

The actuality and importance of the partnership Family-Church-School in the realization of religious education in a world and society of migration

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Abstract: Migration is one of the main causes that leads to the alteration of the Christian family cohesion, contributing greatly to the perversion of the family's original goals. Our family and society needs authentic education, which is Orthodox Christian education. This type of education, carried out through the institutions that regulate and carry it out, namely the Family, the Church and the School, concerns the human being in its entirety, both soul and body. Christian Orthodox education must be a permanent and real presence throughout our lives, not just in childhood or old age. It proposes a set of moral benchmarks absolutely necessary for an ideal future of the Romanian people of today and tomorrow. The present study aims to demonstrate that only through a Christian Orthodox religious education, which is especially necessary in the context of current migration, can we speak of a healthy, strong and happy foundation of the Christian Orthodox Family.

Keywords: migration, christian-orthodox education, religion class, Family - Church - School partnership, christian-orthodox family

I.1. Religious education an imperative for an ideal future

Education of religious origin can be broadly defined as an action of divine origin in which the educated person enjoys what St. Clement Alexandrinus called a „chosen education, made by the Word through His uncreatedness, through His life”².

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² Sf. Clement Alexandrinul, *Pedagogul*, apud Drd. Simona-Cecilia Tudoran, „Educația tinerilor la Sfinții Părinți”, in *Revista Teologică*, serie nouă, an. XV (2005), nr. 1, p. 151.

The actuality and importance of the partnership Family-Church-School

In view of the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity that defines today's world, Orthodox Christian religious education comes and proposes to all: „to know one's own identity, but also that of others of other faiths and beliefs, fostering social inclusion and helping to overcome prejudice and all forms of discrimination”³.

The great challenge for the ideal future of Romanian society and of our Orthodox Church lies, among other things, in the hands and responsibility with which an educator, a teacher, whether cleric or layman, or in fact a person qualified to exercise the mission of religious education, performs this duty. If he will show conscientiousness and devotion, he can heal⁴ and save the world and today's society.

The encyclical of the recent Pan-Orthodox Synod of Crete, in Article IV⁵, points out that education is on the pastoral agenda of the Church, with the Synod Fathers expressing their concerns and fears about the secularized and individualistic educational system that prevails today and challenges especially the younger generation. They also pointed out new trends in the formation and education systems.

Living in a world where migration is becoming a way of life for many, a wake-up call is sounded by education researchers, who agree that school failure used to be associated generally with social origin⁶, and nowadays it is often associated with parental migration. Thus all the conclusions of this research, whether sociological, psycho-pedagogical or religious in origin, express a causal effect⁷ of parental migration on children's educational attainment, especially if they are deprived of their mother's presence in the educational process. Statistics show that women in Romania migrate at a higher rate than men⁸, and because of this feminisation of migration the family has been seriously affected in various ways.

³ ***; *Apostolat educațional. Ora de religie – cunoaștere și devenire spirituală*, Editura Basilica, București, 2010, p. 25.

⁴ Dori Baker, Patrick B. Reyes (ed.), „Religious Educators are the Future”, in *Religious Education*, an. CXV (2020), nr. 1, p. 1.

⁵ Sorin Ionițe, „Enciclica SMS: Educația nu este doar cultivare intelectuală, ci și edificare spirituală”, <https://basilica.ro/enciclica-sms-educatia-nu-este-doar-cultivare-intelectuala-ci-si-edificare-spirituala/> (accessed on 7th of March 2023).

⁶ Horațiu Catalano, „Migration – a new cause of the learning difficulties in contemporary school”, in *Educația 21*, an. II (2008), nr. 6, p. 151.

⁷ Aniela Matei, Andra-Bertha Sănduleasa (ed.), „Effects of Parental Migration on Families and Children in Post-Communist Romania”, in *Revista de Științe Politice*, an. XI (2015), nr. 46, p. 197.

⁸ Wedad Andrada Quffa, „The effects of international migration on postdecembrist Romanian society”, in *Revista de Științe Politice*, an. X (2014), nr. 42, p. 248.

According to a survey, young people, including children, teenagers and young adults up to the age of 30, make up almost half of all migrants⁹ worldwide. Exactly the age segment of people that will represent the near future. Our Church is therefore working hard to educate both those who represent tomorrow's future and all her children. In the last period of time, certain years, which have been declared as anniversary years in the Romanian Orthodox Church, have as their theme religious education or education reflected through pastoralism: the year 2016 - the anniversary year of religious education of Orthodox Christian youth; the year 2020 - the anniversary year of pastoralism of parents and children and the year 2021 - the anniversary year of pastoralism of Romanians abroad. In these years all these themes have been accompanied, within the Romanian Patriarchate, by numerous debates, congresses, symposiums and conferences.

I also cannot fail to notice the direction in which the education of children and young people is being pursued today, under the pressure of certain minorities, who are trying through aggressive propaganda¹⁰ to impose their ethical concepts and ideologies foreign to the Romanian nation and law, including through legislation in Romania. Our family and our society needs, not sex education or health education or, as they may wish to disguise this name and the intentions behind it, but an education, as archdeacon prof. dr. Ioan I. Ică Jr. emphasised, for life, for the future of a society and a family based on the true values that only authentic religious education can provide.

I.2. The role and importance of Christian Orthodox education today

If religion is understood as a general phenomenon in the history of mankind, which did not come into being at one moment in history but simply at the creation of man, being the first act of divine revelation¹¹, then religious education can be defined as the earliest method of human social formation¹², religion having from the beginning an essential role in the crystallization of human culture and civilization¹³. I must specify that „religious belief is not an evolutionary acquisition but an original given. Religious

⁹ Ana Vila Freyer, Sümeýra Buran (ed.), „Editorial for the Special Issue on Migration, Education, and Youth”, in *Migration Letters*, an. XIX (2022), nr. 1, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰ Their ideologies are intensely supported both by political power and materially and financially by various NGOs both in our country and in highly developed capitalist countries.

¹¹ Pr. Ioan Bunea, „Valoarea educativă a Religiei”, in *Revista Teologică*, an. XXXIV (1944), nr. 9-10, p. 421.

