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Liturgy Catechesis in the Manuscript of Catechism Lessons from the Diocese of Arad. Liturgy

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Abstract

In this study, I tried to identify the elements of liturgical catechesis regarding the Holy Liturgy, as depicted in the manuscript of *Lecții la catechism* (Lessons of Catechism). Additionally, I highlighted the formative character of catechesis with experimental implications, emphasizing the centrality of the Liturgy in the lives of believers and the Church community. Catechizing the people during communism represented a true note of resistance through catechesis as transmission of the Church's faith and formation of new generations in the spirit and Tradition of Eastern Christianity.

Keywords:

Liturgy, manuscript, liturgical catechesis, communism, experience, transmission of faith

The manuscript *Lecții la catechism* (*Lessons of Catechism*)¹ represents a concrete source on how the catechesis of the Church remained a practice during the communist period in the historical Cathedral of Arad.

¹ The manuscript with the title *Lessons of Catechism* is very extensive. Designed in 21 notebooks comprising 361 topics, the author uses, in general, elements of the Church's catechesis. The manuscript crossed the communist period, mirroring the fundamental elements of the liturgical catechesis systematically supported in the historical Cathedral of Arad in a period when the Church's catechesis suffered from the limitations of the communist regime. From the 21 notebooks located in the

As mentioned, catechizing the people during the communist era was an act of courage and devotion to the priestly mission and also a huge risk for the priest. Here we refer to perhaps the most difficult period in the history of the Orthodox Church during the communist era, a time in which the threat and direct involvement of the Soviet Union were felt in the Church and society. However, the manuscript provides defining elements for the image of the Church's work among the faithful, the level of knowledge of the Church's teaching by the priests, and the thirst of Christians for the word of God, especially for the conscious experience of faith. Catechesis and the unity between the knowledge of the Church's teaching and its experience represented one of the forms of resistance of Christians during the communist period. If we talk about resistance through culture and faith, there was also a form of resistance through the knowledge of faith united with experience. This was achieved through catechesis.

We observe that the pivot of Christian resistance during the communist period was not simply the teaching of faith, but its application, its living in the Church cult. The worship of the Church became the source and framework for understanding, experiencing, and communicating the faith present in a doxological and poetic manner, in the liturgical texts of the Church, in the symbolism of gestures, liturgical vestments, cult objects, liturgical space, the Church year with its stops dedicated to Great Feasts, the feasts of the Mother of God, and the celebration of the Saints and Angels.

I. Liturgy: Structure and Theological Meanings

The Holy Liturgy represents the culmination of human experience with God. The entire spiritual preparation of man is oriented towards the experience of the Liturgy, and the experience of the Liturgy strengthens man's spiritual life. It is a kind of ascent in steps that the Liturgy seals through one's participation in the reality of Christ's sacrifice and resurrection. The catechist attaches great importance to this idea, as he recapitulates its content for fixation within the framework of the new catechesis. He writes:

“In the last lesson, we learned that the highest service of the Church is the Holy Liturgy and all the others are a preparation for the Liturgy”². The author provides important information about the number of Liturgies, the time of celebration, the prefiguration of the Liturgy at certain moments in the Old Testament, and its origin in the New Testament, the parts of the Liturgy, the Proskomedie, the Liturgy of the Catechumens, and the Liturgy of the Faithful. Within these explanations, the catechist updates his message to the faithful: “Until then, we ask the faithful of our holy church to follow the next lessons to know and understand more and more about the Holy Liturgy. Understanding it better, they will also feel that they are in the church as children are at the table around their father”³.

Recapping the main ideas about the basis of the Liturgy identified at the Last Supper and the number and parts of the Liturgy, he moves on to analyze the Proskomedie, which he divides into three parts: a) the opening prayers of the servants; b) the dressing of the servants; c) the preparation of the gifts⁴. Although he begins to explain the order of the Proskomedie with its three phases, the author realizes that for a better understanding of the explanations, he needs to introduce the altar of the Church and its contents to those catechized. For this reason, he interrupts the explanations about the Proskomedie and the Liturgy in general and offers instructive explanations about the holy altar and its contents. Thus, he provides explanations about the holy altar as the place of Christ’s non-bloody sacrifice, as the altar where the church’s sacrifice is offered, as the Lord’s tomb, as the throne⁵. The significance of the altar table is deepened by the symbolism of its four corners (four evangelists, and four cherubim from Ezekiel’s vision). The association between the signs of the cherubim from Ezekiel and the four

Archives of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Arad (abr. AFTOA), notebooks I, II, III, VI, VII, VIII, and XIV are missing. Although we lack the content of ideas in these notebooks, we still have access to the in-depth topics in the general contents of notebook XXI. The manuscript in its entirety totals 1755 pages in which we find dogmatic, liturgical, biblical, moral, and historical contents predominantly presented from the catechetical perspective.

² AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, f. 336.

³ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, f. 351.

⁴ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, f. 351 etc.

⁵ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, ff. 355-356.

evangelists is interesting to explain the symbolism of the holy table in four corners.

“In other words, the signs of the four evangelists are the cherubim from Ezekiel’s vision. The Lord whose glory Ezekiel saw seated on the four cherubim is Christ the Lord on the throne of the cherubim. In the New Testament, the Gospel is placed on the four evangelists, as the Lord’s glory on the four cherubim. Therefore, the faces of the four evangelists with their signs are placed at the four feet or in the four corners of the altar: Matthew with the cherub with a human face, Mark with the cherub with a lion’s face, Luke with the cherub with an ox’s face, and John with the cherub with an eagle’s face”⁶.

The significance of each liturgical gesture, of each garment of the holy table is presented: a) placing the relics of the martyrs as a testimony to the truth; b) the first garment of linen symbolizes the shroud in which the Lord’s Body was wrapped; 2) the second luminous garment symbolizes the garment that shone on Christ at the Transfiguration; 3) the third garment does not have a precise significance, but only that of protecting the other two mentioned garments⁷.

The author pays special attention to the objects that are on the holy table. Although he recalls the temporary objects placed on the altar table: the epitaph, the adorned cross, and feast icons, he emphasizes that there are permanent objects that must be on the holy table of the altar: the Gospel, the antimention, the cross, the tabernacle, the candlestick. For each of these objects, he provides concise explanations⁸. Of course, at the end of the lesson, he summarizes the knowledge and writes:

“Summing up briefly what we learned today, we see that on the holy altar, we have the following: the Gospel, which symbolizes the presence of Jesus Christ; the antimention, which symbolize

⁶ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, f. 356.

⁷ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, f. 357.

⁸ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, ff. 360-362.

the shroud in which the Lord's body was wrapped to be placed in the tomb, the holy cross, which reminds us of the sufferings and death of the Lord on the cross for our salvation; the tabernacle, which symbolizes the glory around the throne of God, and the candlestick, which symbolizes both John the Baptist and all Christians whose lives must shine, carrying the light of Christ for the salvation of mankind and the glorification of God"⁹.

The Proskomidiar also has its meanings and objects. The author presents an exposition of these so that those to whom he addresses on the importance of the Liturgy understand the entire fabric of meanings, gestures, and liturgical aspects. The Proskomidiar – the place of preparation, the place of setting forth – represents the cave where the Magi worshiped, above which the angels sang and the star stopped. The objects of the Proskomidiar are the cross, the candlestick, the diskos with the star, the chalice, the spear, the covers for gifts, the spoon, the tray for the prosphora, the commemorations, and the icon. As with the objects on the altar table, the author provides teachings about the meanings of each object of the Proskomidiar¹⁰. The author makes his audience aware of the sacredness of the objects of the Proskomidiar, of the connection of the Proskomedia order with the divine economy, and with the words of the Holy Scripture.

“The Proskomedia service is performed in silence, that is, not to be heard by those in the church. As I mentioned before, each object and each movement of the serving priest is accompanied by words from the Holy Scripture, which remind us of the Nativity of the Lord, of His passions and death for us. But even by themselves, the objects of the proskomidiar: the diskos, the chalice, the covers, the spear, the spoon, the prosphora, and the commemorations teach us that each object recalls moments from the life of the Savior. Seeing them, either in the procession with the holy gifts or during communion, we should accompany them

⁹ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, f. 362.

¹⁰ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, ff. 363-367.

with a brief prayer such as this: remember me, O Lord, when you come into your kingdom”¹¹.

