

*The Gnosiology as experience of the Resurrected Christ in the liturgical texts of the Pentecostarion*

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### *Summary*

In the work entitled *The Orthodox Gnosiology as Experience of the Resurrected Christ in the Liturgical Texts of the Pentecostarion* aims to emphasize the experience of knowing God, presented in the liturgical hymns of the Pentecostarion.

### *The Motif for Choosing the Theme*

The motif for choosing this theme is to discover and to describe the experience of knowing God formulated in the liturgical texts of the Pentecostarion. The research aims the way in which the book of the *Pentecostarion* describes this synergic work, of God and of the Man, through which the man reaches at knowing God by achieving the holiness. In this work, I have done a presentation of the experience of knowing God, by starting from the content of the liturgical hymns from the book called *Pentecostarion* and comparing it to and synthesizing it with the references of some Fathers of the Church, about the experience of knowing God. The present research is an interdisciplinary one, which joins the Dogmatic Theology with the Liturgical Theology and with the Mystical Theology.

### *The Stage of the Research*

During my study I didn't find any previous research referring to the Orthodox Gnosiology reflected in the Church's hymns. The sources of the research were, firstly, the book of *Pentecostarion*, along with the Holy Scripture, the patristic writings, the specialty works in the content of which one can find the experience of knowing God.

### *The Used Method*

As method of work I have firstly used the analyzing on parts of the *Pentecostarion*, aiming to discover the specific notions of knowing God, mirrored in this book's texts. Then I have compared the affirmations of the hymnologists with the ones of the Holy Scripture, and with the ones of the Church's Fathers, as also the ones of some contemporary authors, who described the experience of knowing God, then synthesizing and trying to compose the work in an unitary manner and in a continuity of the ideas' development, both in the content and in its composition. I have also aimed to adapt the liturgical language to the contemporary one, trying to value the existential dimension of the concepts and of the notions exposes within the work. I have tried to assure also an applicative dimension to the work, having in view the specificity of the theme.

### *The Purpose of the Research*

The purpose of the work *The Orthodox Gnosiology as Experience of the Resurrected Christ in the Liturgical Texts of the Pentecostarion* is to identify and to express in as clear as possible manner the conception of the authors of the *Pentecostarion* book, regarding the experience of knowing God. The work is structured on four main chapters, each of them having more sub-chapters, through which we try to describe the experience of knowing God.

### *Terminological Clarifications*

#### *Gnosiology*

The Gnosiology is defined as "philosophical theory of the man's capacities of knowing the reality and to reach at the truth"<sup>1</sup>. This term is composed by two words: *gnosis* – knowledge and *logos* - discourse. In a free translation it would mean discursive knowledge, namely "that knowledge which attains its purpose through a series of intermediary operations, by deducing

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<sup>1</sup> Ion M. STOIAN, *Dicționar religios*, Editura Garamond, București, 1994, p.114

an idea from another one, founding itself on the rational thinking”<sup>2</sup>. In the theological writings the *gnosis* represents the superior knowledge of the spiritual ones and often is mentioned such a knowledge done by Gnosticism<sup>3</sup>. The philosophy of the Gnostics affirmed that the power of knowledge is held only by the initiated ones and only these ones can know the truth and they have the possibility to save themselves only with the help of the rationality. Unlike this one, the Orthodox Gnosiology presupposes a certain way of life and it is accessible to all the people, not only to come *initiated* ones. Referring to this Father Nikos Matsoukas says: “The theological gnosiology doesn’t constitute a simple theoretical preoccupation and a work of the dogmatists, but it is the way of life of the members of the Church’s body, which is imprinted in the monuments of the churchly communion and even in the ones of the culture in which lives and breathes”<sup>4</sup>. Also „the theological gnosiology of the Byzantine philosophy and theology, in principle leaned on models of the Greek antique’s philosophy, remarks clearly the difference (the otherness) between truth and knowledge, between being and knowing”<sup>5</sup>.

### *The Theology*

During the first centuries of the Christendom it was used the Greek term of *gnosis* for knowledge, but its association with the Gnosticism determined the patristic writers, starting with Origen, to adopt the term *theology* for referring to the gift of understanding the divinity and not like the modern academic term from today. Consequently, the *theology*, in the Greek tradition, had a mystical connotation, being closely tied rather to the meditation and contemplation than to rationality<sup>6</sup>. To the Church’s Fathers, the term *theology* it means “the contemplation of the Holy Trinity and is, before all, the godlike light reflected by the mirror of the cleaned soul: the soul *receives in itself the disk of the sun* and deepens itself in the sentiment of the presence and of the coming of God. The mystical theology presupposes the knowledge through the *inhabitation* of the Word. This doesn’t mean to know something

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<sup>2</sup> Vasile BREBAN, *Dictionar al limbii române contemporane*, Editura științifică și enciclopedică, București, 1980, p.166

<sup>3</sup> Simon BLACKBURN, *Dicționar de filosofie*, trad Cătălina Iricinschi, Editura Univers enciclopedic, București, 1999, p. 171

<sup>4</sup> Nikos MATSOUKAS, *Introducere în gnoseologia teologică*, trad. Maricel Popa, București, Editura Bizantină, 1997. p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Nikos MATSOUKAS, *Introducere în gnoseologia teologică*, p. 37

<sup>6</sup> Emil BARTOȘ, *Conceptul de îndumnezeire în teologia lui Dumitru Stăniloae*, Editura Cartea Creștină, Oradea, 2002p. 48

about God, but to have God within yourself, to be full of godlike presence, of Holy Ghost, like it is said that Saint Stephen was during his sufferings. This knowledge presupposes a progressive awareness of the presence of the Word, a presence which illuminates the soul<sup>7</sup>.

### *Oikonomia*

In the patristic dogma “there is made distinction between *theology* namely the teaching about the being of God in Himself, or the substantial godhead common to the Three Persons, about the hypostatical intra-Trinitarian relations and *oikonomia*, namely the teaching about the His personal revelation and work in creation and in history, about the Embodiment and the Redemption worked by God in the Person of the embodied Word and through the power of the Holy Ghost. The *theology* leads us to the mystery of the being and of the perfection, free of any determination and relation. The *oikonomia* leads us to the personality of the living God Who manifests Himself and communicated Himself in revealing acts in the history of the salvation after falling, accomplished through the missions of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, in the history of the people Israel and of the Church. The *oikonomia* is the mystery of His will, conceived before the world`s creation, to be everything united into Christ (Ephesians: 1, 9-10). It unveils the mystery of the life of God, the *theology*, and this one illuminates the divine work and its understanding, the *oikonomia*”<sup>8</sup>. Referring to this, Saint John Damascene mentions a “distinction between *theology* and *oikonomia* – God in Himself, in fact the Trinity, on one hand, and the Holy Ghost in His relation with the creation, on the other hand; we know better the last one than the first one, though even in what concerns the *oikonomia*, a great part of it escapes to our understanding. He refers also to the distinction introduced by Dionysus the Aeropagite, between the cataphatic theology and the apophatic one, a theology of the affirmation (Greek: *kataphasis*), in which we affirms what God has revealed about Himself and a theology of negation (*apophatis*), in which we deny the fact that our notions can describe with accuracy the reality of God; among these two ones the apophatic theology is the most important”<sup>9</sup>.

