

The Indian correspondence of Father Andre Scrima with Father Benedict Ghiuș reflected in the Securitate Archives

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Abstract: Important personality of the Romanian Theology of the 20th century, but also of the Universal Orthodox one, Fr. Andre Scrima was not only the delegate of the Ecumenical Patriarch Ahtenagoras to the Second Vatican Council, but also a professor and a writer with deep approaches in the ecumenical and spiritual field. In the same time, he has the epistolary vocation. Conscious of this fact, we try there to offer to the readers an unpublished letter kept in the Archives of the former Securitate, written in 1957, shortly after his arrival in Benares, where the Romanian clergyman will prepare a PhD. thesis. Addressed to his spiritual father, the Archimandrite Benedict Ghiuș, the document contains not only a complex description of the travel that he had before to arrive in India, but also a presentation of the meetings that he had, of his activity and of the way how the Orthodox faith was perceived in the ecumenical field by the Catholics and Protestants. The document is therefore important not only due to its autobiographical relevance, but also because it comes to show the way how the Romanian theologian from the French area understood the ecumenical realities, the role that the Orthodox Church could play in their evolution and also for the complex descriptions offered there.

Keywords: ecumenism, Benares, Ecumenical Institute from Bossey, Yves Congard, Jean Danielou.

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Father Andre Scrima has benefited recently by the interest of the researchers. A lot has been written about Father Andrei Scrima in lately. In the decades that passed after the events of 1989, his work was returned, partly during his lifetime, partly posthumously, to readers in the Romanian space.² Moreover, some of his representative texts have been translated and edited in other languages,³ and in recent years monographs, studies and articles dedicated to the activity and biography of the great Romanian theologian have been released.⁴

However, there are still many interesting things about the work and legacy of the great Romanian theologian that could be brought to attention by contemporary research. Thus, for example, the way in which his activity in the ecumenical area was reflected in the documents of the former Romanian Securitate could constitute a subject worth to be investigated. According to the data provided by the Archives of the National Council for the Study of Security Archives (ACNSAS), there were three files on the name of the Romanian theologian.⁵ Two of them are subordinated to the Information fund, and one to the Foreign Intelligence Service. It is interesting that among the information dedicated to the archimandrite there are also documents concerning other great contemporary

² Andrei Scrima, *Timpul Rugului aprins*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1996; André Scrima, *Antropologia apofatică*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2005); André Scrima, *Biserica liturgică*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2005; André Scrima, *Comentariu integral la Evanghelia după Ioan*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2008.

³ Cf. André Scrima, *L'accompagnement Spirituale. Il movimento del Roveto ardente e la rinascita esicasta in Romania*, Editions Qiqajon, Bose, 2018.

⁴ See for example: Ioan Alexandru Tofan, *Omul lăuntric – André Scrima și fizionomia experienței spirituale*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2019; Anca Manolescu, Bogdan Tătaru-Caxaban, Miruna Tătaru-Cazaban (eds.), *O gândire fără țărături: ecumenism și globalizare*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2005; Nicu Dumitrașcu, „Andre Scrima and the Power of Spiritual Ecumenism”, in *The Ecumenical Review*, year 68 (2016), nr. 2-3, p. 272-281; Mihaela Grigorean, „André Scrima, visionnaire du transreligieux”, in *Transdisciplinarity in Science and Religion*, year VI (2009), p. 69-82; Anca Manolescu, „La paix chrétienne comme dialogue: le pere Andre Scrima”, in *Irenikon*, an LXXXVIII (2015), nr. 1, p. 1-55; Maxim Morariu, „Correspondența părintelui Andrei Scrima cu Patriarhul Justinian reflectată în arhivele Securității”, in *Tabor*, an XIV (2020), nr. 10, p. 79-85; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, „Elements of Father Andrei Scrima's Ecumenical Activity as Reflected in File No. 0005468 from the “Securitate” Archives”, in *Review of Ecumenical Studies*, year 12 (2020), issue 3, p. 497-511; M. Velati, *Separati ma fratelli. Gli osservatori non cattolici al Vaticano II (1962-1965)*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2014; Bogdan Tătaru-Cazaban, Diana Dumbravă (eds.) *André Scrima. Expérience spirituelle et langage théologique. Actes du colloque de Rome, 29-30 octobre 2008*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta, Roma, 2019; Radu Bercea, „Essai sur l'herméneutique ‘en acte’ d'André Scrima”, in *New Europe College Yearbook*, year 6 (1998-1999), p. 24-36.

⁵ See: ACNSAS, *Fond SIE*, dossier no. 2601; ACNSAS, *Fond informativ*, dossier no. 0005468, vol. I; ACNSAS, *Fond informativ*, dossier no. 0005468, vol. II.

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theologians, such as Father Chesarie Gheorghescu,⁶ which appeared there, either by mistake or because the repressive institution wanted to use the same methods of intimidation in his case as in the case of the aforementioned archimandrite.

From the documents, it appears that the former Security was precisely informed about his departure to India (some of the informants even trying to prevent it) and that he was always aware of what he published, supported or spoke during the various demonstrations. His relationships with different people,⁷ the correspondence he sent to the country, or that he received from here, were intercepted, and the studies published in various prestigious magazines in the West were translated, although often those who read them did not have the competence to understand them.

His correspondence represents an interesting aspect, which over time has been the object of tracking and interception. Thus, two letters that were sent to him by Patriarch Justinian, one in Switzerland and one in Benares, are preserved, the latter in response to another sent by Father Andre, the one sent by him from the Indian university centre to the Primate of the Romanian Orthodox Church,⁸ a long letter also sent from Benares on 06. 08. 1957 (actually completed on 16 August and sent, as it seems, a day later)⁹ to father Benedict Ghiuș and several letters addressed to the same father and to father Sofian Boghiu¹⁰ and the answers received from them (but these dating before his departure to India, when he was on the road).

⁶ Chesarie Gheorghescu (1929-2017), Orthodox archimandrite, theologian and writer. Sent by the Romanian Orthodox Church to study at the Saint Tikhon Academy in Zadonsk in Moscow during the communist period, he refused to return to the country. Blackmailed by the authorities, he will eventually return, which will lead to his imprisonment and persecution for several years. For more information on his life, work and work, see also: Chesarie Gheorghescu, *Ofrandă cu smerită închinare pe altarul sfânt al preoției slujitoare (la 8 decenii de viață)*, Editura Conphys, Râmnicu Vâlcea, 2009; Miriam-Felicia Cărămidaru, *O sumară prezentare a vieții și operei Arhimandritului Doctor Chesarie Gheorghescu*, Editura Mănăstirii Dintr-un Lemn, Frâncești, 2002; Chesarie Gheorghescu, *Minăstirea Dintr-un Lemn*, ediția a 4-a, Editura Episcopiei Râmnicului și Argeșului, Râmnicul Vâlcea, 1987; Chesarie Gheorghescu, *Studii de teologie fundamentală și apologetică: teză de licență*, ediția a 2-a, Editura Conphys, Râmnicu Vâlcea, 2010; Chesarie Gheorghescu, *Pomelnicul Sfintei Mănăstiri Dintr-un Lemn – județul Vâlcea (precedat de o succintă relatare istorică)*, Editura Almarom, Râmnicu Vâlcea, 1998.

