

**"ALEXANDRU IOAN CUZA" UNIVERSITY - IASI**  
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## Summary of Thesis

**THE SERVICE CONSECRATION FOR PLACE OF  
WORSHIP IN CURRENT LITURGICAL RITES.  
HISTORICAL, LITURGICAL AND EXEGETICAL  
STUDY**

Project Coordinator:  
Prof. Univ. Rev. Dr. SAVA VIOREL

Ph.D. candidate:  
Reverend PÎJÎN C. MARIUS



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## Introduction

The place of worship of Christians, called church, is the same sacred place where God dwells among his people. Therefore the church as place of worship, occupies a special place in life and human existence. Presence of God in the place of worship and among the people, as we saw in the Old Testament, begins from the day of its consecration.

The theme *The service consecration for place of worship in current liturgical rites. Historical, liturgical and exegetical study* is a very beautiful one, actual and important for Romanian liturgical theology. As for the ***current state of research on the subject***, from the research I've done so far, I've noticed that the proposed topic for research was not covered, only some aspects of its content were analyzed, the results of these analyzes were published in some specialty items of Romanian and foreign liturgy. However, today there isn't currently in Romanian, nor in the foreign liturgy, a presentation and treatment of sanctification of a place of worship as it is committed in the actual liturgical rites.

***The importance of the topic lies*** in the fact that it makes almost a complete presentation of what the church sanctuary, beginning from its architectural evolution,

components, iconographic ornament, religious objects, the relationship between place and liturgical worship and until the rites of church sanctification, all exhibited both historical and liturgical, and exegetical.

As the title recommend, *the main purpose of this paper* is to present the evolution of ritual consecration of the place of worship in Romanian liturgical tradition, by studying religious books published in this regard, and also the presentation of sanctification of the church ordinances and other liturgical rites of the present.

Regarding *the study of sources*, especially in the presentation of liturgical ritual of current sanctification, I have studied books, manuscripts, where there exists such a thing, and, also, some texts which are used by the bishops, on similar occasions. In the Appendix I have attached the front page of several files (title sheet) of the texts I have studied. About Old Oriental Churches, to study the rites of consecration of the church, I corresponded with several hierarchs and theologians of these churches from whom I received some liturgical texts and whom I have mentioned on the right place.

*The method* I used in the study of these texts was historic, through chronological researching occurrence of the texts, starting from the oldest evidences written in this

respect. Then it was used analytical-critical and synthetic method, observing the ordinances in each hand to identify the defining elements which positioned the ritual in a namely rite. Finally, the comparative method has been used to remark especially the similarities, but also the differences concerning this sanctifying work of the church, between the current liturgical rites. Through this method we have seen the common root of all current rites, and the peculiarities offering an insight into local development of divine worship.

This paper takes place across four chapters, each dealing with one aspect of the proposed theme.

## **Chapter One**

In the first chapter, entitled *Church, place of worship, historical look*, I treated the place of worship development in terms of an architectural point of view, from its earliest forms until the completion of individualization of architectural styles. As the Jewish cult was used as a model for Christian worship, as well the holy tent and the temple of Jerusalem were, on the one hand, foreshadowing, and, on the other hand, models for Christian place of worship.

In early Christianity, worship was held in a walking framework because of persecution against Christians. That is the reason we can not talk about church itself, but rather of

**temporary** places of worship, such as: *top turret, houses of Christians and catacombs*. Then, through the Christianization of rich people, the rituals have moved into houses that they **permanently** were putting at the disposal of the Church, very spacious houses which offered, through the status of these meant people, safety from oppressors. Now we can talk about *domus ecclesiae*. One of these private houses converted into church is the house from Dura Europos.

In time, from *domus ecclesiae* was switching to Christian basilica, which was the beginning shape of the Christian place of worship built for this purpose. Following Hellenistic and Syrian influences, basilica becomes on the late sixth century a *byzantine church*.

The second Christian millennium meant the emergence of local architectural styles, every Church revealing her style or styles.

## **Chapter II**

In the second chapter we presented the practice of the church's sanctification in the Byzantine rite, the one of the Orthodox Church of the East, from its early forms until the present form, particularly in Romanian liturgical tradition, were we presented and the religious books published in this regard, but also and the different points of the other Eastern

liturgical traditions, such as the Serbian and the Russian. Within the presentation of the sanctification ritual it was shown and the symbolism of this ritual.

The appeared consecration practice of the church evolved and crystallized once with the development of the worship's place. The early form of the altar's consecration, consists in serving the Divine Liturgy above it. Then, were added the other elements of the sanctification's practice: the deposit of the Holy relics, the washing with holy water and the anointment of the altar with oil. About these, we find evidences, in the Codex Barberini gr. 336 from the eighth century. This manuscript presents the practice of the church's consecration close as the form we have today, form that has evolved in time, as can be seen in the Codex Bessarionis (XI century), Codex Allatianus (XIII) About life in Christ of the Saint Nicholas Cabasilas (XIV) and the Treaty on all our Orthodox faith dogmas of St. Simeon of Thessalonica (XV).

In the Romanian liturgical tradition, after their form, are known two kinds of church's consecration: the small one, which it was usually performed by the priest, and the big one, which it was usually performed by the bishop. From the researched sources I found six practices for the consecration of the new church, three by the priest and three by the bishop. The consecration practices by the priest are those from the

manuscripts from 1674 and 1757, and of Gabriel Banulescu-Bodoni from 1809. Those practices committed by the bishop are those of the Bishop Stefan of Wallachia, which was printed in 1652 and until 1993, of the Metropolitan Andrei Saguna, printed in 1862, and that of Miron Cristea, taken from the Bishop Miron Romanul.

