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ARAD
INTERDISCIPLINARY DOCTORAL SCHOOL
FIELD OF THEOLOGY**

**CANONICAL PUNISHMENTS AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES
IN THE CANONS OF THE EASTERN CHURCH (IV-IX CENTURIES)**

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ARAD

2023

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INTRODUCTION

1. Focus of the research

The present work, which falls within the scope of canonical-legal and historical studies, proposes an approach to the issue of canonical sanctions and disciplinary measures of the Eastern Church, as they were later fixed in the canons, starting from the observation of the crucial role that church discipline played among the faithful, both in the Old Testament, New Testament and in the continuing era after the foundation of the Church as an ecclesial body of divine-human nature.

Another objective of the treatment of this topic is to observe the emergence and evolution of various concepts, sanctions (punishments) and disciplinary measures of a canonical and ecclesiastical nature for the discipline of the Church in general.

Noting that in the early centuries the Church was faced with unprecedented challenges, this research aims at an analysis of the objectives, contents and methods of discipline among Church members, both clergy and laity.

A "pedagogy" of the faithful is envisaged, directed towards the achievement of two interrelated goals: a) the maintenance of rigorous discipline in the Church in order to form and develop an authentic religious personality; b) the salvation of the faithful.

These goals can only be achieved if they are operationalized as objectives of a biblical, pedagogical and canonical-legal discourse, firmly rooted in the principles of the Church, which the present paper examines.

Without observance of moral and legal norms of conduct, the necessary order in the life of any society cannot be ensured.

The punishments and disciplinary measures laid down by the canons for ecclesiastical offences are general for all members of the Church and specific for the offences of clerics or monks.

As a theological-legal science, Canon Law is concerned both with methodical research, study and analysis and with systematic exposition, i.e. the setting out in a logical system of the rules, principles and norms of law by which the Orthodox Church is governed.

The content of the plan reflects a scholarly approach to the subject, highlighting elements of real interest and highlighting particularly interesting aspects that can inspire the institutional dynamism of the Church today.

Concepts such as cursing (anathema), excommunication (hērem), exclusion, affirisure, etc., as disciplinary measures and how they were included in the canons, as well as ways of applying Canon Law, are traced.

The interest around this theme is manifested by researching the historical circumstances, arguing the canonical-legal, social and confessional reasons that led the Eastern Church to include a certain type of punishments and disciplinary measures in the canons drawn up in the period concerned, the 4th - 9th centuries.

2. Motivation and choice of subject

The present study is motivated by a personal interest in the issues concerning the Eastern Church's punishments and disciplinary measures as reflected in the synodal canons of the 4th-9th centuries and their importance in the pastoral life of the Church, since it is well known that many of these canons are still used today as rules of conduct in dealing with various disciplinary, liturgical, pastoral and moral problems.

Another argument for approaching and treating this topic is to observe the emergence and subsequent developments of various concepts of Church coercive measures.

In this research I also wish to gain some understanding of the position of the Eastern Church as an ecclesial institution, which has historically faced the delicate issue of discipline, especially among the clergy.

As a theological-legal discipline, Church Law sets out the principles and rules of law by which the Church is governed and organised.

The question of punishment in the canonical Tradition of the Church is a delicate one, because it knows no parallels. It represents a blatant antinomy, a visible and obviously real divergence between ontological love and the exercise of punishment, which is very often linked to the confirmation of power. The fall of man is situated, among other things, at the level of the exercise of power that he exercises over creation, and punishment remains the diachronic means of this exercise of power. In contrast, ontological love presupposes complete freedom, in which there is no exercise of power or any attempt to coerce in order to acquire or have a result, or to be efficient (to be effective) in this exercise. Right here we see the antinomy between divine love and sanctions.

The institution of the State and its law ignores this ontological parameter of love. Theology (as ecclesial life) is based on love, which can only be born after the "death of the ego", in which each dies to self and lives in complete freedom for the other, while the law - personal or state, it does not matter - manifests itself after the death of love, which is rupture, divorce; if it is not preceded by such a rupture, such a death, the law remains totally neutralized and devoid of any meaning.

Punishments and sanctions come as a result of the exercise of Law, the ultimate exercise of power, whereas "God [the Trinitarian] is love" and in this Trinitarian communion of love, there are no rights or sanctions, because the Trinitarian life is a life of love even after death. The question therefore remains entirely open...

Because of the discontinuity that has developed between Church and State in modern times and the more exclusively spiritual and pastoral function of the ecclesial organization, canon law scholars are seeking a recovery of the vital contact between canon law and theology, biblical exegesis (critical principles of biblical interpretation) and Church history in their contemporary forms. Researchers in Canon Law also seek a link with the empirical social sciences (e.g. sociology, anthropology and other such disciplines), which is necessary for an understanding and scrutiny of the application of canon law. The study of the history of Canon Law requires not only a legal and historical background, but also an understanding of theological concepts and contemporary social relations. Many sources, such as the documents of councils and popes, are often uncritical and found only in poorly organized publications, and much of the material exists only in manuscripts and archives; frequently, legal sources contain "dead law" (i.e., law that is no longer considered valid) and say nothing about "living law." What does and does not fall under Canon Law, what is or is not a source of Canon Law, what law is universal and what is local and other such matters must be judged differently for different periods.

The function of Canon Law in liturgy, homiletics and other social activities involves the development and maintenance of those institutions which are considered to be most useful for the personal life and faith of the members of the Church and for their vocation in the world. This function, then, is concerned with a continual adaptation of canon law to the circumstances of the time as well as to personal needs.

In the present paper, I will attempt, on the basis of biblical, patristic and canonical texts, to define the various concepts underlying canonical sanctions, starting initially from their emergence since the time of Adam, and attempting to articulate a subsequent canonical argument regarding their development and transformation into norms of canon law, as well as the way in which these sanctions have been applied over time, pointing to some "famous" cases from this perspective.

3. Research status

Within the Romanian canonical-legal theology of the Church, there have been authors who have written articles and studies on various subjects related to the Church discipline and which have been a real support for the documentation of the present research, containing valuable information about the jurisdictional activity of the Church described by Church Law.

There is, however, no exhaustive approach to this topic of Canon Law with strict reference to disciplinary measures and canonical sanctions (punishments) as laid down in the Church canons.

Priest John V. Covercă , writes about "Ecclesiastical judgment in ancient times", a work written under the direction of Prof. Liviu Stan, accepted as a dissertation for the degree of Master and published in *Studii Teologice*, year XIII (1961), no. 1-2, p. 66-85. The author recalls the courts of the first four Christian centuries and describes the qualities of church judges. He also describes public and private confession as a form of judgment in those times, as well as the role of the penitential priest. Epistles are correctional means, having a more legal character granted by a judge who puts spiritual teaching and spiritual medicine at the service of the spiritual tribunal. The judgment of both Christians and clerics takes into account the specifics and consequences of the acts committed.

The priest Munteanu Alexandru Armand, publishes the study "The application of epitaphs in the light of the holy canons", in the journal *Studii Teologice*, year XIII (1961), no. 7-8, p. 445-465, in which he classifies the epitaphs, in order of their seriousness as well as their application to the faithful: in *forum internum* (at the confessional seat) but also in *forum externum* (by the legal instances of the Church). These epithets (admonition, admonition, fasting, prayer, metanoia, excommunication or affliction) are applied for various offences: against the faith, against holy works and works, against society, against the family, against one's

neighbour, against one's own person. The author also argues the procedure in the application of epitaphs using the canonical provisions of the Church, but makes no reference to the occurrence of these disciplinary measures.

"Courts of Justice in the Orthodox Churches" is a work that discusses the canonical unity of Orthodoxy by observing as closely as possible the fundamental canonical ordinances and describes the need to "retouch" some of the differences that persist (often unjustifiably) between local Orthodox Churches.