*Cataphatism* (Greek: *kataphaticos* – affirmative), is the expression of the rationality`s effort of representing and confessing God, using notions and concepts specific to rational

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<sup>7</sup> Paul EVDOKIMOV, *Cunoașterea lui Dumnezeu în Tradiția răsăriteană- Învățătură patristică, liturgică și iconografică*, trad. rom. Preot Vasile Răducă, Editura Humanitas, București, 2013, pp. 23-24

<sup>8</sup> Pr. Prof. dr. Ion BRIA, *Curs de Teologie Dogmatică și Ecumenică*, Editura Universității „Lucian Blaga”, Sibiu, 1996, pp. 97-98

<sup>9</sup> Andrew LOUTH, *Introducere în Teologia Ortodoxă*, trad. Dragoș Mîrșanu, Editura Doxologia, Iași, 2014, p. 65

knowledge. This cataphatic or affirmative way shows what God is in respect to the realities of the created world, considered as His symbol. God is thus known from His presence and from His works in Creation, being attributed to Him the features discovered by studying the creation. The existence of God is sustained through affirmations, as it would be: God is good, God is almighty, God is wise. The cataphatic way highlights the three qualities of God in connection with the world: Creator, Providence Maker and Judge<sup>10</sup>.

*Apophatism* (Greek: *apophasis-apophatikos* – negation, to know through negation). The apophatic theology of the negative way (via negativa) of the knowledge is knowledge through negation. God remains unknown in His being. God cannot be known by us like we know the realities of this world by using the concepts and the categories of time and space. The divine attributes expressed by cataphatism cannot give a comprising image of God. He is above any representation<sup>11</sup>. The attributes borrowed from the human life determined antinomial affirmations. If we call God, Justice, then love is above any justice. If we call Him love this one doesn't exclude justice. The apophatism says that God is above any justice and He cannot be compared to the measure of the human justice. In this manner proceeds with all the features attributed to God. It is said therefore: known-unknown, visible-invisible. The apophatic knowledge is a knowledge that cannot be comprised in words. It presupposes a mysterious feeling of the personal presence of God through His grace, which causes the strengthening of the faith and of the love for God and for the neighbor<sup>12</sup>.

Considering like this, through *theology* we understand a spiritual experience and knowledge. The Christendom borrowed many elements from philosophy, but has kept though a well defined identity. To Orthodoxy, the philosophy and the theology “remain connected to each other continuously and organically. Highlighting the continuity between these two – but remaining opened the possibility of some disagreement points – the Eastern Christianity is ready to use the Greek philosophy as a tool, having in mind especially the connection element assured by the concept of *Logos*. More than that, by sustaining the idea of the ontological

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<sup>10</sup> Pr. prof. Ion BRIA, *Dicționar de Teologie Ortodoxă*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București 1994, p. 118

<sup>11</sup> Pr. prof. Ion BRIA, *Dicționar de Teologie Ortodoxă*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București 1994, p. 118

<sup>12</sup> Pr. prof. Ștefan BUCHIU, et alii, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, Editura Basilica, București, 2017, p. 200

Trinity, the Orthodox Church believes that there is no separation between rationality and revelation, there`s no division between grace and nature, and, also, there`s no radical distinction between human and divine”<sup>13</sup>.

### *Episteme*

Vladimir Lossky speaks about *episteme* and *gnosis* as about two ways of knowledge. The *episteme* operates with the help of the processes of research and reasoning, and it is characteristic to the scientific and philosophical epistemology, and *gnosis* is a divine gift received through a revealing encounter and isn`t the result of the human effort<sup>14</sup>. The theology in its quality of word and thinking must necessarily to keep secret a gnostic dimension in the sense of the contemplation and of the silence. It is about a way of thinking, in the process of which, the thinking doesn`t include, doesn`t comprise, but it`s included and comprised, mortified and resurrected by the contemplative faith. Thus the theological teaching situates itself in a difficult manner between *gnosis* – charisma and silence, contemplative knowledge and existential knowledge, and *episteme* – rational science and thinking. The language uses the *episteme* but cannot reduce itself to this one without exiting again from this world. The language must guide the spirit on the road of the contemplation, towards the clean prayer within which the mind is suspended, towards ineffable<sup>15</sup>.

### *The Being and the Energies of God*

The Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers sustain that God can be known according to His work, but He cannot be known according to His Being. Starting from these affirmations the Fathers of the Church made the difference between the being and the energies of God. The being remains not-cognoscible, but through the uncreated energies, God reveals Himself to the man as much as the man can understand. Saint Maximos the Confessor says about this: “We don`t know God out of His being, but out of the greatness of the deeds and from the taking care that he has for the existing ones. For through these ones we understand, as through some mirrors, the borderless kindness, wisdom and power of Him<sup>16</sup>. The distinction

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<sup>13</sup> Emil BARTOȘ, *Conceptul de îndumnezeire în teologia lui Dumitru Stăniloie*, p. 50

<sup>14</sup> Vladimir LOSSKY, *Introducere în teologia ortodoxă, traducere*, trad. Lidia și Remus Rus, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 1993, p. 15

<sup>15</sup> Vladimir LOSSKY, *Introducere în Teologia ortodoxă*, p. 12

<sup>16</sup> Sfântul MAXIM MĂRTURISITORUL, *Cele patru sute de capete despre dragoste* 1,96, în Filocalia vol 2, trad. Dumitru Stăniloie, Editura Humanitas, București 2009, p. 63



between the being (the essence) and the energies of God was described also by Saint Gregory Palamas. He justified this distinction by making use of the Greek theologians like Basil the Great and Maximos the Confessor. The distinction between being and energies it is a “distinction between God in Himself and God in His work; God in Himself, in His being, *ousia*, in not-cognoscible, but he makes Himself known in His works and Energies”<sup>17</sup>. The teaching of the Church shows that the life of the man presupposes his participation to God, and knowing God it depends on the measure with which we impart ourselves from God<sup>18</sup>.

In the Chapter I of the work I have presented the book *Pentecostarion*, showing its importance in the cult of the Church, as also few data regarding its authors and its dogmatic content. The *Pentecostarion* is the cult book of the Orthodox Church which comprises the order of the holy religious services of each day, for the period between the celebration of the Lord's Resurrection and the Sunday of the Romanian Saints. The name of the book comes from the Greek word *Πεντηκοστή*, the *fifteen* day, defining in this way the liturgical period of the Pentecost. Besides these ones, in the content of the book we find also those *Tri-songs*, composed as it is mentioned, by the our pious father Josef the hymnographer, which begin to be sung at the Compline, after the Lighted Week of the Holy Easter, namely from the Sunday of Saint Apostle Thomas, in all the days of this week and of the other ones, to the Sunday of All the Saints. The songs of the Pentecostarion, composed in their great majority by Saint John Damascene, Joseph the Studites and Cosma of Maiuma, reflect the transfiguration of the man due to the resurrection of the Savior Christ. In what regards the authors of the liturgical hymns, these ones into their humbleness, often remained unknown. The Church, by assuming the songs it introduced them in the cult books, becoming thus part of the Church's heritage. The hymns of the Pentecostarion are founded on the Holy Scripture and on the Holy Tradition of the Church, and this fact gives authority to those texts. It is said that, if somebody wants to become a theologian, it would be better first, to begin reading the hymns of the Church<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Andrew LOUTH, *Introducere în Teologia Ortodoxă*, p. 81

<sup>18</sup> Sfântul GRIGORIE DE NYSSA, *Despre pruncii morți prematur, către Hieros*, în *Scieri*. Partea a doua, trad. Pr. Prof. Dr. Teodor Bodogae, col PSB, vol 30, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1998, p. 418

<sup>19</sup> IEROTHEOS, Mitropolitul Nafaktosului, *Dogmatica empirică, după învățăturile prin viu grai ale Părintelui Ioannis Romanidis*, p. 331

The knowledge of God is in the first place, the purpose of this life but also the condition of the eternal life, like the Savior taught us, by saying: “*This is the eternal life, to know You, the only true God and Jesus Christ Who You have sent*” (John, 17, 3). This conditioning is possible to be fulfilled because God doesn't ask ever to the man, something that the man would not be able to accomplish. Even the *Pentecostarion* hasn't the composition of a treaty of dogmatics, within its pages we find elements of the Orthodox teaching referring to the knowledge of God.

