

ECCLESIOLOGY OF IOANNIS ZIZIOULAS THROUGH THE PRISM OF “LITURGICAL” AND “THERAPEUTIC” ECCLESIOLOGY

Antun Japundžić

Catholic Faculty of Theology
in Đakovo, J. J. Strossmayer
University of Osijek
antun.japundzic@gmail.com

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Abstract

Contemporary Eastern Orthodox theologian, Ioannis Zizioulas, is certainly one of the most prominent theologians of the modern times considering his great work as well as the depth of his thought. Although his work explores a spectrum of theological ideas, this paper brings his ecclesiology into light from a point of view of “liturgical” and “therapeutic” ecclesiology, which Zizioulas recognizes within the eastern tradition as two types of ecclesiology that are intertwined and therefore cannot be separated one from the other. Thus, this paper examines Zizioulas’ work in the context of the contemporary Greek Orthodox theology and puts forward his interest and view on ecclesiology with an aim to illustrate the “liturgical” and “therapeutic” dimension of ecclesiology that is present in his work and thought which are based fairly on patristic theology. Along these lines, this paper presents his ecclesiological concept right through the prism of “liturgical” and “therapeutic” ecclesiology.

Key words: Zizioulas, Eucharist, Orthodox ecclesiology, Greek Orthodox theology

INTRODUCTION

As theological universities of Tsalonikki and Athens prosper, we can witness the advancement of theology spreading from various theologians coming from these universities, whose philosophical and theological thought will be the foundation of the Greek Orthodox theology. There were many theologians of the modern era that made a significant contribution to Greek Orthodox theology. Let us mention only few such as Christos Andrutsos (1865 – 1935), and the more contemporary theologians like Ioannis Karmiris (1903 – 1992),

Nikos Nissiotis (1925 – 1986), Ioannis Zizioulas (1931 –), and others. The last of the four mentioned, however, by no means the least significant and influential, will be the subject of research in this paper.

The prominent Orthodox theologian, Ioannis Zizioulas, known as one of the most cited orthodox theologians of the western theological thought and one of the most influential contemporary theologians, undoubtedly has a wide spectrum of interests within his philosophical and theological research. We have his opus and the broad range of philosophical and theological topics that he examines as evidence. Although he is not the only Greek Orthodox theologian who examines ecclesiological topics, still, he brings novelty into the field of Orthodox theology and ecclesiology. As follows, within a spectrum of topics he analysed, we will focus on his ecclesiological thought and analyse as well as present specific elements of his ecclesiology.

1. ZIZIOULAS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CONTEMPORARY GREEK THEOLOGY

Taking into account the entire history of the Orthodox theology, we might consider the 20th century as a unique period of the modern Orthodox theology. It is Zizioulas who tries to portray the situation of the Orthodox theology today in his work *Orthodoxy*.¹ In this work, he focuses on three different topics concerning Orthodoxy: its canonical structure,² its course of theological development³ and its relation with the unorthodox.⁴ We should be aware of the fact that Zizioulas offers his own vision of the Orthodox theology in the future presenting a certain perspective and place that, according to him, Orthodoxy⁵ has.

Ecclesiology certainly is one of the last theological branches that appeared in Orthodoxy.⁶ Hence, the Orthodox theologians stress the notion of the Church sacrament as primarily a lived

¹ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Православље*, Хиландарски фонд при Богословном факултету СПЦ, Београд, 2003.

² Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Православље*, 20-33.

³ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Православље*, 33-47.

⁴ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Православље*, 47-69.

⁵ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Православље*, 69-73.

⁶ Let us mention here the famous Russian theologian Georges Florovsky who recognized that the teaching of the Church as such is in its "pre-theological" phase. It is this theologian who will influence Zizioulas' theological formation which

experience, which is why we do not have systematic ecclesiological handbooks and the reason why ecclesiology does not appear as a separate treatise. Orthodox theologians, therefore, point out the importance of the experiential dimension, while the doctrine itself stays in the background. Since the systematic ecclesiology or the study of the Church as a systematic discipline that would originate from the Church Fathers does not exist, some Orthodox theologians define the present state of ecclesiology as a “pre-theological” period.⁷

