

**"The Orthodox understanding of Spiritual Transformation"**  
**- Reflections to debates -**

Prof. Dr. Stelian TOFANĂ  
 "Babeş-Bolyai" University  
 Faculty of Orthodox Theology,  
 Cluj-Napoca, Romania

**Preliminaries**

Arthur J. Schwartz (Ed.D.), in one of his articles, has defined spiritual transformation as being a dramatic change in religious belief, attitude, and behaviour that occurs over a relatively short period of time.<sup>1</sup>

The definition seems to contain in itself the human areas in which this transformation operates: belief, attitude and behaviour. As for the context in which this transformation appears, there is some consensus in the research namely that this change usually occurs within three contexts:

1. *As an intensified devotion within the same religious structure*
2. *A shift from no religious commitment to a devout religious life*
3. *A change from one religion to another.*<sup>2</sup>

From an Orthodox perspective, the first two contexts, in which occurs such a spiritual transformation, would best explain what it is in itself, as a phenomenon.

But for a better understanding of the phenomenon of spiritual transformation, I would like to point out the relation between conversion and spiritual transformation? Or, in other words, can we equate conversion with spiritual transformation?

**I. Conversion – a spontaneous process or a slow (gradual) one?**

The word conversion derives from the Latin *converto-ere-ti-sum*, which means *to change, to pretend, to transform, to convert*.<sup>3</sup> In the christian sense, conversion is a spiritual process that produces the turning to God, transitioning from the state of sin to the state of grace, turning from unbelief to faith, from sin to virtue.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Arthur J. SCHWARTZ (Ed.D), „The Nature of Spiritual Transformation - A Review of the Literature”, in *The Spiritual Transformation Scientific Research Program*, Conference on October 5-7, 2002 – Philadelphia, PA, The Metanexus Institute on Religion and Science, 2000, 4

<sup>2</sup> Arthur J. SCHWARTZ, Ed.D., „The Nature of Spiritual Transformation...”, 4.

<sup>3</sup> See *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its Development*, (Eds RALPH P, Martin, Peter H. DAVIDS), art. ”New Birth”, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1997, 792-821.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ioan BUNEA, *Din galeria marilor convertiți – Medalioane*, Ed ”Presa Universitară Clujeană”, Cluj-Napoca 1998, 11

When do conversions occur? When an idea has hardened itself to such an extent that it has become the only master of the unconscious and accumulated enough power to dominate the conscious. It erupts like the lava of a volcano and changes the inner physiognomy of the subject.<sup>5</sup> This is the so-called *spontaneous conversion*. In such kind of conversion, God's providential action is much more evident than in the so-called „slow” conversion.<sup>6</sup> This presence of the grace and power of God escapes to the psychological investigations. The conversion simply occurs and there is nothing more that can be explained in this regard. Conversion is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 16:7-9, Acts 10:44-47). And the Spirit moves where He wants, above human influence (John 3:8).

As an example in this regard can be taken the conversion of Paul, which cannot be explained in a psychological way, but only admitting the intervention of the divine factor.<sup>7</sup> For the conversion to be complete, it must bring forth change, both in terms of faith as well as in the behaviour of the subject. The beginning of change, produced in the subject's behaviour, can be associated with the beginning of spiritual transformation.

But the states of the soul which the subject is going through, during the conversion process, can be determined only in the so-called *slow conversion*. In such a kind of conversions one may remark a number of efforts aimed to a single goal: *spiritual fulfilment or holiness*. From this point of view, spontaneous conversion must extend into the so-called slow conversion, which is called nothing but what we call the process of spiritual transformation. Therefore, the conversion cannot be confused with spiritual transformation, but neither can they exist separately. One may not speak of conversion without spiritual transformation and vice versa.

The spiritual perfection or the holiness cannot be earned through a single effort, or in a single moment, in the spontaneous conversion, but by fighting persistently, along with sacrifices.