The doctoral student in theology Mihuş Valeriu Miron , publishes the paper in Theological Studies, year XVIII (1966), no. 9-10, p. 584-619. In it we find a brief historical overview of the judicial forums in the ancient Church, a description of the judicial courts in the ancient Orthodox patriarchates (Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem), as well as the courts in the autocephalous Orthodox Churches (Russian Orthodox Church, Orthodox Church of Greece, Serbian Orthodox Church, Bulgarian Orthodox Church, Romanian Orthodox Church, Polish Orthodox Church, Orthodox Church of Finland).

A novelty that emerges from the lines of this article is the existence of an "auxiliary" body such as the Joint Council made up of representatives of the Patriarchates of Constantinople, Antioch and Jerusalem.

The canonist Archdeacon Ioan N. Floca speaks about the right of appeal in his article "The Canons of the Synod of Sardica" (in the journal Studii Teologice, year XXIII (1971), no. 9-10, p. 720-726, pointing to the canonical decisions of the Synod of 343. Canon 3 recommends that a condemned bishop, dissatisfied with the judgement of the synod of the province to which he belongs, should ask Pope Julius I of Rome (337-352) to intervene as arbitrator between the parties. At the same time, the procedure which the pope is obliged to follow in this matter is clearly and precisely established. Although the Synod of Sardica was unanimously recognized as a local synod, the decisions of the synodists acquired a special authority in the canonical "code" of the Eastern and Ecumenical Church.

Professor of Theology Nicolae Chişescu writes an article entitled "The distinction between oros and canon and its significance for the reception of the Council of Chalcedon", in the journal Ortodoxia, year XXII (1970), no. 3, p. 347-364.

This article is relevant for understanding the distinction between doctrinal canons and juridical canons even if the form in which they were issued by the synods

does not distinguish them from each other. The Church has infallibility as the "Corpus Mysticum Christi" and the Ecumenical Council is infallible as a faithful part and organ of the Church. In the opinion of the author of this article, the Ecumenical Synods were a symbol of the "triumph of the kingdom of heaven" and a call to keep the authority of the Church undiminished. The formula in the biblical quotation from Matthew 23:23: "Do these and do not leave these", applicable to both the oros and the canon, is used.

Professor Iorgu D. Ivan adds to these two terms in his article "Όρος και κανον in Orthodox Church Law" in *Orthodoxy*, year XXII (1970), no. 3, p. 365-372. It is stated that: 'the decisions of an ecumenical synod represent the voice of the whole Church and they are binding on all members of the Church without distinction' (...). In the Orthodox Church, the primary source of law is the will of her Founder, revealed and contained in Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition. Ecclesiastical laws with administrative or disciplinary content, adapted to the circumstances in which the Church carries out her activity, have acquired their binding force from the authority which ordained or strengthened them. Decisions and definitions (όροι), like canons (κανόνες), are not important and binding by the term they bear, but by the content they contain, that is, by the truth of faith, defined by the competent authority, or by the fundamental principle of administration and discipline which they express".

Silviu Petre Pufulete, in his article "The punishment of descending from the step according to the canons of the Orthodox Church" in *Studii Teologice*, year XXVII (1975), no. 1-2, p. 41-51. The author recalls that the Church's legislative and jurisdictional power is justified by its position as an independent ecclesiastical social body both in origin and in the purpose and means used to achieve it. Falling from grace is not a fall from grace but a disciplinary punishment, heavier than suspension and less severe than catechesis. This disciplinary measure is an experiment in subordination, in obedience for the purpose of promoting a higher interest of the Church for the "preservation of order and discipline". The effects of demotion are manifested in the limitation of the exercise of the sanctifying power of the hierarchical step in question, but not because he loses the sanctifying capacity acquired through ordination, but because he partially loses or is limited in this capacity. The author also mentions the deviations which attract this punishment on those concerned.

Professor Ilie Moldovan, in his article "Canons and their relation to divine revelation" in *Orthodoxy*, XXVIII (1976), no. 2, p. 365-373, refers to the fact that "between the Gospel and the canons there is a relationship which is mediated by Holy Tradition". It also states that "the writings of the New Testament must be regarded as the most important documents which give us the possibility of verifying the content of the Christian law as preserved in the holy canons". In the opinion of Father Moldovan "in our days, when so many fundamental social changes are taking place, it is necessary to codify the canons according to the criterion of their relation to revealed truth... The Church will take care that canonical provisions (including sanctions) are not ignored, but on the contrary raised to their true value, but neither sacralized in a sense alien to the Orthodox point of view. In this way, it will also guard against falling into two equally dangerous extremes in the future: uprooted spiritualism and spirit-killing formalism."

The priest and university professor Dr. Constantin Rus, offers a "Canonical guide on church offences and crimes", a study published in the magazine *Mitropolia Banatului*, year XXXV, (1985) no. 9-10, p. 620-627. The author mentions "the kinds of ordinances for correcting members of the Church who err and for bringing them on the path of a correct life, in conformity with ecclesiastical doctrine" as well as the canons which provide for the punishment of offences concerning the faith, the structure of the Church and the relationship with God. Offences against the canonical order are also presented, such as: violation of responsibility, disobedience to ecclesiastical authority, renunciation of the priesthood, renunciation of monastic vows, drunkenness, card playing, various unchristian practices, negligence in clerical dress, beating, denial of the sacrament of confession. Canonical sanctions are also foreseen for offences concerning human life, offences concerning morality, offences concerning the right of possession, violation of tombs, etc. This guide is an extremely useful tool for direct reference to the canonical source of any disciplinary measure or sanction.

A canonical study of particular importance is the work "Precizări privind unele noțiuni ale dreptului canonic bisericesc (depoziție, caterisire, excomunicare-afurisire e anatemă) în lumina învățurii ortodoxe" by Prof. Nicolae V. Dură , published in the journal *Ortodoxia*, year XXXIX (1987) no. 2, p. 84-135, part I and in *Ortodoxia* no. 3/1987, p. 105-143, part II. The author argues for a "unitary

ecclesiastical criminal procedure, because at present there is no canonical penal code that specifies both canonical notions and the cases in which the respective punishments can be applied, in full conformity with Orthodox doctrine, and thus the ignorance of ecclesiastical laws would disappear. The terminological ambiguities related to the sanctions (punishments) listed in this study would also disappear: *quod omnes tangit, debet ab omnibus approbari* (what affects all must be approved by all)'.

Professor Iorgu Ivan publishes in *Studii Teologice*, year XLI (1989), no. 4, p. 78-101, an article in which he writes about "Some canonical terms. Their Meaning and Explanation in Orthodox Law". Among these terms are mentioned some which designate ecclesiastical punishments: affurisement (excommunication) and anathema.

Professor Ivan's study "Resignation from the Priesthood" presents two views on the issue: a very clear-cut (harsh) one which does not admit under any circumstances the resignation of the clergyman (priest or bishop) of his own free will, but his removal from the priesthood by judgment, and another, more lenient, conception, which we also find recorded in the *Pildalion*, according to which a clergyman who feels guilty of an offence which renders him unworthy to serve may resign. The author states: "there is a resignation from the see, but not from the priesthood or the priesthood; problematic are the reasons which have their basis in the canons and practice of the Church, as well as the consequences to which clerics who resign are exposed". .

The priest professor Ioan Petreuță wrote a work entitled "Anathema", published in 1941 by Concordia "Gh. Munteanu", Arad Graphic Arts Institute. In this work the author speaks about the notion and purpose of anathema, about the right of the Church to anathematize, about the procedure of application and about the consequences of anathema, as well as about absolution which "nullifies the crime committed, overlooks the punishment imposed and, therefore, leads to reconciliation with the Church".