¹² Felix Godeanu, *Educația inter/transreligioasă în școală*, Editura Lumen, Iași, 2015, p. 9.

¹³ Pr. Conf. Univ. Dr. Miron Erdei, „Educația și idealurile ei din trecut până azi”, in *Orizonturi Teologice*, an. VII (2006), nr. 1, pp. 61-67.

education is therefore also an original datum; it begins with man¹⁴, as Mircea Eliade also points out when he says that „to be, or rather to become man, is to be religious”¹⁵.

Orthodox Christian religious education is concerned with the whole person, regardless of age or social status, and the formation through this type of education is permanent and eternal¹⁶. It takes place throughout a person's life, even if ideally the period of childhood, pre-adolescence and adolescence are the most suitable, fruitful and most significant in beginning the process of acquiring religious values and formation¹⁷ through religious education. Even if the sowing and fruition of a religious education is possible at any age, it is of paramount importance that divine grace and the spiritual effort of those who receive education¹⁸ work together, a gradual effort according to each person's ability, just as we gradually fight against sins, beginning with the work of good deeds, so too must religious education begin, recalls St. John Chrysostom¹⁹.

I can confirm with all openness of heart, as one who has shared and strives to share continuously and unceasingly from the immense treasury of educational values of religious education, that religious education is a totality of actions aimed at achieving: „in a methodical and systematic way the moral-spiritual growth of the individual, through the implementation, in his life and activity, of moral-spiritual and religious values, with a view to the harmonious development of his being and life, for himself, for society and for the Church to which he belongs”²⁰.

His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel said extraordinarily that „the values offered by religious education are extremely necessary, especially in this period of secularization of Romanian society, since they represent for young people an essential spiritual landmark and an existential link between all the knowledge acquired through the study of other

¹⁴ Pr. Prof. Dr. Constantin Galeriu, „Ora de religie în trecut și astăzi”, in *Îndrumări metodologice și didactice pentru predarea Religiei în Școală*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă, București, 1990, p. 5.

¹⁵ Mircea Eliade, *Istoria credințelor și ideilor religioase*, Vol. I, Editura Științifică, București, 1991, p. 9.

¹⁶ Conf. Dr. Carmen-Maria Bolocan, „Rolul profesorului (preotului) de Religie în formarea caracterului moral-religios al elevilor”, in *Teologie și Viață*, serie nouă, an. XVIII (2008), nr. 1-6, p. 191.

¹⁷ Idem, *Principii didactice în Sfintele Evanghelii*, Editura Astra Museum, Sibiu, 2014, p. 13.

¹⁸ Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Sebastian Șebu, Prof. Monica Opreș, Prof. Dorin Opreș (ed.), *Metodica predării religiei*, Editura Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2000, p. 8.

¹⁹ Sf. Ioan Gură de Aur, apud Ioan Remus Răsvan, *Ideile pedagogice în viziunea Sfântului Ioan Hrisostom și relevanța lor astăzi*, Editura Techno Media, 2013, p. 79.

²⁰ Carmen Maria Bolocan, *Principii didactice în...*, pp. 32-33.

disciplines”²¹. Religious education therefore has a linking role²² between the other disciplines whose aim and finality is the knowledge of man and the surrounding world.

The importance of a sound education, which can only be of moral-religious origin, is also evident from the fact that the phenomenon of migration is caused, among other things, by desacralisation, by detachment from the sacred element, from holiness. People seek neo-pagan vitalism, which resides in the power of instincts and strong sensations, through the three dominant factors: money, power and pleasure. Paradoxically, however, financial wealth and affluence has not solved the deep problems of the alienated, and the non-material Romanian soul of the migrant or migrantess cannot acquire fulfilment through material goods.

I wonder what will be the outcome, at some point, as a consequence of this mass migration of the sons and daughters of our Church, on their future religious identity or on the unaltered preservation of the Orthodox Christian faith? It is now being observed that for many of our brothers and sisters of nation and faith, the price of material and financial gain comes at the price of a great value, namely the definitive loss of identity²³ of nation, language, culture and religious affiliation. This is precisely where one of the roles and purposes of religious education Christian Orthodox comes in, namely to materialize concretely and factually the truth that religious education is a keeper and a promoter over generations of the identity of Romanian language and culture and Christian Orthodox faith . Contrary to the fact that Christian Orthodox education is carried out, in the Romanian Orthodox diaspora, mainly within the family (in the happy case where the family is reunited, with all its members together) and within the space where Romanian Orthodox parishes carry out their public divine worship services, its existence is of real importance. I would like to remind you that this latter form of education is carried out mainly through the occasional catechesis held by the Church's ministers or through the various spiritual discussions after the Christian agape, which are a reality in many Romanian Orthodox communities abroad.

A heavy damage is done to the contemporary family by depriving it, because of migration, of the educational role of childcare²⁴, which parents must exercise with particular responsibility over their children, both in their educational and formative role as future members of our society and Church. According to the National Authority for

²¹ † PF Daniel, „Cuvânt înainte”, în *Apostolat educațional. Ora de religie – cunoaștere și devenire spirituală*, Editura Basilica, București, 2010, p. 7.

²² Ș. Reli, *Principii pedagogice noi pentru învățământul religios în liceu*, apud Carmen Maria Bolocan, *Principii didactice în...*, p. 14.

²³ Ana-Elena Costandache, „Diversity issues of Exile: between Identity and Migration”, in *Journal of Romanian Literary Studies*, an. VII (2017), nr. 10, p. 735.

²⁴ Aniela Matei, Andra-Bertha Sănduleasa (ed.), „Effects of Parental...”, p. 197.

Children's Rights and Adoption, more than 80,000 Romanian children²⁵ need psychological, social and educational support because their parents are working in different countries of the European Union and beyond. Therefore, religious education carried out in the family home has a defining and decisive character for the growth and formation of children and young people. As the people's conscience says, the seven years at home are essential, because during these years the child learns to pray, to go to church, to have a piety and an inclination towards the holy, to be decent and respectful towards everything around him. However, if parents do not take care to bring up their children in a manner pleasing to God and do not urge them towards the holy things, instilling in them a love and a disposition towards these values, or, worse still, if they are absent from these years of their young children's development, then the latter will, to a large extent, suffer great shortcomings in their development throughout their lives.

