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Dignitas Perpetua: The Sacerdotal and Sacramental Constitution of The Person

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Abstract. The connection with all that exists can and should be a liturgical and thankful connection, imprinted by God's love for us. The liturgical aspect can be observed not only in the concrete ecclesial context, but also in the social one, in the ratio of the need for the life of the Church and the desire to receive it in the world at different levels. The liturgical ministry itself, which gives us through the One whom we serve the liturgical power, sends us to a continuous ministry, showing that I am capable of tirelessly realizing myself as a man who understands service from all its angles.

Keywords. Person, Sacerdotaly, God

The man who has Christ, as the One to whom he serves, cannot remain indifferent, cannot notice impassively all the hardships and sufferings of those next to him, without doing anything. Taking the initiative to change the situation of those, he then knows himself a servant, a liturgical man, or a person who has demonstrated the words and prayer addressed to God in the Church, in order to be helped to an eternal life as well. "*Service therefore also has a function of continually advancing in knowledge and development of man. It represents the true humanism, which means both the knowledge of man and his continuous development.*"¹

For the beginning of this ministry, which first assumes God as the tireless helper, from which I also have the liturgical force, Father Stăniloae distinguishes with special importance "*the word and the prayer*"². Speaking of the word and prayer we learn that there is a gradation of them, which comes to remind us of the intensity of the word as prayer and of prayer by word, or "*the gradation of the word consists in the extent that the word is united with prayer.*"³

Thus the greatest value we can give to the word is that which we give through prayer, "*the supreme moral value of the word lies in prayer*"⁴, the word being all the more valuable

¹ Fr. Prof. Dr. D. Stăniloae, *Servants of God, servants of people*, in "The Orthodox Church Romanian", An LXXXVIII, no. 3-4, 1970, p. 412.

² Rev. Prof. Dr. D. Stăniloae, *Spirituality and Communion in Orthodox Liturgy*, IBMBOR Publishing House, 2004, p. 84.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Fr. Ioan C. Teșu, *Christian virtues, paths towards eternal happiness*, Trinitas Publishing House, Iasi, 2001, p. 158.

because it is used that prayer by which we ask that Christ be made present with His life and in our lives. The necessity of these two, one for the other, in man's effort to make himself known through them to God, and even God making himself known to the one who uses these means is an undeniable reality. When *"two people pray for each other, both are in the exercise of responsibility for one another. [...] He who supports others supports himself through those he supports; he that giveth power receiveth power."*⁵

Through prayer you not only address a request, a word of thanksgiving or praise to the deity, but through it we enter into a direct connection with God, in a personal dialogue with the One who is not present for the first time then as after a break in which you have never sought Him before. For the presence of Christ among us does not depend on one or the other of those who believe or do not believe in Him, but rather you are the one who announces your presence by prayer in order to enter into the attention of the person of Christ who is constantly attentive in your life or for the existence of man in general, without any time when you could talk about a withdrawal of His. This is because he who prays remains in the remembrance of God and *"he who abides in the remembrance of God remains in his preoccupation."*⁶

My being thus opens through prayer to the One who is always open as the One who gives and maintains life not for a necessity that goes from within Him, but as a necessity for me, as a need of myself and of the world because only in Christ I am shown my whole life, and besides Him I would be utterly deprived of a direction that can lead me to an eternal knowledge of the possibilities of being my in God⁷. *"In prayer I recognize that at the basis of all the powers and movements of the world, as well as of my powers and works, is the power of God, and God actualizes it in the way most useful to me at my request, strengthening for this purpose also my power, and also adapting the powers of the creation of my work to the required purpose. [...] Prayer involves synergy between me and God. [...] In any calling I go out spiritually, existentially from my self and the called one comes out of his own self, entering spiritually, existentially into me, [...] more emphatically this happens in the call that he addresses to God and in the call that he addresses us, in the new consciousness"*⁸.

At the same time, the word of Christ that takes us or brings us before Him, does not only have an anamnetic value, through which we put forward with the help of the spoken words stages in the life of a person who wanted to bring an example of good living, but we bring the Person who lives for each staged, although He is without any stage in perfection, as my own life stages. The word spoken by the priest or the faithful man who confesses a real faith of the one who calls, makes god present the Word, in which all words find their value, or in him reveal their real value.⁹

By him, by word, it is shown that *"man is made to be someone before the absolute Personal Trinity. God can work through the human person who prays his own miracles, or deeds above all the laws of nature."*¹⁰

The words are specific to the Word and are given by Him to use them in our relationships with our fellowmen and our relationship with Him, giving us the real possibility to know by word the One who has the word and who gives himself the working and changing Word of our lives. *"The word of Christ, or of Christ, is not only a knowledge of Christ's past*

⁵ Rev. Prof. Dr. D. Stăniloae, *Theology of Orthodox Dogmatics*, vol. III, IMBBOR Publishing House p. 48.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁷ M. A. Costa de Beauregard, *Dumitru Stăniloae. Mica Dogmatici vorbită*, Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 1995, p. 88.