Spiridon Cădea publishes in three issues of the *Theological Review*, an article on "The punishment of deposition from the clergy" (no. 7-8, p. 244-259, no. 9-10, p. 290-304 and no. 11-12, p. 402-411, Sibiu, year XXIV-1934) in which the author talks about the punishments for clerics (of correction or medicinal which are limited in time, as well as the punishments proper or vindictive, of which the heaviest is deposition); also mentioned are the offences of clerics, which are punished with

deposition: general ecclesiastical offences, special ecclesiastical offences for clerics (against discipline, deviations from the fundamental rules in the performance of holy works) as well as general offences in social life. It concludes:

"Just as it is true that some canons, through the disappearance of the cause which gave them birth, through the disappearance of the danger which threatened the Church at a certain time, have come to have only a historical, scientific value for Christian life today, it is equally true that if most of the canons of the Church were observed by clergy and laity, and if the punishments indicated by these canons were applied more often today in cases of guilt, Christian moral life would gain and discipline in the Church would be stronger. The canons remain for ever the best guide by which the Christian is bound to shape his life. The clergy in particular is obliged to obey, to live the Church's rules in spirit and in letter, in order to be a living and edifying example to Christians in all circumstances. Even the canons concerning the catechism of the clergy, if they were observed with interest and severity, would prevent too great a secularization of the Orthodox clergy and too great an alienation from purely priestly duties.

The future Orthodox ecumenical synod, which is in its preparatory stages, can, by its decisions, make the ecclesiastical laws once again the rules of daily life, rules written in the hearts of Christians, rules lived and which help the salvation of the faithful at every moment. We look forward to this Christian and Orthodox revival".

Without using an exhaustive approach, I will mention a few other works that have appeared in the course of time on some of the subjects dealt with in this study.

1. On judicial courts: G. CRONȚ, "Church justice in Moldavia and Wallachia in the 19th century. XIV-XVIII", in *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei*, year XLI (1975), no. 3-4, p. 28-42; G. CRONȚ "Instanțele de judecată ale Chiesa din Países Române în sec. XIV-XVIII", in *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei*, year XLII (1976), no. 5-6, p. 38-51; N. CAZACU "Consistoriile bisericești", in *Glasul Bisericii*, year IX, (1950), no. 4-5, p. 22-41; G. SOARE, *Natura giuridică a consistoriilor bisericești*, Bucharest, 1943; S. BERECHET, "Judecata bisericească la primii cristianți", in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, year XLIII (1923), no. 7-8, p. 456-481; S. BERECHET, "Dreptul vechilor nostri ierarhi la judecările mirenilor", in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, year LVI (1938), no. 11-12, p. 744-753; RUS C., "Competenza

judectorească a sedeurile protopopești din Transilvania în sec. XIV-XVIII", in Mitropolia Banatului, year XXXV (1985), p. 338-348; C. RUS, "Canonical principles not taken into account when judging and condemning Metropolitan Sava Brancovici", in Altarul Banatului, year II, (1991), nr. 10-12, p. 72-91;

2. On appeal or right of appeal, dispensations: ȘTEFAN V., "Recourse in ecclesiastical disciplinary cases", in Biserica Ortodoxă Română, year LXXIII (1955), no. 6, p. 44-62; I. N. FLOCA, "Dispensation in Church Law", Theological Studies, year VII (1955), no. 1-2, p. 46-62.

3. On punishments, sanctions and offences: A. MUNTEANU "Punishments applied to clerics by the Church", in The Romanian Orthodox Church, year LXXIX (1961), no. 9-10, p. 32-48; S. PUFULETE, "The punishment of descending from the step according to the canons of the Orthodox Church", in Studii Teologice, year XXVII (1975), p. 41-51; I. STELIAN, "Considerații asupra castipselor aplicate în pravila din 1646", in Biserica Ortodoxă Română, year LXXXI (1964), p. 51-65; G. CRONȚ, Este îndreptățită autoritatea ecleziastică să pronunțe două punpse pentru aceiaime abateres?, Bucharest, 1937; Augustin VASILE, "Sancțiunea în direito canonic", in Studii Teologice, year XLI (1989), no. 5-6, September-December, p. 17-27.

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4. Purpose, limits and originality of the work

The 21st century is characterized by a marked dissolution of traditional values. Many historical institutions, which have been the basis of civilised society, are today threatened and in danger of remaining mere mentions in history textbooks. The deeply secularised society of the contemporary period also often tends to discredit the Church as either an anachronistic, corrupting or manipulative institution, or all of these together. Not infrequently, the church institution is the target of coordinated attacks, which seek to speculate on any crack, either at the level of ministry or at the level of the church hierarchy, in order to add "evidence" to its artificially constructed negative image.

The new means of communication are also a challenge to the Church's organisation: they can be used to its advantage, to convey the Church's message to any part of the world and to expand the mission to an unprecedented level, but they can also be an instrument of undermining the Church's image when they are used to record and broadcast any wrongdoing by a member of the Church.

The canons of the Orthodox Church stand out in their juridical aspect for the complete vision they offer of canonical discipline and their interconnectivity. Thus, a good knowledge of ecclesiastical legal practice and of the canons in general is imperative for effective pastoral ministry on behalf of the faithful.

The importance of knowing the legal procedures of the other sister Orthodox Churches must also be taken into consideration.

This is justified primarily on the basis of the ancient principle of Sobornicity, since since ancient times the Orthodox Churches have communicated their main disciplinary decisions to each other, thus removing the danger of transgression of some clergy or laity under punishment and their reinstatement within the community or the ecclesiastical hierarchy of another Church. In addition to this historical consideration, the present situation must also be taken into account: since the mobility of the individual has increased exponentially in the contemporary world,

it is necessary for every member of the Church to know and respect the disciplinary provisions of the ecclesiastical body under whose jurisdiction he or she is at any given time, just as every citizen is bound to know and respect the legal provisions of the country he or she is visiting, since he or she is implicitly subject to their jurisdiction.

Since the beginning of historical time, law has been the guarantee of order in human society. From a secular point of view, it has ensured the stability and development of civilisations, allowed the formation of values and rules of conduct that have become intrinsic, and regulated the conduct of inter-human relations. The legislators of the past have remained in the posterity of history as some of the central figures of the civilisations they represented.

From the point of view of religion, legislation enjoys a higher regard - divine laws are the expression of the divine will on earth, unchangeable rules entrusted to humans for maintaining a relationship with the divine and for harmonious living. If the great secular legislators enjoy fame in the posterity of history, the makers of spiritual laws are in many cases attributed divine attributes. This characteristic is particularly noticeable in the case of the great monotheistic religions.

The Saviour Jesus Christ did not leave a code of laws as such, a series of case-by-case provisions; Christianity is essentially a religion of love and brotherly understanding. Love is the greatest of all laws in the Christian vision, and whoever follows it cannot go wrong. However, as theology shows, the disorder established in the world by the sin of the ancestors and the weaknesses of human nature made it necessary, over time, to promulgate a moral code of Christianity and to set up courts.

The civilisation that made a major contribution to this institutionalisation of Christian law was the Roman Empire, within which the Church developed. Roman law had already reached its full development by the time Christianity was recognised as a lawful religion, and the Church's canon law was organised on its principles. This osmosis had beneficial effects on both sides: while Roman legal principles allowed an efficient categorisation of ecclesiastical crimes and punishments, the principle of Christian philanthropy humanised Roman laws. The symbiosis between the two structures was completed later, in the Byzantine period, when Christian influence can easily be seen in law collections and law manuals, such as the Pandects, Digests and

Corpus juris civilis of the Holy Roman Emperor Justinian I the Great, the Eclogue of Emperor Leo III the Isaurian or the Procheiron and Epanagoga of Basil I the Macedonian.

The perpetuation of the practice of collective judgment in the early centuries of the Christian Church's existence is evidenced first by the writings of the Nostra: thus, St. Paul rebukes the Corinthians for having had recourse to the courts of the pagan Roman state instead of settling their differences within the community, submitting to its judgment: "Dare any of you, having a quarrel against another, judge himself before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are you unworthy to judge such little things? Know ye not that we shall judge the angels? How much more the worldly? So if you have worldly judgments, do you have those who are not in the sight of the Church judge you? I say this to your shame. Is there not a wise man among you who can judge between brother and brother? But brother with brother is judged, and that before unbelievers?" (I Corinthians 6:1-6). From this Pauline epistle we can see a gradual evolution of judgement in the early Church, signaling the emergence of the court of two or three believers, which will later develop, including more and more members, until it includes the whole community.