In addition, there is a place for fire, the censer, the incense. Because catechesis was conducted in the context where certain neo-Protestant groups denied their importance and biblical foundation, the author makes a more detailed incursion into the biblical significance of these objects and elements of worship. Thus, he brings examples and bases from the Old and New Testaments¹². Of course, he also reinforces the knowledge:

“Let us now briefly summarize what we learned today so that it consolidates in our minds: the censer with fire symbolizes Christ, that is: the fire symbolizes the divine nature, and the censer symbolizes the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have seen that the doctrine given to us by God through revelation cannot be changed or mixed with the false teachings of heretics, just as in the Old Testament it was not allowed to put foreign fire in the censers. Incense and myrrh, as we said, symbolize the good smell of the Holy Spirit who teaches us to pray with sighs too deep for words, as the holy Apostle Paul says. Incense and myrrh accompany our prayers as an offering”¹³.

Addressing the matter of the Proskomedia, to understand the phase of vesting the servants, he explains the significance of the vestments and the place where they are kept: the diaconicon. He offers a detailed explanation of the vestments of the deacon, priest, and bishop and the aspects they symbolize, correlated with biblical events and the salvific work of the Lord Jesus Christ¹⁴. He also emphasizes the awareness of the vestments’ significance. “So let it be in our minds that at the sight of the church vestments, we think of what they require of us or what they symbolize: the passions and mockery of Christ for us sinners”¹⁵.

¹¹ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, f. 367.

¹² AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, ff. 368-370.

¹³ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, ff. 370-371.

¹⁴ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, ff. 372-386.

¹⁵ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, f. 386.

The Liturgy of the Catechumens is explained as part of the Church's Liturgy, with prior knowledge about the objects of the altar, the proscomidiar, and those related to the significance of the hierarchical vestments, the deacon, priest, and bishop. The author provides detailed explanations about the part of the Liturgy called of the Catechumens, about the great blessing, the great litany, the antiphons, the Beatitudes, the entry with the Gospel, the Apostle, the Gospel, the litany of supplication, the litany of the called¹⁶. The author does not insist that the sermon be given immediately after the Gospel, but he insists on the presence of Christians in the Church from the beginning of the Liturgy so that they can partake of the teachings of the antiphons, the Apostle, and the Gospel. The sermon is delivered after the Gospel precisely because there were catechumens who had to leave the Church, they partook of the teachings from the Gospel for their preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism. Not being catechumens, the author's opinion is that the sermon can be given at another part of the Liturgy or even at the end. Here is the explanation:

“In all times, in some places, the sermon was given immediately after the reading of the Gospel, in the first centuries, when the catechumens were numerous, it is natural that the sermon was given here, after the reading of the Gospel. To clarify it and to connect it with the exhortations for the catechumens, who were immediately to leave the place, to leave the holy Liturgy (...) Today the sermon at the holy Liturgy is uttered in some places the same way, immediately after the reading of the Gospel. However, since this moment is not designated for preaching, it can be held in another part of the Holy Liturgy, for example, after the communion of the priest and before the communion of the people, as is the custom with us. There are also places where the sermon is uttered at the end of the Liturgy. It doesn't matter the time, and we have said these things so that we know and understand that there has been no deviation if the sermon is held in one part or another of the holy Liturgy. Because of the

¹⁶ AFTOA, Mss. *Lectii la catechism*, IV, f. 387 etc.

importance of the teachings contained in the antiphons, in the chanting of the Beatitudes, in the reading of the Apostle and the Gospel, the Christian must be present from the beginning of the holy Liturgy”¹⁷.

The author advocates for the recitation of the litany for the catechumens as a prayer of the strong people in faith for the weak ones who still do not know the faith. “It is our duty as those who know to pray even for those who do not know, even for those who do not want to pray. In their souls, there is the seed of prayer like the seed of a flower in dry ground. Over the dry earth of these souls, we must ask for the rain of God’s grace to pour down”¹⁸.

In notebook V, the author presents important information about the Liturgy of the faithful. He is influenced by the thinking of Nicolae Gogol regarding meditations on the Liturgy. An interesting assertion is made between the removal of catechumens from the church and the removal of hostile thoughts from the hearts of the faithful who remain in the church during the Liturgy. To help the faithful understand the first important moment of the Liturgy after the departure of the catechumens, the author explains the Cherubic Hymn. The awareness of the faithful regarding the presence of God and angels in the Liturgy is strongly emphasized through associations made by the author with texts from the Old Testament. These texts depict the resemblance between humans and angels. He writes:

“The song *Cherubic Hymn* has the following meaning: we humans, carrying on the diskos and chalice, those that will be transformed into the body and blood of the Lord, represent the Cherubim who, in the vision of the Prophet Ezekiel (1, 26), bore on a throne the One who had the appearance of a man, the Son of Man. We, who bring the thrice hymn to the Holy Trinity, must cast off all worldly cares, for just as Abel brought a sacrifice whose smoke rose straight up only because his soul was not troubled by any worldly care or passion, as Cain was troubled

¹⁷ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, f. 392.