⁸ Rev. Prof. Dr. D. Stăniloae, *Spirituality and Communion*...., p. 87.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹⁰ *Ditto*, *The Immortal Image of God*, vol. II, p. 156.

*saving deeds, but it produces an assurance of his present saving work in him who believes, and a gradual increase in eternal life in him. So in him is Christ himself a worker."*¹¹

Prayer is not a waste of time or effort, nor even the gain of time, but it brings man countless and endless powers to an infinite degree, when time is no longer reckoned as time, but as eternity. *"The habit of almost permanent prayer [...] it can be won by considering all things, persons, circumstances imposed upon us, as words incorporated into God,"*¹² in the communion of the Church.¹³

That is why the word and prayer are not given for use alone or can be used personally as a result of their use with others in the Church, from where we withdraw with them in the private dialogue we have with Christ, with communion in mind¹⁴. The Holy Spirit rejoices us with this use, having him as the one who makes Christ permanently present in his Church, which he *"won with his own blood."* (Acts 20, 28). Also, the word opens up to new common relationships in the social environment, of support and help, explaining the movement of life between people, because it does not bring a monologue, *"it does not have a monologic character, but dialogic and does not have the purpose of painting static worlds, but is the seed of dynamism thrown into the soul of people and into social relations, it is the spiritual dough of the incessant historical movement"*¹⁵.

Recalling the value of historical orientation and the importance of addressing words as effects of the existential environment and the purpose for which it is lived, or the target of history, Father Stăniloae states that *"in history there are three planes of reality. It is the plan of nature or physical laws, the plan of legal relations between men or of the social order, and the plan of loving communion with God and fellowmen or the Church. [...] The purpose of history is shown in the third, superior to the two kingdoms of legality, in the kingdom of grace, ruling toward eternal life."*¹⁶

The love of God cannot be believed, it cannot be real, if it is not also a love of neighbor, or in other words in the love of neighbor, they can best show the love of God. And this is not a mere humanism, because this love has two directions, or one direction addressed as two. for *"the act of service of the Christian is one the addressees are two: God and man. He who serves man also serves God."*¹⁷

If the word is required expressed, it is the whole word that is required to be streamlined, incorporated or led to its end which is the deed. If the beginning of the work is the word, the perfection of the word is the factual act oriented towards the one who needs it or my need to manifest myself in realized words¹⁸. *"The deed is an expression and a step towards efficiency of the word as the future face of the logos of things. The word is the project, the deed is the realization of the future face of things. That is why without the project there is no deed, and without the deed the project is something unfulfilled and without power."*¹⁹ From here one can notice something more than the consideration of the deed as a simple act of valuing the word,

¹¹ Ditto, *Spirituality and Communion*..., p. 89.

¹² *Idem*, *Trăirea lui Dumnezeu în ortodoxie*, Ed. Dacia, Cluj Napoca, 2000, p. 111.

¹³ Ditto, *Servants of God, servants of men*..., pp. 29-30.

¹⁴ Petrov, G. D. (2021). The relationship between the priesthood and the church from the perspective of unity. *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, 22(1), 812–818. <https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v22i1.4365>

¹⁵ Rev. Prof. Dr. D. Stăniloae, *Jesus Christ or the Restoration of Man*..., p. 234.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 404-406.

¹⁷ Ditto, *Servants of God, servants of men*..., p. 410.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 411.

¹⁹ Ditto, *Jesus Christ or the Restoration of Man*..., p. 184.

but it is "the start towards the realization of a future phase from the road of the logos of human beings and things towards the perfect target".²⁰

But all the deeds of the human person must be placed on the foundation of a creative deed that offered the possibility of their use. Or they are the answer to God's deed that gives them true meaning. They open the person to the most responsible communication of his thoughts to his fellows and the reception in the same way of those. Close to God, supported by Him in all his achievements through the power that gives it, man "never reaches the end of goodness with deed, understanding, delicacy in relation to others"²¹.

