

Abstract

The habilitation thesis entitled "**Culture and communication in the context of the ecclesial community**" was developed as part of the habilitation process research in the field of theology and is carried out in accordance with the higher education law and subsequent academic regulations in Romania. As such, it presents: 1) the author's academic, scientific and professional achievements following his research in the European and international context of research in the author's field of specialization; 2) development plans of the author's professional, scientific and academic career, for example, his main directions of research and teaching; 3) the main bibliographic references associated with this thesis.

In my doctoral thesis, "**The Trinitarian Paradigm of the Contemporary Ecclesia**", I supported the idea according to which: "the knowledge of the doctrine regarding the Church, which finds a clear understanding in the Trinitarian paradigm, has a special value both as an explanation of the present and as understanding of the future. The study of the doctrine regarding the Church according to the Trinitarian paradigm, which is indisputable, offers the possibility to see the Church, Christians and their thinking in a dynamic perspective. The doctoral thesis: "**The Trinitarian Paradigm of the Contemporary Ecclesia**" is divided into four chapters, as follows.

The first chapter presents *The Trinitarian Paradigm of the Ecclesial Being*, or *The Holy Trinity as the foundation of the Ecclesial being*, in which the following aspects are emphasized: The symbiosis of the divine nature with the human nature in the body of the Church; Correlating the immutable and dynamic character of the being of the Church; Reflections of the original model in the course of history regarding the being of the Church and the difference between the reflected image and the reality of the Church's experience. The work emphasizes the fact that the Church is presented in the Holy Scriptures through metaphors, a fact that requires a correct interpretation of them in order not to slip into anomalies and heresies.

In the second chapter, *the Trinitarian Paradigm of Ecclesial Relations* is presented, or *The Holy Trinity as the source of relations within the Church*. In this chapter, three fundamental principles are developed regarding ecclesial relations: Holiness in communion; Submission in love and Service in truth. In the Church, as in the fellowship of the Holy Trinity, holiness and communion, obedience and love, service and truth must be ideally intertwined. The principle of

mutual communion is the only way for the existence and work of the true Church according to the paradigm of the Holy Trinity.

In the third chapter, **The Trinitarian Paradigm of Ecclesiastical Leadership** is emphasized, or **The Holy Trinity as a model of Church leadership**, in which the Principle of plurality, the Principle of unanimity and the Principle of representativeness are highlighted, principles that will ensure an effective leadership of the contemporary Church. An alarm signal is being raised regarding the Church's slide towards worldly systems of governance that are by no means of divine origin.

Finally, in chapter four, *The Trinitarian Paradigm of the Ecclesial Mission* is exposed, or *The Holy Trinity as the support of the Church's mission*, in which the importance of glorifying God, edifying the saints, evangelizing the world and the importance of preparing the Church for glory is emphasized.

In the final part it is stated that the Holy Trinity is the unique model of the identity of the Church. Also through the model of the Holy Trinity, the Church is called to evaluate itself, and its fulfillment is achieved in an infallible way following the model of the divine Trinity.

All these aspects, to the extent that they will be understood and presented in a clear and coherent way, will be able to ensure the Church the place it deserves in contemporary society and at the same time will be able to offer each person a place to feel the divine presence, to find their fulfillment, to understand their own identity and responsibility on this earth and to ensure a good preparation of everyone for glory. When the Church will know its true nature through the prism of the Trinitarian paradigm, when it will develop divine relationships found only in the unshakable intimacy of the Holy Trinity, and the concept of its leadership and mission will be nourished from the inexhaustible resources of the Godhead, it will truly become that vibrant organism as intended by the Savior Himself. Today, when the testimony of the Church is so weakened due to fragmentation, Christians being accused of mutual intolerance, it is all the more necessary for the Church to turn its gaze to the original model of its being, relationships, leadership and mission. It can be considered that such a deepening of the doctrine regarding the Church, according to the Trinitarian paradigm, will be of real use to all those who want to better understand this doctrine, and to all those who want to get involved in a concrete way in the work entrusted to the Church.

Following my doctoral work, I continued to research different aspects of the ecclesial community, paying particular attention to specific elements in the history of the Church. In

addition, I expanded the research, paying special attention to the development of the ecclesial community. I looked with interest at the role that culture had and has on the ecclesial community, and the importance of communication in the context of the ecclesial community.