The specific judicial activity of the Christian Church can be described as follows: "every deviation from the norms of conduct, whatever they may be called, religious, moral or legal, is first of all judged as a sin and only in the second place, when appropriate, is it judged as a formal violation of the law" . This characteristic feature of the ecclesiastical body also leads to a different categorisation of offences from civil law. State legislation distinguishes the application of disciplinary power in civil matters from criminal matters, but the Church does not make this distinction, since all offences are crimes, contraventions of the law of faith or of the canons. That is why the terminology is also different: in the State they are called judicial sentences in civil matters and criminal sentences in criminal matters, while in the Church they are called only disciplinary sentences or measures.

With these considerations in mind, the thesis I wish to present will outline the emergence and evolution of canonical sanctions and disciplinary measures in the Eastern Church (predominantly) and how they have been received over time through their transformation into canons.

In addition to the desire to expose some questions of Church discipline in the sphere of theology, practical, I have chosen this theme also for a missionary reason. In this period of history characterized by the ideologies of post-modernity that shape the world in which we live, there is an alarming process of abandonment of the most elementary norm of discipline in most domains, man being urged by all means of modern technology, to reinvent himself, to rewrite from different perspectives the whole spiritual and spiritual dowry, in order to discover a "truth" (or several) that will please everyone.

The man of profane history is the man (as a family) cast out of Paradise, in constant conflict with the Divine, with the world and with himself. This is what modern man looks like: eternally dissatisfied, living under the sign of dissatisfaction, always seeking and never finding the Truth. Total and exclusive self-confidence obscures faith in God in accordance with this induced and permanently maintained autonomy. Through deceptive progress, man experiences a false becoming that inevitably leads him to spiritual death and implicitly to physical death. From this perspective, man is faced with a horizon of mystery which is a specific horizon of human existence that is strictly within the definition of human consciousness.

We often remain passive to this approach, helplessly witnessing the stripping of meaning from canonical spirituality, the desacralization of spiritual life, which remains outside ecclesial life, developing in isolation and often against the Christian faith.

And because of this, this research project was conceived from the outset with a multiple purpose in its structuring and development, namely: historical, juridical-canonical and theological.

The historical aspect takes into account the emergence and evolution of the concepts of disciplinary measures since the Old Testament period; the juridical-canonical aim aims at outlining the relationship between the canonical content (as a norm or regulation) and the juridical content of the canons for their application in the life of the members of the Church, and the theological aim is to highlight the texts of "disciplinary" canons within Canon Law as means for the correction of penitents.

The analyses and results we have arrived at are applicable only in the sphere of ecclesiastical criminal law, without exhausting all the elements of canon law in relation to the jurisdictional activity of the Church. It would have been quite

impossible to deal with all the questions concerning discipline and/or the restoration of discipline in the Church by all the means of correcting the faithful.

This approach is based on the observation that in Romanian canonical theology there is a lack of a study that focuses on canonical sanctions and disciplinary measures of the Eastern Church, as well as on the way in which different circumstances led to the elaboration of disciplinary canons, starting from the 3rd and 4th centuries A.D. and up to the 9th century A.D., a period in which most canons were issued by local or ecumenical synods or by some holy Fathers.

5. Research methodology

Scientific research is based on the use of a methodology, a set of methods and procedures with which the study of law in all its complexity takes place.

By method we mean a concerted set of intellectual operations (which may consist of principles, rules) that are used to achieve one or more objectives in terms of knowledge of a phenomenon. To this end, certain technical procedures may also be used, which are ancillary to methods and should not be confused with them.

Referring to the main methods of the present research, I mention first of all the biblical-historical method. By chronologically establishing certain concepts related to church discipline, we have highlighted, as a priority, the moments in the biblical history of the Jewish people that led to the emergence of sanctions (punishments) which, over time, were developed in other forms but which retained their original purpose: to maintain discipline within the communities and to punish those who violated the Law or the Word of God.

According to the historical method, we have researched the perspective and historical evolution of punishments as sanctions and disciplinary measures, throughout the different social orders, analyzing their essence, form and functions in relation to a specific historical stage, knowing that canonical-legal institutions bear the stamp of the historical transformations of the world in general and implicitly of the Church.

Thus, we have presented the emergence of punishment with the violation of the divine commandment (mentioned in Holy Scripture) which shows us that man received the first law, which empowered him with freedoms and rights, but which naturally also made known to him the obligations he had in order to exist and live in safety and peace.

The curse (hērem) arises as a consequence of this violation of the Law.

In the writings of the Old Testament, the concepts used to describe the punishments inflicted undergo an important development, depending on the gravity of the offence committed. Thus, we are dealing with lighter to harsher punishments that have different periods of application.

The New Testament times reposition the punishments and disciplinary measures on new coordinates based on divine love for the "correction of the sinner" and which are described gradually: reprimand, exclusion, excommunication, damnation, anathema.

Also from a historical perspective, the later church canons were analysed, regarding the sanctions that became well specified and established on the occasion of various synods. Far from being a collection of rigid prohibitions and punishments, the "holy orthodox canons", as they are often and beautifully called by those who understand their role in Christian pedagogy, constitute a genuine moral guide, a guideline for our spiritual life, based on Holy Scripture and Apostolic Tradition. The holiness and authority of those who have written them give them the power to guide us towards an authentic life in accordance with the divine ordinance. For the present times, marked in many respects by relativism and indifference, the sound appeal to the values of traditional Orthodox morality, preserved in the canonical treasury of the Church, represents a salutary return to normality.

All these sanctions have their basis in Divine Reason and Logic which are punctually described in Holy Scripture.

In the present study we have also used the logical method, which is essentially characteristic for Church Law. Disregarding what is non-essential or incidental in the existence of law, we have studied the circumstances in which the jurisdictional activity of the Church has emerged as a distinct, separate corpus within Canon Law, obviously following legal logic.

This juridical logic can be seen in the penitential discipline as well as in the emergence and development of courts of justice, since the early Church. All disciplinary measures follow a certain sequence in relation to the seriousness of the act or the persistence in "sin" of a member of the Church. Also from a logical perspective, I have sought to make the arguments presented in this study valid and congruent.

A method of important value in the present study, with regard to the evolution of disciplinary measures and sanctions in the canonical tradition of the Church, is that of comparison.

From the comparative study of the canons as pastoral rules or as laws of the Church, in comparing the canonical systems of the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church, the factors which determine both their common and specific transformations (with regard to the question of the indelible character of grace in the Sacrament of Priesthood in the application of the penalty of catechesis, for example) are revealed.

For the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the concept of the canonical code is similar but not identical to the Western one, which is more juridical and legislative in content and expression. In both traditions, canon (from the Greek term *κανών*/kanon) is a rule (or measure) adopted by a synod (ecumenical or local) or drawn up by a holy father. These rules constitute the "tradition of the holy canons" or Orthodox Canon Law.

In the Catholic Church, the conciliar (synodal) canons have been supplemented by papal decrees. In the cent. In the 20th century, the Catholic Church began to codify these canons, and thus the 1917 Code of Canon Law took shape. A revised edition, the *Codex Iuris Canonici* (CIC), was published under the pontificate of Pope John Paul II in 1983 to incorporate the new regulations of the Second Vatican Council.

As a conclusion after the brief presentation of the research methods, it must be noted that they should not be understood in isolation, but in their interdependence and complementarity, and the vision that I have tried to respect in the course of writing has been that of their concomitant application, so that the elements presented may lead to an understanding of certain realities, thus resulting in a systematic approach.

6. Structure of the work

The paper entitled *Canonical Punishments and Disciplinary Measures in the Canons of the Eastern Church (4th-9th centuries)* is structured in five chapters, each of which is divided into several sub-chapters, preceded by an introduction and then followed by conclusions and a bibliography.