This makes me responsible and all this gives me wings to give more or to give myself more for my fellow human beings. Mutual giving is the giving of life to one another, and this in God, or having Him as a model, knows no bounds. Father Stăniloae tells us, among other things, that complete giving is one's own sacrifice, it is the infinite space of love for one's neighbor.

By self-sacrifice, when nothing can stop you from proving love, the liturgical man is eternally liturgically inscribed, and through himself and others; he is a man who serves from the ministry of Christ, when his cross is the cross of Christ gladly worn for someone other than him. *man rests, if this is the effect of love for another. There is neither a way nor a place to rest man deeper, more true, than the crucifixion and the cross out of love.*"²² And Father Stăniloae adds to this the fact that "man rests on the cross in the measure of his union with God, that is, in the measure of love capable of suffering"²³.

Through His divine Being and His evangelical teaching, Jesus Christ is above all ages. By his ransom-sacrifice and parable life, he surpasses all men. All his work, his whole saving work, bears the seal of eternity and deity²⁴. Forever, among men, life, teaching and all the work of salvation of the Savior is contained in the Gospel, organized in the Church and shared in the Holy Mysteries. The gospel is the book with the foundational teaching of the Christian religion. The church is the organized form of Christianity, the school of the perfection of the soul, the place of salvation and the community of love of Christian mankind. The Holy Mysteries form the Christian cult founded by the Savior, the means by which God descends into the soul of man and the soul of man ascends to God.

Like the Gospel, the Church and the Mysteries, the house of God and the religious cult that is officiated in it, are places of salvation and means of sanctification *from Jesus Christ*.

The beginning of the organization of the Church is made by the Savior by choosing the apostles. With the election of the twelve apostles begins the preparatory work for the organization of Christianity in religion and the first cornerstone of the Church is laid. «You are of the house of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the chief cornerstone being Jesus Christ himself» (Eph. 2:19-20). Otherwise, the choice had no meaning. "Whenever you want to share, Saint Vasanufie tells us, day: "Let it not be to me, Master, these

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

²¹ Ditto, *The Immortal Face of God*, vol. II..., p. 11.

²² Archim. Vasile, *Eisodikon, Elements of the liturgical experience of the mystery of unity in the Orthodox Church*, The Holy Stavronichita Monastery in the Holy Mountain, 1974, p. 122, *apud* Fr. Prof. Dr. D. Stăniloae, *The connection between godliness and theology in the Orthodox Church*, in "M. O.", An. XXXVI, 1984, p. 55.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

²⁴ Petrov, G. D. (2021). The concept of transcendence in philosophy and theology. *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, 21(1), 846–852. <https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v21i1.3832>

*holy Mysteries for judgment, or for damnation, but for the sanctification of soul and body." Then draw near with fear, and our master lover of men will do with you his mercy."*²⁵

The divine Mysteries transfigure, the human and dehumanize him, man becoming a mystery in which the "mystery of change" is worked, that is, the deification. He who eats of the divine Mysteries prays like Saint Varsanufie saying: "And I take healing every day from Your holy members, that is, from Your Body and Blood, and from the water that comes out of Your holy coast. And my passion still pus. Because you said, Holy, that he who comes to the doctor and wants to heal himself to do what the doctor commands, send me, Master, all the cures you want, cauterizations, poultices, only stop my flow, that is, the unclean thought"²⁶.

Regarding the Holy Mysteries, the divine Father Maximus the Confessor says the following: "So the Word being the Master of all spiritual reasons, both of those in the things seen and of those in the intelligible realities, according to decorum and with the right word gives to those worthy to eat, as a body, the science contained in the reasons of the things seen and to drink, as a blood, knowledge found in the reasons of the intelligible. And again, the body of the Word is the true virtue, the blood the knowledge without error, and the bones the theology (the knowledge of God) the unbounded. For as blood is transformed into the form of the body, so knowledge is transformed by doing in virtue."²⁷

The deep knowledge of the mystery is seen in the great Father Maxim, "spiritual reason" is like a food, that we share with the Holy Mysteries, and we dehumanize ourselves, that we share in the divine Word Christ, also a divine food is reason, which changes man pleasures into a man of the spirit, he becomes the perpetrator through knowledge. By eating God Christ, we change, we cleanse our consciences, and it becomes a worker. By eating from knowledge, which is the attribute of God, we know the true union and fellowship of the divine Grace.