---

<sup>5</sup> Regarding the factors that determine conversion, Arthur Schwartz identifies six "Conversion Motifs": intellectual, mystical, experimental, affectional, revivalism, coercive. See, Arthur J. SCHWARTZ, "The Nature of Spiritual Transformation", 8.

<sup>6</sup> The scholastic thinking classified conversions into two broad categories: *spontaneous and slow*. It suggested as prototypes St. Paul and Augustine. Although these classifications seem to be somewhat forced, the conversion process moves between these two coordinates. Such a shift, no matter how it occurs in terms of temporal aspects, cannot be possible without the work of God inside of human freedom.

<sup>7</sup> Regarding the controversial issue of Saul's conversion, see: B.R. GAVENTA, *From Darkness to Light: Aspects of Paul's Conversion in the New Testament*, Philadelphia: Fortress 1986; R.N. LONGENECKER (ed.), *The Road from Damascus: The Impact of Paul's Conversion on His Life, Thought and Ministry*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997; A.F. SEGAL, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990; K. STENDAHL, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976.

Augustine noted in his *Confessions*, 12 years had passed since conversion and obvious progression was made in his spiritual life, but some of the old natural tendencies (inclinations) strongly demanded to be satisfied. The voluptuousness images printed with skill are weak – he says – when awake, but while asleep urges me to return, to give my consent and they give me the illusion of the act”.<sup>8</sup>

Conversion is not synonymous with perfection, because a lot of habits of the old nature are not lost, neither are habits of the new nature gained in one day.<sup>9</sup> From the act of conversion the result may be an entirely new spiritual life, an heroic life, in which new virtues are manifested, new energies appear. In this new life what was impossible becomes possible, what was worshiped is burned and what was burned is now worshiped.

Conversion means, therefore the beginning of repentance (*Metanòia*) and of spiritual transformation. *Metanòia* means a profound transformation, a radical change of beliefs and therefore a shift beyond sin by ceasing to commit it, and a new start of life, a new field of work in grace and truth, a mutation of the mind, a new birth. This is the meaning of repentance in Orthodoxy – a second baptism, a ceaseless renewal of man.

In other words, the spiritual transformation is a permanent conversion, repentance understood as a *state of living*.<sup>10</sup> The initial conversion, no matter how intense it would be in the early stages, cannot be considered the peak of Christian life, and thus, a state from which one cannot move further. It is difficult, for example, to imagine, even though not impossible, that Zacchaeus the tax collector after the moment of his initial conversion in Christ’s presence, would have returned to his old way of life; or the Prodigal Son, once reinstated, would have asked again for his fortune to go back into the world of sin.<sup>11</sup> Normally, they assumed the act of conversion as a permanent act, of a continuous process of spiritual transformation.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Fer. AUGUSTIN, *Confessiones* (Mărturisiri), Scrieri alese (partea întâi), PSB, 64, București 1985, 242.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Alexis CROSNIER, *Les convertis d’hier*, Paris 1910, 54, apud, Ioan BUNEA, *Din galeria marilor convertiți*, 17.

<sup>10</sup> "Repentance understood as a *state of living*" is a suitable concept to express the permanent state of spiritual renewal of man in a constant repentance"(See, REDNIC Georgel, *Rolul misionar al pocăinței în viața parohială*, Ed. "Renașterea", Cluj-Napoca 2014, 57).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. REDNIC Georgel, *Rolul misionar al pocăinței*...,56.

<sup>12</sup> More details with regard to the difference between Conversion and Spiritual Transformation, see, Ralph W. HOOD jr., Peter C. HILL, Bernard SPILKA, *The Psychology of Religion. An Empirical Approach*, The Guilford Press, New York-London, 2009, 206-242.

## II. **Spiritual transformation: Gift and Becoming or its "passive" and "active" aspect. Ways of achieving it. A New Testament Perspective**

Significantly, contemporary theologians share the belief that there is no one cause of spiritual transformation, no one process, and no one simple consequence of that process. Moreover, it is usually not a single event, but a *complex process* that includes a lot of people, events, expectations and experiences.

