἶκος τῆς σῆς ψυχῆς] which he considers more valuable than himself [τιμιώτερος], and because of this, it is necessary for it to be „lit and to shine clearly [νοητῶς ὁφείλει φωτίζεσθαι καὶ καταλάμπεσθαι]” through the light of virtue.
maintained by „the divine fire” [διὰ τοῦ θείου πυρός]”[38]. The use of the place of worship lit by lamps, as a model for the soul, expresses the acknowledgement of a similarity between the ecclesial and the anthropological interior space, both sharing the element the light, but reliant on the sources of origin.

The stages of life that spiritually change the human being are explained in Catechesis 28 in relation with the main stages of the liturgical anaphora, in a particular way to suit the priestly service: unblemished life, self-giving as a pleasing sacrifice to God [θυσίαν τελειαν, ἁγίαν, εὐάρεστον, 266-267; cf., Rm 6, 16; 12, 1] in the temple of the body [ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ ἑαυτῶν σώματος, cf., I Co 6, 19 ], Christ the High Priest and his offering brought to God the Father in the above altar [εἰς τὸ ἄνω θυσιαστήριον καὶ παρὰ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως Χριστοῦ προσφορά τελεία τῷ Θεῷ καὶ Πατρὶ, 269-271], changed by the power of the Holy Spirit [δυνάμει Πνεύματος Ἀγίου μεταποιηθέντων] and transfigured into Christ [καὶ ἄλλαγέντων καὶ εἰς Χριστὸν, τὸν δὲ ἡμᾶς ἀποθανόντα καὶ ἐν δόξῃ ἀναστάνταν Θεότητος, μεταμορφωθέντων][39]. In this text the word ναός refers to the body, not the soul [ναῷ τοῦ ἑαυτῶν σώματος] as it does in the previous example, expressing the same idea of the anthropological capacity of inner living through God, according to the interpretation of Saint Paul’s the Apostle.

The word sacrifice [θυσία] refers to the spiritual state of self-denial and giving to God in the sense of its use by the Holy Apostle Paul. The term used for spiritual change [μεταποιείω] found in the Eucharistic anaphora, at the time of the Eucharistic

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epiclesis, indicates an analogy between the most mysterious moment of the Holy Liturgy and the core of spiritual life which shows that the Eucharistic change is, in the terminology of eastern spirituality, a guiding line for the anthropological change, which does not imply the change of the human nature, but its elevation at a higher level through saintliness, cleansed passion and holiness.

The liturgical terminology integrated into the exposition of the particularities of spiritual life has a double distinguishing effect. It determines both the understanding of the spiritual life from the perspective of the idea of change, which constitutes the divine core of the Holy Liturgy, as well as the understanding of the Holy Liturgy from a spiritual-contemplative perspective.

3.2.2 Saint Nikitas Stithatos (1015–1090) illustrates the theme of spiritual life understood as an inner liturgy in high theological density texts. He also uses expressions about the liturgical terminology to

The stage of the contemplative life is called by Nikitas Stithatos the work of,,liturgizing in order to purify the mystery of sight” [ἱερουργήσας καθαρώς τὸ τῆς ἐποπτείας μυστήριον], having as the ultimate effect the communion with Christ. The verb used [ἱερουργήω] designates the holy work proper to the liturgical service and spiritual life. The idea of spiritual transformation comes to life with the Christian ardent to cleanse himself of passions.

The Holy Liturgy is for the Nikitas Stithatos a model for experiencing the ,,mysterious liturgy of the mind”, conditioned by inner unity through the work the Holy Spirit of the soul power: As long as the nature of the powers in us is divided within, and is thus divided into many opposing parts, one cannot partake of God’s gifts which come above our nature.

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40 St. Νικίτας Στιθάτος, Δεύτερα φυσικών κεφαλαίων εκατόντας περὶ τοῦ νοοῦ καθαρσεως, 99., PG 120, 952B.
And not being partakers of them, one keeps oneself far away from the mystical liturgy of the heavenly altar, done by the work of the mind [τῆς μυστικῆς ἱερουργίας τοῦ ἐπουρανίου θυσιαστήριου τῆς κατὰ τὴν νοερὰν τελομένης τοῦ νοεὶς ἐργασίαν]. However, when through the diligence of the holy necessities one has cleansed away the filthiness of sin and, by force of the Spirit, gathered together the divided parts of themselves, only then does one rejoice sharing [ἐν μεθέξει] of the unspoken goodness of God and bring the divine mysteries of the mystical liturgy of the mind, to the empathic altar and above God’s heavens [καὶ τὰ θεία μυστήρια τῆς μυστικῆς τοῦ νοὸς ἱερουργίας εἰς τὸ ύπερουράνιον, καὶ νοερὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ θυσιαστήριον], in a way worthy of God - the Word, as true seers and priests of His immortal secrets [ὡς ἐπόπται καὶ ἱερεῖς τῶν ἀθανάτων μυστηρίων αὐτοῦ]41.

