

## HOW CAN MONASTIC LIFE TO HELP THE RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH? AN ORTHODOX POINT OF VIEW\*

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### CUM POATE VIAȚA MONAHALĂ SĂ CONTRIBUIE LA REÎNNOIREA BISERICII? PUNCT DE VEDERE ORTODOX

**Sumar:** În contextul împlinirii a 500 de ani de la Reforma protestantă, la Castel Ring - Selbitz, Germania, s-a organizat la sfârșitul lunii august 2017, un congres dedicat vieții consacrate. În cadrul acestuia, participanții din mai multe Biserici și confesiuni istorice creștine au discutat pe marginea temei: Cum poate monahismul să contribuie la înnoirea vieții bisericesti?

**Cuvinte cheie:** mănăstire, Biserică, Ortodoxie, viață monahală, misiune, înnoire

The Romanian Orthodox monasticism nowadays, continues its mission at all ranks of the Church. In Romania there are now over 600 monasteries and skities, spreaded all over the country, with around 8.000 monks and nuns. Only from this perspective, we may understand the importance of the monasticism in the Romanian Orthodox Church.

The monasteries, together with the parishes, are the two springs where the Christians come to get the imortal wather for the eternal life. Both in the past and nowadays, someone could not see the Church without monasticism. In spite of the increasing of the number of those who chose to live in a monastery, in the last years, Christians are very much devoted to monasteries, by going there, sometimes day by day, Sunday after Sunday, mainly when the feast of a monastery is celebrated. The Christians go to the monasteries for some important reasons:

- for the divine services that are fully celebrated there;
- for the spiritual fathers who live there;
- for the songs performed by the monks and the nuns;
- for the sermons that are delivered by;
- for the authentic iconography;
- for the products that some monasteries made off;
- for the beauty of the nature where the monasteries are built;
- for the tranquility of the monasteries, in contradiction with the noise of the big cities etc.

In attention to the main theme of the congress, this paper tried to find ten aspects about how can the Orthodox monasticism to renew the life of the Church.

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There is no definition of the monk that would be fundamentally different from that of a Christian. To be a true monk or true nun is also to be a true Christian. Monastic life is a mode of existence in the communion of faith and the love of God, that may be an example for every Christian family in the world.

The presence of a monk in the world can only be a paradox. He is a pilgrim, who does not belong to this world, but nevertheless finds himself within it. This causes a tension in the inner life of each monk, which is the same for a true Christian in the world.

In accordance with the needs and possibilities, each local Church has developed diverse forms of monastic life, which she has integrated into her pastoral, missionary and spiritual work through the ages.

Each period of renewal in the spiritual life of our Churches has been marked by a corresponding renewal in the life of the monastic communities. We are therefore convinced now that the renewal of spiritual life today should begin with a revitalization of our monastic communities, both of monks and of nuns.

The monastic community has a particular vocation within the community of faith. It has the task of proclaiming the Kingdom and of living as a sign of the coming Kingdom – a paradigm of the Parousia.

At the heart of the monastic discipline is the sanctification of time and the renewal of the inner person, by unceasing prayer. For such reasons, we think that, in fact, there is no different spiritual guidance for the monks and for those who are living in the world. Only each experience is different.

Most of the Christians live in affluent and secular societies. They are unable to find in them spiritual values, upon which they can regulate their lives. Sensing this secular vacuum, they look to the monasteries. The monasticism offers an authentic Christian life-style to those seeking peace and integrity of life.

In some areas of the world, the joy of living together in the Lord is absent from the community. This communal, unifying experience of sharing is well expressed in monastic communities as a sign for all.

Monasteries have and can continue to offer their special and unique experiences to benefit the entire believing community. Retreats held under the care of the monasteries for both clergy and laity offer possibilities for profound renewal and rededication to Christ.

Confession, discussion and solid scriptural guidance, related to the personal needs of each individual is the particular gift of monastic communities to the Churches.

The continuing renewal of the monasticism, according to the ancient rules and promoting the same values, contributes, without doubts, to the holistic mission of the Church, on each level.

The doors of the monasteries are open wide to all, both Orthodox and non-Orthodox. Through them, the visitor or the pilgrim gets the first idea about how the Orthodox Church is. It is therefore of a maximum importance to live the doors open, as a sign of openness, as a sign of friendship, as a sign of mutual understanding of each other. And, again, the monasticism offers a great gift to the Church, playing as a real ambassador of her.