In the introduction I mentioned the reason for choosing the subject, then the object of the research, after which I mentioned the stage of the research, the studies

and articles written on the basis of this subject, continuing with the aim, limitations and originality, after which I described the methods used in the elaboration of this work, and at the end of the introduction, I pointed out the difficulties I encountered during the research.

Chapter I, entitled Punishments and Disciplinary Measures in the Old Testament Writings will include the following researched elements: The notion of punishment, anáthema in the Old Testament, the concept of ḥērem and anáthema in the Old Testament tradition, excommunication in the Old Testament, the concept of bāḏal in the Old Testament, other notions expressing excommunication, exclusion from priestly service, other disciplinary punishments in Old Testament writings, disciplinary punishments in the rabbinic tradition.

Sanction is also called punishment. The Romans called the penal sanction "poena", which means "payment" or "punishment". The word has an even older origin because the Romans took it from the Greeks, who called the penalty ποινή, the Greeks took it from Sanskrit, which called the punishment 'koena', which meant the currency with which the offence was paid (a kind of fine). Until the 18th century the Romanians did not use the word "punishment", but the word "scolding", mentioned in the chronicles and pravileas of the Romanian Lands.

Punishment is a measure of constraint and a means of re-educating the guilty party. The main purpose of the ecclesiastical punishment is not to torment the guilty, but to bring him back to the true path from which he has strayed, to prevent him from doing further harm to his fellow men and to dissuade others from committing similar acts.

Punishment is important because it is only through its use that order can be maintained and justice enforced.

In canon law, the application of sanctions is intended to correct the wrongdoer, to satisfy the injured party and to prevent the danger of the crime. By correction, the Church seeks to re-educate offending members and to bring them back to the original state of order and discipline common to the Christian community. Knowledge of the sanctions laid down in the holy canons is very important in our time, since this will avoid the danger of future offences and will strengthen the discipline and good order of the Church.

In ancient times, people used punishment as an instrument of purification and cleansing of society applied to a recalcitrant person.

In the Old Testament we find ideas from the law of retaliation whereby the offender was obliged to suffer the same harm as the victim. Thus Deuteronomy 19:21 gives us the following principle: "Thou shalt not spare his eye, but shalt ask soul for soul, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. The evil that someone does to his neighbor must be repaid."

Punishment is first mentioned in the Old Testament, when God's punishment (for the serpent's temptation of Adam and Eve) in the form of the curse is mentioned.

"Curse" and "damnation" are the terms that make up the anathema meaning of the Old Testament writings. The Latin expressions "execratio" (curse) and "detestatio" (curse) also designate the anáthema. Anathema is also communion with unworthy people.

In the Old Testament, this expression was used both in relation to what was alienated because of sinfulness and what was dedicated to God.

The Old Testament applied the word anáthema to anything set aside for sacrifice and thus forbade the profane use of the term in the sense of „dedicated to destruction" - such as, in the case of religious warfare, the enemy, their cities and possessions.

The word ἀνάθεμα (anáthema), meaning something offered to a deity, appeared in the translation of the Hebrew Bible, known as the Septuagint, to render the Hebrew word ḥērem and appears in various verses of the Old Testament. The term ḥērem is used in the Hebrew text to designate persons or things that are offered to God and thus forbidden for common (non-religious) use. Ḥērem is a difficult word to translate but assumes various meanings in translation, a matter dealt with in the present study. The word anáthema takes on the meaning of the Hebrew word ḥērem, and indicates the object or person upon whom God's curse is invoked and focused if an oath or promise has not been kept (kept).

The presence of the terms anathema/ ḥērem is highlighted in the writings of the Pentateuch and some of the pre-exilic writings. We find the notion of ḥērem in various contexts and circumstances recounted in Holy Scripture.

The term ḥērem was often used to refer to the total annihilation of idolatrous people or nations. The land conquered in the name of the Lord by Joshua is ḥērem,

which means that Israel cannot make use of it, because it rightfully belongs to God, who grants the right of use, not ownership, to his vassal Israel as a blessing in return for fidelity to a Covenant.

A practical application regarding the concept of anathema/ ḥērem is that one cannot read the Bible (especially the Old Testament) in a fatalistic manner and assume that anyone will understand its meaning. Indeed, a cursory glance at this particular concept might lead the uninformed reader to believe that God encourages violence and genocide. In fact it emphasizes that humans rely completely on God and therefore must obey his laws and commandments.

In postexilic Judaism, the meaning of the word ḥērem has changed to an expression of God's displeasure with all persons, Jew or Gentile, who do not subordinate their personal conduct and tendencies to the discipline of the theocracy and must be purged from the community - thus making anathema an instrument of synagogal discipline.

In postexilic priestly law, we find ḥērem used as a term for a special form of private dedication of things and persons to the sanctuary.

From the book of Enoch, which is par excellence the foremost apocalyptic work outside the canonical scriptures (an apocrypha), we retain an apocalyptic prophecy that will include the "crushing" (ḥērem- destruction, perdition) of the earth followed by a judgment of all men.

It was concluded that the community at Qumran was governed by a Manual of Discipline concerning the service of God and the status of the community, which includes several imprecations against the "sons of darkness".

From the time of the Old Testament there is a transition to another form of punishment, namely excommunication, which is not punitive but rather restorative.

The Old Law of the Jewish people included a number of restrictions, designed to strengthen their obedience to God. These apodictic commandments, which required observance of a series of specific rules, such as dietary rules prohibiting the consumption of many animals considered unclean or alcoholic beverages, rules of religious and prophylactic cleansing in relation to various diseases, birth and sacrifice, sacrificial rituals and the observance of festivals, especially the Shabbat, expressed universal ethical and religious principles, a

fundamental ethos, subject to the will of Yahweh. By violating these legislative precepts any prisoner was liable to excommunication.

The purpose of excommunication is to burden the conscience of the unrepentant believer, so that he (or she) will return to (and in) his (or her) community, recognizing the presence of sin as well as the need for repentance and steadfast faith in God.

The biblical form of excommunication indicates any person or thing that has been removed from the community because it has been made sacred by God or perceived as a disgrace before God. *Hērem* in the Bible refers primarily to the act of an individual dedicating goods to God, which was considered a sacred act. However, once something was dedicated, neither the sanctuary could sell the item nor could the contributor recover it.

After the Babylonian exile, the term *hērem* would take on other semantic connotations and begin to indicate acts of excommunication, exclusion, separation, etc. of persons who did not respect the Law or the authorities.

One such connotation is represented by the term *kareth*, which was a punishment for certain offenses defined by Jewish law and meant a "cutting off of the soul," its disappearance and denial of a share in the next world, exclusion from Church fellowship as a means of personal discipline, or purification of the community, in this case, the Church.

Another term used to describe a form of excommunication is *bāḏal*, which is used to express an act of government or authority by which one person is separated or distinguished from another. A Jew in *bāḏal* will thus be unable to participate in synagogal ritual, will not be able to contract a marriage according to Mosaic law, and generally will not be recognized as a Jew by the community. In this case, exclusion is more an attempt to get the person to change and return to the right path, not to punish him.

The *hērem* structure appears in different circumstances, in different eras and in different guises, and of course has different purposes, as does the *bāḏal* structure, matters dealt with in the present study, obviously not in an exhaustive manner.

Other terms expressing excommunication in the Old Testament are also mentioned: *niddui*, *nezifah*, *šamta*. However, among the Jews, excommunication was

not only a Church punishment, but also a civil punishment, because in their theocracy there was no distinction between divine and legal law.

The exclusion of Jewish priests from priestly service and the loss of all the benefits of the priestly office was prescribed for (and by) knowingly violating the rules imposed by that office.

Also mentioned in the first chapter are other disciplinary sanctions (punishments) of the Old Testament era: banishment (personal or collective), exile, and isolation.