From its content the believer can achieve what we call rational or intellectual knowledge of God. Ever since the first pages in which the Resurrection is reflected, the hymns describe the fact that God is the One Who brought to existence the entire Creation and the whole creation is full of His glory.

In the Sundays of the *Pentecostarion* one refers to the sources through which many wonders were done. Either is about the spring of the healing, the Bethesda, the fountain of Jacob or the water spring of Siloam, all of them tell about the glory of God, and unveil His power for healing any sickness and any helplessness among people. All of them show, as one of the songs says, that God is *our Deliverer*<sup>20</sup>.

Out of the form of the *Pentecostarion*, following its order and teaching, participating to the cult of the Church, the believer has the possibility of having the experience of God. In this book is practically described the experience of the spiritual ascension from the doubt of the Disciples and of the Prudes, to the holiness of *All the Saints*.

In the Sundays of the Man with Palsy from Bethesda, of the Samaritan woman and of the Blind from Birth, one can speak about what we call the knowledge of God in the concrete circumstances of the life. The circumstance of the life which brought to the knowledge of Christ: the man with palsy, the Samaritan woman and the blind from birth.

The teaching of the *Pentecostarion* is exposed in a poetical manner, transposed into metaphors, allegory, symbol, epithets, so to reflect as expressive as possible the content of these themes, to stir up the sentiment and the emotion of the presence of God into the believer's soul, but mainly to be easy to memorize.

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<sup>20</sup> *Penticostar*, Duminica Slăbănogului, Canoane, Cântarea a 8-a, Irmos, p. 146

*On the Mount Sinai Moses saw You in a pyre, You, Who received “into womb, without burning, «the fire of the Godhead; and Daniel saw You «uncut mountain; and Isaiah called You begotten staff from the root «of Jesse»”<sup>21</sup>.*

In Orthodoxy, the believer saw in the cult of the Church, first of all, a mean of sanctification and of saving the soul. The truths of faith taught from the liturgical hymns become guidebooks of spiritual life. The confession of the truth of faith through the Church`s hymns make it to become doxology and prepare the soul for encountering God. The greatness of the religious services, especially at the celebration of the Lord`s Resurrection, overwhelms the soul and stirs up the sake after God.

The hymnographers express through the hymns of the Pentecostarion the circumstances of the resurrection as also the messianism and the godhead of the Savior Christ. The relation between dogma, cult and knowledge presupposes a relation of reciprocal sustaining, in the profit of the believers` salvation who participate to the Church`s cult.

The dogmas were firstly revealed truths which then have been formulated by the Church`s Synods, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The dogmas are founded on the Holy Scripture and on the godlike Tradition, but they are formulated and definite by Church<sup>22</sup>. About this formulation of the dogmas confesses also the following hymn:

*“The group of the Holy Fathers, gathering together from the edges of the world, dogmatized a being and a nature of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and the teaching about God they taught it clearly to the Church;”<sup>23</sup>*

The dogmas defined by the synods were then introduced in doxological formulas as prayers which entered into the cult, as composing parts of the Church`s cult<sup>24</sup>. These dogmas unveil the truth and guide the man in the experience of knowing God. The foundation of the dogma is the experience of the Holy Fathers of the Church.

The hymnological dimension of the liturgical hymns expresses the eternal power and the godhead of the Resurrected Christ. Through the participation at the holy religious services from the period of the Pentecostarion we fulfill the advice of Saint Apostle Paul taken by

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<sup>21</sup> *Penticostar*, Duminica Slăbănogului, Canoanele, Cântarea a 9-a, Irmos, p. 147

<sup>22</sup> Prof. Nicolae CHIȚESCU, Pr. Prof. Ioan PETREUȚĂ. Pr. Prof. Isidor TODORAN, *Teologia dogmatică și simbolică*, Manual pentru Facultățile Teologice, vol.1, Cluj Napoca, 2008, p. 67

<sup>23</sup> *Penticostar*, Duminica Sfinților Părinți, la Laude, Stihirile Sfinților Părinți, 4, p. 292

<sup>24</sup> Paul EVDOKIMOV, *Cunoașterea lui Dumnezeu în tradiția răsăriteană*, trad. Vasile Răducă, Editura Humanitas, București, 2013, p.121

hymnographers: *“Rejoice always. Pray yourselves ceaselessly. Give thanks for everything, for this is the will of God, into Christ, for you”*. (I Thessalonians 5, 16-18) and also through our living let's fulfill the advice: *“either you are eating, or drinking, or you are doing something else, do everything for (the glory of) God”* (I Corinthians 10, 31). We fulfill everything only in the *Church of His glory*.

The following hymn assures us that only the ones who glorify God will enjoy the fruits of the resurrection:

*“By breaking the gates of the death with Your power, You have made known the ways of the life and You have opened the gates of the immortality, to the ones who speak to You with faith: Glory to Your power, Lord!”<sup>25</sup>*

In the second chapter of the work, entitled **The Anthropological Fundamentals of the Orthodox Gnosiology in Pentecostarion**, I have described firstly the relation between revelation and knowledge, by showing that the man has the capacity of knowing God, due to the fact that he has been created in the image of God. By falling into the sin, the *image* was only *broken by passions*, like the hymns of the Pentecostarion show, but hasn't been totally lost and even if it hasn't anymore the power of knowledge, it has remained the inclination of the man of searching for God; there has also remained the sake of God or the nostalgia of the Paradise.

Neither God has forgotten the man; He unveiled Himself in many ways.

The Creation confesses through itself her Creator Himself:

In the Scripture it is said: *“The heavens tell the glory of God and the doing of His hands is heralded by the strength”* (Psalm 18, 1) as also: *“The unseen ones of God are seen from the creation of the world, being understood through creatures, namely His eternal power and godhead”* (Romans 1, 19-20). This confession of the creation has been taken also by hymnographers, thus:

*“On God, the One glorified without silence by angels, into the highest ones, the heavens of the heavens, the earth and the mountains, the hills and the deep and the whole human kind with songs bless Him, like the Maker and the Deliverer”<sup>26</sup>*.

But God also spoke to the people, through the prophets of the Old Testament, giving them the Law. That's why a hymns says:

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<sup>25</sup> *Penticostarul*, Miercuri în săptămâna a patra după Paști, Cântarea a 4-a 1, p. 162

<sup>26</sup> *Penticostarul*, Duminica Slăbănogului, Canoane, Cântarea a 8-a, Irmos, p. 146

*“Listen to the voices of the prophets and know, that Himself is truly the Deliverer of the world and the Almighty”<sup>27</sup>.*

God shows Himself through the circumstances of the life, through the voice of the conscience, through all of them unveiling Himself, as much as the man needs it to be saved. Then, at the fulfilling of the time God revealed Himself through the Savior Jesus:

*“Christ came, about Whom the prophets said that He will come from Zion, and the world He to Himself will call it”<sup>28</sup>.*

The hymns refer to what Apostle Paul assures us also: “After God, aforetime, for many times and in many ways, spoke to our fathers through the prophets, in these late days spoke to us through the Son, Whom He put inheritor of all and through Whom He also made the ages” (Hebrews 1, 1-2).

*“In He must come, surely, Messiah, behold Christ-Messiah already came now, Jews. Why are you deceiving yourselves by rejecting the Righteous One, about Whom Moses wrote in the Law?”<sup>29</sup>*

The revelation of God has been consummated through the embodiment of the Savior Christ, at the fulfilling of the time; then “The Word has made Himself body” (Galaatians 4, 4) and through this the Embodied Son of God assumed our human nature and the man has become “partaker of the godlike nature” (Pater 1, 4).