The three practices which are performed by the priest differ among them. The practice from 1674 is the hierarchical practice which was performed from necessity reasons, by the priest and which resembles with the old practice of St. Simeon of Thessalonica, and also with the Russian tradition. The practice from 1757 is the blessing practice of the church, made by Bishop Petru Movila of the Kiev, and the one from 1809 is the practice of the Antimins settlement by the priest, with the blessing and the consecrated Antimis by the bishop. And these two practices from 1757 and 1809, were also performed if necessary.

Among those three practices performed by the bishop there are no big differences. The practice from 1652, of the Bishop Stephen, is a Greek practice, with the ritual of bringing and settlement of the relics at the beginning of the service. The practice from 1862, of the Bishop Andrei Saguna, is a Russian practice, with the ritual of bringing and settlement of the relics at the end of the service, after the

consecration and the dressing of the Holy Table. And the practice from 1927, of the Miron Cristea, is a Greek practice, but where the priests go around the church only once, with three stops, and main pray of consecration of the church is read after the Holy Table's dressing. The current liturgical practice, follows the practice from 1927, of the Patriarch Miron Cristea, with the correction made in 2012.

Among the practice of church's consecration from the Romanian liturgical tradition and those from the Serbian and Russian liturgical traditions, there are no major differences, at least in terms of liturgical text , fact which indicates that these liturgical traditions have the same common source, the Byzantine Rite. The few differences resumes to the order of the moments from this service, so that the bringing and the settlement of the relics is done in the Russian tradition after the washing, the consecration and the dressing of the Holy Table, while in the Serbian tradition is made before washing it.

As for the symbolism of consecration service of the church, this is closely related with the symbolism of its parts and with the meaning of the liturgical worship. The Church, regarded as a holy place, is not just a simple building, but a sacred space where the architecture, the painting, the



worship, converge to the same purpose: to help the man to glorify God and to obtain his eternal happiness.

### **Chapter III**

In the third chapter, the one dedicated to the other liturgical rites, I have showed the service of consecration of the holy place of worship in Old Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman rite, that of the Roman Catholic Church, each with its peculiarities.

The consecration service of the holy place, as it is committed in the worships of the Old Oriental Churches, shows the common wire of these worships with the Byzantine one, which can be a point of dialogue between these Churches. The peculiarities we meet in every church, show the beauty of local traditions and their identity, such as the expression of joy and the intensity of religious feelings by the cries and shouts we notice in some Eastern Churches.

They don't touch the dogmatic aspect, even if these Churches, called non-Chalcedonian have Chalcedonian doctrine of faith, which can not be seen in the liturgical text. From the researches based on the comparative and analytical method, were observed over 10 major similarities between the non-Chalcedonian rituals and the Eastern Orthodox rituals. This fact, has led to the clear conclusion that even in

liturgical terms, these sister Churches have a common past and a common tradition. In each of these churches, the liturgical act of consecration of the altar, has a special and a uniform significance, in the same time. In other words, all these Churches have the same vision of the church sanctuary with the same symbolic value, but also sanctifying value, as place of God's presence among the faithful. This thing is understood from the chosen and read scriptural texts, but also from the liturgical texts content and especially, from the epilectic prayers contend.

In the Roman Catholic Church, there were cult reform activities, especially by the Second Vatican Council, a reform that has left its mark on the ritual consecration and dedication of the church's altar, from this liturgical reform movement resulting three services for the blessing of church. The earliest form, the Tridentine was a very complex one, even exaggerated by some liturgical acts, proved as dispensable, that in 1961, when the dawn of the Second Vatican Council were arising, the consecration service of the altar will be simplified. In this pre-conciliar form, the gestures that were made three times, are made now just once and are giving up a part of the scriptural texts. After the Second Vatican Council, continues the cultic reform, but with negative effects on worship and liturgical life, whereas the

Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium allowed the bishops intervention in adapting rituals. Even if the last consecration service of the church, the conciliar one, has a much too simple form, they are still foreseeing similarities with the Eastern Orthodox and non-Chalcedonian services, such as: the surrounding of the church, the door's church dialogue, the altar anointing with Holy Chrism, the candle ignition by the bishop, the singing of 83<sup>rd</sup> psalm, etc.

#### **Chapter IV**

The last chapter, the fourth, is the one that shows the relationship between divine cult, church's architecture and painting, a symbiotic and interdependence relationship. In this chapter we have shown which is the symbolism of the constitutive parts of the church, their relationship with the Saint Liturgy and the Sacraments, as well as the symbolism of the iconographic project, that completes with it's explanation, the "theology of church-sanctuary".

The Church, regarded as a holy place, is not just a building, but a sacred space where the architecture, the painting, the worship, converge to the same purpose: to help the man to glorify God and to obtain his eternal happiness. From the architectural point of view, the church is a place of ascension, of spiritual ascent and all, worship, architecture

and painting have the same purpose and send the same message. In the narthex the man is cleaned, in the nave he is illuminated and in the altar or at the altar, he is deified. Therefore in the nave are made the baptismal exorcisms, the denial of the sins by confession, and only after that, the believer gets into the nave for illumination, and looks to the altar with the desire of deifying. It is an entry and a continue approach toward the heaven's kingdom symbolized by the Holy of Holies.

We hope that this paper has achieved to present as clearly and fully which are the practices of sanctification of the worship's places in the current liturgical rites, with the common aspects, but also with their differences, that it will be a reference work for those who wish to deepen certain aspects of church sanctuary and will provide an answer to those who wonder which is the purpose of creation of sacred places in each city, village or hamlet.

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