In addition to these coercive measures, rabbinic tradition also provides for other sanctions: confiscation of property by a court, deprivation of liberty until sentencing, reprisals (only in cases of violence). The death penalty or flogging was only imposed if the crime was committed in front of witnesses and the offender was aware of the punishment.

Chapter II, Discipline in the New Testament writings, will describe the concept of discipline in Scripture (both Old Testament and New Testament discipline), the reasons for discipline in the New Testament, the purpose of discipline in the New Testament, anathema in the New Testament, anathema in the Gospel accounts, anathema in the Pauline writings and in the Johannine writings, affliction in the New Testament, removal from the priesthood, exclusion/excommunication in the New Testament, rebuke or admonition in the New Testament.

The process by which God's people learned obedience was some form of discipline, which otherwise involved punishment or disciplinary action.

The purpose of obedience as a basic element of Old Testament discipline is "[...] that you may live and be established [...]" according to Deuteronomy 11:8. Patriarchs, judges, kings, prophets and wise men worked with God in teaching His people. Successful discipline resulted in a life pleasing to God. The earliest setting for discipline was the family. God's notion of discipline, the concept of community and its leaders applying God's discipline, derives from the notion of each person's internal discipline.

In the New Testament framework, with the coming of Jesus Christ, most of the content of the Old Law is abrogated. Of course, there can be no question of a fracture between the Old Testament law and the New Law preached by the Saviour

Christ, who Himself says: "Do not think that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets; I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17).

The Lord Christ does not establish any legal rule concerning discipline and does not set up any specific body of ecclesiastical judgment, leaving only a moral rule to "direct" the conduct of the early Christians: brotherly rebuke between two persons, then submission of the case before witnesses, then the council and finally, in case of non-correction, expulsion.

Communal discipline was characteristic of Christian groups in New Testament times. St. Paul, for example, probably borrowed some notions from Jewish groups, such as the Pharisees, whose disciplinary procedures he himself benefited from. These systems of discipline developed during the intertestamental period as reform movements among Jews developed ways of establishing and regulating boundaries between themselves and outsiders.

The reasons for discipline as well as the purposes of discipline are also described in Chapter II of the paper. The main purpose of restorative discipline involves the reintegration of the penitent into the respective community, towards which the whole congregation must show great leniency. Love is the miracle by which this restoration can be achieved.

The meaning of anathema is also found in the New Testament. Considering that ἀνάθεμα (like *hērem* in rabbinic Hebrew) came to mean excommunication from society, in the New Testament the word takes on a new meaning and force alike. These meanings are mentioned in the Gospel accounts, in the Pauline writings (1st epistle to the Corinthians, epistle to the Romans, epistle to the Galatians) and in the Johannine epistles.

It is noteworthy that St John speaks for the first time of the Antichrist, who is contrasted with Jesus Christ, a contrast that is extremely significant from a theological point of view. He points out that the Antichrist is to be understood as an adversary of Jesus, for the word "Antichrist" classifies in a single category all those who bring a false doctrine that is directed primarily against Jesus Christ and therefore against God.

Other sanctions mentioned in the New Testament have also been described in this study: damnation, exclusion, rebuke, rebuke.

St. Paul also attributes to Scripture a disciplinary role, that of rebuke, which, objectively understood, will lead to salvation: "All Scripture is given by God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. So that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (Timothy 3:16-17).

I have entitled the third chapter of the present study Disciplinary Courts in the Canonical Tradition of the Church.

The laws by which the Church regulated the external life of her members and all that was deemed necessary for the maintenance of Church order to support the realization of the Church's purpose form the so-called canons (κανόνες) or ecclesiastical laws (ἐκκλησιαστικοί νόμοι) in the narrower sense. These ecclesiastical laws of administrative or disciplinary content, adapted to the circumstances in which the Church works unceasingly for the salvation of its members, acquired their binding power from the authority which ordained or enforced them.

Often the polyvalence of the term κανόν has led to different interpretations according to particular contexts. In the definition of this term we find some minimal landmarks regarding the etymology, meaning and usage of the term. During the 4th century a change in the use of the term occurs, κανόν becoming a technical term for decisions issued by synods.

The following issues will be dealt with: the semantic meaning of the word 'canon', aspects of the origin of the term 'canon', the relationship between ecclesiastical (church) laws and state laws, the pastoral significance of these canons, and a certain relationship between canons and Church dogmas.

The believers of the early Church came from all peoples, all religions and especially from all classes of ancient society. Among them, apart from the bond of faith and brotherly love, there were still many human differences and interests, by which they differed. Moreover, the very establishment of communities, with all the inter-human relations that a new community presupposed (social, economic, political, commercial relations, etc.), led to manifestations that had to be guided by rules of behaviour that went beyond the demands and rules of strictly religious-moral life of a Christian nature.

These manifestations gave rise to conflicts, disputes and sins. Inevitably, alongside religious and moral rules of conduct, legal rules were also used to resolve

them. And those who had the power to intervene in order to reconcile were those to whom the Saviour had given the power to judge disputes between Christians.

Thus a new specific feature of the Church's activity gradually appeared and was established, namely the activity or function of the judge, by which certain disciplinary measures were imposed to guarantee a correct proportion between a particular offence and the measure imposed to correct the penitent.

The courts of the canonical disciplinary authorities are dealt with in this chapter and an attempt has been made to classify them from the time of their appearance, as well as the way in which these courts have carried out their work.

Thus, the judgement in the early Church, the ecclesiastical judgement forums in the early Church, the court of the apostles (fraternal court), the public court of the "sobor", the court of the priest/bishop, the judgement forums of the early Byzantine Empire, public confession, the penitential priest, the episcopal synodal institution, the metropolitan synodal court, the exarchal court, the patriarchal court, the courts for monks, *episcopalis audientia*, are aspects which will be dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter IV, Canonical Sanctions in the Canonical Tradition of the Church, will deal with the notion of canonical sanction, sanctions in the early Church, penitential discipline in the Church of the first centuries, penitential steps in the Church.

The Church appropriated the first rules of law from the life of the State, i.e. from Roman or secular law, and at the same time appropriated the corresponding legal terminology of secular law. These processes unfolded over time as two parallel and inseparable processes. It was only later that the Church developed its own legal rules and created its own terminology. The reason for jurisdictional power would be the necessary work of establishing and preserving the legal order.

In order to achieve its goal of leading the faithful on the path of salvation, the Church implemented a series of penitential measures, called penitential discipline.

In the Orthodox East, the prominent feature of penance was not the practice of mortification and pious works, although this was assumed; the penance imposed on sinners was a longer or shorter period of exclusion from spiritual-spiritual and liturgical-eucharistic communion, to which they were gradually readmitted.

Sanctions such as admonition, excommunication (as a temporary suspension from Holy Communion), damnation, canonical epithet, catechesis, removal from the step, anathema, will also be the subject of this chapter.

These sanctions will be approached from both a patristic and a patristic perspective, describing, among other things, famous cases of anathematization and of catechesis, as well as certain circumstances that led to these anathematizations and catechizations.

As a very drastic canonical sanction, catechesis will also be treated from the perspectives of Catholic, Protestant and obviously Orthodox theology regarding the indelible character of grace in the Holy Sacrament of Ordination.

The question often arises: how can ontological love, on the one hand, and punitive canonical sanction, on the other, be reconciled in the same ecclesial space? Would it not be a blatant contradiction to evoke, on the one hand, the uniqueness of the event - Love Incarnate and, on the other hand, to "threaten" people with punitive canonical sanctions? All these questions directly concern the substance of the very existence of sanctions within the Church, as well as the content of these sanctions, if a specific exception for them is finally admitted.

However, it goes without saying that Trinitarian love excludes by definition any notion of punishment from the *αγάπε* (agape) relationship in Trinitarian communion; punishment does not exist there. In fact, its absolute absence is what conditions this *αγάπε* (agape) relationship. It is therefore necessary to question the "necessity" - if it is a necessity - of "canonical sanction" within the ecclesial body, in order to explain its existence before examining the content of this type of sanction which is based on canonical provisions.