According to the thought of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), a great purpose of education is to plant morality in man²⁶, and another major purpose of education, also according to his thought, would be the triumph of virtue and the elevation from the state of animality to humanity²⁷. He explicitly suggests and indicates that the idea of the existence of God should be made real from an early age, in order to be able later on to concretize the necessity of a moral life²⁸, given that youth has a predisposition to drift towards all wickedness and thus has a need to be closely supervised, to benefit from a chosen guidance in its development²⁹. St. Basil the Great and Plutarch also complement this delicacy, fragility as well as importance of the age of youth, saying that youth is a soft and wet thing, and that teachings and stories penetrate the still delicate souls of children, but at the same time they warn that „what has hardened can hardly be moulded. Just as seals are impressed into soft wax, so teachings are impressed into the souls of those who are still children”³⁰.

²⁵ Alexandra Porumbescu, Livia Pogan (ed.), „Social Change, Migration and Work-Life Balance”, in *Revista de Științe Politice*, an. XIV (2018), nr. 60, p. 24.

²⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Tratat de pedagogie. Religia în limitele rațiunii*, Editura Agora, Iași, 1992, apud Constantin Cucoș, *Educația Religioasă. Conținut și forme de realizare*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1996, p. 50.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, apud G. Ephraim Lessing, *Educația omenirii*, trad. de Al. C. Străchinescu, Editura Noel, Iași, 2003, p. 11.

²⁸ Pr. Dr. Constantin Naclad, *Educația Religioasă în cadrul slujirii preoțești*, Editura Trinitas, Iași, 2007, p. 104.

²⁹ ***, *Cum să educăm ortodox copilul. 300 de sfaturi înțelepte pentru părinți de la sfinți și mari duhovnici*, trad. din lb. rusă de Adrian Tănăsescu-Vlas, Editura Sophia, București, 2011, p. 74.

³⁰ Sf. Vasile cel Mare, Plutarh (ed.), *Despre educarea copiilor*, Editura Sophia, București, 2013, p. 25.

II. Religion Class in Schools - necessity and blessing

After almost half a century of atheism, as a culmination of the sacrifice of hundreds of young people in the revolution of 1989, the school year 1990-1991 meant and marked at the same time the reappearance in the Romanian educational landscape of the subject of Religion³¹. For many, this period of its absence in Romanian schools meant „an eternity”³², because the deprivation of the presence of religious education, achieved through the Religion class, felt like an „operation to cripple the soul”³³.

However, in recent years, we have witnessed an avalanche of different associations and NGOs, which systematically want to induce in our minds, feelings and habits, through the media and TV, through all kinds of opinion polls, the fact that Religion is not meant to be among the educational subjects in Romanian education. Contrary to the decision no. 669 of 12 November 2014 of the Constitutional Court of Romania, which makes the participation of students in religion classes conditional on a written request³⁴, under the pretext of exercising freedom of conscience and religious beliefs³⁵ (cf. art. 29, para. 1 of the Romanian Constitution³⁶), the extraordinary reaction and affirmative response³⁷ of the overwhelming majority, both of parents and of young adults, eloquently showed the importance of religion in the life of the Romanian Orthodox Christian people and the fact that the religion class is not just another subject within the paideutic act of the Romanian educational system, whose status and presence in the school system should be „periodically subject to arbitrary decisions”³⁸ made and promulgated by the political factor, following pressure from minorities and without prior public and honest debate. I would also add that at the moment, when I am writing this

³¹ ***, *Apostolat educațional...*, p. 39.

³² Prof. Maria Panaite, „Predarea Religiei-mijloc de modelare morală a tineretului”, in *Glasul Adevărului*, an. XVII (2006), nr. 143, p. 109.

³³ Pr. Prof. Dr. Constantin Galeriu, „Ora de religie în trecut și astăzi”, apud Pr. Drd. Ioan Chirvasă, „Principii fundamentale și mijloace de învățământ folosite în educația religioasă”, in *Teologie și Viață*, serie nouă, an. IX (1999), nr. 7-12, p. 37.

³⁴ In accordance with Order No. 5232/2015, Chapter II, Art. 3, of 14 September 2015, issued by the Ministry of Education.

³⁵ Biroul de presă al Patriarhiei Române, „Imens credit moral pentru a investi mai mult în educația religioasă”, in *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei*, serie nouă, an. VIII (2015), nr. 3-4, p. 17.

³⁶ Constituția României, <https://www.constitutiaromaniei.ro/art-29-libertatea-constiintei/> (accessed on 19th of April 2023).

³⁷ More than 90% of pupils opted to enrol for Religion, despite the extremely short enrolment period (about three weeks) and all the extra effort for schools and not least all the humiliating difficulties for parents.

³⁸ ***, *Apostolat educațional...*, p. 32.

study, have been for debate in the Romanian Senate³⁹, which is a decision-making body, a package of Education Laws, which also concern the subject of Religion under the following aspect: Religion to be an optional subject in the Bacalaureate for students in the humanities⁴⁰. Following these debates, the President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis, signed the decrees for the Law on pre-university education and the Law on higher education⁴¹, which regulate and fix Religion as a subject that can be chosen for the Bacalaureate exam.

Looking over the realities of the educational systems of different countries in the world today, we found that religious education is a permanent presence in more than 40 European countries, naturally organized through different models⁴², existing in the school curriculum and having between one and up to three hours per week⁴³ dedicated to its study. The presence of religion in the curricula of the European Union countries⁴⁴ is a reality, a tradition⁴⁵ even, due to the fact that religion is an original and universal fact⁴⁶, existing at all times, in all places and among all peoples⁴⁷.

³⁹ Redacția EduPedu.ro, „Proiectele legilor Educației au ajuns la Senat, după ce au fost adoptate în plenul Camerei Deputaților. Amendamentele vor fi depuse până pe 14 mai”, <https://www.edupedu.ro/proiectele-legilor-educatiei-au-ajuns-la-senat-dupa-ce-au-fost-adoptate-in-plenul-camerei-deputatilor-amendamentele-vor-fi-depuse-pana-pe-14-mai/> (accessed on 19th of April 2023).