However, speaking of the Greek Orthodox theology, it is worth mentioning the Greek Orthodox theologian Ioannis Karmiris (1903-1992)⁸ who wrote the first monography about the Church.⁹ In addition, let us mention the fact that Karmiris is a theologian from a period of reformation of the Greek theology, as Yannis Spiteris points out.¹⁰ However, it should concern us that the relevance of Karmiris’ work as a theologian is his contribution and significance for the field of ecclesiology¹¹ where he left a considerable mark as a theologian of the Greek Orthodox theology circle, and wider.¹²

we shall discuss later below. Cf. Georgij Florovskij, *Cristo, lo Spirito, la Chiesa*, Edizioni Qiqajon – Comunità di Bose, Magnano, 1997., 116-117.

⁷ Cf. Pavel Evdokimov, *L’ortodossia*, Società editrice il Mulino, Bologna, 1965., 173.

⁸ Ioannis Karmiris [Ἰωάννης Καρμίρης] is a Greek Orthodox theologian that has been active in the attempts of the revival of the Greek theology. He is most recognized for his ecclesiology, and has participated in different ecumenical congresses and councils and is one of the most prominent Greek theologians in and outside Greece. Cf. Yannis Spiteris, *La teologia ortodossa neo-greca*, Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna, Bologna, 1992., 242-255.; Giovanni Karmiris, *L’insegnamento dogmatico ortodosso intorno alla Chiesa*, Edizione Istituto di Studi teologici ortodossi s. Grigorio Palamas, Milano, 1970., 3.; Yannis Spiteris, »Karmiris, Ioannis«, in: Edward G. Farrugia (ed.), *Dizionario enciclopedico dell’Oriente Cristiano*, Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Roma, 2000., 408.

⁹ Cf. Ἰωάννης Καρμίρης, *Δογματικῆς τμήμα Ε΄. Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησιολογία*, Ἀθήναι, 1973. Contemporary theologian and an expert on the modern Greek theology, Yannis Spiteris claims that Ioannis Karmiris is the only author of a monography on ecclesiology of the recent times, i.e. up to the year 2003. Along these lines, Spiteris says that Karmiris’ dogma is the “only monography of the Church written to this day” i.e. the year 2003 when Spiteris publishes his book *Ecclesiologia ortodossa*. Yannis Spiteris, *Ecclesiologia ortodossa. Temi a confronto tra Oriente e Occidente*, Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna, Bologna 2003., 37.

¹⁰ Cf. Yannis Spiteris, *La teologia ortodossa neo-greca*, 242-255

¹¹ Works on ecclesiology cf. e.g. Ἰωάννης Καρμίρης, *Δογματικῆς τμήμα Ε΄. Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησιολογία*, Ἀθήναι, 1973.; Giovanni Karmiris, *L’insegnamento dogmatico ortodosso intorno alla Chiesa*, Edizione Istituto di Studi teologici ortodossi s. Grigorio Palamas, Milano, 1970. and other.

¹² Cf. Yannis Spiteris, *Pravoslavna teologija »ponovno otkriva« svoju prošlost. Teologija Otaca ponovno predložena današnjem čovjeku*, in: Rosino Gibellini (ed.), *Teološke perspektive za XXI. stoljeće*, KS, Zagreb, 2006., 301-313.

We can see that Ioannis Zizioulas is not the first or the only contemporary Greek Orthodox theologian who researched ecclesiology. Nonetheless, it does not diminish his importance and contribution in the area of Orthodox ecclesiology as will be pointed out in this paper. As follows, in the context of the contemporary Orthodox theology, Zizioulas focuses on several topics in a special way: pneumatology, ecclesiology, Eucharist ecclesiology, clergy and the holy secrets, as well as gnoseology and epistemology. This unveils the depth of his philosophical and theological interest.¹³

1.1. Zizioulas' theological formation and interest

The current and still active neo-Greek Orthodox theologian, bishop and metropolitan of Pergamon, Ioannis Zizioulas [Ἰωάννης Ζηζιούλας], was born in 1931 in Katafygio, near the city of Kozani (northern Greece). He starts his theological formation in Greece, firstly at the Faculty of theology in Thessaloniki (1950) and then continues his studies at the Faculty of theology in Athens (1952 – 1954).¹⁴ It is clear, beyond question, that the First congress of Orthodox theological schools in Athens in 1936¹⁵ left a significant

¹³ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Православље*, 40-46.

