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Aspects discursifs et gestuels de manifestation rituelle de la hiérarchie ecclésiastique

Discursive and Gestural Aspects of the Ritual Manifestation of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy

Abstract: The celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy shows through discursive, gestural and proxemic means that the Christian Church is a hierarchized organism in which the various liturgical roles are performed by Eucharistic ministers occupying various hierarchical positions. The present article proposes a discursive analysis of a few utterances pronounced, during the celebration of the Orthodox Liturgy, by the bishop, the priests and the deacons, who render manifest this ecclesiastical hierarchy in its ritualized form of visibility. The discursive analysis shall be accompanied by a semiological analysis of the gestural and proxemic data, founded in its turn on a theological reflection synthetized in a few fundamental studies of liturgic theology. Our major reference is the French text of the Eucharistic Liturgy, along with the ritual reality we could observe and register both in Romania and in France (in numerous parish and monastery churches), thanks to the method of participant observation (Maisonneuve 1988, 12).

Keywords: ecclesiastical hierarchy, Orthodoxy, discourse, liturgical gesture, ritual manifestation, proxemics.