⁴⁰ Diac. Iulian Dumitrașcu, „Religia a fost aprobată ca disciplină opțională la Bacalaureat pentru elevii de la profilul umanist”, <https://basilica.ro/religia-a-fost-aprobata-ca-disciplina-optionala-la-bacalaureat-pentru-elevii-de-la-profilul-umanist/> (accessed on 22th o April 2023).

⁴¹ Alexandru Boboc, „Președintele României a semnat decretul pentru Legea educației: Religia este disciplină la alegere pentru Bacalaureat”, <https://basilica.ro/presedintele-romaniei-a-semnat-decretul-pentru-legea-educatiei-religia-este-disciplina-la-alegere-pentru-bacalaureat/> (accessed on 3rd of July 2023).

⁴² Emanuel Tăvală, „On the juridical Aspects of religious Education in the public Schools of Europe with a Case-Study of Romania”, in *Romanian Journal of Comparative Law*, an. II (2012), nr. 1, p. 80.

⁴³ Vasile Crețu, „L'education religieuse en Roumanie. Les défis du croire pour les jeunes d'aujourd'hui”, in *Altarul Reîntregirii*, an. XXI (2016), nr. 3, p. 88.

⁴⁴ Pr. Sorin Șelaru, George Vălcu (ed.), „Studiul Religiei în școlile publice din statele membre ale Uniunii Europene”, in *Studii Teologice*, seria a III-a, an. VIII (2012), nr. 1, pp. 229-232.

⁴⁵ Pr. Lect. Univ. Dr. Dorin-Corneliu Opreș, Prof. Dr. Olivia-Monica Opreș (ed.), „Spre o educație religioasă ancorată la realitățile începutului de mileniu III”, in *Altarul Reîntregirii*, an. XIII (2008), nr. 2, p. 186.

⁴⁶ Stelian Gomboș, „Problema existenței orei de Religie – o abordare teologică și apologetică”, in *Orizonturi Teologice*, an. VIII (2007), nr. 1, p. 97.

⁴⁷ Its existence takes the form of various denominations, which basically pursue the same goal, that of building up the inner man, the man with a mind and personality formed for the

The existence of religion classes in educational establishments helps to strengthen the link between school and Church, as these two institutions have been going „hand in hand for hundreds of years”⁴⁸ in the formation and intellectual and spiritual development of children and young people. But at the same time I would point out that the relationship between religious education and Church and School is regulated and established by a number of international human rights laws⁴⁹, with the Church acting, inter alia, in accordance with the provisions of Art. 26, para. 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, according to which: „parents have the right of priority in the choice of the manner of education given to their children”⁵⁰. Even before the existence of these international legislative norms, the United Nations as well as the Council of Europe legislated that there were: „references to justice, honour, humanity, which are common to all the world's religions”⁵¹. At the same time, the right of children to religion or spirituality is specifically provided for in the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child, published in 1924, which legislates this right in a much more concise form than is specified in the United Nations regulations of 1989⁵².

The realization or realization of the educational ideal proposed by the Education Law⁵³ is possible only through the formation of the personality of all its subjects in accordance with the values of the Christian teaching brought by the Saviour Jesus Christ, contrary to the fact that religious education has its limits, determined by the weekly hour in which it is carried out in schools or, in another context, by the speed of the passage of time in the present and cannot, as Fr. Dumitru Călugăr, „in concrete terms the high ideal

Kingdom of Heaven. Thus we have the following titles: Religion (Finland, Italy and Spain); Religious and Moral Education (Luxembourg); Religious Education (Austria, Denmark, Germany, Greece and Ireland); Moral and Religious Education (England); Moral and Religious Education (Portugal); Christianity, Religion and Ethics (Norway); Religion or Ethics (Belgium); Religious Ideological Movements (Netherlands) etc. See more about the methodology and history of Religious Education in these and other countries in Pr. Sorin Șelaru, George Vălcu (ed.), „Studiul Religiei în...”, pp. 234-251.

⁴⁸ † Andrei Andreicuț, „Copii și tinerii bine educați devin cu vârsta tot mai înțelepți”, in *Tabor*, an. X (2016), nr. 1, p. 8.

⁴⁹ Irina Horga, „Organizarea Educației Religioase în Școlile publice: cadrul legal”, in Dorin Opreș, Monica Opreș (coord.), *Religia și Școala. Cercetări pedagogice, studii, analize*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 2011, p. 35.

⁵⁰ † PF Daniel, „Cuvânt...”, p. 6.

⁵¹ Răzvan-Florin Ciule, *Cateheza copiilor și implicarea tinerilor în Biserică prin metode active*, Editura Techno Media, Sibiu, 2013, p. 69.

⁵² Friedrich Schweitzer, „Religion and Education: A Public Issue and its Relationship to the Religions and Religious Traditions”, in *Religious Education*, an. CVIII (2013), nr. 3, p. 250.

⁵³ *Legea învățământului nr. 84/1995*, as amended and supplemented.

of Christianity, moral perfection”⁵⁴, but through it „moral-religious characters can be formed”⁵⁵.

Religious education has the gift of forming and raising beings who open themselves harmoniously and generously with love and compassion towards those around them⁵⁶. This is why, for example, religious education Orthodox Christian, which is embodied in the religion class, has as its main objective, in addition to its educational role of teaching and training, the acquisition and application of Christian values, received in the class, in daily life. This is where the special responsibility of the religion teacher, the priest or the person carrying out the religious education process comes in, as it is their duty to help children, pupils or adults to live the values they have received in practice⁵⁷.

III. The partnership Family-Church-School – opportunities and perspectives

Religious education is, or should be, a major objective⁵⁸ of today's Romanian society, through its many institutions but also of each individual. I say this because religious education is the highest and greatest peak in the process of shaping and crystallizing the character and personality of children and young people. Any society that seeks spiritual and spiritual progress and the material well-being⁵⁹ of the country and its citizens should have, as a fundamental and top priority, the achievement of a chosen religious education for them.