⁷ Thus, for example, the informants spoke in different characterizations both about the special relationship that will exist between Father Scrima and Patriarch Athenagoras, but also about the knowledge he had in spaces such as the Palestinian one, or in Israel. Cf. ACNSAS, *Fond informativ*, file no. 0005468, vol. II, f. 1-4.

⁸ See: Maxim Morariu, „Corespondența părintelui Andrei Scrima cu Patriarhul Justinian reflectată în arhivele Securității”, p. 79-85.

⁹ ACNSAS, *Fond informativ*, dossier no. 0005468, vol. I, p. 353-364.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 367-373.

From all the preserved correspondence, the densest in message and content is certainly that sent to Father Benedict after his arrival in India. Transcribed, most likely by the Security organs according to the original manuscript, a fact that explains the technical editing errors, the mistakes made in the writing of proper names, but also the carelessness in terms of punctuation and the use of capital letters, it represents a text that can be subsumed both autobiography and journal, theological analysis, or research with ecumenical valences.

The young monk presents to his spiritual father the experiences he had during the long journey to the Indian lands, where he will prepare an interesting doctoral thesis dedicated to the existing similarities between Christianity and Hinduism.¹¹ He would tell him about the Swiss and Greek stops, about the twists and turns of the road, the interactions between cultures and spiritualities and the challenges they had raised. At the same time, he will carry out a complex evaluation of ecumenical realities and potential dialogue bridges, looking at the Christian world as a whole through the eyes of the man concerned with those of spirituality. As expected, the Security will not understand much of what is described here by the Romanian theologian. The unsigned note that accompanies the text comes to emphasize the fact that Father Scrima wrote to Father Benedict and only focuses on the fact that, among other things, he mentions the publication of a text in the French magazine *La Reforme*,¹² which will later be translated in the supervision file and to which Father Bartolomeu Anania will even make a chronicle of him in the magazine *Orthodoxy* of the Romanian Patriarchate, a fact that will not escape the vigilant eyes of the security guards¹³ (it is debatable to what extent this chronicle did not even contribute to the arrest of the future bishop).

However, the text is important from several points of view. On the one hand, the father describes the meetings he had and talks about how he met important theologians from the Western world, such as the Dominican C.J. Dumont, who will accompany his series of studies published in the Catholic magazine *Istina* from Paris with an interesting preface,¹⁴ Father Yves Congar, who will also evoke him in the pages of a volume of dialogues,¹⁵ Cardinal Jean Danielou and many other figures who will later stand out during the Second Vatican Council, at which the father will participate as a personal

¹¹ Anca Manolescu, „La paix chretienne comme dialogue: le pere Andre Scrima”, p. 33.

¹² ACNSAS, *Fond informativ*, dossier no. 0005468, vol. I, p. 352.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 54.

¹⁴ C. J. Dumont, „Pour un dialogue sur la piete hesychaste”, în *Istina*, year 5 (1958), nr. 3, pp. 293-294. Cf. Andre Scrima, „L'avenement philocalique dans l'Orthodoxie roumaine”, în *Istina*, year 5 (1958), nr. 3 p. 295-398; Andre Scrima, „L'avenement philocalique dans l'Orthodoxie roumaine”, în *Istina*, year 5 (1958), nr. 1, p. 493-416; Andre Scrima, „L'avenement philocalique dans l'Orthodoxie roumaine”, în *Istina*, year 5 (1958), nr. 4, p. 443-474.

¹⁵ Jean Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité, Jean Puyo interroge le Père Congar*, Le Centurion, Paris, 1975, p. 147-152.

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observer of the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras. On the other hand, he critically analyses both Catholicism, Protestantism, Greek Orthodoxy, which he has the opportunity to know on his way to Mount Athos, or that of the French space (where he makes contact with prominent exponents of the Saint Serge Institute in Paris). He objectively assesses realities, reads the signs of the times and even manages to anticipate future realities. As an erudite young man and a man open to dialogue, he is called to speak to others about the beauties of Orthodoxy and thus becomes a true apologist for it. In addition, he manages to forge strong personal ties that will cement over time, impressing with intelligence and objectivity. All these aspects are presented to Father Benedict in a downright enthusiastic manner. The discovery of Catholicism and the various forms of manifestation of monasticism, in the apostolic and religious form, in the West, is not only a reason for amazement for him, but also the opportunity for new insights. The desire to discover hesychasm is the bridge that Andre Scrima makes fruitful in order to understand the common heritage. She is also the one who transforms him into a desired and requested presence in various Catholic spaces, also delaying his arrival in India. As a man who wishes for unity, but is at the same time aware of the obstacles and deficiencies that come to provide a strange dynamic to this issue, he wants to emphasize the fact that:

„Once again, it's about the nuances and the fine instrumentation of some attitudes that can be partially related to them, especially about overcoming them. Because the reunification of the Churches will not be the result of our negotiations and ability, but will be the gift of the Lord to the people of the "good will" of the mystical body, it is an acute human problem. Let us not be afraid to become human again precisely when this thing is so difficult (now at the end of the above, the hypothesis of a misplaced interpretation of my words comes to mind: I hope for those who will read these lines, that they will not think to consider me a "Catholicist" or something like that, I wish to all my brothers to have had the experience of the absolute Holiness of Orthodoxy, as I have had lately, and also the glimpse of the true obligations arising from it.)”¹⁶

Nor the formal aspects, which transform him into a true author of travel diaries, are avoided by the disciple in the correspondence he has with his spiritual father. Father Andre thus manages to describe what the experience of repeated flights meant for him, how it marked and impressed him and even to present, not without some lyricism, the elements and the sea in a description with interdisciplinary relevance. Aspects related to the accommodation to the complicated climate of India, along with issues regarding the meetings with the young theologians from Beirut are also evoked in the broad

¹⁶ ACNSAS, *Fond informativ*, dossier no. 0005468, vol. I, p. 356.

description that seems to invite Father Benedict to live through the eyes of the curious child who was Father Scrima then, the experience of meeting, visiting and praying.

In all the presented aspects he never forgets to mention the fact that the main focus of all the steps he undertakes falls on aspects of an intrinsic nature, with mystical relevance. The Lord must be at the centre of all things, and this aspect is in fact the only one that matters, he keeps mentioning with real frequency. His vocation as a hesychast is not shaken by the difficulties of the journey, nor by the various experiences lived or by the complex and challenging process of acclimatization. On the contrary, they all come to help strengthen a genuine vocation.

So Father Andre Scrima talks about all these aspects in the pages of the letter sent to Father Benedict. Unfortunately, his Security file does not preserve the response of the hesychast who remained in the country, a fact most likely due to the confiscation of his letter. We reproduce here his extensive epistle, accompanied by the Security note, with the desire to contribute also to the rediscovery of a great Romanian theologian who, unfortunately, is still better known today in the Western space than in the Romanian one, despite the efforts undertaken by various researchers.

Appendix

1.

NOTE¹⁷

From the attached letter sent by the Romanian monk Scrima Andrei from India to Benedict Ghiuș from the Patriarchate, the following follows:

In the magazine "La reforme" appeared an article written about the Romanian Orthodox Church, signed by the Orthodox Professor Clement Olivier, a close friend of Professor Loschi, both from Paris.

The article published in this magazine is a result of the meetings that Scrima Andrei had with various elements from Paris, where Professor Clement Olivier was also present, who signed the respective article. –

Scrima Andrei shows in that letter that the above-mentioned article appeared without his knowledge, but he knew that Professor Clement Olivier intended to write this article and asked him not to mention his name in that article, but at most his capacity as a monk .