Spiritual transformation is an ongoing process of renewal and sanctification of man. The Spiritual transformation is a permanent state of living in a constant repentance. In the Orthodox Liturgy there exists a request, in a litany that explicitly states this: "That we may live out the rest of our days in peace and repentance, let us ask from the Lord".<sup>13</sup>

Discussing what spiritual transformation means in itself, and its effect on the subject, Ralph Hood identified six criteria that distinguish spiritual transformation from other types of religious experiences. These are:

1. A spiritual transformation is a profound change in the self.
2. The change is not simply a matter of maturation, but is typically identified with a process (sudden or gradual) by which the transformed self is achieved.
3. This change in the self is radical in its *consequences* – indicated by such things as a new centering of concern, interest, and behaviors.
4. This new sense of self is perceived as "higher" or as emancipation from a previous dilemma or predicament.
5. This process occurs within a social medium or context, specifically spiritual transformation entails a religious framework within which the transformed self is described, acts, and is recognized by others.
6. If behaviors from these new ideals and changed habits of life do not follow, then there has been no transformation.<sup>14</sup>

As for the ways of achieving Spiritual Transformation, I would mention some of them:

1. **Baptism – spiritual rebirth (Born again).** *The "passive" and "active" aspect of Spiritual Transformation*

Although the New Testament continues this understanding of spiritual transformation as a "return", the concept of being "born again" is used prominently to denote a **spiritual rebirth** into Christ. Jesus Christ explicitly tells Nicodemus that: "*No one can see the Kingdom of God*

<sup>13</sup> *The Divine Liturgy of our Father among the Saints, John Chrysostom*, Oxford, England, 2011, 41.

<sup>14</sup> See Ralph HOOD, Bernard SPILKA, Bruce HUNSBERGER, & Richard GORSUCH, *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Approach*, The Guilford Press, New York/London, 1996, 276.

*unless he is born again*" (John 3:3). This new birth is from above, from the Holy Spirit, and it is a new and unusual one.

Commenting on these words of Jesus, St. Cyril of Alexandria in his commentary on the Fourth Gospel states: *"It is the Father's will that man be partaker of the Holy Spirit, being born again to an unusual and new life and thus still while on earth to be a citizen of heaven...Therefore, we have been born again to newness of life and recreated for divine adoption."*<sup>15</sup> Speaking further about the power of the baptism water, St. Cyril added: *"Just as, when the water poured into a boiler meets the fire's flames and heats up, in the same way, through the work of the Spirit, sensitive water turns into divine and unspeakable power and sanctifies those who immerse in it, re-embedding in us the beautiful image of the former."*<sup>16</sup>

The Spirit, coming into man, re-births him primarily because it connects him to a God who is above the repeated and closed laws of the world. The Spirit makes man to feel that he is not closed within himself, but open to overcome the monotony of a fleshly and selfish life. This is possible because of God's power, which dwells in man from Baptism, and which during the man's life continues the process of spiritual renewal and sanctification gained in the sacrament of Baptism.<sup>17</sup>

This aspect of spiritual renewal and holiness, understood as a *gained honour (status)*, but in which the Christian is called to grow up, is emphasized in a very special way by Apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. In his greeting, he writes: *"To the church of God which is at*

---

<sup>15</sup> Cf. CHIRIL AL ALEXANDRIEI, *Comentariu la Evanghelia Sfântului Ioan*, in "Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești" (PSB), 41, București 2000, 169-170.

<sup>16</sup> CHIRIL AL ALEXANDRIEI, *Comentariu la Evanghelia Sfântului Ioan*, 170-171.

<sup>17</sup> See more details with regard to the consequences of the Baptism, Karl Christian FELMY, *Orthodoxe Theologie. Eine Einführung*, Darmstadt, 1990, 169-177.