¹⁴ For more biographical details on Ioannis Zizioulas see: Athanasios G. Mellisaris, The Challenge of Patristic Ontology in the Theology of Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 44 (1999) 1-4, 467-469; Yannis Spiteris, *La teologia ortodossa neo-greca*, 369-370; Janusz Syty, *Il primato nell'ecclesiologia ortodossa attuale. Il contributo dell'ecclesiologia eucaristica di Nicola Afanassieff e John Zizioulas*, Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, Roma, 2002., 31-33; and other.

¹⁵ Concerning the First congress of Orthodox theological schools in Athens 1936, it is of importance to mention that it was the first international congress where representatives of all Orthodox theological schools participated. This congress resulted in new perspectives and cooperation between the Orthodox theological faculties. The second congress of the Orthodox theological schools was took place in 1976 Athens, followed by the congresses in Boston (1987), Bucharest (1996), Beograd (2001) and Sofia (2005). For more data on the congresses see Niko Ikić, *Ekumenske studije i dokumenti*, 128-130; Đuro Paša, Prvi kongres predstavnika pravoslavnih bogoslovnih fakulteta u Atini, *Bogoslovska smotra*, 25 (1937) 2, 203-211; Sabor pravoslavnih bogoslova u Atini, *Bogoslovska smotra*, 24 (1936) 4, 440-442; Yannis Spiteris, Pravoslavna teologija »ponovno otkriva« svoju prošlost. Teologija Otaca ponovno predložena današnjem čovjeku, in: Rosino Gibellini (ed.), *Teološke perspektive za XXI. stoljeće*, Kršćanska sadašnjost, Zagreb, 2006., 284; Богдан Лубардић, О свеправославном дијалогу високих теолошких школа (-1936 2004): традиција, одговорност, будућност, in: Радован Биговић – Богдан Лубардић – Богољуб Шијаковић (ed.), *Јединство, мисија и богословље Цркве у трећем миленијуму. Зборник радова петог међународног конгреса високих православних богословских школа (Београд, 26.9. – 1.10.2001.)*, Београд, 2012., 212-215; Богдан Лубардић,

influence on his academic life and formation in Greece, as well as his studies at The Ecumenical Institute in Bossey (1954 – 1955) where he develops interest in ecumenism.¹⁶ After his studies at the Ecumenical Institute, in the period between 1955 and 1957, Zizioulas continues his studies at the University of Harvard, influenced by the teaching of the famous patrology professor, Russian theologian Georges Florovsky.¹⁷ All these factors and circumstances of his academic life contributed to the development of his theological thought, and later influenced his theology.

Although Zizioulas is considered today as one of the most famous and researched Orthodox theologians of the western theology and the most influential and cited Orthodox theologian within the western theological thought,¹⁸ still we cannot say his theological thought is thoroughly researched.¹⁹ If we take into account the span of his theological thought we must see a wide range of topics he examines. They are essential topics of Christianity such as: “personhood”, the Eucharist, the relationship of the Church and the Eucharist etc.

It is of importance to mention that Zizioulas' work reflects that his teachings and his theological thought are founded on the teach-

Јустин Поповић и Русија. *Путеви рецепције руске философије и теологије*. Беседа, Нови Сад, 2009., 101-102.

¹⁶ His interest in the ecumenism is obvious later in his theological thought and in his participation in the ecumenical conferences where Zizioulas is often present as a representative of the Orthodoxy. Cf. Yannis Spiteris, *Ecclesiologia ortodossa. Temi a confronto tra Oriente e Occidente*, 302.

¹⁷ Georges Florovsky one of the finest of the Russian theologians that belongs to the theologians of the Russian diaspora, was Zizioulas' university professor of patrology which was surely one of the reasons Zizioulas will direct his theological thought towards Theology of the Fathers and be associated with the neo-patristic stream of theological thinking. Cf. Yannis Spiteris, *La teologia ortodossa neo-greca*, 369; Aidan Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora. Church, Father Eucharist in Nikolai Afanas'ev 1983-1966*, Cembriidge University Press, Cembriidge, 1989., 153-162; Karl Ch. Felmy, *La teologia ortodossa contemporanea. Una introduzione*, Editrice Queriniana, Brescia, 1999., 25-27, 31-32; John Binns, *Le Chiese ortodosse. Una introduzione*, Edizioni San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo, 2005., 98-101.