ACNSAS, *Fond informativ*, dossier no. 0005468, vol. I, f. 352 r.

¹⁷ The document is undated and unsigned.

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2.

Benares. 06. 08. 1957

Letter from Father Andre Scrima to Father Benedict Ghiuș

Benares 6. VIII. 1957

Dear and beloved Father Benedict,¹⁸

I was in Locarno when I wrote you last, around the end of February. I am now at Neneres, in the heart of India, of course I have crossed seas and lands to get here. I would even like, with Your Holiness's permission, to dwell for a moment on what may be more impressive (to others) in my existence now, namely the very fact of traveling, the mirage of the itinerant condition. Does it remind you of the morning in November when I detached myself from the earth unconsciously, I would say with acute normality? I felt that from that moment I was freed from the "journey" and that I was entering the "path", which is something else entirely. You are on your way only when the journey from outside intersects with the itinerary inside in as many signs of the cross: primacy then no longer belongs to one road or the other, but to the one who embraces them with the signs of his presence and creates them through this embrace. Behold, indeed the way is the living God, and apart from Him the journey is illusion and entertainment. I cannot say much about advancing in Him, in which we are more drawn in than penetrated with our "powers": I find myself, on the one hand, caught and indebted to the Lord not only with my whole being, but I would say, beyond it, deeper than my life. I am, in fact, only the projection of this relationship of absolute obligation for everything that does not belong to me because it is given to me; maybe that's why, on the other hand, I sometimes feel growing in secret and preparing something that might be (and might not be) another beginning of life in Him, of life, in short – a mystery of love and interpenetration. This would truly be the rest at the end of the endless road. And I want to add the feeling that I do not think alone – and I did not get here alone: I know and recognize very simply how much I am supported by the prayers of the first brothers and the brothers who are always added: I therefore ask you, with humility and trembling, don't stop praying for me, therefore for us.

But I will try to share with you some of the signs of my ways from outside, which once again, are not only from outside and as usual I address all those whom I include in the same brotherly love, even if I admit – and lament – my impotence to give everyone at least fragments of my time which, quite simply, almost no longer exists even for me:

¹⁸ Benedict Ghiuș (1904-1990), Romanian archimandrite and theologian, known mainly for his work in the spiritual revival movement *The Burning Brush*. He was one of the most important Romanian Orthodox theologians of the last century and the mentor of Father Andrei Scrima. For more information on his life and work, see also: http://romlit.romanialiterara.com/index.pl/lotul_rugul_aprins._preoi_i_martiri__benedict_ghiuș?caut=ghiuș, accessed 22.8.2021.

it's strange to live in another duration from which "your time" goes as the fruit of an understanding, of an effort, but more chosen of a grace.

So, that November morning I left very naturally, like something that happens because it absolutely had to happen, because (please understand) it had already happened. I was sitting in the seat of the plane and I felt that another spring had been triggered, releasing and putting into action what, unknown, had been prepared for that day and hour: nothing can equal the burst of consciousness that the Lord works in us as in his heaven (this "in" is truly supernatural); from that moment the world reveals itself in a different way. Then we arrived in Switzerland. Now I can recapitulate, somewhat, the Swiss moment and try to find a place for it that I believe is providential: contact with authenticity. As before – before and after – by God's will we met the peaks from the first moment, which is not unimportant (and which once again had been arranged through small and unsuspected details, meetings, previous contacts). I had a vision of the Protestant universe in its entirety and in its depth: I realized, live, its problems, aspirations, tendencies, needs, difficulties, nostalgias, prospects (I stop) (which of course involved meetings, discussions, conferences, debates, I was quite busy, thank God!, without tiring, I gave academic lectures, I "fought" weighted and orthodox, when I had to). I could present my observations in this way: on the one hand an interesting attempt (without further clarification) of contemporary Protestantism to [have] constituted a body of tradition in matters of doctrine, on a necessarily philosophical (though not classical-philosophical) basis, because the liturgical or experimental-mystical basis is missing. It is in any case a genuine moment, a first stage.

"Philosophy" uses that personalist and introspective (a overcoming of Cartesianism inward, inward, which is not without enriching the problematic field of philosophy and general culture – and perhaps also the problematic of the anthropology of religious experience). Usually and unfortunately – the representatives of this tendency are somewhat less willing to observe and take up the themes of the authentic Christian tradition, which they encounter in the Orthodox and the Roman Church: this I believe also because the act itself – or the work – of creation under certain conditions it absorbs you and shuts you down. (K. Barth¹⁹ is less celebrated today, and up close he can be likable, but woefully inadequate). The other trend, this organic and deepened one of an overcoming of the old Protestant base in the sense of accepting the Liturgy, the sacramental life and exceptionally, the integral monastic life. This is the case of the community from Taizé (near Cluny), where the Rule of St. Benedict (costum, vows), the Orthodox liturgy, liturgical singing was adopted, adapting of course. I think the event

¹⁹ Karl Barth (1886-1968) is a Swiss Protestant theologian, considered the most important representative of his confessional area since Jean Calvin until today. For more information on his life, work and theology, see also: Henry Babel, *La théologie de Karl Barth: le pour et le contre*, La Baconnière, Neuchâtel, 1967.

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will have [an] unsuspected consequence; once entered into the higher determinism of the monastic life it is impossible not to go all the way. (The community is emerging, it recently opened a community of sisters in Grandchamp (Suisse) and another of brothers in Bavaria). Moreover, if I am not mistaken, I also shared with you in the letter from Locarno²⁰ the impression that I want to repeat now regarding the perspective of the reunion of Christendom: it is necessary to predict, for each confession (especially [for those] non-traditional) a move forward and not a forced return to an abandoned stage, rather lost and which even today may seem foreign to them, but a real move forward and a genuine deepening of their own Christian experience until the moment when with the help and the work of the Spirit, what today is repugnant (dogma, mysticism, monasticism, will be rediscovered as a new universe (and it always is) encountered through a personal drama.

And then came Paris. Like Switzerland and like absolutely all the places and countries I passed through, France meant the man to me. You remember my favorite adage about inner travel: It wasn't a hunch, it was a premonition. I understood now that the inner itinerary is the one that goes through people and therefore through history. Not the one that goes through landscape and geography. Paris was supposed to mean for me the encounter – the most authentic and delicious – with Catholicism, as I could not have had it anywhere. The city remained, I wouldn't say unknown, but just like that. I didn't even notice the spring that triumphantly entered the city. I did not visit the Louvre (it was shown to me, from afar, one day by two SJ²¹ parents accompanying me on my way. I did not see the Picasso retrospective. It was performed in a new interpretation. "The Damnation of Faust" I did not listen to it. To top it all off, I didn't even notice the scholarly arabesques of fireworks poured over the Seine one evening to greet an imperial procession. I went to the Biblioteque Nationale only once to work, I forgot to tell you that in Switzerland I was offered a contract, which I signed with a German house in Gotingen, republishing the "Protestantische Real Enzyklopadier" and which asked me to collaborate on an article on some spiritual problems. I turned in the article before the deadline (here they work differently). So, almost ironically, I did not see Paris, although I lived in it and met its people. But on my way, it remained one of the most meaningful and more blessed stops.