*“If don’t you believe to the words, believe at least to the deeds of the Master, you Jews; what are you deceiving yourselves for, rejecting the Saint One, about Whom Moses wrote in the Law?”<sup>30</sup>”*

Also in this chapter I have shown also the care of the hymnographers for deepening the quality of the man of being in the image and in the likeness of God, and the importance of these qualities of the man in the experience of knowing God.

Behold what the hymnographers describe like this quality of the man, of being in the image of God:

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<sup>27</sup> *Penticostarul, Duminica Orbului, la Vecernia Mare, la Doamne strigat-am, Stihirile lui Anatolie, 3, p. 221*

<sup>28</sup> *Penticostarul, Miercuri în săptămâna a patra după Paști, Alt canon, 2, p. 161*

<sup>29</sup> *Penticostar, Miercuri în Săptămâna a patra după Paști, Canoanele, Cântarea a 3-a, Alt canon, 4, p. 162*

<sup>30</sup> *Penticostar, Miercuri în Săptămâna a patra după Paști, Canoanele, Cântarea a 3-a, Alt canon, 3, p. 161*

*“The Maker, built at the beginning the human nature from earth, in His likeness and in His image”<sup>31</sup>, “with His hand”<sup>32</sup>. “Wanting to compose being to him from the unseen nature and from the seen ones, he built his body from earth, but He gave him soul, through the godlike and life-maker breath of Him”<sup>33</sup>. “He honored the man with His Image and He painted in the material body the likeness of that Being without matter, to Who also He made the man partaker by putting him to master, according to his will, the ones from earth”<sup>34</sup>.*

They deepened the scriptural message and put this quality of the man, of being in the image of God, at the basis of the spiritual life and of the salvation of the soul<sup>35</sup>.

The sub-chapter Person-Communion-Knowledge, describes the role of the *Person* in knowing God, by showing the fact that also the hymnographers of the Pentecostarion taking the teaching of the Scripture, they remember about the apparitions of God in the world, both in the Old Testament and also after the Embodiment of the Savior, like having a personal character. God unveils Himself to the man, like Person who speaks to him and listens to him. We can know God only like person, because only the person has de capacity of love and of knowing.

*“You Who are, and Who has been before, and You showed Yourself like a man, God”<sup>36</sup>.*

The knowledge presupposes closeness, love, communication between two persons. For reaching at knowledge, the man must achieve first the virtue of love, to be a loving being like God.

The third Chapter entitled **The Christological Fundamentals of the Orthodox Gnosiology Reflected in Pentecostarion**, it aims to highlight the references to Embodiment, to the Sacrifice on the Cross, and the Ascension of Savior Christ, within the hymns of the Pentecostarion and the gnosiological consequences of this references. The embodiment of Christ is reason for the deification of the man and through this one of knowing God through experience, Who allows Himself to be known by the assumed human nature (I John 1, 1) for

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<sup>31</sup> *Penticostar*, Luni în săptămâna a șasea după Paști, la Stichoavnă, p. 237

<sup>32</sup> *Penticostar*, Duminica Slăbănogului, la Vecernia Mare, la Litie, Și acum...p. 138

<sup>33</sup> *Penticostar*, Sâmbătă în săptămâna a șaptea după Paști, la Stichoavnă,p. 305

<sup>34</sup> *Penticostar*, Sâmbătă în săptămâna a șaptea după Paști, la Stichoavnă,p. 305

<sup>35</sup> *Penticostar*, Duminica Samarinenței, la vecernia mică, la Stichoavnă, 2, p. 183

<sup>36</sup> *Penticostar*, Joi în Săptămâna Luminată, La Vecernie, Și acum p. 48

elevating the man to the knowledge of the mystery of His godhead<sup>37</sup>. About this assures us the following hymn:

*“To the One born from the Father before ages, to God-the Word, to the one embodied from Virgin Mary, come to worship Him! For enduring the Cross, He gave Himself to burial, as Himself wanted; and resurrecting from dead, he has saved me, the estranged man”*<sup>38</sup>.

Out of His great love for people, the Son of God, *the One Who descended from heavens*<sup>39</sup> “suffered on Cross and death for our salvation. Through His death He thwarted the mastery of the death, he resurrected on the third day and He unveiled to the human nature that the light of His resurrection was for this one, the light of the incorruptible and eternal life<sup>40</sup>. The hymnographers highlight the willing acceptance of the sacrifice on the Cross, by the Savior Christ. Thus, in a hymn it is shown that Christ *climbed Himself* on the Cross:

*“You climbed Himself on the Cross, Jesus, the One Who descended Yourself from heavens; You came to death, You the Life without death; towards the ones from darkness, You the true Light; towards the fallen ones, the resurrection of everybody. The One Who are our enlightenment and Savior, glory to You!”*<sup>41</sup>”

The sacrifice of Christ is a self-giving, a gift brought to the Father and a compassion for all the people. Christ identifies Himself to all people. He suffers and assumes the affects of their nature and even death, from the love for them, to liberate them from the slavery of the sin. The deification of the human nature is done through the embodiment of the Son of God, but this deification is made perfect through His Cross and His Ascension and His sitting on the right hand of the Father. I have also shown that Death and the Resurrection of the Lord must be considered together, like the Church considers them in the liturgical hymns and in prayer: when it mentions about the Cross, it also mentions about the Resurrection of Christ. This unity must be seen as a succession of the two events in the work of the salvation, each moment being present in the development of the other one. The Church hasn't separate the mystery of the Cross of Christ from the Mystery of His Resurrection, but it's seen the Cross

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<sup>37</sup> Pr. prof. dr. Stefan BUCHIU, *Cunoașterea apofatică în gândirea Părintelui Stăniloie*, Editura Basilica, București, 2013, p.21

<sup>38</sup> *Penticostar*, Luni în Săptămâna luminată, la Doamne strigat-am, stihirile Învierii, 1, p. 31

<sup>39</sup> *Penticostar*, Sâmbătă în Săptămâna luminată, la vecernie, la Stihavnă, Stihira Învierii, p. 60

<sup>40</sup> Pr. Porphyrios GEORGI, *Înviere și viață, Eshatologia Sf. Grigorie Palama*, p. 108

<sup>41</sup> *Penticostar*, Sâmbătă în Săptămâna luminată, la vecernie, la Stihavnă, Stihira Învierii, p. 60

in the light of the Resurrection, and the Resurrection like a victory of the Cross. One cannot speak about the victory through Resurrection if we don't mention firstly the Passions and Death on Cross of the Savior. Both the Cross and the Resurrection, behold what has come like, through the Cross, joy to everybody.

The celebration of the Resurrection of Christ is shown in details in the songs of the Pentecostarion. The hymns assure us that: “*Christ resurrected Himself from death, with death trampling on death, and to the ones from tombs giving them life*”<sup>42</sup>.

The Resurrection of Christ is the essence of the Christian faith, like the Apostle Paul says: „*If Christ hasn't resurrected Himself, vain is then our preaching, vain is also your faith*” (I Corinthians 15, 14). This is the day in which Christ resurrected Himself from death and passed the human kind from the depths of the hell, *to heaven and salvation*<sup>43</sup>.

The resurrection of Christ is the foundation of the resurrection of all the people. It is an impulse towards holy life. Without resurrection the ascetic toil would have been in vain<sup>44</sup>.