¹⁸ Cf. Yannis Spiteris, *Ecclesiologia ortodossa. Temi a confronto tra Oriente e Occidente*, 302.

¹⁹ Here, it is worth mentioning that in the Croatian speaking world and the Croatian scientific philosophical and theological magazines there are no works published that examine the theological thought of this recognized Orthodox theologian. Not until recently, has there been published only one paper in Croatian language that examines Zizioulas' thought and opens a path towards a discussion on his theological thought. Cf. Grigorije Durić, Učenje Jovana Zizjulasa o načelu Boga Oca, *Crkva u svijetu*, 49 (2014) 1, 39-57.

ings of the Church Fathers, especially the Cappadocians. That is clearly visible in his studies and the definition of the notion of "person". Besides, let us mention the fact that ecclesiology is one of his key points of interest.²⁰

1.2. Zizioulas and the modern theology

In the modern Orthodox theology we perceive authors that are Zizioulas' pupils or whose works reflect the influence of his theological thought. Such, for example, is the case of the Greek theologian Stavros Yangazoglou, or the Serbian theologians Ignjatije Midić and Maksim Vasiljević. Let us mention another important author from the United States of America, which is Aristotle Papanikolau. All of them have been greatly influenced by the Zizioulas' thought and either became his pupils or embraced his thoughts to create their own theological thought.

In his analysis and interpretation of the Zizioulas' thought, the French theologian Jean-Claude Larchet comes to a conclusion that Zizioulas has his own authority on the field of ecclesiology because of his position as a metropolitan. As Larchet states: "The election of Ioannis Zizioulas as a metropolitan by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople gave his theological thought an ecclesiological authority."²¹

We might readily concede to his statement, however, one should bear in mind that Zizioulas' research of ecclesiological questions dates back before his election as a metropolitan, and we have his doctoral thesis and other works as evidence. The election of Zizioulas as metropolitan gives him credit as an authority, without doubt, but the subject of his work is of essential importance for Orthodox theology. Let us mention a name of another theologian of Russian Orthodox belief, Nikolaj Afanasiev who was not a metropolitan, but became known for his Eucharist theology which was a point of research in Zizioulas' work too. We should not comply with Larchet's thought so easily since our Greek theologian gained authority among the Orthodox theologians based on his ecclesiological work and thought within theology and ecclesiology.

²⁰ Cf. Жан Клод Ларше, *Личност и природа. Православна критика персоналистичких теорија Христа Јанараса и Јована Зизијуласа*, Међународни центар за православне студије, Ниш, 2015., 15-16.

²¹ Cf. Жан Клод Ларше, *Личност и природа. Православна критика персоналистичких теорија Христа Јанараса и Јована Зизијуласа*, 16.

2. FROM EUCHARIST TO ECCLESIOLOGY

Since our theologian explored crucial topics of Christianity, the relationship of the Church and the Eucharist to mention one, that is and should be the focal point of the Christian life. Alongside other Orthodox theologians, Zizioulas stresses the Trinitarian and theandric character of the Church even though the author of this paper does not have the intention to analyse them further. Still, we should regard certain elements of his work as original and unique.

2.1. His interest for ecclesiology

Zizioulas shows his interest for the sacrament of the Eucharist very early in his research and work, i.e. at the beginning of his scientific and theological research, or to be more precise, in his doctoral dissertation that he writes in Greek, in Athens, 1965 under the title *Ἡ Ἐνότης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῇ Θεῷ Ευχαριστία καὶ τῷ Ἐπισκόπῳ κατὰ τὸν τρεῖς πρώτους αἰῶνες* [The unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the bishop in the first three centuries].²² This topic will be present and further explored in his later works²³. While writing his doctoral dissertation, he starts seriously examining the relationship between the Church and the Eucharist. It can easily be seen that, just like other Orthodox theologians, he speaks of the Church in a descriptive way and does not try to define it.