It will be very difficult for me to present to you here my contacts and dialogue with our Catholic brothers: it was something full of seriousness, gravity, nostalgia and hopes, results that mark forever. And above hopes, of results that always mark, all dressed in the clearest elegance and honesty of love without confusions, sentimentalisms or arriere-penses. Of course, the quality of people is decisive in such cases (again the peaks, but I had an overwhelming and unbelievable experience of an interest and a longing to know

²⁰ Unfortunately the text of the letter from Locarno was not kept in his tracking file (n.n.).

²¹ Jesuits (our note).

to meet again *d'acueillir l'Oriethodoxie*, broadcast widely and deeply, as a sign which cannot be ignored by anyone. From the contempt, then the ignorance until now not long ago, it passed imperceptibly and almost miraculously to the respect and eagerness to know (no doubt we must not overgeneralize, but what I say now is typical). And the Orthodox continue most of the time to let the Holy Fathers speak, without today's sons speaking creatively in the same spirit (again, let's not generalize, but what they say is unfortunately typical).

We still do not answer those who ask us and we do not give as much as we should to those who ask us. That is why I admired the perseverance of those who, in the interest of the Western Church, devote themselves to knowing and sharing the truth about Orthodoxy, or Orthodoxy in short. Such a man is Mgr. Dumont²², director of the "Istina" center (a noble private hotel on Bd. d'Auteuil). Seeing him up close, I realized the reality of the fact that these people are "interested" in Orthodoxy first of all out of love for the Lord and His Church, then from the sincerity and seriousness of a vocation to reactivate spiritual values that belong to Christian universality. If some Orthodox, asked to respond to the dialogue or only record it, affect a wary attitude and insist on always seeing a perfidious tactic of grabbing and abolishing, that is aside, because things have been like this until recently, but it will come very soon the time, or has come, when this excuse or pretext will no longer be usable (seriously); but on the other hand, I realized live, in Orthodox circles, the impossibility of employment and even, very sadly, a lack of solid theological – and intellectual – detail, necessary in today's work. And I tell you: beyond the complexity and turmoil of history, the mystery of the meetings and reunions between the two branches of the triangle of the Church remains a fundamental fact. Hence the ever-new obligation, for both parties, to continuously decipher the signs of time and eternity, to restore their understanding, to educate their means. It is no longer possible, it is no longer allowed to waste too much time, precisely for "tempus non erit emplus". And because the ebb and flow of defence and mistrust work especially in us, I think we should be attentive to these tendencies, perhaps legitimate, but whose unvarnished application can block even the economy of divine grace: the tendency to define ourselves by opposition ("we are something else": this brings narrowness and the loss of universal character). The tendency to fiercely attack one aspect of the front (let's say Thomism), without seeing how it is compensated and balanced to the point of exhaustion in the vast and multilateral edifice of the Church (a tendency that can lead to a strange "ignoratio elenchi"; without realizing it you get out of the problem, you miss the train). Finally, I also signed for myself (thinking of my precious friends in the

²² C.J. Dumont (1923-2001) was an important French Catholic priest and historian of the last century. For more information on his life and work, see also: <https://alleanzacattolica.org/jean-dumont-1923-2001/>, accessed 22.8.2021, and <https://journals.openedition.org/dominicains/1228>, accessed 21.8.2021.

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country) the tendency to give an extremist mystical interpretation, driven more by the coherence of a mystical lyricism, to some minor differences that are thus elevated to the rank of impediments diriments (it is, at the limit, the tendency of the rascals; one can only make the sign of the cross in one way), one can only etc..., a very high and subtle "mystical" meaning obliges us to respect the Eucharist celebrated with unleavened bread, even if the parents did it, I'm afraid that in this way we replace the mystical, living and organic "situation" with speculation or speculative mysticism).

Once again, it's about the nuances and fine instrumentation of some attitudes that can be partially related to them, especially about overcoming them. Because the reunification of the Churches will not be the result of our negotiations and ability, but will be the gift of the Lord to the people of the "good will" of the mystical body, it is an acute human problem. Let us not be afraid to become human again precisely when this thing is so difficult (now at the end of the above, the hypothesis of a misplaced interpretation of my words comes to mind: I hope for those who will read these lines, that they will not think to consider me a "Catholicizer" or something like that, I wish all my brothers had the experience of the absolute Holiness of Orthodoxy, as I have had lately and also the glimpse of the true obligations arising from it.).

The Catholic Church is obviously going through a crisis that I would also briefly include in the 3 points above: but it is a recognized crisis, consciously assumed. The critical moment formally returns to the same old confluence between the new situation of the Church (living community of believers) and the rigid, sometimes intractable leadership of the Vatican. (Personally, I have the impression that this rigidity is also not without a benefit for the quality of the new realities: it imposes a control, a selection, a period of verification and maturation, which prevents fantasy, improvisation, imposture, in Romanian, nonsense, which is always our sweet temptation in matters of spiritual life). Here, a French prelate said to me one day: Aue voulez-vous mon cher, it seemed last year that the Almighty had decided to rid us of the current pope, but then he changed his mind.

It is becoming more and more obvious that this crisis is a team problem and the radical solution will lie in a change crisis of the ultimate team. For the first time in ages, it looks like the "new" team is on the horizon. Until then, many regrettable errors of stupidity occur: for example Fr. Congar²³ does not have the right to live in Paris (he can

²³ Yves Congar (1904-1995) was an important Dominican monk of French origin who became a cardinal of the Catholic Church. He stood out by publishing valuable works on ecclesiology and ecumenism, but also by actively participating in the Second Vatican Council and by the suggestions made then. For more information on his life and work, see also: Aurelian Băcilă, *Spiritul Sfânt și Tri-unitatea divină la Boris Bobrinskoy și Yves Congar: cercetare asupra Spiritului Sfânt într-o perspectivă ecumenică*, Editura Galaxia Gutenberg, Târgu-Lăpuș, 2006; Jean Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité, Jean Puyo interroge le Père Congar*.

come to visit, but without permanent residence) among other things because he stood up against the maintenance of Latin education in the Church. Then other injustices and machinations in which, as usual, purely personal passions are mixed. But I repeat, the conclusion is encouraging, because the number of total Christian vocations is increasing and with it the general style is always rising higher.

However, I would also like to offer you some (broken) lines from the portraits, the situations, the events encountered in this context: it is obviously quite difficult. However, I have new news about P. Heitz. I didn't meet him in Paris. He is no longer in France. He is no longer in the Catholic Church either: he switched to Orthodoxy, unfortunately in rather ambiguous circumstances. The last stage was in "Istina" 5-6 years ago, when he met a woman, apparently an Armenian, from whom he was unable to part (even before the official marriage a child was announced, who would stillborn). In this situation, he met a very dubious character, P. Kowalewski, Orthodox (?), who immediately proposed his re-ordination as an Orthodox priest, after the civil marriage, which, according to his theologians, caused the nullity of the Catholic ordination. Said and done. But the Exarchate of Moscow, with whom the sinister Kowalewski (although it sounds like in detective novels, the expression is appropriate), was in communication with him, rightly refused to march: Father Heitz remained suspended, in obscurity. Mgr. Dumont, to whom it was evidently a personal pain, nevertheless spoke of him with much love and admiration: he told me that he had rarely seen a person with such a strong and deep priestly vocation as Father Heitz. Upon his departure from "Istina", P. Heitz really dramatically divided some of his personal belongings, he left the books to the institute, the vestments of a priest, and the chalice in which he served the first Eucharist after his ordination years ago, asked to be handed over when possible, P. Ghiuş. So you were known at "Istina" and it is still believed there that the only person who can help him remains Your Holiness. He is at present somewhere in Germeins (I have not yet got his address, but if I get it I will send it to you with a request to write to him); I only know that another child followed, that the wife is not of the best quality (the classic misfortune of the defrocked), that P. Heitz is active in some orthodox circles: Mgr. Dumont believes or hopes he will return to health.