In this context, I would like to point out that education has always been closely linked to religion, as can be seen both in ancient times, in the East, where schools operated largely alongside temples, and in the West, where monasteries were centres of culture alongside which schools operated, both for clergy and laity⁶⁰. Religion has therefore been, since ancient times, a „factor of social or cultural perpetuation and continuity”⁶¹.

Looking back over the hundreds of years that have passed, we will realistically realize that the first schools, the first textbooks, the first teachers are the fruit of the efforts and efforts of our ancient Church. We will also note that not gratuitously and

⁵⁴ Dumitru Călugăr, „Educația religioasă în școala primară”, in *Îndrumări metodologice și...*, p. 43.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁶ Prof. Silvia Popescu, *Formarea duhovnicească în contextul școlii generale*, Măldărești-Vâlcea, 2004, p. 23.

⁵⁷ Răzvan-Florin Ciule, *Cateheza copiilor și...*, p. 71.

⁵⁸ G. Ephraim Lessing, *Educația...*, p. 8.

⁵⁹ † PF Daniel, „Cooperare benefică între Familie, Școală și Biserică în domeniul educației”, in *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei*, an.VIII (2015), nr. 3-4, p. 19.

⁶⁰ Carmen Maria Bolocan, *Principii didactice în...*, p. 304.

⁶¹ Constantin Cucos, *Educația religioasă. Repere teoretice și metodice*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 1999, p. 14.

unjustifiably, but fully justified, has been perpetuated over the centuries the awareness that the Romanian School is the daughter of the ancestral Church⁶², which the incomparable and peerless Mihai Eminescu called: „Mother of our Nation”. From the beginning of its existence, the Orthodox Church of our Romanian nation has been the place where, sublimely and mysteriously, the teaching of religion was intertwined and merged with the liturgy, and the abecedary⁶³ was often replaced by the icon. That is why when we talk about the existence of Romanian religious education we must, as Prof. Ioan Chirilă reminded us, dive deep into history and notice that the very fundamental structure of this education is one: „with obvious religious underpinnings”⁶⁴, but also the fact that Orthodox religious education in our Romanian nation was not an auxiliary activity⁶⁵ of the Church, since for many centuries Romanian culture was consumed and developed in monasteries or near churches, the first schools functioning practically, as we have shown above, within monasteries and churches.

I mention that religious education and its aims cannot be subject to questions and interpretations that would include the notion of monopoly⁶⁶, both on the part of clerics, laymen and lay institutions, but the sound understanding is that religious education is a matter of collaboration, of joint and mutual assistance on the part of all the factors that are involved in achieving and completing its aims. Religious education, understood in this way, becomes an „apotheosis of collaboration, of the joining of skills”⁶⁷. It should be clearly emphasized that religious education should not remain a private matter that concerns each individual, since: „it requires a resolution of the community and the institutions that serve it”⁶⁸. This is why it is necessary, especially in the context of the present times, to make the most of the educational potential of religious and moral origin⁶⁹ of the small church, which is the family, by enhancing and increasing it within the other educational values promoted and supported by the school. The family, on the

⁶² Prof. Maria Panaite, „Predarea Religiei – mijloc...”, p. 109.

⁶³ Pr. Dr. Constantin Naclad, *Educația Religioasă în...*, p. 105.

⁶⁴ Pr. Conf. Dr. Ioan Chirilă, „Misiunea prin activitatea didactică religioasă”, in *Studii Teologice*, seria a III-a, an. I (2005), nr. 3, p. 169.

⁶⁵ Pr. Dr. Constantin Naclad, „Importanța Religiei Creștin-Ortodoxe în educarea tineretului”, in *Teologie și Viață*, serie nouă, an. XV (2005), nr. 7-12, p. 97.

⁶⁶ Carmen Maria Bolocan, *Principii didactice în...*, p. 304.

⁶⁷ Constantin Cucos, *Educația religioasă. Repere...*, p.16.

⁶⁸ Idem, *Educația Religioasă. Conținut...*, p. 107.

⁶⁹ Dorin Opriș, „Familia și paradigma educației moderne”, in *Simpozionul Teologic Internațional „Familie, Filantropie și Etică Socială. Parteneriatul Stat-Biserică în Asistența Socială”*, Ediția a X-a: 6-8 mai 2011, Vol. I (supliment al revistei *Altarul Reîntregirii*), Editura Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2011, p. 532.

other hand, has a well-defined role in religious and moral education, its contribution being complementary⁷⁰.

An addition of great importance for the future of our Romanian people came when religion was introduced into the framework plans of primary, secondary and high school education, religious education being an integral part of school education, becoming a branch of it⁷¹. At the same time a minus, which would make everything ideal, everything whole in this process, is the absence of religious education from the pre-school cycle of state public kindergartens. However, religious education is occasionally provided in these kindergartens, either through bilateral projects⁷² between kindergartens and parishes or through the voluntary work of priests and theological students (the latter often in practice) and not least through the voluntary initiative of educators, in response to their great responsibility of conscience. Another minus that I note would be that between the educational factors Family, Church and School, due to the globalization of the post-modern era in which we live, there is not an organic and functional link extremely strongly closed. The organic and functional correlation was the determining element between these institutions. Now secularism, desacralisation, disunity and religious confusion mean removing the Church and all moral and religious norms from social life.

Another positive aspect is the fact that over the years, countless educational programs and School-Church partnerships have been developed and implemented with the aim of „improving the act of paideutic”⁷³. As a complement and completion of the Religion class, the Romanian Patriarchate, through the implementation of these projects, has as an incentive and final goal nothing else than, as patriarch Daniel emphasized, to cultivate the connection of children and young people with: „a living community, prayerful, witnessing and in solidarity with people in need”⁷⁴. To this end, the Romanian Patriarchate, through the sectors and departments responsible, has implemented, in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education and the World Vision Romania Foundation⁷⁵, certain projects and educational programs, among which I mention:

⁷⁰ Gavril Trifa, „Familia și valorile moral-religioase în postmodernitate”, in *Altarul Reîntregirii*, an. XXV (2020), nr. 3, p. 86.