¹⁸ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, f. 393.

– so too will we bring the sacrifice of the holy Liturgy, not for condemnation, but for salvation”¹⁹.

This is not the first time the author associates Old Testament imagery with its fulfillment in the New Testament and its realization in the Liturgy and the experience of the Church, to explain and express liturgical catechesis.

The author not only explains the theological moments of importance in the Liturgy but also seeks to elucidate liturgical conduct even in practical aspects, which sometimes depended on a community custom. The custom for the faithful to kneel and have the precious Gifts placed on their heads at the Great Entrance is mentioned. The author says that it is “a good and beautiful custom, but in a large crowd, it causes too much disturbance, so, at our churches on Sundays and major holidays, this would be impossible”²⁰. However, he implies that this practice could be followed during weekday Liturgies when there are not as many people.

Another important moment is the Creed, preceded by fulfilling the commandment of love and forgiveness both at the altar, through the practice of the priests, and among the believers, urged to love one another to confess the one undivided Trinity. The author points out the custom in the villages around Arad where those going to church or already in church greet each other with “May God forgive you”. He considers this practice an echo of fulfilling the text from Matthew about bringing a gift to the altar after reconciling and forgiving the one who has wronged you²¹. We observe that this practice of forgiveness before entering the church or before the Creed is reinforced by the author through parables and stories to encourage the catechized to forgive. He strengthens this practice with the example of the early Christians who, at the deacon’s call to love one another, embraced in church and forgave each other if they had erred²².

The part concerning the liturgical anaphora is commented on by the author through the use of images and texts from the Old and New

¹⁹ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, V, f. 396.

²⁰ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, V, f. 396.

²¹ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, V, f. 398.

²² AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, V, ff. 398-399.

Testaments, texts from Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Revelation. The triumphant hymn is the song of the angels but also the song of those who received Christ in Jerusalem. He explains it by dividing the text into two closely related realities: “The angels sing: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth, Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory! And the people singing is connected to it: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He That comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest”²³. We also find an explanation of the anaphora, of the prayers read silently by the priests on the altar. The author does not omit the conscious awareness of the audience regarding the assumption of a concrete experimental liturgical practice during the Liturgy. The theology of liturgical catechesis is intertwined by the author with the concrete experience of those who listen to him and who are part of the community and assume a conscious way of living the Liturgy. After the theological explanations of prayer, he writes:

“Thine own of Thine own we offer unto Thee, on behalf of all and for all. Through these, along with the greatest of the altar’s servants and all of us faithful, we present our Gifts before the Lord and offer Him them which we all have received from the Lord. Therefore, it is said: Thine own of Thine own. And we bring the gifts so that from sinners as we are, we may be sanctified and deified. For sanctification and deification are the purpose that encompasses all our purposes, the highest desires of men; we bring them for all that God has done for us because when we fell into sin, He did not abandon us, but He sent us prophets, He gave us the law and commandments, and above all, He gave us His Son”²⁴.

²³ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, V, f. 400. We also find an explanation of biblical terminology in the context of liturgical catechesis. Although we encounter this frequent explanation, we only offer the example from the three-holy chant before the change, when the author shows that the Lord Savaot means the Lord of hosts, of the angelic hosts, and Hosanna means God saves (f. 400).

²⁴ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, V, f. 401. The song of victory is for Christ’s victory over death, a victory also given to humans. We observe a liturgical mystagogy centered on elements of biblical and patristic essence. The term *deification* best specifies the patristic influence on the author’s thinking in the exposition of the liturgical catechesis

Another eloquent text regarding the formative role of catechesis refers to the attitude of those in the church during the recitation of the words before the Epiclesis. What should be the attitude of Christians, and their thought before the Epiclesis? The author explains in summary, fixing the knowledge of the lesson taught with an emphasis on experiencing the Liturgy:

“Concluding today’s lesson, from what is contained in it, we can and should understand that whoever sings the triumphant hymn, Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy, we should at least say it in our minds with the singer, whether it is one person or a choir of tens or hundreds of voices. Let us sing it with fervor, for we sing it together with the angels. And at the words of remembrance ‘Take, eat, and drink of it all of you’, let us humble ourselves, preserving the fervor of the triumphant hymn, for the moment of changing, the culmination of the Holy Liturgy, is approaching”²⁵.