One day, accompanied by a prelate, I went to visit a Carmel in Bouogne (residence of Carmelite nuns). It was a Carmel of strict observance: when I entered the parlour, I saw a strong grating, provided with sharp nails towards the visitor, and like a thick curtain towards the nuns (Saint Theresa, as a Spaniard to appear her daughters). At one point I started really scared: a cavernous voice was heard, not very distinct, almost gloomy. She was the superior Mother, speaking from beyond. After I was introduced, the Mother Superior gathered the Carmel beyond the grill, raised the curtain, because all the Carmelites were provided with a similar Arab veil (it was still a concession in my honor) and without being waited, i had to talk. I was amazed and humbled – understanding how well known the prayer of the heart was in the Carmelite

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environment, from the pilgrim's reading, other studies and from the conferences of the Istina fathers. I tried a kind of community meditation on the spot (if I can say it this way: that is, not only an exhibition, but also the participation of the audience through questions and the sharing of my own experience): for me it was a divine joy. A few days later I found myself with letters from the Superiors of other Carmelites in the province, who invited me to their monasteries, for the same reason (P. Chenii ²⁴who was in Paris and had heard about it tells me: "Mon pere, vous allez devenir le precheur du Carmel"), but I thought it better not to go.

Then I spent a day at Saulchoir (including the services) I don't think I'll soon forget that day. There were 260 Dominicans, in their white and black robes, chanting rhythmically, mysticizing measured to the cadence of their gestures, at the same time normal, spontaneous, free in their lives. I had a full, hot, exciting high voltage afternoon. P. Ple, the director of "Le Vie spirituelle", who was there, asked me to write down what I spoke (I wonder if I will do it: I have so many requests for contributions to the theological and philosophical journals in those parts that I would it takes a year just for something like that.). And then, I got to know up close in a kind of long-awaited recognition, all those names that, not long ago, were exotic: P. Danielou,²⁵ P. Bouxer, G. Marcel,²⁶ P. Chenu, P. Vilain, etc. Not simple visits, but deep-seated connections that continue to deepen. As I wrote to Bro. Codin, it was not only a personal experience, but a check of our entire community. I tell you, there is also a Sainte Europe, let's not only look for the mystical sanctity of other exotic lands, I have learned to love the authentic quality of these people who maintain the mystery of life according to God "in the old world" and I repeat the situation of our community is included in the present, for example, the problem that concerns your Holiness, if you see it, I think it would be hailed as a highly valid formula. And I also understood that "the spirit of the mind which today strives to understand and express fundamental realities must be a broad and comprehensive spirit." The era of specialists has passed – you can imagine my surprise

²⁴ Cel mai probabil este vorba despre dominicanul francez Marie-Dominique Chenu (1885-1990), una dintre vocile importante a Conciliului II Vatican. Cf. Marie-Dominique Chenu O.P., *La Chiesa nel mondo. I segni dei tempi*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 1965.

²⁵ Jean Danielou (1905-1974), iezuit francez, cardinal, membru al Academiei Franceze, una dintre vocile cele mai reprezentative ale teologiei apusene a veacului trecut. Cf. <https://www.academie-francaise.fr/les-immortels/jean-danielou?fauteuil=37&election=09-11-1972>, accessed 22.8.2021.

²⁶ Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973), filosof scriitor și gânditor francez. For more informations, see: Simone Plourde *Gabriel Marcel, philosophe et témoin de l'espérance*, Presses de l'Université du Québec, Montréal, 1975; Simone Plourde, *Vocabulaire philosophique de G. Marcel*, Éd. Du Cerf, Paris, 1985; Pioto Prini, *Gabriel Marcel et la méthodologie de l'invérifiable*, Economica, Paris, 1984; Paul Ricoeur, *Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers, deux maîtres de l'existentialisme*, Temps Présent, Paris, 1948.

when in the most authoritative intellectual circles, the activity of a P. Jugie, Grumel, etc. she was considered as fatally bound to "blunder," as the above persons, though honourable workers and archivists, "had no more culture than a cook", someone who is a man of culture and an honest man told me. We who suffer from the mirage of intellectual work, confirmed in the old book, should also remember. We need not so much outward respect for the letter as boldness of spirit, and all that once could seem to me even in myself, the danger of an excess of erudition or commerce in general ideas, I understood to form the binding fabric, the humanism of every thinker from here. I'm sorry I can't say more – but you can imagine for yourself – what it meant to meet and talk with the above people[s] and others. P. Danielou is likeable, but threatened by a worldly and cultural popularity that overwhelms him (we had interesting discussions on some texts from St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Macarius the Egyptian, published in a new lesson by Jeager). An exceptional man is P. Bouyer, former Protestant pastor, today orator and professor at the Inst[itute] Catholique. He is a strong intellectual and spiritual presence (he wanted to become Orthodox after overcoming Protestantism, but he did not have an open heart towards the communities of Orthodoxy, he is strongly imbued with the Eastern tradition and wrote an exceptional book: "Le sens de la vie monastique" – among other things. I will write to him to send it to you.

He was giving a lecture at the Inst[itute] Catholique on Areopagite spirituality and some issues of modern philosophy, of course I had something to say. Regarding him, I want to make a request: He told me that he was a colleague at the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Paris (years 1928-1930) with two Romanians: P. Emilian Vasilescu,²⁷ about whom I gave him all the information and a Nicolae Iliescu I have not heard of.

And as he would like to know everything there is to know about him, please ask Fr. Emilian and possibly Fr. Cazacu and write me here, if necessary, the very address of this N Iliescu. P. Lialine, when he heard of my presence in Paris, wrote to me inviting me to Chevetogne. I couldn't go anymore. I couldn't even go to the Trappists, where the prayer of Jesus is very present.

I should also say a few words about Orthodox circles. Their situation is complex. They are in a transitional stage. The old Russian diaspora is dying out (the luminaries disappeared long ago), the new generation, raised among foreigners, is looking for its personality. And according to the good Eastern tradition, a lot of intrigues, scandals, conflicts, enemies (on the first day, visiting 3 professors from S[ain]t Serge, each spoke ill of the other: I was immunized from the country. I saw – today – old Zander, warm,

²⁷ Emilian Vasilescu (1904-1985), Christian theologian and philosopher. Mircea Păcurariu, *Dicționarul teologilor români*, București, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 1996, s.v. Emilian Vasilescu.

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human, sweet. I reminded him that once upon a time at a religious congress, he said to S[andu] Tudor²⁸: "Brother, I bless the Lord that I met you".

And I also added: "give me permission to return now in the name of my connection with P. Daniil these words." He burst into tears. He asked me about Bishop Tit Simedrea,²⁹ and about Father Sterian. Lossky³⁰ remains the most serious of them. The lady and he send you many warm greetings (I knew from you how you visited him one evening when the little girl was sick. The lady is still grateful to you today for the prayers you raised for their child). Philokalia and the course of P. Stăniloae³¹ produced an exceptional impression: indeed, the confrontation with spiritual problems there are many powerful documents. There were presentations and discussions around them.