⁷¹ Carmen Maria Bolocan, *Principii didactice în...*, p. 304.

⁷² Pr. Dr. Cosmin Santi, Dr. Elena-Ancuța Santi (ed.), *Elemente de Educație Religioasă în Grădiniță*, Editura Basilica, București, 2014, p. 143.

⁷³ Pr. Petre Semen, „Biserica, școala și familia- factori determinanți în educarea tinerei generații”, in *Ortodoxia*, seria a II-a, an. III (2011), nr. 4, p. 33.

⁷⁴ † PF Daniel, „Cuvânt rostit cu ocazia proclamării anului 2016 drept «Anul omagial al educației religioase a tineretului creștin ortodox și Anul comemorativ al Sfântului Ierarh Martir Antim Ivireanul și al tipografilor bisericești»”, in *Telegraful Român*, an. CLXIV (2016), nr. 1-4, p. 1.

⁷⁵ Idem, „Misiunea Bisericii în educația religioasă-morală a copiilor și a tinerilor”, in *Ziarul Lumina*, an. IX (2013), nr. 216, miercuri, 18 septembrie, p. 1.

Hristos împărtășit copiilor; Alege școala!; Copilul învață iubirea milostivă a lui Hristos and more recently the project *Calea mântuirii(The Way)*. The latter project is aimed particularly at adults.

Among all these projects listed above, I will mention more explicitly, here, in this study, the catechetical project „Christ shared with children”, recognized in other countries under the name of „Youth Bible Curriculum”⁷⁶ and which is a catechetical project and catechesis at the same time that is addressed primarily to over 4 million Romanian children in the country and throughout the Romanian Orthodox diaspora. Its emergence within the Romanian Patriarchate was due in significant proportion to the fact that the Romanian Orthodox Church lacked a biblical catechesis programme. Biblical catechesis was often limited to occasional sermons by the priest at the end of church services, without being the subject of a thorough study⁷⁷ and carried out in a setting separate from that of public divine worship, except in some parishes and in rare cases. With the implementation of this catechetical project, the most extensive and conscientious catechetical program of the Romanian Patriarchate since 1989 begins, starting at the same time the fruitful and fruitful collaboration between the World Vision Romania Foundation and the Romanian Patriarchate. Through this project, the implementation team has put together a set of tools and means⁷⁸ that are absolutely necessary for the catechization process.

Religious education in the framework of this Family-Church-School partnership has as its goal and aims, as explicitly stated in Article IV of the Encyclical of the Pan-Orthodox Synod of Crete, not only a certain intellectual cultivation, but above all „the edification and development of the whole human person as a psychosomatic and spiritual being, in accordance with the interrelated principle: God, man, world”⁷⁹.

⁷⁶ Pr. Floricel Daina, „Proiectul «Hristos împărtășit copiilor» - binecuvântare și lumină”, in *Legea Românească*, an. XX (2009), nr. 4, p. 72.

⁷⁷ Pr. Drd. Sorin Lungoci, „Proiectul catehetic «Hristos împărtășit copiilor» în legislația bisericească”, în *Altarul Banatului*, serie nouă, an. XXIII (2013), nr. 7-9, p. 142.

⁷⁸ See for example: *Hristos împărtășit copiilor, Ghid catehetic pentru parohii, partea a I-a (9-10 ani)-Viața noastră cu Dumnezeu*, Editura Basilica, București, 2009; *Hristos împărtășit copiilor, Ghid catehetic pentru parohii, partea a II-a (9-10 ani)- Viața noastră cu Dumnezeu*, Editura Basilica, București, 2010; *Hristos împărtășit copiilor, Ghid catehetic pentru profesori, partea a I-a (11-12 ani)- Cu noi este Dumnezeu*, Editura Basilica, București, 2010; *Hristos împărtășit copiilor, Ghid catehetic pentru profesori, partea a II-a (11-12 ani) - Cu noi este Dumnezeu*, Editura Basilica, București, 2010 etc.

⁷⁹ Sorin Ionițe, „Enciclica SMS: Educația...”.

IV. Migration - a major challenge for Society, Family and Church

In this globalized age⁸⁰, we are contemporaries of a huge phenomenon that has been taking place since the most remote times⁸¹, that of migration⁸², materialized throughout history by transhumance, invasions, crusades, colonizations or other reasons⁸³, but which nowadays seems unprecedented in history, spreading with great speed throughout the world. The existence of globalisation and various events on the international scene⁸⁴ have led to a sharp increase in migration flows in recent times. Globalisation is fostering this phenomenon of migration, which in the past was considered an exception, even an anomaly, in relation to the condition of sedentary human communities⁸⁵. Today, all the countries of the world are active or passive participants in this migration phenomenon, under the heading of country of origin, transit country or destination country⁸⁶.

Migration is an integral part of a process that affects a significant⁸⁷ part of the world's population today. I would venture to say that today's migration is one of the starkest realities for humanity today and has untold complex implications for economic, social, cultural and educational processes⁸⁸. The changes are visible⁸⁹ in economic,

⁸⁰Aurelian-Petruș Plopeanu, Daniel Homocianu (ed.), „A Romanian University Students' Profile regarding their Migration Intentions. A Cross-Sectional Study based on Questionnaire Survey”, in *Revista Românească pentru Educație Multidimensională*, an. IX (2017), nr. 3, p. 61.

⁸¹Hristea G. Karaiannis, „Biblical perceptions about diversity and identity in a world of migration”, in *Icoana Credinței. International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research*, an. V (2019), nr. 9, p. 6.

⁸²Mircea Agabrian, *Sociologie generală*, Editura Institutul European, Iași, 2003, p. 274, states that migration can be defined under two distinct aspects: „immigration, which refers to the number of people who enter the country in a fixed period of time, and emigration, which refers to the number of people who move outside the borders of a country, permanently or temporarily, in a given time. These elements, combined, produce migration in its full meaning, which is the gain or loss of population in a country due to migration. Net migration equals immigration minus emigration”.