We observe that in liturgical catechesis, the author intertwines the historical and biblical plan with the mystical and spiritual one to connect the events within the Liturgy on the one hand to the concrete of the divine economy unfolded in history, and on the other hand to the concrete of the divine economy continuously updated in history through the Liturgy, communally and personally with each individual.

The culminating moment of the Liturgy is the transformation of the gifts into the Body and Blood of the Lord through the Holy Spirit. The author captures the interweaving of the people’s singing and prayer with that of the priests at this moment and explains the significance of the use of bells and semantrons so that all people, wherever they may be, on the bed of suffering or prisons, have the opportunity to lift their thoughts to God²⁶.

After the consecration of the gifts, the culmination of our petitions focuses on receiving the gifts at the heavenly altar and the sending in return of the gift of the Holy Spirit, as well as the boldness to call God,

²⁵ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catechism*, V, f. 402.

²⁶ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catechism*, V, f. 404.

the Father. In the liturgical symbolism, the presentation of the holy chalice to the people and their call to communion through approaching with fear, love, and faith in God signify the appearance of the Savior Christ after the Resurrection. Therefore, the Risen One is the Lord who has shown Himself to us and is blessed²⁷. After the communion of the faithful through the words “Be Thou exalted, O God, above all the heavens, and Thy glory over all the earth”, the glorification of the Risen Lord’s ascension to heaven is depicted. The prayers and hymns “We have seen the true light” and “Let our mouths be filled with Thy praise” are thanksgivings offered to the Triune God because He has deemed us worthy to partake of the Body and Blood of Christ, and we have received renewed Spirit in us, so that the prayer of the ambo may be “the seal of all requests”²⁸.

II. Eucharist: The Way of Communion and Theological Significance

Besides explaining the aspects related to liturgical and spiritual symbolism, the lessons about the Holy Liturgy encompass how Christians should partake in communion. We can say that the teaching about the parts and significance of the Liturgy, and of each liturgical moment in particular, is concretized, and applied, with an understanding of how Christians commune and prepare for the moment of partaking in the Body and Blood of Christ.

From here, we see that all explanations of liturgical catechesis have a well-defined spiritual purpose, namely the union of those who listen and participate in the catechetical program, with Christ, preparing them for this union and raising awareness of the importance of this union for the perfection of their lives. Furthermore, we encounter an explanation of the mystery of union with Christ in the Eucharist and elements of concrete ecclesial conduct before the chalice. Thus, it is taught:

“Those who partake, holding a lit candle, which symbolizes the awakening of the soul, and quietly recite the prayers with the

²⁷ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, V, f. 406.

²⁸ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, V, f. 408.

priest: I believe, O Lord, and I confess, that You are truly the Christ, and Not for judgment or condemnation. After this, they rise, extinguish the candle, and with a fervent desire for God, with hands crossed over the chest, come one after another to the holy chalice. Through Holy Communion, the Lord Christ descends with His body into our inner being as He descended into the tomb to make it brighter than any imperial palace. He descends into our nature as He descended with His soul into Hades and just as He crushed the gates of Hades, delivering those who were held there, so He crushes our impure thoughts and unbinds the pure ones. In this way, communion is the renewal in us of the death and resurrection of Christ, it is the light, that is, the joy of the new Jerusalem, and the great and most holy Pascha, that is, the salvation of our souls”²⁹.

At the end of the Liturgy, the author says that the priest distributes the offering or the antidoron, namely parts of bread from which the Lamb has been removed. He explains that it is called antidoron, that is, instead of the gift, instead of Holy Communion. This distribution of the offering at the end of the Liturgy reminds us of the agapes in the early Christian centuries and anticipatorily reveals the symbolic banquet of the king (Matthew 22, 1-14), “to which the king comes and speaks with his own”³⁰. The offering is also a sign of the brotherhood among those who have attended the Liturgy, who partake from the table of the same heavenly Father. Here, we observe, without any explanation, how the author shifts the emphasis from the Eucharist as the place of brotherhood and the image of the banquet of the Kingdom to the role of the offering, which flows and is linked to the Eucharist.