Through the articles and works published so far, I wanted to contribute to highlighting the importance that the ecclesial community has for society. Most of my research has been based on aspects that have not yet been sufficiently developed by others. This enabling thesis brings together the various facets of the life of the ecclesial community and presents them as a coherent contribution to the history of the Church.

The first chapter of the work, "**The relationship between culture and communication within the ecclesial community**", presents the fact that the relationship between culture and communication within the ecclesial community is a complex and profound aspect, having special implications on the way believers understand and share their faith in the context of their Church. Communication in an ecclesial community is largely shaped by fundamental cultural values and the logic of cultural differentiation.

In the first sub-chapter, *Value systems and logics of cultural differentiation within the ecclesia*, I will highlight the fact that within ecclesial communities, individual cultures bring with them distinct value systems, which influence both the way believers perceive faith and the way they interact with each other and with the world around them. These values may include perspectives on morality, concepts of right and wrong, and how believers interpret and live religious teachings. For example, in an ecclesial community, one cultural group may emphasize asceticism and renunciation, while another group may emphasize charity and social involvement. These differences can lead to different interpretations of religious doctrine and varied lifestyles within the Church. An important aspect of the relationship between culture and communication within ecclesial communities is the logic of cultural differentiation. This refers to how cultural groups define boundaries and differences between them, often through specific social norms, rules and practices. In the ecclesial context, this logic can appear in the form of theological, liturgical or ethnic divisions. For example, certain churches may have distinct liturgical traditions, and believers may interpret some aspects of the faith in different ways depending on the cultural context. This logic of differentiation can bring both unity, by cultivating cultural and religious identity, and challenges, by creating barriers between the various groups within the ecclesial community.

In the second subchapter I will emphasize the fact that ***the discovery and acceptance of cultural diversity is an essential process within ecclesial communities***. This process involves awareness and recognition of cultural differences, as well as engaging in dialogue and collaboration to overcome possible tensions or conflicts. In this sense, effective communication plays a crucial role, facilitating mutual understanding and building bridges between cultures. Ecclesial communities that adopt an open approach to diversity can benefit from greater spiritual richness and greater resilience in the face of social and cultural change.

To manage the relationship between culture and communication within ecclesial communities, religious leaders and believers must be aware of the impact of cultural values on the way dialogue and interaction takes place within their Church. This involves a reflection on one's own cultural biases, as well as an openness to learning and enrichment through interaction with different cultures. Developing an inclusive vision and communication strategies that take into account cultural diversity can contribute to strengthening unity within ecclesial communities.

The relationship between culture and communication within ecclesial communities is, therefore, a complex aspect, with multiple layers and deep implications. Value systems and the logic of cultural differentiation shape communication and interactions within the Church, and the discovery and acceptance of cultural diversity is an essential step towards building a more resilient and spiritually rich community. Awareness and commitment to dialogue and mutual understanding are fundamental in navigating the challenges and opportunities that cultural diversity brings to the ecclesial context.

In the third subchapter, ***the influence of culture on communication within the ecclesial community*** will be presented. Communication within the ecclesial community is deeply influenced by the cultural diversity of its members. Culture plays an essential role in establishing a framework for communication, influencing language, values, and the way in which information and ideas are exchanged. This study explores the impact of culture on communication within the ecclesia, highlighting ways in which cultural diversity can be managed and how it can enrich the understanding and practice of faith. Culture is not just a passive factor influencing communication; it can also play an active role in the process of transmitting the religious message and in the formation of the community. Adapting religious messages to the cultural context of the audience is essential for them to be relevant and engaging. An effective preacher or religious leader understands the needs and cultural susceptibility of his community and adapts his speech to

connect more deeply with his members. Also, promoting open dialogue and encouraging questions from diverse cultural perspectives can create an environment conducive to understanding and internalizing the religious message. Ecclesial communities can promote a spirit of unity in diversity, emphasizing that cultural differences should not be reasons for division, but can bring additional richness within the community. An ecclesial community that effectively manages cultural diversity can become an example of solidarity and unity despite differences. Mutual acceptance and collaboration within diversity strengthens community cohesion and highlights the power of faith to bring people together despite their cultural diversity. Communication is the spine of any kind of relationship, be it personal, professional or social. It is a complex and continuous process that involves sending and receiving messages, but also understanding and interpreting them.