⁸³Simona Macarie, Cristian Bențe (ed.), „Fenomenul migrației externe și efectul acestuia asupra Familiei”, in *Societate și politică*, an. II (2008), nr. 1, p. 129.

⁸⁴Alina Ardeleanu, „Migrația internațională în contextul fenomenului de globalizare”, in *Revista de Științe Militare*, an. XIX (2019), nr. 57, p. 141.

⁸⁵Alexandra Deaconu, „International Migration in the Current context”, in *Revista Universitară de Sociologie*, an. XII (2016), nr. 1, p. 57.

⁸⁶Adelin-Ion Mazăre, „Manifestări ale fenomenului migraționist în contextul fenomenului de globalizare”, in *Studii de securitate publică*, an. III (2014), nr. 3, p. 160.

⁸⁷Levente Dimén, András Horváth (ed.), „Root causes of Migration in the 21th century”, in *Pangeea*, an. XVIII (2018), nr. 18, p. 14.

⁸⁸Laura Nicoleta Popa, „Effects of Parents' circular Migration on Students' school achievement: explanatory variables”, in *Educația Plus*, an. VIII (2012), nr. 1, p. 124.

political, social, cultural and educational life, both from the perspective of those who migrate and those who receive migrants. In an ever-changing globalising world, migrants have a strong impact on all institutions and agencies dealing with migration issues, constantly updating and modifying the economic, political and social agendas⁹⁰ of the countries, which lose them as citizens permanently or for a period of time, or receive them into their territory.

So we are living in a true age of migration⁹¹, in which migration is nowadays a particularly topical issue and a major concern of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁹², with more than half of the agenda's goals directly related to the phenomenon of migration today, and the global involvement of researchers and policy makers is also now making a big contribution to the topic of migration. Migration is a global issue that has attracted the interest of⁹³ almost every country in the world.

With the fall of the communist regime and as a result of the previous desire to emigrate, many citizens of Central and Eastern Europe⁹⁴, including the citizens of our country, determined also by the existence of economic and social tensions in their countries, as well as by the reasoning that there is no bright economic prospect in the motherland in the near future, chose to take the path of emigration to countries more developed in all respects.

As we have seen, the phenomenon of migration has appeared, in one form or another, during the passage of time in all countries of the world, but in the post-revolutionary period of our country, the migration phenomenon has reached alarming levels, deeply influencing Romanian society today, with millions of Romanian citizens⁹⁵ experiencing this phenomenon. I would also add that with the liberalization of the visa

⁸⁹ Laurențiu Georgescu, „Migration and the Role of Intercultural Education”, în *Review of General Management*, an. X (2015), nr. 2, p. 105.

⁹⁰ Georgiana Florentina Tataru, „Migration – an Overview on Terminology, Causes and Effects”, in *Logos Universality Mentality Education Novelty: Law*, an. VII (2019), nr. 2, p. 11.

⁹¹ Mona Simu, „Migration Reflected in Romanian Newspapers – Highlights on the Refugee Crisis. Preliminary Research on Two National Daily Newspapers: Jurnalul National and Libertatea (March-August 2016)”, in *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov, Series VII: Social Sciences and Law*, an. X (2017), nr. 1 - Supliment, p. 42.

⁹² Tatiana-Camelia Dogaru, „Migration in Statistics indexes' terms. Romania Study Case”, in *Journal of Public Administration Finance and Law*, an. X (2021), nr. 19, p. 19.

⁹³ Adrian Boldișor, „Religious Implications of the Migration Phenomenon. An Orthodox Perspective”, in *Revista de Științe Politice*, an. XI (2015), nr. 46, p. 216.

⁹⁴ Viorica Chirilă, Viorel Chirilă (ed.), „The Analysis of Romania's External Migration and of the Causality between Remittances and Romania's Economic Growth”, in *Amfiteatru Economic*, an. XIX (2017), nr. 46, p. 697.

⁹⁵ Remus Gabriel Anghel, István Horváth (coord.), *Sociologia Migrației. Teorii și studii de caz românești*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2009, p. 14.

regime for the Schengen Area we are facing an explosion⁹⁶ of emigration of the sons of our homeland, being dismaying how every year thousands and tens of thousands leave their ancestral land, eager and determined not to return.

In the context of current migration and under the effects of globalism, the expressions „permanent” and „temporary”⁹⁷ risk being confused, being imprecise, since Romanian citizens and not only can change their country of residence whenever their professional or material needs require it. The time to return to the mother country, in the context of the desire to gather as much as possible and to fulfil one's dreams, loses its coordinates⁹⁸, extending itself into an eternal and unpredictable tomorrow. This is also shown by the specialized studies and monitoring of Romanian emigrants over the last 15 years, during which time their temporary migration has gradually turned into a permanent⁹⁹ and circular migration. Also according to the studies we see that the majority of Romanian migrants are young, generally under 35¹⁰⁰, they are more flexible¹⁰¹ than older people, especially in circular migration.

Worryingly, beyond the scale of this phenomenon, a large proportion of all this migration is parents whose children have remained in their country of origin¹⁰². In my short experience as a minister of the Holy Church, I have realised, through discussions with young people affected by migration, how difficult it is for those who leave or those who stay at home and take care of their little ones. Beyond this burden of substituting the role of the other, there is mistrust of the partner, which often leads to endless arguments, jealousy and ends in cohabitation and divorce. Research by institutions accredited to monitor this phenomenon has also revealed psychological¹⁰³ and emotional disorders in

⁹⁶ This phenomenon of migration, as we will see in the end of this study, has also provoked the reaction of the Romanian Patriarchate regarding the regulation and organization of the Romanian Orthodox diaspora, which has developed greatly in the last twenty years.

⁹⁷ Răzvan Brudiu, Alexandru Ciucurescu (ed.), „Diaspora ortodoxă: analiză, nuanțare și redefinire”, in *Altarul Reîntregirii*, an. XXVI (2021), nr. 3, p. 142.

⁹⁸ Ana-Elena Costandache, „Diversity issues of...”, p. 735.

⁹⁹ Victor Bogdan Oprean, „Migration costs in asymmetric environments and education outsourcing. The case of Romania”, in *Analele Științifice ale Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași. Științe economice*, an. LXI (2014), nr. 1, p. 83.