As for the Akathist "Burning Brush", I was proposed to publish it: I think I had a chance to find a poet capable of translating it and I am thinking of editing it – Deo volente in parallel text two colours (red and black) and stylized vignettes. Lossky hearing him interrupted me and said: "I think he is of the family of the Spiritual Centic of ION of the Cross" (a few days ago I received here in Benares a letter from a friend in Switzerland saying: "M- I was impressed and enriched by what I read [in] *"La Reforme"* – a French religious periodical about Romanian Philology and *Le Buisson Ardent*"³². I am also curious to see what was written without my knowledge, probably an echo of the discussions during my time there: as soon as I have the magazine, I will send it to you (the publishing house of the Akathist is a Dominican one).

²⁸ Daniil Sandu Tudor (monk Agaton) (1896-1962), Romanian writer, poet and monk, the initiator of the "Burning Pyre", spiritual revival movement, imprisoned by the communists on grounds of "mysticism" and died in the Aiud penitentiary. For more information on his life and work, see also: Aurelia Bălan-Mihailovici (eds.), *Ieromonahul Daniil – Sandu Tudor și „Rugul Aprins de la Mănăstirea Antim la Mănăstirea Rarău*, Editura Charisma, Deva, 2010); Carmen Ciornea, *"Să nu fiți căldiceii!": Sandu Tudor și întemeierea Rugului Aprins: (1940-1952)*, Editura Eikon, București, 2018; Carmen Ciornea, *Sandu Tudor și asociațiile studențești creștine din România interbelică*, Editura Eikon, București, 2017.

²⁹ Tit Simedrea (1886-1971), was for a time vicar bishop of the Archdiocese of Bucharest (1926-1935), then bishop of Hotin (1935-1940), and then metropolitan of Bucovina (enthroned in 1941). For more information on his life and work, see: Alexandru M. Ioniță, *Tit Simedrea Mitropolitul – repere biografice*, Editura Ex Ponto, Constanța, 2002; Artur Silvestri, *Secretul „Rugului aprins” – pornind de la câteva documente despre Mitropolitul Tit Simedria*, Editura Carpathia Press, București, 2007.

³⁰ Vladimir Lossky (1903-1958), Russian theologian and philosopher, professor in St. Petersburg and Paris. For more information on his life and work, see: Olivier Clément, *Orient-Occident: deux passeurs, Vladimir Lossky et Paul Evdokimov*, Labor et Fides, Genève, 1985; Nicoleta Pălimaru, Ciprian Vidican, Anotolie Negruță (coord.), *Teologie și spiritualitate la Vladimir Lossky*, Editura Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2015.

³¹ Dumitru Stăniloae (1903-1991) was the most important Romanian theologian (our note).

³² See: ACNSAS, *Fond informativ*, dossier no. 0005468, vol. 1, f. 54.

I have to stop. It's clear, I think, that the French stage was happy. It happened to me very often (in Switzerland and France) to give a dissertation in the morning, to give an exposition in the afternoon, to participate in philosophical discussions in the evening until late at night (not once in three different languages in Switzerland in the ecumenical environment). That is why I ask you to support me with your prayers. Under these conditions the road to India and India itself was becoming more and more uninteresting, less glamorous. The environment was serious, the insistent request, the prospects of fruition by God's mercy seemed clear. If I still left, firstly because I realized that if I don't have a moment of retreat now, at the beginning of the new road, I don't know if I will ever be able to have it again. I was occupied, shattered, disintegrated, in time and even in strength (I did not read a book in all that time): then it seemed to me that I understood certain signs pointing to India as an ordered place (for example, I met at Mount Athos "by chance as it must happen", the man who gave me the necessary recommendations for certain personages and circles in India and Tibet); finally, last but not least, I came here because I am a monk and I have to obey when the Primate of my Church insists on this (I have a somewhat special, traditional "bless and forgive" obedience, Moldovalah and I think more difficult, but I felt it was inexcusable to derogate; I stayed a month in Greece—most of it at the Holy Mountain. Greece is Hellenic, chauvinistic and orthodox, the clergy is difficult beyond the permissible limits of spiritual and moral life). Although they all wear uncultivated beards and greasy locks, I ask the lyrical defenders of this hairy apparatus from us to be more reserved with the prediction of this dubious innovation and today displayed out of inertia and indiscriminately), Churches are full on holidays, noisy and undisciplined, life sacramental is missing almost entirely. At the Faculty of Theology in Athens, although all the professors are laymen, educated in Protestant schools (I attended the solemn meeting of the proclamation of Bratavis as a member of the Hellenic Academy. I talked with him and others, and please forgive me, I did not feel the spirit of deep renewals. More promising is the Thessalonica theological center where a layman republishes Palamas). The Holy Mountain is undeniably holy, and at one point I had the strange and hard-to-express feeling that its being is of such absolute uniqueness that its connection with the rest of mankind has always been indirect on the visible plane carried out mainly through envoys, messengers and not by the direct impartation of its essential secret, which thus remained intact. And it is intact to this day, even today when the monasteries are deserted, when meat is eaten, when stupid quarrels (political, nationalist, calendar) grind the spiritual dignity of the place. Very few young monks and many policemen, rare and almost inaccessible to the immeasurable personality. (I met the Russian hermit who composed the foreword for the English edition of the Philokalia: he is 82 years old, speaks perfect English and French, does not love a lot of people). (I open another parenthesis here, to mention what I forgot to say above – otherwise I forgot a lot of things – regarding P. Gouillard: he is no longer a monk, he is no longer Catholic, he married and went to Mohammedanism Sufism

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through "traditionalist" circles. He translated the Philokalia after this step and this explains the Sufi appendix). Seen up close, all traditionalists: Schuon, etc., are embarrassing and often comical, take my word for it, though I can give you some juicy details. I remember the overwhelming seriousness with which some of our brothers "adhered" "internally" to the phenomenon and my heart sinks: I dare to name Șt[efan] Todirașcu,³³ to whom I send this detail and especially my love. Schon and I were neighbors for four months. To return to the Holy Mountain. For me it was a final blessing before leaving the continent. I will not forget the night services in the secret chapel – I tremble when I think about it – of the Dionysius monastery (I kissed the tomb of Patriarch Niphon), the sunrises of monasteries from the ridges and the lights glimpsed on the aromatic paths of the mountain; the order that still echoes in some lavras and that allows you to suspect how "organized" Orthodox monasticism was in its prime. I open another parenthesis: I have the impression that from God's deep economy, made sensitive in history to direct it to its meaning, Eastern Christianity is today experiencing the end of the Constantinian era (as the Western one is experiencing the end of the renaissance and the Council).

The union with the age (fruitful and of course justified, characterizing the Constantinian institution, is disintegrating: we have only to look at what has been happening in Orthodoxy for 40 years. You remember that we were also discussing these things in the country. Now I think we have observed live. It is a fact, before any appreciation: it would not hurt to take a step forward or a step up to the style and values that were of the pre-Constantinian apostolic age).

