

Father Ștefan Buchiu speaks about Father Stăniloae's contribution to the Romanian and universal theology and culture



In an interview for Radio Trinitas, Rev. Ștefan Buchiu, professor at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology at the University of Bucharest, presented the contribution of Father Dumitru Stăniloae to Romanian and universal theology and culture.

The novelty and strength of Father Stăniloae's theology are given by the exit from academism and its openness to spirituality, Father Ștefan Buchiu said.

He called this theology "personalistic" because it is a theology of person and communion, an existential theology, in which you meet Christ, not just read about Christ. It is not a Christ of discourses, but a Christ who brings you from the plan of eternity the love of the Father and the power to be worthy of this love, which

transforms you.”

A personal theology

It is an “iconic” theology, Father Stefan Buchiu added, “in the sense that it has a deeply personal character: you are “bespoken”, as Father Staniloae said, you are called to dialogue as a person.”

“So, you emphasize your uniqueness, your specificity, by serving others, because Christ Himself has served you. And then, only by serving do you meet Christ, only in His Cross do you meet Him, and then you meet Him in the Resurrection,” the professor explained.

However, this mystical process cannot take place outside the Church, Father Ștefan Buchiu said.

“All this at the same time – incarnation, sacrifice, and resurrection – we actually live in the Church. Therefore, we taste the Kingdom of God, which begins with power in the Church, and begins inside us, as persons,” added the professor.

Christ assumes us and changes us through love

“From the dogma of the Holy Trinity, Father Stăniloae retained especially the altruistic love that is between the Three Persons, a sacrificial love, promotion of the other.” In the Holy Trinity, the great theologian saw the model and paradigm of the Church, Fr. Buchiu clarified.

“We are called to live like the Persons of the Holy Trinity, in a diverse unity, or a unitary diversity.”

Father Stăniloae renewed not only the teaching about the Holy Trinity but also Christology, showing that “Christ is the love of the Father; He is the revealer of the Trinity and the One Who shares the love of God the Father and shares with us the Holy Spirit,” said Father Stefan Buchiu.

“It is a living Christology, a Christ Whom you feel close to you, Who assumes you, because this Christ, Who has the evangelical image, but also an ecclesial image, experienced in Christian communities, from the first Apostles until today, He claims you and, once united with Him, He leads you step by step and passes you through

everything He has gone through,” the professor commented.

“So you don’t feel alone on this road to God,” he added.

Cultural dialogue

Another important contribution of Father Stăniloae was the opening of theology to dialogue with society and culture. He was not only a good connoisseur of the Holy Fathers but also of the philosophy of the twentieth century.

This explains the well-deserved place of the great theologian among the members of the Romanian Academy and the admiration of the people of culture for him.

“Father Stăniloae often argued with Romanian people of culture, out of the desire to show that our Romanian traditions are deeply Christian, that we had theology before school theology, that we inherited, we took over the patristic vein from Byzantium, but at the same time, we put our Romanian seal, which is very balanced,” said Father Ștefan Buchiu.

The professor also remarked that today it is recognized in the other theologies of the Sister Churches as one “really balanced, existential, but also socially engaged, not only contemplative.”

At the end of the interview, the former dean of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Bucharest mentioned that “His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel is not only the most important disciple that Father Stăniloae had but also a continuator of his thinking and gave us the complete work of Father Stăniloae.”

The complete works of Father Dumitru Stăniloae are being published by the Romanian Patriarchate’s Publishing House.

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