In notebook IV, we discover an element of liturgical catechesis regarding the Eucharist, the author seeking to answer the question: how can we partake in the sacrifice of Golgotha? Christians partake in the sacrifice of Golgotha through Communion with the Body and Blood of Christ. He shows that this communion must be done with fear of God, with faith, and

²⁹ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecjii la catechism*, V, f. 407.

³⁰ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecjii la catechism*, V, f. 408.

with love, using the Church's liturgical exhortation for approaching the Chalice. He explains what Holy Communion is: "It is the body and blood of the Lord sacrificed on the cross and given to us for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life under the humble guise of bread and wine"³¹. He associates the Eucharist with two very important biblical moments: the teaching of the Savior about Himself as the bread of life that descended from heaven (John 6, 46-51) and the Last Supper (Matthew 26, 26-28)³².

Responding to the question about worthiness at Communion, it is shown that through faith, hope, and love, a person can partake worthily of the Body and Blood of the Lord. These virtues are concretely associated with attitudes and ways of living.

"What does worthiness at Communion consist of? We could say briefly: in faith, love, and hope. Faith in the glorified God in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the faith that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and our Savior, the faith that in Holy Communion we truly receive the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. – Love for God and neighbor. Love that moves you to forgive your neighbor so that you may also be forgiven. Love moves you to repent for your neighbor and for the sins you have committed and requires you to increase your acts of love for your neighbor. – Hope that having Christian faith and love, that is, the faith and love required by Christ, you will truly commune with Him on the unending day of His Kingdom"³³.

To provide an answer to the question of worthiness-unworthiness, a parable is told about a scholar who, although confessing and partaking, feels unworthy. This illustrates the issue through a parable that associates the liturgical response with two biblical episodes: the faith of the father who brought his lunatic son to the Savior to be healed and the faith of the centurion. From here, the biblical principle "*Lord, I believe, help my unbelief*" is drawn, and it is explained to Christians:

³¹ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, f. 329.

³² AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, ff. 329-330.

³³ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, f. 330.

“The Holy Fathers teach us through the prayers they left us to say: «Lord, I believe, help my little faith». I am not worthy for you to enter, Lord, under the covering of my soul’s house, but I ask you to help my unworthiness. We do not have true worthiness, but the Lord knows our weaknesses, and before Him, the little worthiness adorned with the feeling of unworthiness is beautiful (...) For this reason, the service of the Holy Liturgy, at which the sacrifice of Holy Communion is brought, is also called the service of reconciliation with God and the brotherhood among people”³⁴.

The application of liturgical catechesis is achieved by assuming a Christian attitude and state regarding the topic discussed. The author urges Christians to assume this worthiness in the consciousness of unworthiness concerning the Holy Mysteries, especially concerning the Eucharist. The applicability of the exhortation consists of a prayer that contains elements of the invoked biblical models – the father of the lunatic son and the centurion. The attitude towards the Holy Mysteries must be an attitude that extends into each day of the Christian’s life.

“Let us say with all our heart and always, even when we stand before the holy chalice for communion and on other days: «Lord, help my unbelief. I believe, O Lord, and I confess that Thou art truly the Christ the Son of the living God who camest into the world to save sinners, of whom I am first... May the communion of Thy holy Mysteries be neither to my judgment, nor my condemnation, O Lord, but to the healing of soul and body»”³⁵.

This liturgical prayer not only focuses on the answer to a theological question but also an existential attitude towards the mystery of faith and participation in the Holy Mysteries. The conclusion to the whole issue

³⁴ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catechism*, IV, ff. 330-331.

³⁵ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catechism*, IV, f. 331.

of the worthiness or unworthiness of the Christian in the Mystery of the Eucharist is found in the introduction to the next liturgical catechesis on the place where the holy sacrifice is offered. It is written: “In the last lesson, we learned that through Christ’s sacrifice, we become participants through worthily partaking of the Holy Communion”³⁶.

It is observed not only here but in most catechesis that the author begins with a central recapitulative idea, with a response of recapitulative value, linking the topics and themes together.

³⁶ AFTOA, Mss. *Lecții la catehism*, IV, f. 332.