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## **Abstract**

The theology and the theologian Petru Rezuș although in a first phase gives the impression of a special emphasis on the theological synthesis with explanations of terms and structural divisions, yet his dogmatic thinking is one that does not forget to capitalize on the patristic, scriptural and even liturgical directions of dogmatic theology, with concrete implications in Christian life, even though the way he manages to convey them is not always the best.

In an attempt to highlight all these aspects, I have thought this paper in five chapters, hoping without the need for exhaustiveness, to outline the decisive contribution of Father Petru Rezuș in the mid-20th-century theological context a contribution that we can say has opened up real perspectives of progress in the field of Dogmatic Theology.

Thus, in the first chapter, I tried to show how Father Rezuș succeeds in turning a "waste into a situation of creative provincialism", highlighting in this sense the biographical elements that marked the life and the thinking of the future dogmatist in the

context of the twentieth century, but also the coordinates of his thinking.

After his theology studies at the Faculty of Theology of Cernăuți, and literature studies at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the same university, studies that materialize with the graduation of theology in 1935 with the title "distinction" and literature in 1937. Between 1935-1937 receives, as a recognition of his merits, a specialization scholarship from the Religious Fund of the Bucovina Metropolitan Church in Dogmatic Theology and Fundamental Theology. Thus, during this period, he studied at the university centers of Strasbourg, Oxford, Cambridge and Vienna, all his theological training being achieved by obtaining on 12 April 1937, the title of Doctor in Theology in Cernăuți with the qualification "Magna cum laudae" under the supervision of professor Vasile Loichita. Petru Rezuș was ordained priest on 9 April 1938, and from August the same year he was named chaplain for the Storojineț parish, near Cernăuți.

The dissatisfaction that he lived in the parish, together with the desire to pursue an academic career, led Rezuș to leave Bucovina, all this in the context of the opportunity to apply for the post of professor of Dogmatic and Apologetics at the Academy Theology of Caransebes. Thus, starting October 15, 1938, he was appointed

temporary professor at the Old Testament Department of the Theological Academy of Caransebes, then passing to the Department of Dogmatic and Apologetic Theology, the approval of the substitution at the Department of Dogmatics and Apologetics being given on 5 January 1939. Certainly the enrolment of Father Rezuș in the professorial body of the Theological Academy in Caransebes was also due to the dogmatist Vasile Loichita, who had delivered his dogmatics at the Academy of Caransebes, his recommendations weighing a lot in his appointment as a substitute for the Department of Dogmatics and Apologetics in a first stage. The official appointment as a substitute professor occurred on 15 October 1938. By decision no. 44347/1944 of the Ministry of Religious Affairs to be recognized, starting with 1 December 1944, the appointment as permanent titular professor at the Department of Doctrinal and Apologetic Theology of the Academy.

The historical context has made the situation of the Academy more and more hard to solve over the years, the Government wanted to transform the Academy into a Theological Seminary and to establish a faculty of theology in Timisoara. Since neither PS Veniamin Nistor's attempt to bring the Faculty from Cernăuți to Caransebeș to rescue the Academy from its abolition and given the imminence of this outcome, Father Rezuș from 13 March 1947 leave

for 10 days in holiday, because then ask for the personal card for departure and give up the Department of Doctoral Theology at Caransebes. From 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1947 he is appointed professor at the Faculty of Suceava and from 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1948 he is in Bucharest where he remains until his retirement on 1 October 1974.

As far as the coordinates of his theological thinking are concerned, we can say that theology and theologian Petru Rezus belong to the theological context of the twentieth century, the parent approaching on the one hand during the interwar period, interesting themes of the time and, on the other hand, inter-confessional themes, of fundamental and ecumenical theology during the communist-atheist period. We can say that father Petru Rezuș will continue the tradition build by professors Vasile Gaine and Nicholas Cotos in Cernăuți, believing that he "can extend his preoccupations in all the fields of Theology within the fundamental Theology in order to create the most favorable conditions for the assimilation of divine revelation".