2.2. The Church and the Eucharist

Concerning the notion of the Church, let us bear in mind that our theologian avoids to give a definition of the Church because he

²² Although the dissertation was written in 1965, its first edition in Greek language was in 1989, and the second, a year later in 1990. The dissertation was published in 1997 in Serbian language under the title *Јединство Цркве у светој евхаристији и у епископу у прва три века*. Apart from that, the paper was translated in English under the title: *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and Bishop During the First Three Centuries*. With this English translation, the dissertation has become available for the western reader which contributed to the raising interest for his work. Cf. Ἰωάννης Ζηζιούλας, *Ἡ Ἐνότης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῇ Θεῷ Ευχαριστία καὶ τῷ Ἐπισκόπῳ κατὰ τὸν τρεῖς πρώτους αἰῶνες*, Ἀθήναι, 1989., ²1990.; same author: *Јединство Цркве у светој евхаристији и у епископу у прва три века*, Нови Сад 1997.; same author: *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, Massachusetts, 2001.

²³ Ioannis Zizioulas, *Eucharistia e Regno di Dio*, Edizioni Qiqajon – Comunità di Bose, Magnano, 1996.; Ioannis Zizioulas, *L'essere ecclesiale*, Edizioni Qiqajon - Comunità di Bose, Magnano, 2007.; and other.

believes that it is necessary to have a "specific view on the Church"²⁴, while not defining it. From his statement: "The Church is mostly what we experience and see, not what we define by words."²⁵ it is plain that he has no intention of defining the Church because it is not possible to define it and give a solid definition that would encompass everything that the Church represents. Along these lines the Greek theologian indicates to an interrelationship between Church and the Eucharist by stating "The spirit of Easter dominates the Holy Liturgy, as if the Kingdom of Heaven was present in the world. It is what we must treasure with care, because if we lose the identity of the Holy Eucharist, we will be in danger of losing the identity of the Church itself."²⁶ Having that said, the Greek theologian illustrates the tight relation of the Eucharist and the Church and identifies the possible dangers of losing the Church's identity.

Influenced by Zizioulas is one of his pupils, the Greek Orthodox theologian and bishop of the Braničevo-Požarevac dioceses, Ignatiје Mидић. He believes, as does the metropolitan of Pergamon, that the identity of the Church should be looked for in Liturgy.²⁷ Within that context, Mидић says: "The Church is primarily an eschatological community in Liturgy."²⁸ Hence, the Church has an eschatological identity which we are prone to forget.²⁹ Looking from a liturgical context it should be stressed that the Church in Liturgy is an "icon of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth".³⁰

For this particular reason, the notion of Church should be identified with the service of Liturgy because it is Liturgy that guides towards the Kingdom of Heaven.³¹ The Liturgy, therefore, gives the Church an eternal identity where it is necessary to look at it as an eschatological community.

²⁴ Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, Беседа, Нови Сад, 2001., 27.

²⁵ Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 27.

²⁶ Јован Зизјулас, Идентитет Цркве, in: Златко Матић (ed.), *Православна екклесиологија. Реч о Цркви пред изазовима трећег миленијума*, Одбор за просвету и културу Епархије пожаревачко-браничевске, Пожаревац, 2016., 19.

²⁷ Игнатије Мидић, Црква и њен иднетитет, in: Златко Матић (ed.), *Православна екклесиологија. Реч о Цркви пред изазовима трећег миленијума*, Одбор за просвету и културу Епархије пожаревачко-браничевске, Пожаревац, 2016., 23-44., here 29.

²⁸ Игнатије Мидић, Црква и њен иднетитет, 23-44, here 29.

²⁹ Игнатије Мидић, Црква и њен иднетитет, 23-44, here 29.

³⁰ Игнатије Мидић, Црква и њен иднетитет, 23-44, here 31.

³¹ Игнатије Мидић, Црква и њен иднетитет, 23-44, here 40.

3. THE CHURCH AS AN ESCHATOLOGICAL COMMUNITY

It is beyond question that the focal point of Zizioulas' ecclesiological thought, as we already noted, is the relation between the Church and the Eucharist,³² but we should not overlook the fact that his thought is founded on ontology. Starting from the ontological dimension of a person³³ Zizioulas develops his entire theological and ecclesiological thought.

Further on, the Church operates between two states: it lives within history, but it is open to and looks forward to the future and the eschatological community. Therefore, the Church within its objective historical circumstances gains an insight of the eschatological community and the eschatological unification of the God's people and this way defines its identity.³⁴ It can equally be said that the "Orthodox ecclesiology sees the roots of the Church in its future"³⁵, and our theologian's thoughts follow this idea.