The expressions ἐν μεθέξει, τὰ θεία μυστήρια and the term ἱερουργία denote the author’s intention to express the purpose of spiritual life in terms that designate realities of the Divine Liturgy based on the common denominator of sharing both God and his possessions. The syntagm τῆς μυστικῆς τοῦ νοὸς ἱερουργίας expresses the active role that the mind plays in the accomplishment of the inner anthropological unity, in the spiritual life. Achieving the likeness of God [Θεὸν ἄφομοιώσεως] and sharing of the mysterious possessions of God [μετουσίᾳ τῶν ἀπορρήτων τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀγαθῶν] is conditioned by the “hierarchy of the holy commandments of Christ” [ἱερουργίας ἀφέται τῶν ἱερῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐντολῶν]42. The terms μετουσίᾳ and ἱερουργίας indicate a perfect integration of the liturgical vocabulary in an expression used to denote the purpose and way of accomplishing spiritual life.

41 Ibid., ΤΡΙΤΗ ΓΝΩΣΤΙΚΩΝ ΚΕΦΑΛΑΙΩΝ ΕΚΑΤΟΝΤΑΣ ΠΕΡΙ ΑΓΑΠΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΕΛΕΙΩΣΕΩΣ ΒΙΟΥ, 16., PG 120, 961AB.
42 Ibid., 34., PG 120, 968D-969A.
The act of becoming holy is called the accomplished *holy service of the mind* [ἡ νοερὰ καὶ θεία τῷ ἁντὶ εὐρυγιᾶ] mediated by the *Word of wisdom unspoken* [ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀπορρήτου σοφίας] to those who prepared for it.\(^{43}\)

Reference should be made to the preference to express the highest level of spiritual life in the proper terms of the Holy Liturgy because of the understanding the life through Christ as a sanctifying service.

Saint Nikitas Stithatos translates in liturgical terms concepts from the sphere of spiritual life, highlighting the similarity of their spiritual purposes. He continues the theme of spiritual life by exploring the anthropological inner life.

### 3.2.3 The Metropolitan of Philadephia, Theoleptos

(1250, Nicaea – 1324/5) has a contemplative perspective on spiritual life, which he sees as an inner liturgy. He explains the significance of pure prayer, inserting in his text, besides the biblical references about the role of prayer [Ps 74, 4; 55, 9], a verse in which the word *θυσία* [Ps 50, 18: θυσία τῷ θεῷ, πνεῦμα συντετριμμένον] refers to God’s inner self-giving: *For the mind [νοῦς] and spirit [διανοίας] that appear to God through a strong feeling and a fervent prayer [θερμῆς δεήσεως] are followed by the humility of the soul. Moreover, if the mind, the word and the spirit run and fall before God, the first by remembering, the second by calling [ἐπικλήσεως], and the third by humbleness and love, the whole of the inward man worships the Lord [ὁλος ὁ ἐνδον ἀνθρωπος λειτουργεῖ τῷ Κυρίῳ]\(^{44}\). The inward liturgy

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\(^{43}\) Ibid., 33., PG 120, 968C.

\(^{44}\) THEOLEPTOS, THE METROPOLITAN OF PHILADELPHIA, ΛΟΓΟΣ ΤΗΝ ἙΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΟ ΚΡΥΤΩΝ ἙΡΓΑΣΙΑΝ ΔΙΑΣΑΦΩΝ, ΚΑΙ ΔΕΙΚΝΥΩΝ ΕΝ ΒΡΑΧΕΙ ΤΟΥ ΜΟΝΑΪΚΟΥ ΕΠΑΙΤΕΛΜΑΤΟΣ ΤΟΝ ΚΟΠΟΝ, PG 143, 389C. To note 66, the priest professor Dumitru Stăniloae observed that in that fragment the Metropolitan of Philadelphia gave „ a definition of the inner Liturgy worth remembering”, cf., *Word about the labors of the monastic life*, Filocalia, Vol. 7, Publishing House of the Biblical and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucarest, 1977, p. 54.
understood as an offering to God of the powers of the soul through spiritual works, expresses a core integral anthropological implication caught in the spiritual initiation of the rational-contemplative powers of the soul.