In the second chapter, I analized starting from the coordinates of the theological thinking of Father Petru Rezuș and from the perspective of the theologians of the forerunners, the general historical-theological context in which the dogmatist Petru Rezuș

theologized both during the interwar period and during the Romanian communism.

If, as early as 1918, we can speak, because of a lack of unitary organization and a direct leadership of the Church, of a crisis of the Romanian theological education, the same things have not happened since 1948. We are witnessing this time, besides a regulation of the cult regime in Romania and of a structural change and the position of the Romanian theological education, it is turning to the Church-commanded way.

Through the conjuncture, the Church was forced after the Second World War to take into account the higher cultural and social level that had been established in the country and responding to the new human ideals, moreover since the historical context required new views on doctrinal relations between Churches.

Faced with this situation in which the Church and theology are at the beginning of the twentieth century, Father Rezus tries to reestablish the theological discourse on the line of traditional orthodoxy, giving the confession of Christ a present form appropriate to the new challenges of the contemporary world, a personal style, dogmatic point of view, and always paying attention to the new results of the field, but in the spirit of Orthodoxy.

To the new context marked by secularization, materialism, even despotism, the Church had to respond to it through an effort to "self-define" its own identity and openness, while responding to the new historical transformations. We are witnessing, with the enrollment of Romanian theological education in this movement at a time when Romanian theological thinking suffers "mutations and evolutions", oscillating between the influences of the slavic east and those of the protestant and catholic west. The modernization to which the Romanian theology was subjected also led to the adaptation of the theological discourse to the requirements of the scientific discourse. The Romanian theology adopting, at the end of the 19th century, the western scholastic model at the expense of the traditional patristic one. In this way the transition from the liturgical tradition of the Church to the rationalism of the schools of theology takes place.

Thus, the beginning of the twentieth century puts Romanian theologians and their theology before a scholastic theology, a theology in which the religious truths can be "elaborated, interpreted and ordered" rationally. Now, under the conditions of rational atheism and indifference, the apologetic dimension of dogmatics is redeemed, using rational arguments to prove the existence of God, but to emphasize the orthodox specificity.

The year 1936 and the Congress of the Faculty of Theology in Athens is a good opportunity to embrace another way of theology, that of the Holy Fathers, which entitles us to speak of a Romanian theological renewal right from the end of the first half of the 20th century.

On the other hand, the theology of Romanian communism period went in the same direction of the critical reception of the past, continuing to capitalize on Tradition and the sources of theology, and all this by initiating the neopatristic movement. And yet, the events of 23 August 1944, determined a "division" between the theologians and an orientation towards the Russian Church, and while some regretted that this was not possible for some time, others considered it a danger to the Church. All this double movement, though, on the one hand, aimed at giving a "direct and ruthless blow to the past", on the other hand, to make possible the "renewal" in the Church, has only delayed the appearance of an authentic theological culture.

However, Orthodox theology in general and the dogmatic one in particular, from the second half of the 20th century, integrate into a process of "healing by returning to the Revelation", among the most important priorities being to unite theology with life.

Although it had been discussed since the interwar period about the necessity of the theological renewal, it is only with the research of

the theology of the Fathers, especially that of G. Palama and M. The Confessor, a new theological research program, directly related to the life of the faithful. The theologian Dumitru Staniloae and his theological thinking are part of an ensemble in which romanian theology should develop. The appeal of neo-Patriotic theology to the Holy Fathers is in fact the "fundamental mutation" that dogmatic theology knows in the second half of the twentieth century.

In chapter III I tried to show, along the same line of affirmation and search for my own identity, how and whether she succeeded in repositioning the Father Rezuș of the orthodox dogmatic in the political-religious context of the twentieth century, knowing that this century, on the historical background and under the conditions of the ecumenical movement, was one of the affirmation of the identity of the various christian confessions. That is why I believe that the whole synthesis does Father Rezuș of Dogmatic Theology is one of the reaffirmation of Orthodoxy, even if we sometimes encounter a dogmatics that systematically synthesizes and synthesizes information from different branches of theology, otherwise understandable if we forget that western academic theology he had offered all of this in his existing collections of sources and syntheses.