The prayers from Holy Communion tell us about the soul that it is leper and we come to Christ to share in Him, to cleanse ourselves from the leprosy of sin, of passions: "So benevolent to enter the house of my humble, leper and sinner soul"²⁸, and we ask through prayer for healing of body and soul saying: "Renew me all and root the fear of you in my members and your holiness make it indelible from me"²⁹.

The Church is our Mother, who gives birth without ceasing, through the Holy Baptism, children, that is, sons and heirs of the kingdom and glory of God. The Church through the Holy Mysteries is the ship of salvation from the flood of sins, the sanatorium of sinners and the society of saints. Through the gift of God, the Church is the house of God in which the presence of God and the work of the Holy Spirit are felt. Through the Holy Mysteries, the Church is the altar or pantry of the Holy Mysteries, Zion or the new Jerusalem (Gal. 4:26), the bride of the Lamb (Rev. 21:9), the body of Christ the upright (Eph. 5:27), the pillar and foundation of truth (1 Tim. 3:15), the incarnation of grace and love, of the union and fellowship between men. "Where is the Church, there is the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all the graces and the truth."³⁰

An angel awakens the prophet Zechariah, as a man whom-1 awakens from sleep, and-1 asks: What do you see? The prophet answers him, 'Behold, I see a chandelier of utterly gold,

²⁵ Varsanufie și Ioan, *Scrieri duhovnicești*, în *Filocalia*, Vol. XI, p. 183.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

²⁷ Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Answers to Talasius*, in *Philocalia*, Vol. III, p.124.

²⁸ ****Liturgy*, *Op.cit.*, p. 351.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Rev. Lect. Dr. Nicolae Dură, *Preaching and the Holy Mysteries*, E.I.B.M.B.O.R, Bucharest, 1998, p. 223.

with seven lamps, and above the chandelier there is a vessel of oil from which seven pipes go forth to the seven lamps. And next to it are two olive trees, one to the right of the bowl of oil, and another to the left of the vessel' (Zech. 4:1-3).³¹

According to the interpretation of St. Maximus the Confessor, the golden chandelier is the Church: righteous and bright with light, like gold. Although it is burned "in the furnace of persecutions and tested in the relentless uprisings of the heresies," like gold in the fire, "it suffers not under the burden of trials any weakening in its teaching or life, in its faith or discipline." The bowl with oil or the torch that illuminates the chandelier (the Holy Church) is Jesus Christ, who is placed in the Candlestick, that is, in the Church, to illuminate everyone in the whole world. The lamps are the gifts of the Holy Mysteries, the works of the Holy Spirit (Isa. 11:2-3), which cast out sin, just as the light scatters the darkness. The funnels or pipes of the seven lamps are the moral habits and divine fruits of the holy Church. The two olive trees are the two testaments: the Old and the New Testaments, from which the oil, the light, the meanings of the divine Mysteries are removed³².

Man, as a liturgical being understood in all its aspects, is at the same time a Eucharistic or thankful being. We cannot call man liturgical unless we also call him Eucharistic. The liturgy involves a thanksgiving of the opportunities offered by God to realize me as a man through giving to others, as well as a thanksgiving for the gift of life and for all the gifts received from Him during it. The liturgy itself can be considered first as the thanksgiving of life and eternal knowledge of myself with God and my fellowmen, then as an expression of the desire for existence in eternal communion. Because through the prayer expressed liturgically "*on the one hand, we ask for gifts from God, on the other we thank Him for them.*"³³

The liturgical context reveals more strongly their meaning and beauty, the fragrance of the divine teaching spread through the apostles being symbolized by incense, which is at the same time a symbol of the gift of the Holy Spirit given through the Gospel.

At the end of the Liturgy of the catechumens, Saint Antimis is dissolved, an act associated with the preparation of the tomb by Joseph of Arimathea. The dismissal of the catechumens is the image of the Judgment, when the righteous will be chosen by the wicked, and the closing of the royal doors symbolizes the end of the earthly ones and the entrance of the righteous to the wedding feast of Christ³⁴. This moment calls us "how many of us are faithful" to increase well in prayer because even higher than before we will see.

The cherub, placed in the first part of the Mass of the faithful, illustrates the preparation for the reception of the King. It is a moment lived with intensity by believers, in separation from the "worldly care" and united in the solemn and prayerful expectation of Christ. Believers realize through heruvic the simultaneity of the heavenly Liturgy with the earthly one and live the spiritual ascension of the happy similarity with the Cherubim.