Corinth, to them that **are sanctified** (ἡγιασμένοις) in Christ Jesus,<sup>18</sup> **called to be saints** (κλητοῖς ἁγίοις) with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord..”(1 Cor 1:2). The perfect passive participle „ἡγιασμένοις“ (from ἡγιασθῆναι) already expresses the effect of an action realised with the Christians, namely, in Baptism. They are, after being baptized, **holy (sanctified)**, but at the same time, they are always invited to achieve the holiness - κλητοῖς ἁγίοις. Holiness involves a permanent spiritual transformation. In this regard, the ongoing process of spiritual transformation is the ongoing process of getting the holiness. It is from this perspective one can speak about the passive and active aspect of spiritual transformation.

Spiritual transformation is thus understood as a radical re-organization of one’s identity, meaning and purpose in life. K.I. Pargament suggests that this transformation occurs when an individual begins to feel connected to a spiritual force, identified as God.<sup>19</sup>

This force, he posits, is not only transcendent but also significant to and shaping one’s immediate experience. Those who experience a spiritual transformation feel in touch with this sacred spiritual force that changes one’s worldview, range of emotions, and behaviors. Apostle Paul tells us that this change is indeed a spiritual ‘rebirth’: “*The old has passed away, behold, the new has come.*”(2 Cor 5:17)

In the Epistle to the Galatians, the same Apostle Paul writes to Christians: “*For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ*” (Gal 3:27). The clothing in itself implies a change. One cannot live the whole lifetime in old clothes.

Referring to the new status acquired by the one baptized and to his persistence in this status, St. Cyril of Jerusalem wrote: “Being baptized in Christ and clothed yourself in Christ, you have become in accordance with the Son of God. For God, whom earlier appointed us for adoption as

---

<sup>18</sup> „Christen sind *in* und *durch* Jesus Christus heilig, nicht durch und in sich selbst. Man wird hier zwischen instrumentalem und lokalem Verständnis von ἁγιασμένοις kaum alternativ entschieden dürfen. Christen gewinnen ihre Heiligkeit allein durch Christus Jesus, d.h. in dem von ihm und seiner Heilstat bestimmten Heils- und Herrschaftsbereich“ (Cf. SCHRAGE, Wolfgang, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (1 Cor 1,1-6,11), EKK VII/1, Zürich: Benziger-Neukirchener 1991, 103). Through the expression “ἡγιασμένοις in Jesus Christ”, that by Ap. Paul is found only in this place, Friedrich Lang understands sanctification in a general sense, as coming from the saving act of Jesus’ sacrifice. The Christians share this sanctifications in the act of Baptism: „an dieser göttlichen Versöhnungstat haben die Christen dadurch Anteil bekommen, daß sie als Glaubende durch die Taufe in das Christusgeschehen einbezogen wurden (1Cor 6,11; comp. Rom 6,3 urm)” (See LANG, Friedrich, *Die Briefe an die Korinther*, NTD, Band 7, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck/Ruprecht, 1986,16).

<sup>19</sup> See more details in this regard, K.I. PARGAMENT, *The psychology of religion and coping*, New York: Guilford Press, 1997.

his children, made us according to Christ's glorious body...Being so participants in the life of Christ, you are rightly named "Christ's" (anointed)..."<sup>20</sup>

Apostle Paul makes a qualitative and temporal distinction between the stages of rebirth and those of the spiritual transformation. His anthropology is marked by three concepts:

a. *Old Man*

In the first letter to the Corinthians, Apostle Paul reminds the Christians in the city of their past sinful state, before their conversion and baptism: *unrighteous, fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind (homosexuals - NAS), thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, swindlers* (cf. 1Cor 6:9-10).

b. *New Man*

Using three verbs washed (ἀπελούσασθε), sanctified (ἡγιάσθητε), justified (ἐδικαιώθητε)<sup>21</sup>, Apostle Paul then speaks about the new status that they received in the sacrament of Baptism: "*And such were some of you: but you were washed (ἀπελούσασθε), but you were sanctified (ἡγιάσθητε), but you were justified (ἐδικαιώθητε) in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*" (1Cor 6:11).