Thus, the entire theological work of Father Rezuș is about the recovery and confession of Orthodox theology as a theology that is

nothing less than the Roman Catholic and Protestant one, sometimes demonstrating this with arguments common to all Churches, but showing, when required, the mistakes in these systems.

What Rezuş accomplished in his entire theological work was to show that orthodox teaching is always a living and current one, in this sense attempting an integral approach to research topics, arguing the orthodox viewpoint with rich information from different theological branches, knowing, as he state, that he participated in the work of salvation as he understood and how it was possible.

In this respect, Father Rezuş approaches dogmatic truth in all directions of research: revelation, anthropological, christological, pnevmatological, ecclesiological, aghiological, interconfessional, but not without reservation, as we shall see, regarding the neopatristic theology and representatives it.

From the very beginning, Father Rezuş considers it absolutely necessary to understand the other dogmatic truths, to clarify the term of dogma and implicitly of the Orthodox Dogmatic Tradition, pointing out that beyond the meaning of dogma as a teaching that norms life and is obligatory for the faithful, especially to the idea of authority. The romanian dogmatist describes, in terms of its origin and origin, dogma in three respects: divine (as authority with roots in Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition), Church (dogma is taught, developed

and defined by the Church) and subjective (develops the content of faith ).

For father Rezuş, dogma is a "life direction" that regards man and his salvation, being always reaffirmed in the Church, the Church acting and distinguishing between false and true dogmas, moreover, the path from a simple truth revealed to a dogmatic truth belonging exclusively to the Church. We must, according to father Rezus, distinguish between dogma and theology, between dogmatic development and theological development.

The present state of dogmatic development is for Father Rezus the state "abnormal in the work of the Church," a state in which development has stagnated and in which it is necessary to discuss renewal, returning to the state before schism. It is a necessity that the talks should also take place on the current situation of the Church, the unification of the Churches and the assembly of a new known ecumenical council, and all the more so since the Church, lacking the main organ of ecumenical formalism of his teachings "has not fully mastered the revealed truth, and in which" the old forms must be renewed, the new patterns of life and human thought must be given the unique norm of orthodox pattern of a Church always awake and with care for the needs of the subjects They". The answer, however, must not be an anachronistic one, says father Rezus, but it also does

not make the poverty of dogmas a quality, and from the theologians a solution to the future orthodox dogmatic.

From this point of view, it is the merit of Father Rezus that he has posed the issue of the theologians, authority and its formulation, showing that they depend on the way in which the emissaries remained faithful to the teachings of the Church, drawing the basic principle of theologians as follows: "the quantity does not impose, the number does not recommend in orthodox dogma."

As for the Orthodox Dogmatic Tradition, this is for Father Rezus the tradition in which the revealed truth goes on the path of dogmatic development while maintaining the line of traditionalist orthodoxy, but where tradition is accommodated in the times and thoughts through which it passes, that is why we can speak in the dogmatic tradition of static and dynamic, of Princely Tradition and Apostolic Tradition, even the apostolic age and patristic age of the Dogmatic Tradition.

All the efforts of Father Rezus to clarify dogmatic truth in the light of traditional orthodoxy is reinforced by the correspondence between the orthodox dogmatic truth and the plan of God's existence, which once again indicates that dogmatic truth can only be founded on a personal God and whose existence can be verified. Starting from this reality of God's personal knowledge, Father Rezus explain the

main directions of theological research knowing that it resolves all the problems of Christianity.

Among the basic problems of Christianity, to which father Rezus devotes all his attention, is the question of divine revelation, with implications on the entire doctrinal background, which brings the new Divine revelation to the individualization and distinction of Christian religion in history, having a special status in culture and human spirituality. Divine revelation was needed for man to know the divine truths.