In another descriptive sequence of the spiritual life, Theoleptos also introduces the term ναὸς [place of worship, church] to designate the anthropological, spiritual level. Ascetic living, in ceaseless prayer, transforms the lover of God into a „church”, and the work from the depth of the mind offered to God is compared to a „liturgy”: Therefore, walking down the path of thinking, choose the words of the prayer and tell them to God Lord, shouting strong and forever, asking constantly and with no shame, like the widow who earned the mercy of the relentless judge. By doing so, you walk in the spirit, you do not know of carnal lusts, you do not interrupt the unceasing prayer through human thoughts, and you are the church of God [ναὸς δὲ Θεοῦ], praising God straightforwardly. Praising [εὐχόμενος] so with thought, you succeed in taking part to God’s memory [μνήμην Θεοῦ] perceiving the most hidden [ἐν τοῖς ἁδύτοις τοῦ νου] and looking through mysterious ways for the Unseen On so that through acts of conscience and love to serve God alone [μόνος τῷ Θεῷ μόνῳ καταμόνας λειτουργῶν]45.

The incessant prayer, accompanied by the psycho-physical asceticism, brings the body to the level of spiritual space for the exaltation of the doxologies of God, the peak of the inner life being the contemplative service of God.

Theoleptos does not highlight the anthropological ecclesial structural nature but rather that of attaining the sanctified space of man through spiritual life: He who has risen above the thoughtful nature of the present and has gone beyond the lust of the transient does not look downward, does not desire the beautiful ones of the earth, but has open views from above, looks upon the beauties of the heavens and sees the happiness of the perpet-

45 Ibid., PG 143, 393CD.
He also receives the love of God that descends from above him, becomes a church of the Holy Spirit, desires the divine wills, is carried by the Spirit of God, is praised for faith, and has God seeking willingly and with pleasure.

Theoleptos the Metropolitan uses the following semantic correspondences:

- Church of God [ναὸς δὲ Θεοῦ] – a devout man of the Holy Spirit [ναὸς τοῦ ἀγίου Πνεύματος]
- the liturgy of God [τῷ Θεῷ μόνῳ καταμόνας λειτουργῶν] – spiritual life

The spiritual vocabulary of Theoleptos the Metropolitan contains expressions of anthropological relevance, being inspired by the biblical considerations and the patristic tradition of the hermeneutics of ecclesial - liturgical anthropology.

3.2.4 Saint Gregory of Sinai [1255–1346] deepens the spirituality of the heart by using liturgical metaphors. While the pure heart resembles an altar on which spiritual mysteries take place, the soul resembles to an altar on which Christ, the Son of God, is mystically sacrificed. Similar to Nikitas Stithatos, the work of the mind is compared to a spiritual hierurgy. Not unlike Theoleptos of Philadelphia, Saint Gregory the Sinaite speaks of the anthropological spiritual-ecclesial character acquired through spiritual life. Only the one who reaches the measure of inner work is called „church” and „priest” of the Spirit, which shows that the anthropo-ecclesial paradigm had long been assimilated by the Eastern spirituality for its expressive character and the similarity between the meanings of the place of worship, the Holy Liturgy and the spiritual life: A heart without thoughts [χωρὶς λογισμῶν καρδία], worked by the Spirit, is the true altar [ἰερατείον ἁληθινὸν] even before the next life. For all

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46 *Id., ΛΟΓΟΣ ΤΗΝ ΕΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΩ ΚΡΥΠΗΝ ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑΝ ΔΙΑΣΑΦΩΝ*, 8., PG 143, 404B.
things are spiritually done and spoken there. And he who has not yet acquired this is a rock for other virtues, useful for the building of the divine church [τοῦ θείου ναοῦ], but not the church and priest of the Spirit [οὐ ναὸς, καὶ ιερουργὸς τοῦ Πνεύματος]. Different expressions render the inner liturgy due to the meanings it aims at. The expression ἡ μυστικὴ τοῦ νοὸς ιερουργία denotes the beginning of the prayer of the mind, but the purifying power of the Spirit [111]. The inner liturgy consists in the mystical participation in Christ, a communion to be achieved in the future age: The Spiritual Hierurgy [ἱερατεῖον πνευματικόν], before the future joy beyond the mind, is the work of the mind [ἡ νοερὰ τοῦ νοὸς] which secretly sacrifices and shares from the Lamb of God in the altar of the soul [τὸν Ἄμνὸν μυστικῶς ἐν ἀφραβώνι τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν τῷ τῆς ψυχῆς θυσιαστηρίῳ καὶ ιερουργοῦντος καὶ μετέχοντος]. And to eat the Lamb of God in the empathic altar of the soul [νοερῶ θυσιαστηρίῳ τῆς ψυχῆς], means not only to understand Him or to take part of Him [μετασχέσαι μόνον], but also to make us one as [γενέσθαι] the Lamb, taking God’s face in the future. For here we take the reasons [λόγους], but there we hope to take the very realities of the mysteries [πράγματα τῶν μυστηρίων].