By means of these three verbs, Apostle Paul based the change or the transition of the members in the Christian community in Corinth from what they "once" were (pagan existence) to what they are "now" (new status). The using of both meanings, "instrumental" and "local," of the prepositions "by" and "in," makes their meanings intertwined. Christians were reconciled to God through Jesus' death, and as "baptized" they are included in the Body of Christ, the Church."<sup>22</sup> This is the new man, spiritually transformed, in terms of time.

c. *New Creature* (καινὴ κτίσις)

When Apostle Paul speaks about the transformed and spiritual renewed man in terms of quality, he uses the phrase: "*new creature*". This is what he tells to the Corinthians in his second Epistle: "*Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation (καινὴ κτίσις); the old things passed away; behold, new things have come* (2 Cor 5:17).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Sf. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, "Catechèses mystagogiques", coll. *Sources Chrétiennes*, 126, Paris 1966, 120-121.

<sup>21</sup> The three verbs in 6,11 appear in 1,30 as nouns, but in an reverse order: δικαιοσύνη, ἁγιασμός, ἀπολύτρωσις.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. LANG, Fr., *Die Briefe an die Korinther*, 80. Vezi și SCHRAGE, W., *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (1 Cor 1,1-6,11), 434.

In this status of "new creature," we must constantly grow up. Thus, on the one hand, Apostle Paul affirms that the old man was crucified with Christ, being destroyed; on the other hand, puts forward the imperative to crucify or put off this old man (Rom 6:6; Gal 5:24; Col 3:5-9; Eph 4:24 etc.); yet he also affirms that Christ dwells in us, that we have clothed ourselves in him, becoming a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), and yet again he writes imperatively: *"That, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth"* (Eph 4:22-24).<sup>23</sup> *"So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love"!* (Eph 3:17).

## 2. *Re-evangelization – birth and renewal by word*

The great temptation of the contemporary world regarding the Word of God is that the facts, the story of the Bible, the words that are contained, are considered to have belonged to the past millennia and that they are not relevant to us. Therefore, people should be re-evangelized, re-acquainted with the word of God and His power.<sup>24</sup> The Gospel must be placed central in the world. I would like to make reference in this respect to an Old Testament passage from II Kings 12:1-13, suggestive of how we should relate to God's Word.

King David committed a double transgression: plotting the murder of his general named Uriah and then marrying Batsheba, this man's wife. The King who is now a murderer and adulterer, receives a word from God through the prophet Nathan, who call him to repentance. And Nathan using a parable, tells the King : *"Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said, "There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a great many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb which he bought and nourished; And it grew up together with him and his children. It would eat of his bread and drink of his cup and lie in his bosom, and was like a daughter to him. Now a traveler came to the rich man, And he was unwilling to take from his own flock or his own herd, To prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him; Rather he took the poor man's ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him. Then David's anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die... Nathan then said to David, "You are the man" ! ... Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the*

---

<sup>23</sup> See a commentary on these verses, HENDRIKSEN, William, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Philemon*, (NTC), Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 2007, 214-215.

<sup>24</sup> See more details, Stelian TOFANĂ, "Iisus Hristos și Evanghelia Sa în centrul vieții lumii. Obiectiv imperativ al misiunii Bisericii, astăzi", în *Anuarul Facultății de Teologie Ortodoxă*, nr 12 (2008-2009), Cluj-Napoca, 2010, 35-47.

*LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die" (2 Sam 12:1-5. 7.13).*

What can be observed from the quoted passage? That as long as David thought that the word of the prophet doesn't refer to him, to his life, to his deeds, thus remaining outside the word, he makes judgements of value and yet correct: "*the man who has done this deserves to die*" (2 Sam 12:5). But the moment the prophet warns him that he is the man referred to in the word from God, and that he and his deeds are marked by the words and that his destiny is involved in the word of God, David no longer makes findings and assessments, but commits the repentance: "*I have sinned against the Lord!*" (2 Sam 12:13). He transforms himself and becomes another man. As long as David viewed the history from the parable as a story with other characters, he remained hardened. When he received the Prophet's revelation and understood that the message was referring to his deeds, he makes Metanoia.