The great veil symbolizes the funeral alley from the crucifixion and burial of the Lord, the priests carrying in their hands the tools of torture: the cross, the copy... The commemorations remind us of the words of the thief crucified at the right hand of the Savior, and Saint Antimis becomes the tomb itself. The brightness and solemnity of the moment uplifts the souls of the

³¹Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Heads about love*, in "The Philocalia of the Holy Needs of Perfection" ... , vol. II, p. 45.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Jesus Christ or the Restoration of Man...*, p. 416.

³⁴ *Idem*, *The Significance of Divine Light in the Spirituality and Cult of the Orthodox Church*, in "Ortodoxia", XXVIII (1976), 3-4, p. 441.

believers and also shakes them by the reality of the Sacrifice. They feel that this includes them and places them before the Father.

By receiving the commandment of love again, believers together profess faith before the throne of God in full understanding of those spoken. In the Mass, believers make "*under the most optimal pedagogical conditions, the experience of life in the community [...], it is a burning invitation to life in the community of love, so that all may feel one body, one soul*"³⁵.

The spiritual energy necessary for overcoming the self and opening to communion, to loving solidarity, I sip it from the dogmatic truths, so vividly and strongly present in the liturgical chants, from the principles of Christian morality that flow from them and which are illustrated in the models of the saints, from the very living spirit of the Divine Liturgy always nourished by the Holy Sacrifice.

The content of the Divine Liturgy strengthens, fortifies the will of the believer and orients it to high goals. The example of the Savior and the saints motivates him positively, awakens his conscience and leads him to work.

Motivation and will lead to the intensification of prayer and to the engagement in battle with passions and temptations, and this cleansing work leads again to the increase of concentration and the multiplication of prayer.

Another factor by which the divine cult exercises its educational-pedagogical function of shaping the soul "is the note of mystery [...] and the multiplicity of the symbolic-mystical meanings, through which it is revealed before our eyes". How uplifting and rich in feelings and meanings is the moment of sharing! The grandeur of the moment, the consciousness of sinfulness and the joy of union with Christ, are experiences that change man, essentially change his life³⁶.

Participation in the Divine Liturgy transforms us into subjects of our own religious-moral formation, a guide having the "first and eternal catechetical", Christ God. Every moment, act or liturgical gesture shows us vividly that "everything within the cult consecrates us as the Church of God, makes us the living body of Christ, and consecrates me as a living member of this body." So, as subjects of our own religious-moral formation, we are also active builders of the Church and beneficiaries of its entire treasure offered as a gift by God.

An organic and essential part of the Church's tradition is the transmission of the norm of faith and life to its members, and this is achieved especially through worship, which facilitates direct experience.

Each moment of the Divine Liturgy has a mystical-symbolic charge that points to eternally valid values, typological for the human being. The typological value is naturally doubled by a formative value working in the immediate actuality and generating positive transformations for the "other time of our lives".

As the Old Testament foreshadows the New and New Testaments is the fulfillment of the old, so the divine cult, embracing the truth of both, foreshadows the meaning of human life and shows it the way to fulfillment.

Participation in the religious act presupposes both the inner and outer engagement of the believer. "In the liturgical light and atmosphere, the past, present and future no longer exist as separate parts of time...", but unify in a liturgical time of permanence, whose flow is between the Kingdom that has come and is to come.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Spirituality and Communion...*, p. 80.

In the Divine Liturgy we receive the word of the Kingdom through the Gospel – God the Word – and we learn that "strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to life" (Matthew 7:14), not to the loss of hope, but to the increase of the endeavor.

The Divine Liturgy begins with the glorification of the Kingdom of God and His preaching in the Trinity – "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit", and the sign of the Holy Cross made with the Holy Gospel over Antimis shows that the service that begins is performed to commemorate the sacrifice of the Savior, who, through the Gospel and the Cross, founded the Kingdom of God on earth³⁷.

From the words "Great Blessing", Father Stăniloae stops on six of the many meanings. The first would be that the praise of the Kingdom of the Holy Trinity also implies the will of the community to advance towards it. The Kingdom of the Holy Trinity is the Kingdom of love entered into the outpouring over the world and, being the Kingdom of love, it has the meaning of a communion of those who are part of it, which increases in every Divine Liturgy to become perfect in the next life. The kingdom of the Holy Trinity is eternal and, as such, opens up eschatological perspectives, gives us the assurance that our existence will not cease by death. It has been opened to us through the Son of God who overcame death and who teaches us that we can obtain it by sacrificially overcoming our sinful selfishness, and finally the Kingdom of God is the meaning of our existence.