3.1. The identity of the Church

While Zizioulas observes a certain problem in the western theological thought that concerns the differentiation of ecclesiology and soteriology,³⁶ at the same time he holds that in the eastern theology the notion of the Church "does not possess a precise identity".³⁷ However, our theologian emphasizes that the "Eucharist is the sacrament that gives the Church an identity in time, and that it is an eschatological identity that turns the truth of the Church into reality now and here. Thus, it becomes a starting point in ecclesiology."³⁸

In fact, our author is aware that it is difficult to express the identity of the Church. He recognizes several tendencies within the modern Orthodoxy that practically define the identity of the Church. However, there are faults and inaccuracies inside these

³² Cf. John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church*, St Vladimir Seminary Press, New York, 1997., 123-260; Ioannis Zizioulas, *L'essere ecclesiale*, 71-267; Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 27-114.

³³ He starts his research on ecclesiology and the Eucharist by introducing the ontological meaning of personhood. Cf. John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 27-65; Ioannis Zizioulas, *L'essere ecclesiale*, 23-69.

³⁴ Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 31-34.

³⁵ Игнатије Мидић, *Црква и њен иднетитет*, 23-44, here 33.

³⁶ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 5-7.

³⁷ Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 5.

³⁸ Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 75.

tendencies. Within that context there are the following tendencies: confessional, missionary, moral and therapeutic tendency.³⁹ In the identification of the Church's identity, considering these tendencies, we encounter certain obstacles depending on what we focus on.⁴⁰ Yet, Zizioulas believes that "none of this defines the identity of the Church".⁴¹ Furthermore, he goes a step further and makes clear that "through the act of Eucharist we can see the real identity of the Church".⁴² In the words: "The Church is not what it is, but what it will be in the eschaton. It is the secret of the Church.",⁴³ we see the focus of the Church towards the after-end, eschaton. The identity of the Church will be fully achieved in the future, and has, therefore, its eschatological character.⁴⁴ As follows, to conclude, we can say that the liturgical-Eucharist essence of the Church defines its eschatological dimension.⁴⁵

Furthermore, "The learning of the Orthodox people about the Church is a result of the relationship of the people and the world the way this relationship was built throughout history. According to this, just like dogmatism, ecclesiology is experiential and based on the existence of the Church."⁴⁶ In the end, the only criterion that influenced the making of ecclesiology in Orthodoxy is the experience of the Church. Based on these concepts, our author believes that the Orthodox people construct their meaning of ecclesiology on two experiential foundations. First is the liturgical experience, or to clarify the notion, it is the Holy Eucharist, while the second important element is the ascetic experience and the monastic calling.⁴⁷ The metropolitan of Pergamon affirms this with the following words: "The Holy Eucharist and the monastic tradition have greatly established the Orthodox conscience of the identity of Church."⁴⁸ Regarding that, there have been two approaches to ecclesiology in history, and these are the Eucharist-liturgical and the monastic-ascetic.⁴⁹

³⁹ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Идентитет Цркве*, 8-12.

⁴⁰ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Идентитет Цркве*, 12-13.

⁴¹ Јован Зизјулас, *Идентитет Цркве*, 15.

⁴² Јован Зизјулас, *Идентитет Цркве*, 17.

⁴³ Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 71.

⁴⁴ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 27-34.

⁴⁵ Cf. Yannis Spiteris, *Ecclesilogia ortodossa. Temi a confronto tra Oriente e Occidente*, 70.

⁴⁶ Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 8.

⁴⁷ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 8-9.

⁴⁸ Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 11.

⁴⁹ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 11.