The 10 days I spent in Beirut were a divine gift that totally humbled me. I don't even know really why I stopped in Beirut at 2:50 at night, getting off the plane, and how I came into immediate contact with the Lebanese Orthodox youth, who are incredible in the authenticity of faith, simplicity, Christian enthusiasm. Young students raised in French culture are serious and talented. You can imagine what our meetings were like. We parted praying together and bracing ourselves. But what is happening to the official church is unimaginable: the Episcopate and the administration are in a horrible state. I don't want to add anything more, but all Orthodox Churches should repent with ashes on their heads for what is happening in the Patriarchate of Antioch. We have no right to accuse others of their sins, when we have an obligation to humble ourselves for the unimaginable sacrileges we allow. – (I shudder to think that others may be punished unknowingly for the sins of the other members of this body). – Please mention – as a

³³ Ștefan Todirașcu was a Romanian writer of Christian orientation, a friend of Alexandru Mironescu. For more information on his life, work, and the relevance of his work and thought, see also: <https://www.crestinortodox.ro/religie/un-exemplar-uman-stefan-todirascu-155230.html>, accessed 22.8.2021.

saint – at prayer these young Orthodox: Archim Ignatio, Erom, George, Paul, Albert, George.

And finally I have arrived in India. It was 'the height of the hot season, when existence was defied not in one or other of its places and in its essence, as a possibility. Non-being was more logical, more natural, more normal than fear: L-univers n'est qu'un faut dans la purete du non-etre" is a "truth" of extreme intellectual blasé and current Indian biology (when insects are added, the dust storms, now the monsoon with the respective steams). It was a difficult debut, thank God, but not too difficult, as a kind of preliminary trial. There were also days when I really suffered from thirst, water not being able to be drunk in certain places except boiled because of cholera epidemics, influenza, etc. I wanted to shout: "In the refrigerator, refrigerators." I give an extension for a refrigerator"! I would have gladly traded Indian mysticism for European technique. Then I came to Benares. I saw yogis, ascetics, snuyassini, temples, monkeys, gathurs, funeral pyres: all these are real, but not very important. The only thing of value – therefore priceless – remains our inner situation before God and in Him. The rest, even the miracles, are only signs that need to be proven and covered inside. It was said more clearly, the ultimate truth is the joy of serving the Lord. It protects you from dangers seen and unseen, even miracles that would happen through you or with you, pride can no longer touch you because you were nothing (or were nothing and almost nothing) there. Externally speaking, here in Benares I am busy writing a doctoral thesis in philosophy (the title in Romanian would sound something like this: "Essay on the Anthropology of the Ultimate Stage. Samys-Vedantabhssye and the Eastern Tradition"³⁴), learning a little Sanskrit (which I don't like place), to hold some conferences on some philosophy topics (initially P.S.P. Patriarch sending me an unexpected substantial help allowed me to give up the lectureship of French language and literature that had been offered to me and which would have threatened my personal time). However, I say it with all humility, I wish I had come to India just for that. For the moment though: "I'm not reading" further. Is it because the signs are silent when you have arrived at the appointed place, and they must be replaced by personal effort, humble and persistent, as the necessary response of freedom? Pray for me.

I am happy as often as I can share the Orthodox tradition with the people here, simply and without proselytizing. The experience is new for everyone (there is also a Spanish abbot here with whom we hugged from the first day and who gave us this definition of tomosm: "that which refers to many volumes and tends to fill many volumes" and Dr. in physics-mathematics and I have taken up again – partly sparingly – and this line of concerns which is not at all to be abandoned and where I hope with God's will to reach some valid understandings. I have to close these lines, as you can see from

³⁴ Cf. Anca Manolescu, „La paix chretienne comme dialogue: le pere Andre Scrima”, in *Irenikon*, LXXXVIII (2015), no. 1, p. 33.

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the journey outside I have said a great deal. Yet I must not be ungrateful: I also retained the beauties of Switzerland, the line of glaciers, the south of St. Gothard towards Lago Maggiore, with the promising and sonorous names – Airolo, Belliuzona, Ascona; the sky overflowing over the Mediterranean lands in Greece and Lebanon; before the nostalgic nobility of some Parisian streets; now the torn landscapes of Central India. I liked airplanes, I say this mainly because Brother Codin, wide aircraft and docks, friends of man and states.

One night right in the middle of it, I find myself flying over Milan; below, the city became known [in] multi-colored flames, transposed, trans-encrypted, if I can speak like that in the light: from above the plane answered with its lights and in the cabin with gentle intimacy everything distilled defending a kind of enchantment, of a premonition of innocence. And then the long 10-hour flights where you can do your morning canon over the Arabian desert and all the way to Bombay to read a mystical study of Lossky. I didn't really like the sea (it's beautiful especially on the shore; I also had a storm on it in the Eastern Mediterranean and I understood why the apostle of the apocalypse condemns it to perish at the second birth of the creature being the habitation of the dragon: although it has a master, they always try to act like they don't have it).

Let me also recall that the community of brothers is always presented to me (no forgetfulness, at least on my part), and there is a kind of care and entreaty in me that you have a special attention for young friends. I can tell you something that may seem curious. A desire of mine now would be the action "organization deeper than in the Romanian obsession: is it good at administration?" I have learned some things from running the big Swiss institutions that are equivalent to orchestrating a symphony – working with the people and for the people. You cannot imagine how often I think of E. Toma, B. Vaida, Gigel, (Vășii and Câdea), Duțu and all the others and how much I want them to deepen in the only knowledge and achievement worthy of the greatness and humility of man that accomplished in God. I remembered that exactly 10 years ago we were in Govora. I was also young then, I had a confused premonition that the only authentic name of the future is the living God. And how much I used the connection with the elders. Here I must mention the eternal Daniel P. Allow me to confess to you that I wrote these lines representing his Holiness to me as well as Your Holiness. I think he might answer me. And I also think that they would now recognize how inscrutable the Lord's ways can be and different from the solution of monopolistic discipleship – I don't say monopolistic – which is legitimate, but which should have waited. For His Holiness I would like to mention the strange problem in the Dead Sea desert. I don't know if their situation is fully known in the country. With that enigmatic order of a perfect Essene monastery from decades before his incarnations, (which provided for hours of meditation, reading during the meal, periods of examination of conscience), a monastery with which it seems St. John the Baptist had been connected, but later rejected it. – But his archetypal relationship with Christian monasticism seen as a style

and dimension of spiritual life becomes all the more significant. (The parents of the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem showed me photographs, reliefs of the exhumed remains of the monastery perfectly recognizable (pardon my pun). Its superior was a mysterious "Maitre de la Justice" persecuted, tried and executed by the Pharisees). I would also like to remind him that the Grail was cut from the emerald that fell from the forehead of the angel of light, after sin, and taken over by the Ionian line of the world, water and blood: matter of the Mediterranean. (I was initiated at Monserrat in Spain, the famous abbey built according to tradition on the Grail mountain, Montsalvatch).

I am glad that the Russian books that I sent from Paris have been received at the Theological Institute and I hope also at the Patriarchate's Library. I don't know if Mgr. Dumont sent his last volume: *Les Voies de l'Unite Chretienne*,³⁵ as we had decided; in the affirmative case I would be glad to see a substantial review appear, and I think that you alone could and ought to do it. You will meet with many of your thoughts. Even if the author sometimes speaks [in] a theological and Thomistic language, we must not condemn him lightly; speaks for this world (by the way, we were at "Istina" in Paris when the issue of "Orthodoxy" was received with the honorable article by Mr. T. Popescu³⁶ on the "Union of Churches"; but in the same issue, we were told attracted attention, it was an article written by Fr. Marcu³⁷ from Sibiu (I think I'm not mistaken) about "The truth and beauty of Orthodoxy" – the already crooked title. It was embarrassing to see the name of the general secretary of the Ecumenical Movement, Dr. Visser't Hooft³⁸, known throughout the world as a Reformed and introduced by the author insistently as "Hooft the Anglican". We make a mockery of our intellectual and cultural frivolity. You know the price of accuracy and correctness of information in this[i]world. Please convey these to P. Gagi, along with my warm greetings.