The Kingdom of Heaven is represented in another text by a symbolic Old Testament image in the shape of a colossal two-room „tent”: the first one accommodates all those who are „priests of grace” [ἱερεῖς χάριτος], while the second, reasonably [νοητὴν], „only those who, during this life, have serviced [ἱεραρχικῶς ἐν τελειώτητι] the Trinity like perfect hierarchs [ἱεραρχικῶς ἐν τελειώτητι], in the darkness of not knowing God, while holding Jesus Christ [τὸν Ἱησοῦν τελετάρχην καὶ

47 St. Gregory of Sinai, Κεφαλαία δι’ ἀκροστίχιδος πανυ ὁφελίμα, 7., PG 150, 1241A.
48 Ibid., 111., PG 150, 1277C.
49 Ibid., 112., PG 150, 1277C.
ιεράρχην πρώτον πρὸς τὴν Τριάδα] as the ultimate hierarch before the Holy Trinity

The anthropological, ecclesial-liturgical symbolic correspondences established by St. Gregory the Sinaite are:

- true holy place [ἱερατεῖον ἡλιθινὸν] – the heart [καρδία] worked by the Spirit [7]
- graspable altar [νοερῶ θυσιαστηρίῳ] – soul [ψυχή, 112]
- hierurgy/ holy work [ἱερουργία] – the work of the mind [ἡ νοερὰ τοῦ νοῦς, 111]
- the communion with Christ [μετασχεῖν] – the understanding of Christ [112]
- the eschatological resemblance to Christ [112]

As compared to previous semantic equivalences, Saint Gregory the Sinaite shows variability and relative stability. The analogy of the altar – heart, semantically brings it closer to Saint Macarius the Egyptian, but the use of the word ecclesial hierateion indicates terminological assimilation of the explanations forwarded by Saint Maximus the Confessor. The most semantically stable is the church – human equivalence, with the mention that Saint Gregory accepts it as an expression of anthropological, spiritual becoming. Concerning understanding the service as a liturgy of the mind, it manifests semantic stability about Nikitas Stithatos and Theoleptos of Philadelphia.

The holy service of God is designated by a term commonly found in the patristic formulations, ἱερουργία [111, 112] and the verb λειτουργήω [43] which occurs in rare circumstances. In the mystical liturgy, the role of Christ as the first hierarch indicates an understanding of spiritual life as an act of intersection between the Christian and Him. The use of the verb λειτουργήω brings Saint Gregory closer to Saint John of Sinai.

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50 Ibid., 43., PG 150, 1252CD.
and Theolipt of Philadelphia. He resembles Saints Mark the Ascetic and Symeon the New Theologian from the perspective of presenting the hierarchical ministry of Christ in the spiritual life, differing from them in the way He presents His role to the Christian.

3.2.5 A hesychast theologian mostly appreciated for the depth of his writings, Saint Callistos I, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople [† 1364], uses philocalic terminology to embark upon the traditional - patristic formula of man’s spiritual understanding as a place of worship and the spiritual life as an inward service. In a general sense, he highlights the spiritual, structural vocation of man seen as topos of the inward service to God: Temple of God [Ναὸς Θεοῦ and altar [θυσιαστήριον] in the primary sense is the rational man [λογικός ἀνθρώπος], because in him there is mystically [τελειοῦνται] rejoiced all the sacrifices and empathetic services [τελειοῦνται αἱ νοεραὶ θυσίαι καὶ λατρείαι μυστικῶς] in keeping with the inward man [κατὰ τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον, 3.]51.

The figurative liturgical terms mark the personal dimension of spiritual living compared to a liturgical celebration.