Through the hymns of the *Canon of the Resurrection*, the hymnographers assure us of our passing, *from death to life and from earth to heavens*, through the resurrection of Christ, which is more than a rising from dead of the man Christ, and it is the passing from this temporary life, to that eternal life and also a spiritual passing to the communion with the Resurrected Christ. The Easter, this great “Passover” it means in fact the renewal of the mankind, into the Resurrected Christ. If Christ wouldn't have resurrected the Christendom would have been only a philosophical or moral doctrine, without the power of saving the man from the slavery of sin and of death. The resurrection of Christ is means to the man the renewal in the first state of the human nature. The human nature hypostatized by the Son of God, through His Resurrection and Ascent to heavens, it reaches on the right hand of the Father, in the perfect love of the Holy Trinity, shared to the entire redeemed humanity, through love being committed the union through grace of the people with God. The

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<sup>42</sup> *Penticostar*, Utrenia Învierii, tropar, gl. 5, p. 14

<sup>43</sup> *Penticostar*, Utrenia, Învierii, Sinaxar, p. 19

<sup>44</sup> Costion NICOLESCU, *Hristos, adăpostul, veșmântul, hrana, doctorul și leacul omului și al omenirii pe calea mântuirii, conținutul spiritual al nevoilor trupești vitale, la Sfântul Efrem Sirul*, Editura Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2011, p. 402



experience of the Resurrection of Christ presupposes the internal transformation of the man, as fruit of an authentic Christian way of life.

The hymns of the Canon show Christ as being the *Easter of the Lord, the Spring of Life, the New Beverage, the Lamb of God, the Son of the Righteousness, the Light of the World.*

In the continuation of this chapter I has shown the importance which the hymnographers of the Pentecostarion granted to the *Ascent of the Lord*. Thus, through the hymns of the Canon of the Lord`s Ascent they deepened the teaching about the Ascent of the Lord to heavens with the body, showing that this presupposes also the raising of the renewed human nature above the whole mastery, and its placing together with Christ on the right hand of the Father. The hymnographers take also the message of the angels from the moment of the Ascent referring to the second coming of Christ as judge of the living ones and of the dead ones, synthesizing the teaching about the Ascent to heavens and its consequences, in the following hymn:

*“The Adam`s nature, which descended in the lowest sides of the earth, God, by renewing it into Yourself, You elevated it today above all the mastery and power; and because You loved it, You have placed it together with Yourself; and having mercy on it, You have united it with Yourself; and by uniting Yourself with it, You have also suffered with it; but by suffering, as the One Who are without passion, You have extolled it together with Yourself. And the bodiless ones were saying: Who is this beautiful man? For isn`t only man the One Who shows Himself, but God and Man, with both nature. Therefore, other wonderful angels, in white clothes, flying around the disciples, were speaking: Galilean men, this Jesus, Man and God, Who departed from you, he will come again as God and Man, Judge of the living ones and of the dead one, giving to the believers forgiveness and great mercy”<sup>45</sup>.*

The sub-chapter *The Apparitions of the Resurrected Christ – Premise of the Knowledge*, presents the mode in which the hymnographers described the apparitions of the Resurrected Christ. They have described these apparitions slightly different from the Holy Gospels. They hasn`t presented, from the first day of the Resurrection, the apparitions of the Resurrected Christ like the Holy Evangelists did, in the following days of the Resurrection, and especially the Thomas` Sunday, when the apparitions are reported before the disciples, and in the third

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<sup>45</sup> *Penticostar, Înălțarea Domnului, la Vecernia Mare, la Litie, pp.252-253*

week after the Easter, the apparitions before the Prudes. Then the hymnographers leave the apparitions of the Resurrected Christ, telling deeds and wonders done by Christ during the period of the Pentecost, happened before His sufferings, coming back then to the post-Paschal atmosphere, through the apparition of the Resurrected Christ before His disciples, at the moment of His Ascent to heavens. The apparitions before the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, as also the one from the Tiberias Sea, about which the Holy Gospels tell in detail, here are summarily illustrated, only in the Sticheron of the Gospel from the Fourth Sunday after Easter.

The apparitions assured the disciples and the Prudes of the truth of the Christ`s Resurrection and scattered the doubt of everybody. Through these apparitions, to the disciples He strengthened their faith and gave them the power of knowing Him and to confess the Resurrected Christ even with the price of their lives and to spread the Gospel to the edges of the earth.

The hymnographers tell from the first day of the Resurrection about the *light of the resurrection which shone to the world*, which the Prudes saw it at the tomb and which as the hymns says, He showed it to the nations, scattering the darkness of the lack of faith.

*“Evening worshipping we are bringing to You, the without evening Light, Who, at the fulfillment of the ages, as in a mirror in body shone to the world; and to the hell You descended, the darkness from there You scattered away and the light of the resurrection You showed to the people, You Giver Lord, glory to You!”<sup>46</sup>*

The first hymn from *Pentecostarion*, which tell about the apparition of the Resurrected Christ, before the disciples, we are finding it in the religious service of the Thursday`s Matins, from the Lightened Week.

*“Lord, as You came out from the sealed tomb, so You entered at Your disciples, through the locked doors, showing to them the passions of the body, which You received, Savior, long suffering: Like the One Who are from the seed of David,*

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<sup>46</sup> *Pentecostar*, Joi în Săptămâna luminată, la Vecernie, la Doamne strigat-am, Alte stihiri ale lui Anatolie, 1, p. 47

*wounds You suffered, and like Son of God, the world You saved. Great is Your mercy, You the not-comprised Savior, have mercy on us*''<sup>47</sup>.

This hymns remind about the mysterious resurrection and about the coming out from the tomb without breaking the seals, and about the apparition before the disciples through the locked doors reminding that He is the Son of God, and also about His mission of saving the world. The Holy Apostles took part to this personal experience, of immediate encounter with the Resurrected Christ, due to their love for Him, this love urging them to search for Him, to impart themselves from seeing Him, of the joyfulness of being nigh to Him, to impart themselves from His love in an unmediated way. The Resurrected Christ appeared after His Resurrection only to the ones with the heart full of love; He didn't try to convince the Pharisee and the Scribes about the truth of the Resurrection.

In the fourth chapter entitled **The Ecclesial-Experimental Fundamentals of the Orthodox Gnosiology Reflected in Pentecostarion**, I have shown the way in which the hymnographers illustrated the experience of knowing the Resurrected Christ. In the Church's religious services, there is present the experience of the Resurrected Christ, the One Who through His embodiment unveils to us His godhead, but this is perceived by everyone only as much as it is possible to him, according to his spiritual state. In gnosiology, the knowledge starts from the person to be experienced, from the hypostasis. Christ is experienced not like godlike and human nature, but like divine humanized Person. The term *experience* wasn't currently used by the Holy Fathers, because this term is specific to the scientific research and presupposes that everything to be questioned. We will know God only through faith; any doubt removes us and God. Sometimes it is used the notion of a *theology of the experience*, but only when this experience presupposes the impartation of the grace of the Holy Mysteries and the practicing of the ascetic toil. Father Stăniloae proposes the term *experiencing*, instead of the one of experience. This experiencing presupposes a personal relation, but it is done only into the Church, through the Holy Sacraments. This experiencing addresses itself to the inward man but also aims the cleaning of passions and the impropriation of the virtues, and the achieving of the spiritual senses. Only the clean heart can see God (cf. Matthew 5, 8). The Savior Christ after His resurrection He tried that His disciples to recognize Him through the

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<sup>47</sup> *Penticostar*, Joi în Săptămâna luminată, la Laude, 4, p. 49

senses and if they weren't convinced by what they saw and by what they heard, they were called to assure themselves even through touching.

The sub-chapter entitled *The Knowledge through Senses* it refers to the natural knowledge of God, which the man can achieve through senses and the way in which it is reflected this knowledge in the hymnography of the Pentecostarion. One could believe that the ones who were contemporary to Christ they had the privilege to see, to hear, to touch, in one word to personally know the Embodied God. But by carefully reading the Holy Gospels we realize that the many didn't recognize Him but rather they considered Him as being a teacher or a prophet, and only a few recognized Him as being the Son of God. Edifying in this sense was the dialogue of Jesus with His disciples, told in the Holy Gospel of Matthew: "And coming Jesus in the places of Philip's Caesarea, he was asking His disciples, saying: Who the people say that I am, the Son of the Man? And they answered: Some of them, John the Baptist, others Elias, others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. And he said to them: But who do you say I am? Answering Simon Peter said: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus said to him: Blessed are you, son of Jonah, for not body and blood unveiled this to you, but My Father, the One from heavens (Matthew 16, 13-17). Not body and blood unveiled to Peter the truth about Christ, namely not the bodily senses but the Father from heavens, namely the message of the revelation.