In the second chapter, "***The concept of organizational culture and cultural relativism***", it is highlighted that these are two fundamental aspects in understanding the dynamics and evolution of ecclesial communities. Organizational culture represents the set of values, norms and practices that define an organization's identity, while cultural relativism emphasizes the diversity of cultural values and practices and the need to evaluate them in the specific context of each community. Within church communities, these concepts can influence how believers perceive and live their faith, building a strong organizational culture and navigating the diverse cultural perspectives of members.

In the first subchapter, "***Organizational culture as a factor in the development of the ecclesial community***", the idea is emphasized that organizational culture is an essential element in the development of ecclesial communities. This includes the fundamental values of the Church, norms of behavior and liturgical practices that define the identity and purpose of the religious organization. In an ecclesial community, organizational culture can influence the way believers attend services, engage in charitable activities, and interact with each other. For example, a Church with an organizational culture centered on community and social involvement may have a strong emphasis on volunteer programs and activities that support local needs.

In the second sub-chapter, "***Culture and human ontology within the ecclesial community***", it is highlighted that with regard to human ontology within the ecclesial community, organizational culture can influence the believers' perceptions and understanding of their role within the Church. An organizational culture that promotes collaboration and active participation can encourage

members to take responsibility and contribute to community life. On the other hand, a more conservative or hierarchical culture may impose certain roles and responsibilities, clearly defining the relationships between leaders and believers.

In the third subchapter, *"From 'home culture' to 'community culture'"*, it is shown that another important aspect in the relationship between culture and the ecclesial community is the transition from "home culture" to "community culture". "Home culture" refers to the cultural norms and values specific to the family and the individual, which can have a significant impact on their involvement in the life of the Church. While each believer brings with him personal cultural influences, the process of integration into a "community culture" involves adopting and sharing the common values of the Church. This transition can bring challenges, but also opportunities for community growth and unity.

Cultural relativism also plays a significant role in managing cultural diversity within church communities. This concept emphasizes the idea that cultural values and practices must be understood and evaluated in their specific context, without applying universal standards. In the context of the Church, this means that leaders and believers must approach cultural diversity with an openness to mutual understanding and respect. By adopting a relativistic perspective, ecclesial communities can promote intercultural dialogue and avoid superficial judgments based on cultural differences.

The management of organizational culture and the relativistic approach to cultural diversity require a balanced approach and a deep understanding of the specific context of each ecclesial community. Church leaders have crucial roles in cultivating an organizational culture that fosters unity and active involvement of believers while respecting and valuing cultural diversity. Taking a relativistic approach can help build an environment where community members feel accepted and respected, regardless of their cultural background.

The concepts of organizational culture and cultural relativism have a profound impact on the development and evolution of ecclesial communities. Organizational culture shapes the identity and purpose of the Church, influencing how believers live their faith and engage in community life. The transition from "home culture" to "community culture" brings with it challenges and opportunities for unity and spiritual growth. At the same time, cultural relativism offers an important perspective in managing cultural diversity, promoting mutual understanding and respect

within ecclesial communities. The balanced approach of these concepts can contribute to building more cohesive communities and more open to diversity in the context of the Church.

In the third chapter, "**Communication - Stabilizing Factor in Church Relations**", it is analyzed that this communication in church relations serves as an essential stabilizing factor, having a profound impact on how members of the community interact, share faith and manage diversity. Communication is a vital component in maintaining the stability of church relationships. In a religious setting, where community is central, effective communication is essential to building and maintaining a strong bond between believers. This involves not only passing on information related to religious practices or events, but also facilitating dialogue, sharing thoughts and supporting each other. Communication thus becomes a tool for strengthening bonds between community members, stabilizing relationships and promoting cohesion.