The approach of divine revelation is made by Father Rezus in a third perspective: the author of the revelation, the receiver of divine revelation and the intercessor of the revealed truths. If subjectively divine revelation appears as a free act that goes beyond the natural, but through which God reveals Himself and His will to men, objectively revelation is identified with christian doctrine.

Moreover, Father Rezuş speaks of a "distinguo" in the development of the divine Revelation by referring to those who do not see in the revelation process an act concluded with Jesus Christ but a continuation of the revelation. Even the Church distinguishes between the unique role played by Christ in the revelation process, the role of the Holy Apostles, the Holy Fathers and the Ecumenical Councils.

After the revelatory process, the Church had the mission of giving value on the revealed treasure.

For Father Rezuş without revelation, it would not have been possible to organize the religion, the revelation being the "nervous brain of the entire system of life and faith in Christianity."

As for the future of the Divine Revelation, we must be careful, the Romanian dogmatist states, at the danger of its depreciation through doctrinal innovations, having as a permanent example the attitude of the ecumenical councils that have said their view of the revealed treasury whenever it was needed, all doing so with the consciousness that Divine Revelation is not a mere theological theory but a theory for religious life.

In the Theology of Father Rezus the anthropological problem appears to be a necessity, and this in the conditions in which man tries to explain his state to be on the path of knowledge or existence. Even if the anthropology of father Rezuş takes the form of anthropological apology, once man has the question of the existence of soul and immortality, there is a victory of his mind, a victory in which he gets to see the plan of salvation.

For Father Rezuş, the way in which creation takes place is a revelation and coincides with the beginning of space and time, the material creation aimed at receiving life: "From the created cosmic

matter, God imagines the first living beings." As a distinct note in creation, Father Rezuş speaks of the fixist creative hypothesis, opposed to the evolutionist hypothesis, "the main characteristic of these species is fixism, that is, they are stable, can not be altered in other species, or combine with them".

Any materialistic attempt to question the existence of the soul and its immortality is in fact a struggle against the anthropological christian conception, a struggle that goes up to polygenism and even until there is a mismatch between human antiquity and the biblical account. What Father Rezuş observes is the promotion of a media stream in the Roman Catholic Church between the results of scientific materialism and Christian anthropology, these "Catholic evolutionists" accepting an "evolutionary creation" without, however, removing the intervention of God.

Father Rezus brings to attention alongside the vital soul principle of man, the vital soul principle of animals, and for the full contouring of the human soul it tries to correct the relationship between these two principles.

The resolution of anthropological problems is seen by father Rezus in another plan of existence in the future life, where the existence of man will be fully understood.

Even if the dogmatic themes are deepened by Father Rezus either from the perspective of apologetic, interreligious, interconfessional or even ecumenical theology, between them all, the fundamental question and the test stone for any theologian remains the divine-human person of God-Man and Savior Jesus Christ". That is why the dogmatic development known to the problem of Christology can be traced back to the apostolic period, "the Messiah and the divinity of the Savior" representing the kernels of the christian doctrine.

Numerous testimonies about the messiahity and divinity of the Savior offer us Sacred Scripture itself, especially the pauline epistles being a testimony to the fact that even after the ascension, the christological concerns were a constant in the life of the Apostles and the Church. Moreover, Father Rezus identifies in pauline christology the other truths that will enter the Symbols and will stand at the foundation of the dogmas, including soteriology and ecclesiology.

Not only the Holy Scripture is a testimony of Christ's messiahness and divinity, but the entire patristic period can be identified as the time when the Holy Fathers have definitively clarified the truths of faith concerning the divine-human person of the Savior. And in the post-patristic period, the christological preoccupations

continued, so that they would intensify with protestantism and roman catholicism.

If protestantism call to new ways of doctrinal approach (it speaks of positively and negatively christologically, of mythologization and demitologisation) when it discusses the problem of the messiah and the divinity of the Savior, the Roman Catholic theology presents us a "particularly christologically heterogeneous configuration in the present".