*"They were engulfed by disgust all the thickened ones by the weaknesses of the envy, when they thought at the healing of the man with palsy on the day of Saturday, by saying: It is inappropriate to be done healings on Saturday and to be broken the resting from ancestors o the Saturday; by no recognizing them that You are the Master of the Law and the Healer of our souls"*<sup>48</sup>.

The Samaritan women encountering Christ she believed Him to be a prophet (John 4, 19), and the hymnographers show that this woman going into city heralded Christ as being a great prophet:

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<sup>48</sup> *Penticostarul*, Marți, a patra săptămână după Paști, la Utrenie, după a doua Catismă, Sedealna Praznicului, p. 155

“Come and see a man, Who, by sitting today at the water well, He told me everything that I’ve done; for most true prophet and most great one He is, since he knows all the hidden and the shown ones”<sup>49</sup>.

The hymns of the Pentecostarion affirm the possibility of knowing the Resurrected Christ through senses, as Son of God. Saint Apostle Thomas is the one through whom we are assured of the truth of the Christ’s resurrection. The hymnography takes of the Holy Gospels this advice of the Resurrected Christ, to be touched and known, just for removing any doubts concerning His resurrection. In the text of the Holy Gospels this moment of the touching is only suggested; the hymnography develops though this theme of knowing by touching of the Resurrected Christ. Thus the hymnographer shows that Thomas touched *with the finger the Master* and highlights the happened wonder, comparing Thomas to the grass which *touching the fire rib of Jesus Christ*<sup>50</sup>, he still didn’t burn, but burned instead the whole doubt and changed the mistrust in righteous faith.

The hymnographers go even beyond and teach that Thomas, by touching Christ, *was filled up of grace*<sup>51</sup> and he felt the work of the two natures into Christ, namely he knew Christ as Son of God and confessed Him as Lord and God. Father Stăniloae says: “We know God, by spiritually looking at Jesus Christ, at the words, at the deeds, at His exemplary life, which doesn’t take place without His work within us. Only by living Him as perfect person, shown as such and in His humanity, we know God in a concrete way and through live experience. The knowing of an impersonal reality leaves us in a theoretical cogitation, in a few abstract formulations”<sup>52</sup>.

In the sub-chapter *The Knowing through Experience* is presented the point of view of the hymnographers regarding the role of the faith in the experience of knowing God. The liturgical hymns say about the knowledge achieved through senses that increases through faith. The one on behalf of whom the hymnographers develop this knowledge through faith is the same Apostle Thomas, but also Mary Magdalene. Using the example of Thomas, the hymnographers say that by touching he was filled up with grace and believing, he knew Christ, as Son of God.

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<sup>49</sup> *Penticostar*, Joi în săptămâna a cincea, la Utrenie, la Stihovă, 2, p. 211

<sup>50</sup> *Penticostar*, Duminica Tomii, la Stihovă, stihira glas 4, 2, p. 64

<sup>51</sup> *Penticostar*, Duminica Antipasha, la Utrenie, Canon, Cântarea a 4-a, tropar 4, p. 67

<sup>52</sup> Pr. prof. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, nota 1916, în Sfântul Chiril al Alexandriei, *Comentariu la Evanghelia Sfântului Ioan*, p. 1016

*“Oh, amazing wonder! The lack of faith brought forth unshaken faith. For Thomas said: If I won’t see, I won’t believe! But by touching the rib, he confessed the Embodied One, as the Son Himself of God. He knew as the One Who suffered with the body, and he preached Him as the Resurrected God; and he spoke with great voice: My Lord and My God, glory to You!”<sup>53</sup>*

The faith is the first condition of the knowledge; it accompanies the man in the climbing towards deification from the beginning to the union with God, namely to the full knowledge. This way of knowing through faith has been given by God just for the man to be able to express his freedom and in this way through faith he will gain knowledge. Without a powerful faith the man will vainly try to know God; only in a rational mode he won’t be ever able to conquer his doubt.

The sub-chapter *The Knowledge through Scriptures* it refers to the mode in which the hymnographers present the knowledge of God from Scriptures:

*“The books of the godlike Scriptures and the preaching of the wise men speaking about the godlike ones, they have truly taken fulfillment”<sup>54</sup>.*

The Holy Scripture together with the Holy Tradition constitute the main inspiration source of the hymnographers. The knowledge of God from Scriptures, presupposes on one hand the intellectual knowledge of the teachings from the Holy Scriptures and on the other hand, their accomplishing, as it is said in the Holy Gospel according to Luke: “Blessed are the ones who listen to the word of God and guard it” (Luke 11, 28). This observing of the word it means that the man to live according to the word from Scriptures, not only to know this word. The simple knowledge makes one proud and often leads to falling. Only by living according to the teaching of the Scripture and according to the example of Christ, the man reaches at knowing God, at some state of feeling God.

*“... with Luke and Cleopa together – travelling You were speaking; and by speaking, You did not show Yourself immediately... The One Who everything You orders towards the use of the building, and those prophecies about You, You have interpreted*

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<sup>53</sup> *Penticostarul*, Duminica Tomii, la Stihoavnă, 1, p. 64

<sup>54</sup> *Penticostar*, Miercuri în Săptămâna a șasea după Paști, Canonul, Cântarea 1-a, 1, p. 245

*them when You blessed the bread, You were recognized by them, of whom hearts were already lit towards knowing You”<sup>55</sup>.*

The knowing of God from Scripture it frames itself on one hand in what we call cataphatic or rational knowledge; it assures us first of all about the existence of God:

*“Behold, showed Himself on earth Messiah, Christ, about Whom was written into the Law, long time ago, that He will come a great Prophet, God and Man”<sup>56</sup>.*

On the other hand the Holy Scripture is also a guidebook of spiritual life which by following it, the man reaches at the knowledge of God through experience, to the supra-rational, apophatic knowledge: *“Take heed to My Law, My people; lean your ear towards the words of My mouth”<sup>57</sup>.*

About the knowledge from Scripture Saint Maximos the Confessor also explains to us that:

*”The Scripture knows about a twofold knowledge of the godlike ones. One is relative and consists in reasoning and in meanings, not having the experienced feeling through living of the known One. Through it we guide ourselves in this world. The other one is true in a proper meaning and consists only in the lived experience, being outside reasoning and meanings and providing the whole feeling of the known One through the participation at Him according to the grace. Through this one we will receive in the future life the deification above nature, which will be worked ceaselessly. The relative knowledge, comprised in reasoning and in meanings, it moves the desire towards the live through participation knowledge. And that lived one, which provides the feeling of the known One through participation and through experience it removes the knowledge comprised in reasoning and in meanings”<sup>58</sup>.*

In the sub-chapter *The Knowledge through the Holy Sacraments* it is shown the mode in which the hymnographers have presented the role of the Holy Sacraments in the experience of knowing God. Through the Holy Sacraments by being forgiven the sins there takes place the healing of the body but also the cleaning of the soul, and this cleaning bring with itself

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<sup>55</sup> *Penticostar*, Duminica Slăbănogului, Stihira Evangheliei, p. 149,

<sup>56</sup> *Penticostarul*, Joi în Săptămâna a 5-a după Paști, la Doamne strigat-am, Stihirile samarinencei, 2, p. 208

<sup>57</sup> *Penticostar*, Luni în Săptămâna a treia după Paști, Tricântare, Cântarea a 2-a, Irmos, p. 421

<sup>58</sup> *Sfântul MAXIM MĂRTURISITORUL, Răspunsuri către Talasie*, p.375

also the spiritual awakening, or the awakening of the faith and the experience of the knowledge<sup>59</sup>. In the Holy Sacraments, the work of Christ cannot be rationally explained, but only experienced, through faith. This experience it means the impartation of the godlike power of the Resurrected Christ<sup>60</sup>.