In the first subchapter, "***The role of the context in ecclesial communication and the importance of adapting to the context***", it will be emphasized that in ecclesial communication the context is particularly significant. Each ecclesial community has a specific context, formed by its history, its traditions and its social and cultural dynamics. In ecclesial communication, it is essential to consider these aspects because they influence how messages are perceived and interpreted. Adapting to context means adjusting messages and approaches to fit the specific needs and sensitivities of the community. Effective communication in an ecclesial context therefore involves not only conveying information, but also the ability to resonate with believers in ways that are relevant and meaningful to them in understanding and living the faith.

In the second sub-chapter, "***Ecclesial Communication Aspects and the Modern Paradigm***", it is argued that in the modern era, rapid changes in technology and society bring with them challenges and opportunities for ecclesial communication. Aspects of ecclesial communication and the modern paradigm involve adapting to new ways of communication, and managing challenges related to changes in the mentality and expectations of believers. The use of modern means of communication, such as social networks, online platforms or podcasts, can expand the sphere of influence of ecclesial communities and facilitate interaction with their members in a more direct and interactive way.

However, adapting to the modern paradigm is not only about using new technologies, but also about addressing themes and issues relevant to contemporary society. Church communication in the 21st century must address issues such as social equity, human rights and the ethical challenges

of technology. Followers of new paradigms in communication often have expectations of transparency and accountability from religious institutions, and ecclesial communities must respond to these demands in order to maintain their relevance and credibility.

In the third sub-chapter, "*The Importance of Communication in Developing Relationships*", it will be highlighted how an effective exchange of information and feelings can strengthen interpersonal bonds and help build a lasting connection. Communication in relationships is not just about words; it also involves non-verbal language, tone of voice and active listening. These elements form a complex context in which messages are transmitted and received. Verbal communication is essential in expressing thoughts and feelings. The choice of words and how they are used can influence mutual understanding. Clear and open communication helps lay a solid foundation for a healthy relationship. Gestures, facial expressions and posture can add or detract from the meaning of words. For example, a sincere smile or a gentle touch can reinforce positive messages and strengthen emotional bonds in a relationship. The ability to communicate your needs, wants and expectations honestly helps build a solid foundation for any type of relationship. Effective communication during conflicts is crucial to resolving them and strengthening the relationship. Approaching a conflict with maturity, listening to each other's views and seeking common solutions can strengthen bonds instead of weakening them. Effective communication is also vital in professional relationships. In the work environment, it influences not only the relationships between colleagues, but also the success of the organization as a whole.

Effective communication can strengthen emotional connections and provide an environment conducive to individual and collective development.

In conclusion, the influence of culture on communication within the ecclesia is an essential aspect that must be explored and managed carefully. Cultural diversity can bring challenges, but also opportunities for spiritual growth and enrichment. By adopting an open and inclusive approach, ecclesial communities can transform this diversity into a force that strengthens faith and promotes deeper and more authentic communication within the Church. Managing this diversity requires continuous efforts to promote dialogue, education and the creation of an inclusive environment. For all its challenges, cultural diversity also brings significant benefits, contributing to a richer understanding and authentic communion within ecclesial communities.

Communication is essential to developing and maintaining relationships in all aspects of our lives. The ability to effectively convey thoughts, feelings and needs, but also to listen actively and

to be empathetic, helps to create a genuine connection between people. Open and honest communication is the key to overcoming challenges, resolving conflicts and strengthening emotional bonds. In an age of advanced technology, it is important not to forget the importance of direct human communication, which remains the foundation of genuine and lasting relationships. By improving our communication skills, we help build an environment where relationships can flourish and turn into rich and fulfilling life experiences.

Communication is therefore an essential stabilizing factor in ecclesial relations, contributing to building and maintaining a strong and cohesive community. The importance of adapting to the specific context and the demands of the modern paradigm is crucial for effective ecclesial communication. By embracing modern means of communication and addressing themes relevant to contemporary society, ecclesial communities can strengthen their relationships with believers and expand their influence in a positive and adaptive way.

The second part of the thesis, "**Scientific, Professional and Academic Career - Development Plans**", again shows the three main directions for further research.

I intend to do further research that will lead to the publication of more works of great impact for the ecclesial community. I will focus on the most practical topics, but which will also be presented from a theological perspective, thus contributing to a deeper understanding of the ecclesial community.