For Father Rezus, the "christological revival" in protestant theology appears with K. Barth, and the New Testament appeals, on the Tübingen school branch, were just leaving their consideration as a collection of myths around Christ. Hence the contemporary christological theories where influences are obvious. What orthodoxy does, however, is to remain faithful to true christological teachings without using terms that can not be theologically covered.

Contemporary theology, emphasizes Father Rezus, insists on the "definitive character of our Lord Jesus Christ": "The term" definitive Christ "covers the" eternal Christ, "because the definitive qualifier wants to remove the historical and doctrinal of Christ. It means the need to come out of an area of instability and subjective subjectivity in the other, finality and fixity without which we can not speak of a historical purpose of our Lord Jesus Christ. "

What Orthodoxy does is to remain faithful to true christological teachings, "not dissolving" the divinity of the Savior in terms without theological cover, but everything focuses on the service of Christ as He wished.

As we have seen, for Father Rezus, christology only opens the way of the other truths that will stand at the foundation of the dogmas: soteriology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, aghiology, mariology.

With this consciousness, in the soteriological approach, Father Petru Rezuș leaves from pagan soteriologies to show the superiority of christian soteriology fulfilled in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christianity is the one that opens the gates, otherwise closed in other religions, but at the same time imposes and offers conditions for the work of salvation.

What is important, Father Rezuș points out, is that no non-christian religion manages to solve the soteriological problem outside of christianity, and their endeavor is only progress towards the only christian philosophy. For Father Rezu, the prospect of a new life is open only to christianity, salvation being possible through the free will of man and through work together with sanctifying grace.

In the theological work of Father Rezus, pnevmatology embraces the clothes of a synthesis, which in fact seeks to prioritize the activity of the Holy Spirit after ascending to heaven and

descending upon the Apostles. In the referral, the Holy Spirit does not appear in the plan of revelation in a temporal succession but in a soteriological succession.

Orthodox thought is used by Father Rezus to the idea of movement to recreate the idea of eternity and the unity of the paternal Godhead, and when he speaks of the sending of the Holy Ghost to the world, he shows that He did not need to take the beginning of the Son, there was, but needed, the "saving doctrine to continue the work of subjective sanctification of mankind."

Aghiology is one of the new research themes that Father Rezus introduces to romanian theology with the consciousness that only in the communion of saints (the communion of saints is a dogmatic center where all the dogmas meet), in the doctrine of saints and holiness they are best fulfilled the truths of faith, moreover, being a testimony of individual soteriologies. Only from holiness lived as fullness and not as a possibility of salvation comes the conformity of our life with Christ, the Son of God being the desirable ideal of holiness. But holiness only acquires the one who has love for God and for the neighbor.

Mariology is a topical theme for Father Rezuş in the conditions in which the roman catholic Church made the doctrine of raising the Virgin Mary with the body to heaven a dogma. That is why the

approach of the mariology is an integral one, appropriate to the depth of the subject, the parent presenting the important events in the life of the Mother of God both in the light of patristic theology and of his ancestors.

For the Romanian dogmatist, the fact that the Church gives the Virgin Mary a central place in christian worship and piety shows its importance in the icon of salvation, becoming a way for God to enter the world. Thus, the Born of God becomes the basis for a theocentric humanism.

Regarding the teaching about the Church, the theologian Petru Rezuș emphasizes, this was a constant both in the theology of the past and the present, being seen as a key that solves many of the religious problems of contemporary times. That is why Father Rezus wonders where this concern for ecclesiology comes from and whether it has as a background too little understanding of the nature and attributes of the Church? What Rezuș does is to show that beyond catholic legalism and protestant ecclesiology, Orthodoxy studies ecclesiology according to the intentions of its founder, not forgetting the mission and the means by which it can fulfill its purpose, the salvation of the faithful.

In the fourth chapter I approached the theological work of Father Rezus from an interconfessional-ecumenical perspective, for

the understanding of authentic Orthodoxy requiring a "vertical descent in its depth as a notion", Orthodoxy being characterized precisely by the reality of its doctrinal fund, a reality in which the form does not separate from the background. In fact, inter-confessional problems and the Orthodox doctrinal answer are related to the very doctrine of Christianity, Christian diversification being possible due to deficiencies of interpretation in the teaching of Christ.