The religious means or elements of ecclesial power come from the very work of the Saviour Jesus Christ, and the moral and material means or elements come from the will and work of the members of the Church. Therefore, the canons are not and cannot be equated with the laws of a state, regardless of how it relates to the divinity, since they are pastoral rules of the Church designed to lead Christians into communion with the Saviour Jesus Christ.

The most widespread disciplinary punishments (or sanctions) are dealt with in some leading exponents of Russian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Greek and Romanian

theology, in an attempt to give an overview of that activity of the Church which is the power and the jurisdictional activity.

In Orthodoxy the "satisfaction" of divine justice does not have a vindictive character. Punishments have a pedagogical character, of awareness of sin and of correction.

God does not want "the death of the sinner, but that the sinner turn from his way and be alive", as mentioned in Ezekiel 33:11, and as such it is only natural that issues of absolution and cessation of punishments are also dealt with throughout this chapter.

Chapter V entitled Disciplinary Measures and Canonical Punishments in Canonical Sources and in the Medieval Catholic Tradition will include elements from the Eastern canonical tradition relating to anathema, affirisure (of clerics and laity), excommunication, catechesis, removal from the step, admonition, admonition. Aspects of the medieval Catholic canonical tradition regarding disciplinary measures and sanctions will also be discussed: interdiction, suspension, demotion, deposition, deprivation of benefits, punitive transfer, loss of rights.

It is important to note that from the medieval Catholic area, some of the punishments and disciplinary measures of the Catholic Church were also appropriated to a significant extent by the canonists of the Eastern Church in the elaboration of canon law manuals. The notion of "Church Penal Law" was also implemented.

The previously developed foundations of church discipline before the schism of 1054 remained essentially authoritarian for the Catholic Church's system of sanctions during the Middle Ages, although the system of punishments and disciplinary measures underwent further development and individual changes.

Over the centuries, Catholic ecclesiastical criminal law has matured and developed under very different religious, national and political conditions. In the Middle Ages (the age of the papal world) canonical criminal law reached its full development and scientific discussion.

Once the forum externum (the public ecclesiastical tribunal) was distinctly separated from the forum sacramentale (the tribunal of sacramental penance), beginning in the ninth century, ecclesiastical punishments gradually became an increasingly powerful means of spiritual governance, a kind of coercive measure that ensured the exact fulfillment of the laws of the Church and the precepts of her

prelates. For example, excommunication was either pronounced as a threat or applied to ensure observance of fasts and feasts, payment of tithes, obedience to superiors, denunciation of the guilty, etc., and also to compel the faithful to make known to the ecclesiastical authority impediments to marriage and other information.

The conclusions at the end will provide an overview of how the Eastern Church in the 4th-9th centuries, as an institution, dealt with the delicate issue of church discipline among both clergy and laity.

7. Difficulties encountered

During the research of this topic, the difficulties encountered were those related to the consultation of bibliographical sources on various concepts related, especially, to disciplinary measures in ancient-testamentary times because in the Romanian theological literature we did not find sufficient references on these notions.

We also found some gaps in terms of the existence of studies on expulsions from religious communities in Qumran, expulsions from religious communities in Rabbinic Judaism, etc., which are fundamental issues to better understand the origin and evolution of these disciplinary punishments in Old Testament times.

Another difficulty encountered was that it is difficult to find a specific method by which to distinguish between the related occupations of the term *hērem* in relation to the Old Testament.

The Septuagint retains several terms to explain the concept of *hērem*, but only a few can be equated to a very large extent with *hērem* in the Old Testament: *κατάρα* (curse), *ανάθεμα*, *ανάθημα*, *αφορίζω* (to affurisi), *αναθεματίζω* (to give to Satan), *ολέθριος* (injurious, harmful), *εξωλέθρευμα* (erasure). It is therefore rather difficult to make an objective and complete analysis regarding the development of the concept of anathema and excommunication (in the Old and New Testament period and in the Patristic period) as measures which formed the basis for the development of the Church's disciplinary sanctions. The only attempts of this kind are given by some dictionaries or encyclopaedias.

CONCLUSIONS

The canons of the Orthodox Church stand out, from a juridical point of view, for the complete vision they offer of canonical discipline, as well as for their interconnectivity. Thus, a good knowledge of ecclesiastical legal practice and of the canons in general is practically unassailable, at least from a legal point of view.

In the present paper I have sought to outline and highlight the importance of the Church's jurisdictional activity in the course of a broad process of understanding the notion of Church order and discipline and also a description of the transition from sacramental to jurisdictional episcopacy.

Church order and discipline can also be maintained by certain canonical punishments or by the imposition of certain disciplinary measures appropriate to each situation.

The historical and legal context of the emergence and development of the Church's system of canonical punishments and disciplinary measures has not been dealt with in detail, and they are mentioned sporadically in various articles, dictionaries and encyclopaedias.

Church disciplinary procedure comprises the process of judgement itself, fulfilling the conditions for its conduct. This requires two parties to the dispute (plaintiff and defendant) to be brought before a judicial body, called a judge, who conducts the hearing. In addition to these, the subject of the investigation must be proven by the presence of witnesses, and then by supporting documents, if necessary, a detailed on-the-spot investigation, an oath, various circumstances or mitigating or aggravating circumstances.

Unlike secular laws, every deviation from the rules of ecclesiastical conduct (whatever they may be called, religious, moral or legal) is first assessed as a sin and only secondly, when appropriate, as a formal violation of the law or canon.

In my doctoral thesis entitled, *Canonical Punishments and Disciplinary Measures in the Canons of the Eastern Church (4th-9th centuries)*, I have analysed some aspects of this jurisdictional segment of Church Canon Law.

The great canonical compilations of the 4th-9th centuries constituted a deliberate attempt to compete with the new form of dogmatico-legal ecclesiastical legislation, represented by the symbols of faith and the canons of the synods of the imperial Church, deeply divided by the innumerable schisms between adherents of various forms of heresy, hierarchs, synods and rival creeds.

The idealized past of the early Church was offered as a mirror of the divided present of the period that is the subject of this study, and perhaps this is why, for example, the Canons of the Apostles were a first step towards the legalization of an already existing canonical tradition.

In Chapter I entitled *Punishments and Disciplinary Measures in the Writings of the Old Testament*, we have highlighted, on the basis of the scriptural vetero-testamentary foundations, the emergence and development of a punitive system that appeared with the primordial sin, developed on the basis of the concept of *hērem*, which would later undergo various sub-divisions that would be implemented by the rabbinic system of the time. This concept would form the basis of the concept of *anathema*, which would be recalled in the New Testament period and later taken up by synodal legislation.

In the second chapter, entitled *Disciplinary Measures in the New Testament Writings*, we have made the transition from the rabbinic system of sanctions, specific

to the Old Testament, to a disciplinary system which will find its consonance in the evangelical writings, in the Pauline epistles, as well as in the Johannine epistles.

The development of the jurisdictional activity of the Christian Church will also imply the emergence of courts, obviously also of a disciplinary nature, designed to give the offender (of whatever degree) the possibility of a fair and equitable trial, geared towards the correction and community reintegration of the person concerned. These courts are described in Chapter III of this study, a chapter entitled Disciplinary Courts in the Canonical Tradition of the Church. Also in this chapter we have presented an excursus on some congruences of the term canon, because we have considered it necessary to give a cyclical clarification of this term which is found in various spheres of theology.

In Chapter IV of this thesis, entitled Canonical Sanctions in the Canonical Tradition of the Church, I presented the notion of canonical sanction (punishment), ecclesial discipline in the early Church, penitential steps in the Church. The system of sanctions found in the canons of ecumenical synods, local (or particular) synods, of some Holy Fathers, as well as the way in which these penitential canons were issued, received and imposed throughout the Eastern Orthodox Church is treated in the order of the gravity of the measures that are required and that are fully in accordance with the gravity of the act. Because "God never wants the sinner to die, but rather to turn from his ways and be alive", the Church offers the offender the possibility of being absolved of his deeds if he shows proof of repentance and of ceasing to bear and carry out the punishment. Absolution and cessation of punishment is also a theme dealt with in this chapter.