*“He laid mud on his eyes and said towards him: Go and wash yourself in Siloam! And by washing himself, He saw, giving glory to God”<sup>61</sup>.*

The hymnographers took from Scriptures this wonder, which the Savior committed by healing that man blind from birth. The mud from earth and the saliva imagine the rebuilding of the creature through the presence of the Logos in the middle of the created world. Through His embodiment, Christ heals the human nature. The mud and the water from the spring of the Siloam show the role of the material elements, in receiving the grace and the fact that they can become means of the man`s sanctification and of healing, and that`s why that wonder of healing the man blind from birth it is seen as an instituting the of the Holy Sacraments<sup>62</sup>. The hymnographers highlight the fact that the man finds his salvation only in Christ and in Church. The spiritual experience must be understood only in an ecclesial perspective. The one who wants to know God he must integrate himself in the community of the Church – the Body of Christ – and to participate to the religious services of the Church. Through the Holy Sacraments there takes place a together-working between God and man which we call synergy. Through this one the grace descends and dwells into the man`s heart; through this one the Mysteries of the Church have an important role in knowing God.

In the sub-chapter *The Knowledge through Prayer* is presented the attitude of the hymnographers referring to the knowing through prayer.

*“My prayer I will pour out towards the Lord, and to Him I will tell my troubles, because my soul has become filled up with evilness, and my life has come closer to hell; but like Jonas I pray to You: God, get me out from corruption!”<sup>63</sup>*

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<sup>59</sup> Pr. prof. Dumitru STĂNILAOE, nota 423, la Sfântul Chiril al Alexandriei, *Comentariu la Evanghelia Sfântului Ioan*, p. 241

<sup>60</sup> Ștefan Buchiu, *Cunoașterea apofatică*, p. 159

<sup>61</sup> *Penticostar*, Duminica Orbului, la Vecernia Mare, la Doamne strigat-am, Stihirile orbului, 2, pp. 221-222

<sup>62</sup> Natalia MANOILESCU-DINU, *Iisus Hristos Mântuitorul*, p. 355

<sup>63</sup> *Penticostar*, Vineri a șasea săptămână după Paști, seara patrucântare, Cântarea a 6-a, Irmosul, pp. 449-450



The prayer is the work through which the man, being in a personal connection with God, he will reach to know Him in a mysterious, apophatic way. The hymnographers who composed the liturgical hymns, with the conscience that they are prayers through which the believers glorify God, but through which they achieve the grace and the mercy of God and the holiness, and through this also the knowledge of God.

*“My heart has been strengthened into the Lord, the One Who give the fulfillment of the prayer, to the one who prays himself; for the bow of the powerful ones has weakened, and the weak ones with power girdled themselves”<sup>64</sup>.*

In the sub-chapter *The Knowledge through Love* I have shown the role which the hymnographers grant it to love in the experience of knowing God:

*“With Your godlike brightness, I am praying to You, the Good One, lighten the souls of the ones who are running early morning to You with love, to see You, Word of God, the One Who are true God, Who from the darkness of the mistakes call them out”<sup>65</sup>.*

God is *love* (I John 4, 8, 16). That`s why Christ, the Son of God, can be known only by achieving firstly the love. The hymnographers teach us through their compositions, that approaching God is done only after the man has achieved the virtue of love. Only them who come close to God with love will know God. That`s why also Christ appeared after His resurrection only to them who loved Him. He didn`t try to convince about His resurrection the ones who didn`t believe. Saint Apostle Paul says about the knowledge through love: *“what the eye hasn`t seen, the ear hasn`t heard and to the heart of the man haven`t raised, those ones God has discovered to them who love Him”* (I Corinthians 2, 9).

In the sub-chapter *The Knowledge through Dogmas* I have shown the signification which the hymnographers granted to the Church`s dogmas in knowing God.

*“Blessed forerunners of the evangelical dogmas and of that teaching from above nature, by receiving the whole spiritual enlightenment from the Holy Ghost, they uttered out of godlike instillation, in few words, but with much meaning, the truth from above nature, like some preachers of Christ , by taking from above, in an*

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<sup>64</sup> *Penticostar*, Duminica Samarinenței, Canoanele, Cântarea a 3-a, Canonul samarinenței, Irmos, p. 190

<sup>65</sup> *Penticostar*, Duminica Sfinților Părinți, Canoane, Cântarea a 5-a, Irmos, p. 284

*obvious way, their discovery, and, being lightened, they laid in writing the decision learnt from God*<sup>66</sup>.

References about the knowledge of God through the Church`s dogmas we find in the texts of the Pentecostarion, especially among the hymns of the seventh Sunday after Easter, also called of the 318 Fathers from the Holy First Synod from Nicaea from 325, who being inspired by the Holy Ghost composed the dogmas referring to the godhead of the Savior and His work into world. The dogmas show to us the right faith, but for understanding their message is needed spiritual cleanness achieved through right living, by rising from sins and through growing up into virtue. The dogmas are not only some abstract statements but benchmarks of the spiritual life. They help the man to discover and to know God. The dogmas formulated by the Church have the capacity for answering to the aspiration of the soul towards the absolute truth, answering in a satisfying manner to the rationality, and adapting the godlike truth to the perceiving power of that soul. Despite all these, the godlike truth cannot be fully understood; the human understanding remains covered by a veil, seeing only through guessing. The dogma never exhausts its subject, its meaning being possible to be sustained by the spiritual experience, the dogma fulfilling its role on the measure in which it transforms the life of the believers according to the divine mode, otherwise it remains a simple intellectual knowledge.

In the sub-chapter *The Knowledge of Christ, through the Holy Ghost, into Church* I've shown that the Resurrected Christ cannot be known and lived as God without the Holy Ghost, godlike Person Who brings in creation the intra-Trinitarian life and love. According to the teaching of the Holy Fathers, as we know God the Father through the Son, so also we know the Son through the Holy Ghost Whom we receive through the Holy Sacraments of the Church<sup>67</sup>. *Through the Holy Ghost is the richness of the knowledge of God, of the thinking at the ones from above and of the wisdom; for into Him all the parental dogmas are unveiled by the Word*<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *Penticostar*, Duminica Sfinților Părinți, la Laude, Stihirile Sfinților Părinți, 2, p. 292

<sup>67</sup> Pr. drd. Constantin LEONTE, *Cunoașterea lui Dumnezeu în Hristos, condiție a mântuirii*, în Ortodoxia, Anul XXXIX, Nr. 3, din 1987, pp. 143-152, p. 150

<sup>68</sup> *Penticostar*, Duminica Samarinenței, la Utrenie, Antifonul 1, 2, p. 188

The Holy Gospels say that Savior Christ said to His disciples: *But the Comforter, The Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send, in My name, that One will teach you everything and will remember you about everything that I told you*” (John 14, 16).

The hymnographers show that Christ ascending to heavens through sending the Holy Ghost has lightened the mind of the disciples:

*“Oh, those gifts from above understanding! Oh, frightening mystery! For the One Who masters everything ascending from earth to the heavenly ones, sent to the disciples the Holy Ghost, Who lightened their mind and with the grace made them like of fire”<sup>69</sup>.*

In the last part of the work *The Experimental Knowledge of the Resurrected Christ in the Ascetic-Mystical Dimension*, is presented the attitude of the hymnographers towards asceticism, towards contemplation and towards deification.

