

As something simultaneously revealed to us and yet transcending all understanding, the doctrine of the Trinity constitutes the foundation, infinite reservoir, power, and model of our growing eternal communion; yet it also spurs us on to grow and think continuously in spirit, and helps us both pass continually beyond any level we may already have reached in our personal communion with God and among ourselves, and also strive for an ever more profound grasp of the mystery of supreme communion.

*Dumitru Stăniloae*

Denying transcendence means denying that human life finds any point beyond itself. The twentieth century process of denying transcendence has been powerful and effective. It means that man really has become his own measure. We find no meaning in anything above or beyond ourselves. Lived life exhausts itself; it is self-encapsulated.

*Jean Bethke Elshtain*

The root cause of the social and moral condition of our times rests in philosophy's usurpation of place and near total rejection of metaphysics. Reality has been leveled to a single dimension, the historical, as we have sought to create a universe in which humans hold center stage and as reason has sought its foundation on the imagined surer ground of the empirical. Ironically, however, "in our time," F. Schuon argues, "Man has lost the initiative and is now slipping into a universe - or pseudo universe - wherein only the machine is real." And similarly reason finds itself increasingly edged off stage by imagination and sentimentalism.

*Bruce K. Hanson*

B. Pascal wrote that the tragedy of modern man consists of man's inability to find happiness in an empty room. This remark, in its essence, is related to the discomfort that man manifests before Transcendence.

People accumulate things in order to master them and to have thus a sense of utility, occupation, fulfillment. In other words, man needs a concrete object on which to exercise control. To many, this type of fight is the fight of life.

To feel comfortable in the midst of less things, to walk the way backwards: from possession to dispossession requires the courage of standing alone, naked and weak in face of the mystery from outside and from inside, in front of the overwhelming power of Reality, just like the Chinese hero who ten years ago stood by himself alone in front of the advancing tanks: vulnerable and courageous, alone in face of devastation. This way from accumulation to renunciation is the path from *Dubito ergo sum* to *Fiat*.

To accept Transcendence, the Mystery, is a proof of fundamental realism which comes from the right understanding of one's position *coram Deo* and *coram mundo*.

What is Mystery, how do we relate to the divine transcendence, what is its place and role in the everyday life on contemporary man, how far are we from the salutary realism of an adequate relation to this Transcendence, what is its ultimate significance and relevance for the future of humanity?

To all these questions and many others of the kind, the papers and discussions from this Symposium will try to answer.

*Th.D.*



**THE ROMANIAN INSTITUTE  
OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY  
AND SPIRITUALITY**

The Chapel "St. Ap. Peter and Paul"  
INCORPORATED IN AUGUST 1993

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*The Eighth Ecumenical Theological  
Symposium*

## **Humanity in the Third Millennium and The Mystery of the Divine**

Sunday, December 3, 2000  
5:00 PM

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church  
31st Avenue at 47th Street,  
Astoria (Queens, New York)

Subway G, R: 46th Street; Bus: Q 18

**George Alexe**

Senior theologian of the Romanian Orthodox Church, member of the Union of Romanian Writers, director and founder of *Romanian Communion*; chairman of the Romanian Institute of Orthodox Theology and Spirituality: *Humanity in the Third Millennium in the Light of the Divine Mystery*

**Dr. Bruce Buglione**

Professor of Higher Education Administration, Vice President of Audrey Cohen College, New York: *How do we know that we know?*

**Rev. Fr. Dr. Theodor Damian**

Professor of Philosophy and Ethics at Audrey Cohen College, New York; president of the Romanian Institute of Orthodox Theology and Spirituality: *The Relation Between the Incomprehensibility of God and the Naming of God in the Theology of Pseudo-Dionysius*

**Rev. Fr. Dr. Eugen Pentiu**

Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Holy Cross Greek School of Theology, Boston, MA: *The Tetragrammaton. From Revelation to Mystery*

**Richard Grallo, PhD**

Professor of Human Services, Audrey Cohen College, New York  
*The General Problem of the One and the Many: A Psychological Viewpoint*

**Rev. Dr. Bert F. Breiner**

Episcopal Church USA, Professor of Human Services, Audrey Cohen College, New York  
*Incarnation, Deification and Interfaith Dialogue*

**Dr. Constantin N. Tsirpanlis**

Professor of Church History, Patristics and Orthodox Theology, President of the American Institute for Patristic and Byzantine Studies  
*Existentialism and Personalism in Byzantine Humanism and Hesychasm*

**Fr. Dr. Călin Samărghiban**

Assistant Professor of Dogmatic Theology at Sibiu Theological Seminary, Sibiu University, Romania  
*The Shining Darkness of the Divine: the up to dateness of the Dionysian System in the Third Christian Millennium*

GUESTS OF HONOR:

**His Eminence Victorin**

Archbishop of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of America and Canada

**The Right Rev. Fr. Dr. Vasile Vasilache**

Vicar of the Romanian Archdiocese of America and Canada

DISCUSSION PANEL

**Dr. Steven Cresap**

Professor of Philosophy, Audrey Cohen College

**Dr. Elena Bront de Avila**

Professor of Sociology, Audrey Cohen College

**Rev. Drd. Pavel Nicolescu**

Romanian Baptist Church, Ridgewood, NY

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