Interconfessional and interreligious dialogue is needed, says Father Rezuş, a dialogue in which the dogmatic truth must be protected from any deformation, the greatest danger coming from a supra-confessional theology or ecumenical theology.

On this line, Orthodox Dogmatic Theology, although engaged in doctrinal problems, must respond both to the needs of the faithful and to the new living conditions of christianity. That is why Father Rezuş tries an interconfessional approach to all the problems that make up the Orthodox doctrinal content: divine revelation, ecumenism, doctrine, word, christianity, mariology, christology.

In the fifth chapter I exposed the critical position of professor Petru Rezuş regarding the Romanian philosophy of the middle of the 20th century, especially with Lucian Blaga, without forgetting to highlight the polemic in epoch with Father Dumitru Stăniloae regarding the current neopatristic theology. Although often the harsh

expressions used by Father Rezuș to sanction the slippages of romanian philosophy are not the most appropriate, what the romanian dogmatist really wants to convey is the inaccuracy of a philosophy that refuses dialogue with the faith that revolts against the christian truths, and all the more so as romanian philosophy and philosophers are not foreign to christianity. Also indignant that the philosophy of religion was not introduced in volume V in the History of modern philosophy, Father Rezus considers this to be a "painful shame of the whole Church and a true national injustice," and which seeks only to " execute, religion, in this monstrous way from the spiritual point of view. "

In conjunction with this, Lucian Blaga's attitude towards Christianity causes Father Rezus to answer him, but this time in a much more severe way. Even though his resurrection, Father Rezuș, does nothing else than to rally other positions against the romanian philosopher, the dispute between the two acquires a more serious accent, sometimes sprinkled with irony replies, all culminating in the process open by the philosopher Lucian Blaga to dogmatist Petru Rezus at the court in Caransebes.

We can not overlook the attitude of Father Rezuș towards Dumitru Stăniloae, which is incomprehensible if we consider the praise dogmatist Petru Rezuș introduces to father Staniloae in the first

half of the 20th century as one, , a phenomenon in the history of romanian theology ". Taking into consideration all these positive remarks to the transylvanian theologian, the natural question arises: what determined the Father Rezuş to change his attitude towards one of the theologians who until that time was one of the greatest contemporary theologians of the orthodoxy and will be and one of the purest glories of the gallery of founders of romanian spirituality. "

A possible justification for the new attitude of Father Rezus can be seen if we take into account the historical-political context, with implications in romanian theology of the middle of the 20th century, both in the published studies and the disputes between professors. It seems that the line of the new political organization in the early 50's represents a new direction for Sibiu teachers, Liviu Stan and Spiridon Cândea, who will facilitate the departure of father Stăniloae from Sibiu to Bucharest. This new attitude with which father Stăniloae is encountered is in fact a judgment of father Stăniloae's mariological appeal in the 1950s, but he will not be forgiven by the representatives of the theology of Cernăuți, now in Sibiu and Bucharest, who accuse him "abandoning the orthodox theological tradition in favor of the tradition of inspirational neopatristic and philocalic".

Beyond the edges of a strict theological dispute, with the emphasis either on the patristic theology of the 2nd to the seventh centuries, or on post-patristic byzantine theology, Father Rezuş's attitude is explained maybe best psychologically, starting in a first phase as a complicity to marginalization to which the Sibiu theologian had been subjected by his colleagues, and later transformed into an intellectual stubbornness.

In conclusion, regarding the whole scientific approach retrospectively, I believe that I managed to capture the main guidelines of dogmatical thinking of Father Petru Rezuş, while I am aware that my research does not exhaust the richness of the thinking of one of the most important romanian dogmatists of the last century, and beyond by the inherent limits, this approach opens new research opportunities for Dogmatic Theology.

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