Using the analytical and comparative method, I have described and treated in Chapter V of the thesis on Disciplinary Measures and Canonical Punishments in Canonical Sources and in the Medieval Catholic Tradition, noting that there are certain similarities between the two penitential systems: the Orthodox and the Eastern. When describing canonical measures in the medieval Catholic tradition, we observed that the drafting of the manuals of ecclesiastical criminal law in the Eastern area was influenced by this Catholic tradition and theology.

The novelty brought to the sphere of Canonical Church Law by the composition of this work is structured along several directions, which have so far

been analyzed only tangentially. From this perspective, I have tried to investigate and develop the proposed theme by concluding with the following aspects:

1. Punishment is first mentioned in the Old Testament, when God's punishment (for the serpent's temptation of Adam and Eve) in the form of the curse is mentioned. In the Old Testament the term *ḥērem* is equivalent to curse and was often a response to a person expressing views regarded by the community as heretical or doing works contrary to the Law.

The multitude of meanings of the term *ḥērem* shows how difficult it is to find correct equivalents for widely separated language concepts. The ecclesiastical use of the word *anáthema* in this particular sense probably originated in Palestine in pre-Christian times.

The word *anáthema* takes on the meaning of the Hebrew word *ḥērem*, and indicates the object or person upon whom God's curse is invoked and focused if an oath or promise has not been kept (kept). Because no one could fulfill the Old Testament Law, all people were under the curse of the Law.

The entire Old Testament tradition used the "weapon" of excommunication to defend itself against various forms of alteration or contamination of the Law, developing various measures involving certain degrees of excommunication, measures that would form the premises of the later system of canonical sanctions. From what we have researched we have observed that in the Pentateuch there is both compulsory and voluntary *ḥērem*. The former is initiated by God and the latter is "initiated" by human beings through their actions.

Categorizing *ḥērem* in terms of voluntary *ḥērem* (initiated by human beings) and obligatory *ḥērem* (initiated by God) may be sufficient to classify the law and application of *ḥērem* simply and systematically. In the Talmudic period other punitive modes of *ḥērem* prohibition were also instituted: *niddui*, *nezifah*, *šamta*, *kareth*, *badal*, expressing certain forms of excommunication or exclusion. Other categorizations for *ḥērem*, are the expressions: 'war-*ḥērem*', 'peace-*ḥērem*', 'priesthood-*ḥērem*', 'lay-*ḥērem*' or 'sacred-*ḥērem*'. This is not only a complicated categorization, but also a mixed one. For example, the *ḥērem* of Numbers 21:1-3 can be related to both priestly *ḥērem* (as ministry) and war *ḥērem*: "Then Israel vowed to the Lord and said: If you give this people into my hand, I will destroy them and their cities. And the Lord

obeyed the voice of Israel, and gave Canaan into his hand, and he destroyed them and their cities, and called the place of that name: Hormah, that is, destruction."

2. Church discipline, scripturally observed and reasoned, results in the Lord's blessing being poured out upon the whole world "with His grace and with His love of man". In the pages of the Old Testament there is an increased frequency of the word curse being uttered both vertically and horizontally, that is, both in relationship with God and in interpersonal relationships. The pages of the Gospels radically change the mention of this word. We do not find in these pages that Christ pronounces a curse against anyone. The reasons for disciplining a person must be supported by Holy Scripture. If discipline is not applied, the Church loses its witness.

3. The partial examinations of Old and New Testament writings given here attest that the notion of anathema was well known in the early Church. Curses, the belonging of curses to the satanic sphere and the destruction of this sphere by God at the final judgment, were the most essential building blocks of the early Church's understanding of "anathema" and of later canonical punishments or sanctions. There can be no doubt that such an understanding is consistent with both the Old and New Testaments.

4. It would be wrong to assert that the anathema of the early Church has the effect of intellectually constraining Christians and of wanting to make the Church a closed caste of people who fearfully curse the whole outside world and call it satanic.

Any measure of a disciplinary nature is not intended to prevent theological reflection on the faith and its development. Nor is it directed against those who have doubts in their faith, and therefore it is not aimed at forming an "ideal" group of Christians who do not question, who do not develop their faith, and who do not accept anything outside the visible Church with a curse. Such a way of looking at the anathema of the original Church would actually be contrary to the writings of the Apostolic Fathers.

5. The terminology of curses used by the authors of the early Church is very different. This is probably due to the fact that a fixed mode of expression had not yet developed in this area. Curse, Satan, judgment, hellfire and sin are terms that are used in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers as terms for the Pauline "anathema" or the Johannine "anti-Christ".

6. Penitential discipline in the Church of the early centuries was also maintained by the institution of penitential steps, which were in fact means of executing epitaphs aimed at repressing the offender in the community from which he had been excluded, and which lasted for a fixed period of time.

7. The perpetuation of the practice of collective judgement in the early centuries of the Christian Church is attested first of all by the writings of the Nostra. A gradual evolution of judgement in the early Church can be seen in the appearance of the court of two or three believers, which would later develop to include more and more members until it included the whole community. The general spirit of these courts is the same one that will characterize all the Church's judicial activity throughout time - the purpose of Church punishments is not to strike believers, but to correct them in accordance with Church doctrine.

8. The specific nature of the judicial activity of the Christian Church leads to a different categorisation of offences from civil law. State legislation distinguishes the application of disciplinary power in civil matters from criminal matters, but the Church does not make this distinction, since all offences are offences against the law of faith or the canons. Therefore the terminology is also different; in the State they are called judicial sentences in civil matters and criminal sentences in criminal matters, whereas in the Church they are called only disciplinary sentences. The ecclesiastical courts in the Byzantine Empire, which had strong scriptural, patristic and later canonical foundations for their establishment and functioning, were called upon and entitled to apply the appropriate sanctions to each offence and had the task of ensuring that these sanctions were put into practice.

9. The sanctions laid down in the holy canons for ecclesiastical offences are directed at all members of the Church (affuriate, excommunication, epimyses of various degrees) but there are also specific 'punishments' for particular illicit acts of clerics (admonition, admonition, prohibition of the ministry, removal from the throne, cathexis).

10. The drafting of church criminal law manuals in Eastern Europe was influenced by medieval Catholic theology and tradition (to varying degrees). This does not mean that the Eastern Church did not have its own penitential discipline, only that it was not and is not structured on a strictly juridical positivism but has a soteriological content and is centered on the salvation of each of its members.

The importance of knowing the legal procedures of the other sister Orthodox Churches must be taken into consideration. This is justified primarily on the basis of the ancient principle of Sobornicity, since since ancient times the Orthodox Churches have communicated their main disciplinary decisions to each other, thus removing the danger of transgression of some clergy or laity under punishment and their reinstatement within the community or ecclesiastical hierarchy of another Church. In addition to this historical consideration, the present situation must also be taken into account: since the mobility of the individual has increased exponentially in the contemporary world, it is necessary for every member of the Church to know and respect the disciplinary provisions of the ecclesiastical body under whose jurisdiction he or she is at any given time, just as every citizen is bound to know and respect the legal provisions of the country he or she is visiting, since he or she is implicitly subject to their jurisdiction.

I believe that addressing this issue of canonical sanctions and disciplinary measures as they are reflected in the canons of the Eastern Church, starting from the 4th century, when the first canonical ordinances were already crystallized, and continuing until the 9th century, can inspire the institutional dynamism of the Church today, by highlighting elements that highlight the Church's concern for each of its members, as the Lord God says: "As it is true that I am alive, so it is true that I do not will the death of the sinner, but that the sinner turn from his way and be alive. Turn, turn from your wicked ways! Why should you die [...]" (Ezekiel 33:11).

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