In describing the work of the human mind that surpassed the ethical [ἠθικὴ] level of the Christian life and advanced towards practical life [πρᾶξιν], Saint Callistos I introduces terms from the liturgical vocabulary, establishing similarities between the work of the mind and the liturgical service: So, then, the mind [ὁ νοῦς] which will have rejected the burden of all physical movements and, so to say so, empathic movements themselves, starts to service [ἰερατεύειν] in a dominant way [ἡγεμονικῶς] and to

purify by secretly performing empathic sacrifices [τὰς νοερὰς θυσίας ἐκτελεῖν μυστικῶς], for it to be renewed, according to blessed David, by a righteous spirit and be strengthened by a ruling spirit (Ps 50, 12, 14). Only then are we transformed [ἀλλοιούμεθα] and our faces transfigured [μεταμορφούμενα] as it is natural, by the obedience of Christ, into “complete man, to the measure of the fullness of Christ” [Ef 4, 13].

Comparing the activity of the ascetic mind, which works for its spiritual renewal through a sanctifying service, expresses the appropriateness of the liturgical vocabulary for the stages of spiritual life. The secret performance of the empathic service is paralleled in the liturgical plane by the Eucharistic Prayer, and the spiritual transformation and metamorphosis, by the epiclesis and Eucharistic transformation. Anthropological, spiritual change is, in keeping with the explanation of Callistos I, the elevation to a higher level of living, in line with the statement of Saint Paul the Apostle expressing the ideal of Christian living. In another text, Patriarch Callistos I emphasizes the ecclesiastical function of the mind, expressing himself literally when describing its spiritual activity: Brother, understand that the controlling mind of the soul [τὸν ἡγεμονεύοντα νοὸν τῆς ψυχῆς] is a priest [ἱερέαν], and the servant is the thought [διάνοιαν], quite sharp at perceiving Spirit and its manifestations, for whom the mind [νοῦς] that beautifully distinguishes all, weaves garments for the soul in a divine way [στολὰς ἐξυφαίνει θεοειδεῖς τῇ ψυχῇ]” [4]. The garment of the soul woven by the mind indicates an element of the liturgical clothing terminology, and its achievement is expressed by means of an adjective preferred by Saint Dionysius the Areopagite in his liturgical reading [PG 3, 425B-445C].

The interiority of the soul [τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ταμεῖον], in which the mind [νοῦς] penetrates and performs the union with God, thus attaining its likeness [ἐνωθεὶσα ἐξομοιοῦται Θεῷ] with Him, is

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52 Ibid., [2.], p. 346/347.
53 Ibid., [4.], p. 348.
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Semantically equated by Saint Callistos I with the empathic altar of God [τὸ λογικὸν θυσιαστήριον τοῦ Θεοῦ, 30.]\(^5^4\). In this formulation one can easily observe the active role of the mind in spiritual life as well as the identity of the purposes of the Holy Liturgy and of inward Christian living, oriented towards spiritual, human perfection. The resemblance of the soul to the altar has deep spiritual connotations, suggesting the way the soul must become, only to be turned into a place of spiritual worship that culminates in the union and likeness with God.

The correspondences established between the terms of spiritual life and those of the liturgical service in the church are:

- **temple** of God [ναὸς Θεοῦ] – man [λογικὸς ἀνθρώπος] [3.]
- **God’s rational altar** – soul [τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ταμείον] [30.]
- [λογικὸν θυσιαστήριον τοῦ Θεοῦ]
- **priest** [ἱερεύς] – mind [νοῦς] [2.]
- performing sacrifices and empathic services – spiritual life [νοερὰς θυσίας ἐκτελεῖν, 2; νοεραὶ θυσίαι καὶ λατρεῖαι, 3]
- the likeness with God [ἐνωθεῖσα ἔξομοιοῦται Θεῷ, 30.]

The semantic translations of Patriarch Callistos I express continuity of the patristic equivalences of liturgical terms in the descriptions of spiritual life. His correspondences maintain relative stability about the previous tradition of anthropo-ecclesial thinking.

**3.2.6 Callistos Cataphygiota** [XIV century] is another Byzantine hesychast theologian who used a liturgical terminology to explain states and higher levels of spiritual life. In a philocalic writing, Callistos used liturgical terms to describe the emotions

\(^{5^4}\) Ibid., [30.], p. 360.
felt by the one experiencing spiritual power „spring in heart” and enact silence:
For it is only then that the sacred service [τελεῖται λατρεία] and worship of the mind [προσκόνησις τῷ νῷ] are performed unto God in Spirit and truth in a tacit way\textsuperscript{55}. According to Callistos, the syntagm holy service designates a special mystical experience in which the governing part of man is wholly directed to God.