In the sub-chapter *Asceticism and Knowledge* it is described the mode in which the hymnographers presented the connection between the toil of the asceticism and the knowledge of God. They urge us to a new and clean life which to learn from Christ of keeping it, and through this we will enjoy the coming of the Holy Ghost, Who will teach us everything.

*“Learning from Christ a new and clean life, let`s strive all of us to keep it according as is due to the end; to rejoice of the coming of the Holy Ghost”<sup>70</sup>.*

The asceticism is the death of the old man and a prolongation through will of the state of cleanness from the Baptism. It is more accentuated at the beginning of the spiritual climbing, in the time of cleaning the soul of passions, but the man can never lack the asceticism. The hymnographers show the connection between the senses submitted to the ghost, through fasting and toil and achieving *the light of the dispassion*<sup>71</sup> as reward for the toil. From here it is seen the role of the asceticism in stopping the *body`s horsing around*<sup>72</sup>, and the removal of the impediments from the way of the knowledge by reaching at the state of perfection of the soul and by achieving the holiness.

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<sup>69</sup> *Penticostar, Înălțarea Domnului, Canonul, Cântarea a 9-a, Al doilea Canon, 1, p. 264*

<sup>70</sup> *Penticostar, Miercuri în Săptămâna a patra după Paști, Cântarea a 9-a 1, p. 169*

<sup>71</sup> *Penticostar, Duminica Tuturor Sfinților, la Canoane, Cântarea a 4-a, Canonul Tuturor Sfinților, 3, p. 375*

<sup>72</sup> *Penticostar, Duminica Tuturor Sfinților, la Canoane, Cântarea a 4-a, Canonul Tuturor Sfinților, 3, p. 375*

In the sub-chapter *Knowledge in the Communion of the Saints* it is presented the importance of the communion with the saints in the experience of knowing God.

*“Look now, what is better, or what is more beautiful, than to be the brothers living together? For into this the Lord promised the eternal life”<sup>73</sup>.*

The saints are the ones who walk and toil themselves in the ways of the Lord. And the reward is great: they become *sons of the Most High* (Luke 6, 35). The hymnographers teach us that the Saints have power to mediate to God for people, this power being achieved through the godlike grace, which works within them, in their quality of household of God. In saints is manifested the Mystery of the Embodied Son; through them are shown His love and kindness and He continues His work into His Church. The Saints are like Christ, full of joy, of kindness, states which they impart to them who are around them and through these ones they transform, elevate spiritually and change in good the entire existence of the man<sup>74</sup>. The saint is the man who lives with the angels but manifests sensitiveness towards his fellow humans, as expression of the kindness and of the cleanness, which he has from God and which he shares, from love for his fellow humans, by praying in tears for them<sup>75</sup>.

In the sub-chapter *Knowledge and Contemplation* it is shown the mode in which the hymnographers present this power of the man of seeing God. The sight of God is an above senses and above mind sight; it is imparted to the man after reaching at the state of deification, through the Holy Ghost. The Church`s Fathers understood through the sight of God not a sight of His being but a sight of the light of His glory, making distinction between created and uncreated.

*“Into Your light, Master, we will see light, Lover of people; for You have resurrected from dead, giving salvation to the human kind, for all creature to extol You, the Only One without sin, have mercy on us!”<sup>76</sup>,*

They often use the term *sight* with the meaning of *knowledge*. To this sight of God one reaches only through ascesis and through clean prayer, on the measure of the consummation

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<sup>73</sup> *Penticostar*, Duminica Tuturor Sfinților, La Utrenie, Antifoanele, Antifonul al 4-lea, pp. 370-371

<sup>74</sup> M.A. COSTA DE BEAUREGARD, Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Mica dogmatică vorbită*. p. 91

<sup>75</sup> Pr. prof. dr. Dumitru Gh. RADU, *Despre înnoirea și îndumnezeirea omului în Hristos*, p. 395

<sup>76</sup> *Penticostar*, Marți în Săptămâna luminată, la Laude, Stihirile Învierii, 4, p. 44

and only with the grace of God without which one cannot reach at the sight of God neither at His knowledge.

The sub-chapter *Knowledge and Deification* presents the connection between the deification of the man through grace and the knowledge of God, like the hymnographers saw it.

*“Adam fell, when he was tempted, and he crushed himself, being deceived long time ago with the hope of deification; but he rose up, being deified through the union of the Word, and, through Suffering, he took dispassion, on the throne He is like a glorified Son, sitting together with the Father and with the Ghost”<sup>77</sup>.*

The Holy Scripture show that the purpose of the creation is that the man to become partaker to godhead (II Peter 1, 4). The man is called from the beginning to be partaker to the godlike life. The hymnographers were among the ones who tried themselves to achieve the deification and knowing this experience they expressed it in their hymns. They remember to the man that through the embodiment of the Word it has been opened the way towards deification. Through deification the man can reach also at the knowledge of God. A simple definition of the deification is given by Father Theophilus: “What does it mean the deification of the man? It means that God communicates Himself to the man and that He communicates to the man from what he is, and he makes the man partaker to His godhead. The Father spoke about this marvel, about this thing which we cannot understand because we don't live it; through a comparison, like the iron which burns in fire receives the qualities of the fire without changing his quality of iron , but it also burns like the fire, it consumes also like the fire the things which it touches, as long as it has in itself the power of the fire, in the same way is also the man who unites himself with God, in whom God flows inside, he is deified and receives something from what God is. This is a report, a participation of the man to God”<sup>78</sup>.

The last sub-chapter of the work entitled *Knowledge end Eschatology* assures us that what he have achieved in this life by knowing the commandments and by fulfilling His will, it will remain like a foundation of knowing God also beyond the border of death.

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<sup>77</sup> *Penticostar*, Duminica Sfinților Români, la Canoane, Cântarea a 6-a, Canonul Crucii și al Învierii, pp. 400-401

<sup>78</sup> Arhim Teofil PĂRĂIAN, *Prescuri pentru cuminecături*, Editura Arhiepiscopiei Timișoarei, p. 140

*“Breaking down the gates of death with Your power, You made known the ways of the life and You opened the gates of the immortality, to them who speak to You with faith: Glory to Your power, Lord!”<sup>79</sup>*

At the second coming of Christ, all the people *will see as He is* (I John 3, 2), and not as *in a mirror, or in a riddle* (I Corinthians 13, 12).

*“Climbing Yourself on the clouds of heavens and leaving peace to the ones from earth, You ascended Yourself and Sat on the right hand of the Father, the One Who are consubstantial to Him; for, though You showed Yourself in body, You remained unchanged. For this one You wait for the fulfillment of the time, for, coming on earth, to judge the whole world. You Righteous Judge, Lord, have mercy on our souls, giving forgiveness of mistakes to Your servants, like a merciful God”<sup>80</sup>.*

The hymnographers highlight the connection between knowing God and the happiness of the Paradise through the example of the thief from the Cross, who knowing Christ, and glorifying Him as God, he achieved the Paradise.

*“Inheritor of the immaterial Paradise You made the thief who on the cross knew You God, by shouting out: Remember me, Almighty Savior!”<sup>81</sup>*

The Resurrected Christ is the One Who makes the connection between the life from this earth of the believers and the eternal life. Into Christ we become perfect in this life and through Christ we will advance in knowledge in the life to come.

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<sup>79</sup> *Penticostar*, Miercuri în săptămâna a patra după Paști, Cântarea a 4-a 1, p. 162

<sup>80</sup> *Penticostar*, Canonul Înălțării, Sedealna, p.258

<sup>81</sup> *Penticostar*, Duminica Mironosițelor, Canoanele, Cântarea a 9-a, Canonul Mironosițelor, 1, p. 111