In the Mass we update the Birth of the Savior according to the advice of the Holy Trinity, His work in the world, the Sacrifice, Death, Resurrection, Ascension and Descent of the Holy Spirit, through whom we were born as sons of the Kingdom – brothers of the Son of God and sons of the Father. "And giveth unto us, with a mouth and a heart, to glorify and sing most holy and of great decorum thy name."

"The Divine Liturgy is the most wonderful school of prayer, because it is the "prayer of prayers", both by its content of unparalleled beauty, purity and depth, by the brightness and greatness of the external forms, and by the finality that is looming in each hymn, reading and prayer formula – the sanctification of gifts and the sanctification of believers.

The two purposes are inseparable and logically and naturally complement one another, towards their fulfillment leading Christ, the real perpetrator of the liturgical sacrifice invoked in the priest's intercessory prayer and in the common prayer of the believers. The Divine Liturgy – as a Eucharistic congregation – is the ideal "place" of prayer³⁸. "*It is good and useful for the place of prayer to be the place where believers gather,*" says Origen. *Surely the heavenly powers also take part in the meetings of believers, being present the power of our Lord and Savior, as well as the spirits of the saints in whom we believe.*"³⁹

In the Divine Liturgy we bring and bring with us the whole dowry of the knowledge we have become worthy of and, moreover, we bring inside our hearts all those close to us, known or unknown who, according to the word of the ectenies, are travelers, sick or asleep in the Lord.

The expression of thanksgiving is the expression of prayer, and thanksgiving goes beyond those received, because a person does not give thanks only for the gift received, but for the love and feeling that he has put in that gift to the giver, for that person. Father Stăniloae tells

³⁷ Rev. Lect. Dr. Nicolae Dură, *Preaching and the Holy Mysteries...*, p. 223

³⁸ Origen, *On prayer*, trad. Mihai Vladimirescu, Herald Publishing House, Bucharest, 1995, p. 123.

³⁹ Fr. Prof. Dr. Ene Braniște, *Explanation of the Divine Liturgy after Nicolae Cabasila*, E.I.B.M.B.O.R., Bucharest, 1997, p. 198.

us that "thanksgiving to God is also a form of prayer, for whoever thanks for the gifts received, urges the one who gave them to him to make new gifts"⁴⁰.

His eucharistic address behavior opens new horizons of affirmation of love between persons and of increasing mutual giving through it, encompasses an enrichment of life through another and a desire to make others more and more valuable gifts. "The Romanian word thanksgiving expresses the truth that it produces a multiplication of gifts. [...] So contentment is a real demand for new gifts."⁴¹

It is even more important that my contentment is stronger or acquires a greater power of hearing, if it is uttered together with other people, who also want to thank them. What is meaningful is not only the reason why we thank, but to whom the contentment is addressed and what it is based on. The Eucharist, or the most intensely lived and felt contentment, is the one in one place exalted, for the sacrifice of the Son of God for us. This common Eucharist and also this common gift, for in it is suddenly the most powerful prayer of thanksgiving and the most valuable gift, gives strength and will to throw through gifts *bridges of love* from oneself to others who want to receive you as the one who can help them to fulfill themselves⁴².

For this reason man is a liturgical and thankful being; if he reveals himself thus with many brethren, with the desire to call others who are not convinced, to express himself suddenly to the same Person who holds them. Father Stăniloae states that "the contentment brought to God is richer in feeling when one's own contentment is strengthened by the contentment of others and others is strengthened by one's own feeling. In everyone's contentment is the contentment of all and in everyone's contentment vibrates the contentment of each one."⁴³

The contentment brought by people together does not make everyone sound the same, but it makes them sound symphonically, for the fact that they are distinct people who share the same contentment lived differently. It has been said in recent years that man is a *social being*, yet more can be said given the priceless value of man in Christianity⁴⁴.

For this reason it was added, affirming himself by some who have felt life more deeply, that man is a *thankful being*, who rejoices and at the same time makes joys, and for this whole experience the important thing is that he has learned to give thanks. Even more, suffering and trouble have come to attract after them fervent thanks, when they were taken as moments of correction or return to the truth. Contentment is an expression of love, and therefore man will never give up this way of showing his love. He will also want to give thanks when it seems that he has no reason, saying: thank you Lord for existing.

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⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

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