Let us point out here that the monastic tradition and the Eucharist have shaped the Orthodox conscience of the identity of the Church. By studying historical and theological circumstances of the Church and the Eucharist, the Greek theologian concludes that there is certain antagonism between the Eucharist-liturgical and the monastic-ascetic approach to ecclesiology. Although, primarily there was no divide, it grew over time and has its roots in history.⁵⁰

3.2. Types of ecclesiology

According to our author, the essence of the Church is revealed through the Eucharist which he affirms on numerous occasions in his work. Clearly, Eucharist encompasses the entire Church life and therefore the entire liturgical and sacramental life. Looking from a liturgical point of view, all of the Holy Sacraments starting from the baptism that introduces us into the Eucharist, have their place in the Eucharist.⁵¹ Hence, the Eucharist, i.e. Liturgy and the Church are interwoven.⁵² It should not surprise us that the central topic of his ecclesiological thinking is primarily the link between the Church and the Eucharist.⁵³ Moreover, “through the Eucharist gathering we can see the real identity of the Church”.⁵⁴

Zizioulas, who deals with ecclesiological topic since the writing of his doctoral dissertation, recognizes two types of ecclesiology in the eastern tradition. One is the “liturgical”, that is, “Eucharist” ecclesiology which is the older version in which we can see the tracing back to the original teachings of Saint Paul and the foundations. The other one is the “therapeutic” i.e. “healing” ecclesiology which was introduced and established to a certain point by the famous byzantine theologian and mystic, a saint of the Greek Orthodox Church, Gregory Palamas.⁵⁵

Therefore, bearing in mind the historical-theological research and the Patristic theology Zizioulas recognizes two different approaches to ecclesiology. The first one originates from the Holy

⁵⁰ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 11-12.

⁵¹ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 77-78.

⁵² Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Идентитет Цркве*, 17-18.

⁵³ Cf. John Zizioulas, John, *Being as Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 123-260; Ioannis Zizioulas, *L'essere ecclesiale*, 71-267; Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 27-114.

⁵⁴ Јован Зизјулас, *Идентитет Цркве*, 17.

⁵⁵ Cf. Yannis Spiteris, *Ecclesilogia ortodossa. Temi a confronto tra Oriente e Occidente*, 69-70.

Scripture and is later explored by Ignatio, and features the Church services of the Eucharist. This approach accentuates the identity of the Church which is in eschaton. The second approach to ecclesiology derives from the Fathers of Alexandria and presents the essence of the Church in the past. Since the members of the Alexandrian school have founded their teaching on the Divine Logos, the Divine Word is the central point, especially the cleansing of the human being and the unification of their soul to Logos. In the ecclesiological sense it is important to bring together these two streams of thought. Otherwise, we have polarization and a problem for ecclesiology and the life of Church.⁵⁶

In addition, it should be noted that the "healing" ecclesiology has merged with the monasticism over the course of history and therefore created a blend of ecclesiology that puts the services of the Church in the background and codes them as lateral functions within the Church. According to the Alexandrian School, especially Clement and Origen of Alexandria, there was a belief that the Church is most importantly a place of healing.⁵⁷ On the other side, Ignatius of Antioch, and later Cyprian and other Christian Fathers have developed a different, parallel ecclesiology.⁵⁸ While Zizioulas, inspired with the Patristic theology, sees the identity of the Church in the eschaton, he perceives these other two types of ecclesiology that cannot be separated one from the other and are therefore intertwined.⁵⁹

In his ecclesiology, we can recognize, as mentioned before, the so called "liturgical" and "therapeutic" ecclesiology. In the "liturgical" ecclesiology, the Eucharist as an essential source of ecclesiology, represents a goal, while in the "therapeutic" ecclesiology, the Eucharist is observed as a medium of achieving a goal. According to this, the aim of the "therapeutic" ecclesiology is the cleansing of the souls and their unification with the Logos, i.e. the return of the souls to the original union that existed between the souls and the Logos (Divine Word).⁶⁰ Therefore, the cleansing of the souls hap-

⁵⁶ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Еклисиолошке теме*, 51-54.

⁵⁷ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Еклисиолошке теме*, 41.

⁵⁸ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Еклисиолошке теме*, 42.

⁵⁹ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Еклисиолошке теме*, 51-53.

⁶⁰ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Еклисиолошке теме*, 51-53. Although there are certain obscurities concerning Gregory Palamas, a byzantine theologian and mystic from the 14th century, according to Zizioulas, he is the representative of the "healing" ecclesiology in which the Holy Liturgy and Sacraments present means to gain the aim of cleansing of the soul and the unification with the Logos. Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Еклисиолошке теме*, 55.

pens through the liturgical life of the community, especially during worship at the Holy Eucharist that offers the most perfect way of cleansing of a human being.⁶¹ Moreover, since it is all about healing and the treatment of souls, the ecclesiology itself is called “healing”, that is, “therapeutic” ecclesiology.