¹⁰⁰ Jarosław Domalewski, „Migration as an Element of Young People's Life Strategies”, in *Sociologie Românească*, an. XV (2017), nr. 1-2, p. 41.

¹⁰¹ Roxana Florina Munteanu, Andreea Moraru(ed.), „Romania - Metamorphosis of a developing country and the long-term Impact of Migration”, in *CES Working Papers*, an. VI (2014), nr. 4, p. 72.

¹⁰² Emanuela Apostol, „The Migration Exodus - The Context of the Family Destructuration and the Psycho-Educational Destabilization of the Child”, in *Journal of Romanian Literary Studies*, an. VIII (2018), nr. 14, p. 481.

¹⁰³ Raluca Tomșa, „Psychological Effects of Separation through temporary labor Migration upon the members of the Family”, in *Societate și politică*, an. III (2009), nr. 2, p. 49.

those who remain at home, respectively husband/wife or children, the abandonment of the elderly, the increase in the number of elderly people living in rural areas and, in the not too distant future, the disappearance of certain rural communities.

IV.1. The Church's involvement and loving care for her alienated children

The Romanian Orthodox Church, as a loving spiritual mother of her sons and daughters who have been alienated¹⁰⁴ abroad, takes a special care of them, constantly watching over their faith and identity, fighting with tenacity full of spirit in order to preserve all that is the identity of the Romanian Orthodox Christian soul¹⁰⁵.

A first beneficial measure taken by the Romanian Patriarchate was the establishment of numerous parishes and eparchies in the Romanian Orthodox diaspora¹⁰⁶, eparchies which in turn established various departments, centres and associations, all with the aim of providing for the needs of the soul and body of its spiritual sons and daughters outside Romania, as well as of the relatives of those left at home, in the motherland, in the context in which the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in a fairly recent report¹⁰⁷ considered the Romanian diaspora among the most numerous, placing it in fifth position in an international hierarchy.

Our Holy Orthodox Church, in the Romanian Orthodox Diaspora, makes a special contribution to solving many of the problems that come with the phenomenon of migration, through its services, especially through the Holy and Divine Liturgy, often accompanied by agape that recall the early period of Christians and the Church, spiritually edifying the hearts of hundreds of thousands of Romanians, cultivating in their hearts and being the feeling of unity in Christ and perpetuating the ancestral Romanian language over generations, comforting and consoling every Romanian soul often burdened by the weight of foreignness and deprivation of the presence and love of loved ones at home.

¹⁰⁴†Ep. Ignatie Trif, *Maladia ideologiei și terapia Adevărului*, Editura Horeb, Huși, 2020, p. 36.

¹⁰⁵ Cristian Vlad Irimia, „Evaluarea fenomenului migrației - Soluții pastorale și sociale ale Bisericii Ortodoxe Române”, in *Diplomacy & Intelligence*, an. III (2015), nr. 6, p. 75.

¹⁰⁶ Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Aurel Pavel, „Activitatea misionară din diaspora ortodoxă românească în anul 2021-prezentare generală și studiu de caz - (I)”, in *Mitropolia Ardealului*, serie nouă, an. I (2021), nr. 2, p. 64.

¹⁰⁷ Gheorghe Anghel, „OCDE: Diaspora românească este a cincea cea mai mare din lume”, <https://basilica.ro/ocde-diaspora-romaneasca-este-a-cincea-cea-mai-mare-din-lume/> (accessed on 9th of March 2023).

Conclusions

The three institutions: the Family, the Church and the School have the obligation to educate and train children and young people, especially in the special context of the growing phenomenon of migration. If the three combine their efforts, the results can be ideal, despite the harmful influence of today's society and all the negative effects that come with migration.

It is of real importance that at a young age, the educational and training efforts of parents exerted on children are accompanied and complemented by those of educators¹⁰⁸. Parents are the first to sow the seed of education in the fragile and soft soil of children's souls, then educators or teachers further nourish this seed with the sap of virtue and the Church¹⁰⁹ perfects this joint educational-religious cultivation towards the full spiritual foundation of the one being educated, until he reaches the state of the perfect man (*Eph* 4:13), the measure of completeness in Christ. This is why the family, the school and the Church must „work together effectively in the spiritual and intellectual formation of the younger generation”¹¹⁰, this being the greatest responsibility but also the most valuable investment in time, in order to achieve a strong future fully anchored in the eternal values of the ancient faith for each of the sons and daughters of the Romanian nation.

The implications of this phenomenon of migration, past and present, on the family are multiple and major and it is imperative that they be debated and resolved especially from the perspective of moral and theological thinking of all those who are part of the „battlefield” of the Romanian Orthodox Church and here I refer to both hierarchs, priests, etc. as well as theologians and not only, of our Christian Orthodox nation. I don't think I am wrong in saying that the existence of some saving solutions can be found deep in the hearts of migrants and in the experience of parents who are forced for one reason or another to choose the path of migration abroad.

In concluding the conclusions of this study, I wonder what will be the transformations in the future, in terms of the state-religion relationship¹¹¹, respectively religious identity, in today's Europe, which, due to increased migration, is subject to a conglomerate of different nationalities and religions?

¹⁰⁸ Pr. Prof. Dr. Ioan C. Teșu, *Familia contemporană între ideal și criză*, Editura Doxologia, Iași, 2011, p. 209.

¹⁰⁹ Dumitru Radu, *Idealul educației creștine, apud* Carmen Maria Bolocan, *Principii didactice în...*, p. 297, points out that in this whole educational-religious work, parents have the duty to guide their children towards a higher way of life, teachers to cultivate in the souls of their disciples virtues worthy of their efforts, and the Church has the mission and duty to perfect her spiritual sons.

¹¹⁰ Biroul de presă al Patriarhiei Române, „Imens credit moral...”, p. 17.

¹¹¹ Tuğba Gürçel Akdemir, „Different theoretical perspectives to Secularization and the Impact of Migration on future religiosity of Europe”, in *Alternatif Politika*, an. XIV (2022), nr. 2, p. 265.