

***OVIDIUS* UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANTA  
THEOLOGY DOCTORAL STUDIES**

**ABSTRACT  
OF HABILITATION THESIS**

CANDIDATE:

Pr. Professor Dr. NICUȘOR TUCĂ

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The integrative and interdisciplinary dimension of Liturgical Theology

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Liturgical Theology: worship and dogma, pastoral and mission, art and spirituality

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## ABSTRACT

This proposed thesis in order to obtain the habilitation certificate traces my path after obtaining the title of doctor (Bucharest, 2003) in the field of Theology, the specialty Liturgical Theology, Pastoral and Christian Art, under the guidance of the late Pr. Professor Dr. Nicolae D. Necula and is a synthesis of the research I conducted later, as well as a presentation of research projects for the coming years.

### **The first part of the paper consists of three chapters:**

Chapter 1 - Professional activity: professional training, professional path (professional degrees, internships, and professional training courses), professional experience, recognition of professional activity (awards and distinctions).

Chapter 2 - Didactic and academic activity: didactic and academic activity, as well as the main didactic responsibilities; teaching / research and international collaboration internships, coordination of bachelor's and master's theses; participation in projects, visibility of one's own scientific production in the country and abroad, management and leadership experience, professional development and recognition of academic activity (awards and distinctions).

Chapter 3 - Scientific contributions. This chapter was divided according to the three main directions of my research concerns, grouped in the first part of the habilitation thesis: a) Liturgy and Holy Sacraments, means of expressing the true faith and ways of salvation of believers; b) Pastoral care, liturgical life, and mission in contemporaneity; c) The role of Christian Art in Orthodox worship, culture and spirituality.

**The first direction of research** presented in this thesis focused on the *Holy Mass and the Holy Sacraments*, means of expressing the true faith and ways of salvation of the faithful.

In the oldest documents of the church literature, it is shown that the central point of the Christian cult, from the beginning, was the Holy Eucharist, which represented the core of the liturgical mystery and the spiritual life of the members of the first Christian communities.

The Eastern tradition is deeply liturgical, since for Orthodoxy the Church lives in the Eucharist and through the Eucharist. Orthodox theology is in fact a doxology, a Liturgy, it is a Eucharistic theology.

The whole universe is a Liturgy, a cosmic liturgy, through which the whole creation is brought before the throne of God: “Yours from Yours, We bring to You all and for all”.

I have discovered, thus, an extremely rich Eastern spirituality, starting from the liturgical sources of the Christian life based on the liturgical experience itself and on the *life of communion of the Liturgy in the heart of the liturgical community*.

The liturgy is the medium of man's encounter and communion with God, and Christ makes his presence felt in various ways, all of which are inseparable and complementary, and through all believers share in the love of God, the grace of His eternal kingdom, and thus a deep eschatological sense.

It should also be noted that the liturgical vision of the Holy Fathers, with its rich symbolism, is fully current and will be as long as the Holy Spirit guides and animates the mysterious body of Christ through Liturgy, Holy Sacraments and other sanctifying works.

**The second direction of research** focused on pastoral care, liturgical life and mission in contemporaneity. The research in this chapter also articulates important issues related to the liturgical ministry and the problems facing the Church today in its work, given the many challenges of contemporary society and current pastoral issues related to both pastoral care of young people and families, as well as to the pastorate in the country or of the Romanians in the diaspora. New problems and challenges are presented in terms of pastoralism and mission in a pluralistic and multicultural world. The topics addressed are intended to be an applied response to contemporary liturgical and pastoral issues, with specific features and issues.

**The third direction of research** focused on the role of Christian art in Orthodox worship, culture and spirituality and includes the following research results, which refer, in a first subchapter, to the great cultural program of the first Christian emperor - Constantine the Great - in Rome, in Constantinople, at the Holy Places, etc. and to the general impulse of the arts and writings which the Empire knew at that time. Other studies focus on the role of ruler Constantin Brâncoveanu in Romanian culture and art. Another subchapter in this direction of research is the theology of the icon. The Byzantine icon has a complex language, because it encompasses, but also pivots around it, an iconic theophany or a sacred imagery and an inexpressible richness of symbolic valences; it is a revelation, word and epiphanic anamnesis of redemptive acts, producing a theological emotion and possibly an artistic one in the person who worships it, even if this is not its purpose, giving it a profound liturgical purpose and creating that *mysterium fascinans*. The icon is the encounter of God with man, of energies uncreated with nature, a convergence or an interpenetration between the eternal and the ephemeral. Here we see fully how there is a relationship of complementarity between word and image in the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ.

In conclusion, the symbiosis between the Byzantine Liturgy, the liturgical interpretation (*mystagogy*) and the liturgical construction (architecture / iconography) - unite to form the Byzantine synthesis, i.e., what Hans-Joachim Schultz happily called *Symbolgestalt*, i.e., an Expression of faith.

The personal contributions mentioned and presented in the habilitation thesis refer to the period of the last 17-18 years, but they confirm the experience gained in the over 25 years of

university teaching and research activity at the "Ovidius" University of Constanța.

This paper focuses on an integrative vision in the field of research of Liturgical Theology, of the unity of all theological disciplines that must have as its source the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church.

The liturgy, through its interdisciplinary dimension, manages to include in itself, as in an ontological whole, dogmatics, patristic, history, art, morality and spirituality, thus revealing the liturgical or experiential character of the knowledge of God.

**In the second part of the habilitation thesis** presents the plan of evolution and development of my professional, scientific and academic career. This section is also structured on three main directions of evolution, as follows:

Chapter 1 - Ability to coordinate research teams, organizing and managing teaching and research activities.

Chapter 2 -Professional career development plan.

Chapter 3 - The development plan for the research activity, according to which the main two new research directions established are: 1) The in-depth research of the liturgical and pastoral sources; 2) Carrying out comparative liturgical studies.

The research directions developed so far will be continued, deepened and investigated. I also intend to integrate the research results in the teaching activity.

In the future I mention that I will continue to implement the idea of explaining worship from an interdisciplinary perspective, this being one of the main desideratum of modern Liturgical Theology.

**At the end of the habilitation thesis**, the bibliographic references associated with the content of the first two parts presented above are presented.