Considering these two kinds of ecclesiology, we can say that Zizioulas cannot separate these two ecclesiologies, therefore he affirms the complementary nature of the two types of ecclesiology, and does not contrast them. He finds the ideal match of these two approaches in the teachings of Maximus the Confessor.⁶² Zizioulas believes that, it is Maximus the Confessor who has, in his theological synthesis, achieved a harmonious tie between the “healing” and the “Eucharist” ecclesiology.⁶³ In that context, according to Maximus the Confessor, the Greek theologian points out that human cleansing from evil happens in the Church and that the Church is a “workshop where you can find spiritual cleansing”.⁶⁴ It is important to bear in mind this dimension of the Church in which the Eucharist is illustrated as a transformation.⁶⁵

3.3. Several ecclesiological problems and consequences

While studying the contemporary ecclesiology and authors the Greek Theologian recognizes there are authors that are more inclined towards just one of the mentioned types of ecclesiology and thus, separate the two types one from each other which is not favourable. Along these lines, our theologian writes: “You can see one side taking an interest in only the “therapeutic” ecclesiology and claiming that it is all, or the other side believing in liturgical and institutional ecclesiology, however there is no union between the two sides. The divide is getting wider each day and will have profound consequences for the Orthodox ecclesiology.”⁶⁶ In this way, Zizioulas thinks that we cannot chose only one kind of ecclesiology and accentuate only one aspect while discarding the other.

As follows, watching the Church from a monastic perspective, it is but a method and a path of cleansing the soul and joining it with

⁶¹ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 47-51.

⁶² Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 54.

⁶³ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 16.

⁶⁴ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 17.

⁶⁵ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 18.

⁶⁶ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 45.

Logos. In this way, it loses its primary significance and becomes a means of pursuing an objective because the Eucharist becomes a tool for fighting passion. Hence, this kind of ecclesiology gets a "healing" connotation. However, we should point out that "liturgical" ecclesiology is not and should not be discarded completely.⁶⁷ The problem arises when theologians take sides between the two ecclesiological aspects and act on it without compromise.⁶⁸ It is necessary, therefore, to reconcile both views to obtain a more complete view of the Church.⁶⁹

"Within the Church there is a problem of the relation between an bishop and a monastic",⁷⁰ our metropolitan of Pergamon concludes. Our Greek theologian identifies a practical consequence of the specific antagonism between the two approaches to ecclesiology in the relation between the bishop and a monastic. We see an bishop as a representative of the Eucharist and a key element of liturgical ecclesiology, while the life of a monastic is a proof of the holiness that the Church should have. As follows, it is also a healing attempt.⁷¹

These two approaches have merged over time one into the other. However, it seems that it was not sufficient enough because we can witness that today's Orthodox theology still has the problem of division of ecclesiology into two approaches.⁷²

CONCLUSION

The popularity of Zizioulas' theology and the interest of many a theologian for the research of his theological thought have come gradually, and there are many reasons why. Apart from his bishop's authority, Zizioulas gains a certain authority by himself in the field of Orthodox theology. The wide range of topics he explored might be one of the reasons, but it is primarily the depth and clearness of his theological thought where he most often stresses the importance of the Patristic theology, why he has gained reputation as one of the most prominent contemporary Orthodox theologians.

⁶⁷ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 13-14.

⁶⁸ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 18.

⁶⁹ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 18.

⁷⁰ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 43.

⁷¹ Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 19-20.

⁷² Cf. Јован Зизјулас, *Екклесиолошке теме*, 42.

Although Ioannis Zizioulas is not the first Greek Orthodox theologian that thoroughly researched ecclesiology, it does not diminish his importance in the area of theology and ecclesiology. Within the ecclesiological framework, Zizioulas speaks of the “liturgical” and “therapeutic” ecclesiology and sees the Church regarding both its liturgical and “therapeutic” dimensions that it has. In line with the teachings of Maximus the Confessor, our Greek theologian examines the two types of ecclesiology mentioned. However, we should mention that our author does not divide the two kinds. Moreover, he links them together, by advocating that they complete each other. By giving prominence to one over the other, the result may be misleading and it does not offer a complete picture of the Church.