3.2.7 On the verge of the decisive fall of the Byzantine Empire under Ottoman occupation, Saint Mark Eugenikos, the Metropolitan of Ephesus [† 1444/5], revisits the anthropo-ecclesiastical theme also assumed by the Jesuit theologians. Restating the famous biblical place 1 Tes 5, 17 [Pray without ceasing/ ἀδιαλείπτως προσεύχεσθε] on which hesychasm is based, In 6, 23, Lc 17, 21, I Pt 2, 5 and I Co 3, 16 describe the spiritual life of the work of the mind in its innermost form: That is, we must always stay close to the altar of the mind [τῷ νοητῷ προσεδρεύειν θυσιαστηρίῳ], bringing unto God and placing on this altar our spiritual sacrifices and our thoughts [τὰς πνευματικὰς τε καὶ λογικὰς θυσίας προσφέροντας ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ τῷ Θεῷ] (I Pt 2, 5), in keeping with (the word) The Apostle, if indeed we are dwellings of the Living God [ἐσμὲν ναὸς Θεοῦ ζῶντος], and should the Spirit of God dwell in us (I Co 3, 16)\textsuperscript{56}. The semantic analogies stemming from Saint Mark’s statement are as follows:

- temple/ church [ναὸς Θεοῦ ζῶντος] – man [ἀνθρώπος]
- the empathetic altar [τῷ νοητῷ θυσιαστήριον] – mind
- spiritual and rational sacrifice [θυσίας πνευματικὰς τε καὶ λογικὰς] – thoughts

\textsuperscript{55} Callistos Catarhygiota, Συλλογιστικών και γιολοστάτων κεφαλαίων τα σωζομένα περὶ θείας ενσέως και βιού θεορητικοῦ, 59, PG 147, 896B.

\textsuperscript{56} St. Mark of the Ephesus, Εξήγεσις τῆς εκκλησιαστικῆς ακολούθιας, PG 160, 1164A.
The correspondences set by Saint Mark express relative semantic stability concerning the previous tradition. The expression *empathetic altar* by which the *mind* is understood denotes a spiritual understanding of intelligence as an inner center of spiritual life. He expresses spiritual life in liturgical terms that mark the character of deliberate personal sacrifice unto God. The anthropo-ecclesial theme is an integral part of the conception of spiritual life understood as service.

4 Conclusions

From the anthropo-ecclesiastical, liturgical, biblical, and patristic formulations one can notice that man is exhorted to develop in himself a spiritual service according to the model of the Holy Liturgy. The *Prayer of the heart* has become the *Liturgy of the heart*, the former standing for the ,,epiclesis“ that transforms human nature and the latter for spiritual life understood as inward Liturgy.

Connections established between the ecclesiastical and resemanticized liturgical terms (*church, temple, altar, sacrificial, naos*), specially chosen to explain spiritual life by the means of with paradigmatic anthropological elements that stand for spirituality (*soul, mind, heart, body*), produce a new time of reflexivity focused on the personal growth of the liturgical, gradual, sanctifying and transforming rhythm. They represent the theologians who coined them by designating at the same time their hermeneutical intentions, particularly related to spiritual life. The semantic stability and variability of the patristic lexical correspondences demonstrate freedom of thought and expression and hermeneutic openness. Beyond all semantic correspondences that remain stable or vary from author to author, the aim pursued by those who apprehended them is a spiritual-didactic one, focused on rendering the idea that should man
meditate on the idea that, structurally, he not only represents, but he is also called to become a "church" through spiritual life, he would then fulfil himself as a spiritual being and would not conceive of thoughts and actions that come in contradiction with his spiritual-ecclesial nature.

The chronological presentation of the opinions belonging to influential Eastern spiritual theologians on the spiritual, anthropological, ecclesiastical - liturgical motif, confirms the importance that the Church and the Holy Liturgy have had in their lives and in the Christian communities from different times, which is why they created the novel symbolic analogies, entailed by terminological interferences, symbolic reception and spiritual interpretation. They show that one can speak of an anthropological conception from the perspective of spiritual foundations of the Christian tradition. The recurrence of the anthropo-ecclesial theme in the description of the spiritual experiences indicates the outline of a vivid patristic vision of the man called to unite with God.