³⁵ C.J. Dumont, *Les voies de l'unité chrétienne, doctrine et spiritualité*, Les Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1954.

³⁶ Teodor M. Popescu (1893-1973), prominent Romanian theologian, imprisoned for political reasons at the beginning of the communist period. He was a professor at the University Theological Institute in Bucharest. For more information on his life and work, see also: Adina Pavel, *Teodor M. Popescu și meditațiile despre preoție*, Botoșani, 2013.

³⁷ Grigorie T. Marcu (1911-1987), theologian, professor at the Theological Institute from Sibiu. Cf. <https://www.crestinortodox.ro/dictionarul-teologilor-romani/grigorie-marcu-84288.html>, accessed 22.8.2021.

³⁸ Willem Adolph Visser 't Hooft (1900-1985), German theologian, first general secretary of the Ecumenical Council of Churches (1948-1966). For more information on his life and work, see: A. Guittart, „A Bibliography of the Writings of Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft 1918-1970”, in J. Robert Nelson (ed.), *No Man Is Alien: Essays on the Unity of Mankind*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1971, p. 264-330; Robert C. Mackie and Charles C. West (eds.), *The Sufficiency of God: Essays on the Ecumenical Hope in Honor of W. A. Visser 't Hooft*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1963.

The Indian correspondence of Father Andre Scrima with Father Benedict Ghiuș reflected in the Securitate Archives

Now I conclude, not before setting up the essential question for me of correspondence. Sometimes I get the grave and sad suspicion – that you are waiting for me to write to you in order to "just answer me". It would be a painful misunderstanding and reversal of relations. I am alone here, and you are many there. I have a lot of epistolary obligations (from Mexico and Capetown to Paris and Chicago and you have only one correspondent abroad: me. If you each wrote me a letter a week (I'm not kidding; you, p. Danil, P. Stăniloai, P. Sofian, Codin, etc., etc. or Mr. Vasile, whom I always miss, it would be your turn every two months and I would be grateful. Brother Codin proclaimed my professorship in the letter received here and for which I thanked him before the Lord: "Correspondence is a means that in all ages has been an effective tool to maintain contact with friends" (end quote) .I agree and I would also add the nuance that the letter can be a sign of life and its becoming: here for the correspondence between us, I would even dare to revive the question[a]: How do you feel about the prayer "The central element of our Communion?" and then please tell me what the Metropolitanate of Moldova is doing? What is Slatina, Raraul doing, what else is going on in the Romanian Church: Fr. Anania could also write to me (what is happening with Fr. Mihai, but with Anton?). What's up with Antim, here I try to attach a few lines for other friends. I am writing to Titi separately and I ask your holiness to hand them to him. I began this letter on the day of the wonderful Transfiguration, and finished it the next day at 1:15 past midnight. Please do not expect me to be able to fulfill this effort soon. I hug everyone. Pray for me and please write to me. With deep love in the Lord, the Monk Andrei.

P. S. My address: Prof. Andrei Scrima Send me the letters
International House only by recommended plane
Hindu University Benares 5 U. P. India

I think you'd better write to Lossky (he knows something about Heith). I haven't written yet, send him my regards. Its address is: V. Lossky – 6 St. Louis en L'Isle Paris 4 – 3.

Say hello to Metropolitan Firmilian.³⁹ I really miss him. Please let him know my way too. Maybe I'll write to him later. –

Post-Scriptum: Please forgive me Father Benedict. Here today, August 25, almost 20 days have passed since I finished the lines addressed to you and which you could have received in the meantime (but I wanted to send a sign in the same envelope, brothers and friends. Meanwhile I am grateful to God, I had a Christian and monastic celebration of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin). Here is what I would like to add. I don't know if you remember the name of Abbot Monchauia we first met around 1947

³⁹ Firmilian Marin (1901-1972) was a Romanian theologian, elected Metropolitan of Oltenia. Cf. <https://ziarullumina.ro/documentar/mitropolitul-firmilian-marin-si-invatamanul-teologic-din-oltenia>, accessed 12.8.2021.

with n. 3 (if I'm not mistaken) of "Dieu Vivant". He has been in India for a long time and recently together with [a] French Breton Benedictine (an admirable race) founded a monastery for a monastic lifestyle, lived in the extreme Hindu forms (this Benedictine walks almost naked like local sannyassins, eats the Indian, took a Sanskrit name). He also wrote a book: "Ermites du Saccidaorcida", which begins with a word to Ave Schiron of Pateric. From them I heard the reflection, profoundly true, that India has not discovered its Christian vocation, probably also because it has not known Christian monasticism: rather, what India needs precisely is not monastic forms, but monasticism before Chalcedon, preserved especially in Orthodoxy. They would be happy to see an Orthodox monastery (and this today could only be Romanian) in India. Let us pray to the Lord and let his Will be done, and pray for Henri the hieromonk and Jules the abbot.

Secondly, I want to inform you that I received the article written in Paris about the Romanian Orthodox Church. It appeared in the Ecumenical hebdomadary "La Reforme" and is signed by the French Orthodox Professor Olivier Clement,⁴⁰ a close friend of Lossky (you can read his articles in "Mesager", he was once a disciple of Guenon). The article appeared without my knowledge and is a result of their meeting in Paris, at some of which Professor Clement was also present (I had asked him not to mention my name and at most my status as a monk). Entitled: "L'Eglise Orthodoxe Roumaine" au le miracle du Buisson Ardent", it's a happy title I find, inspired by the akathist P. Daniil, which I translated on the spot in one of the sessions. (They talk a bit excessively about P. Daniil and about our intellectuality, but it is inevitable when things could not be controlled by the one who knows the realities, I was far away). I am sending the article to the [Blessed] Patriarch. I asked P. Anania to show you also Br. Codin and maybe copy it.

Dear Father Benedict, please write to me once more not only to answer me, but to share with me those of your Holiness. Please greet P. Gheorghe, Prof. Elian⁴¹ (how was his first school year?), Mrs. Alina and especially Gherasim.

With the same love, Andrei

ACNSAS, *Fond informativ*, dossier no. 0005468, vol. I, f. 353-364 r-v

⁴⁰ Olivier Clement (1921-2009) was a French theologian converted to Orthodoxy from atheism. He taught at the Saint Serge Institute in Paris. Among his works translated abroad are: Olivier Clement, *The Roots of Christian Mysticism*, New City Press, Hyde Park, 1996; Olivier Clement, *On Human Being: Spiritual Anthropology*, New City Press, Hyde Park, 2000; Olivier Clement, *You are Peter: An Orthodox Reflection on the Exercise of Papal Primacy*, New City Press, Hyde Park, 2003; Olivier Clement, *The Spirit of Solzhenitsyn*, Barnes & Noble Books, New York, 1976. Pentru mai multe informații cu privire la viața și activitatea lui, a se vedea și: <https://ziarullumina.ro/memoriament/un-vechi-prieten-al-bisericii-noastre>, accessed 21.8.2021.

⁴¹ Alexandru Elian (1910-1998) was a historian and Byzantinologist, full member of the Romanian Academy. He taught at the University Degree Theological Institute in Bucharest during the communist period. Cf. <https://acad.ro/bdar/armembriLit.php?vidT=E>, accessed 21.8.2021.