### 3. *Spiritual service of worship* (τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν)". *Practicing virtues*

Having in view the dynamic aspect of spiritual transformation, Apostle Paul even speaks of the need to present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God: "*I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice (θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἁγίαν) acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship (τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν)*" (Rom 12:1). Here body means the whole being; personality in its entirety.<sup>25</sup>

As for the statement "τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν", W. Hendriksen asserts: "Paul is thinking about the action of worshiping, the wholehearted consecration of heart, mind, will, words and deeds, in fact of all one is, has, and does, to God. Nothing less! Rendering such devotion will amount to your *logiken* worship, says Paul".<sup>26</sup>

To understand this sacrifice, the Christian should not "resemble" this world, namely this contingent world, under time, but to change by renewing the mind, in order to be able to discern what is the will of God: which is pleasing and perfect: "*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed (μεταμορφοῦσθε) by the renewing of your mind (ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοῦς),*

<sup>25</sup> Cf. BARTOLOMEU, V.A., *Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptură*, 1634, nota d.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. HENDRIKSEN, William, *Romans*, NTC, Grand Rapids: Baker 2007, 402. St. John Chrysostom interprets the expression "τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν" in a similar sense: "For sacrifice allows of no unclean thing: sacrifice is a first-fruit of the other actions. Let us then from our hands, and feet, and mouth, and all other members, yield a first-fruit unto God. Such a sacrifice is well pleasing..." (St. CHRYSOSTOM, John, "Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans", *NPNE*, XI, Homily XX, 492). With regard to the expression "τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν" (Rom 12,1), see also WILKENS, Ulrich, *Der Brief an die Römer (Rom 12-16)*, VI/3, EKK, Zürich: Benziger-Neukirchener 2003, 3-4.

*that you may prove what the will of God is, which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom 12:2).*

Using the verb *transformed* (μεταμορφουῖσθε), the present passive imperative (continue to be transformed), Apostle Paul envisages a continuous process of transformation, the transformation of the Christian into an eternal present act of renewing of the mind. The key to this transformation, is therefore, the mind (νοῦς), the control centre of attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and actions of humans (cf. Eph 4:22-23).<sup>27</sup>

The ”un-resemblance” of this age, the renewing of the mind and the total transformation of life in a ”spiritual service,” brought before God, is achieved only by practicing the virtues: the love of God and brothers, committing justice, practicing charity, helping the poor, etc.

Righteous conduct is not a condition for obtaining rebirth but rather is both a consequence and evidence that a person has truly been born of God. The new life given to those born of God is both transforming and enabling: it makes the believer righteous and enables the believer to live rightly.

#### ***4. Involvement in the liturgical life of the Church***

Attendance a weekly church service and to meet with other Christians is very important for our spiritual development, but the Christian life cannot be lived based only on a weekly diet of an hour or two dedicated to God, and the rest of the week spent affected by the influences of the world and the self-focused life as many tend to live.

Maturing in our spiritual life requires nourishing spiritual food and spiritual living water to develop. The food needed for spiritual growth comes through the Holy Communion (Eucharistic), meditation on the word of God (the Bible), prayer, confession, worship, living the Liturgy after Liturgy,<sup>28</sup> living a life in humility, leaving the sin and discovering God's will by the teaching of the Holy Spirit and obeying it. The spiritual water is the living water promised by Christ, which is the presence, power and help of the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual transformation is perceived only in retrospect. One day we may look back and analyze how things have been changed. Perhaps, we will see that we are no longer slaves of passions that

---

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Stelian TOFANA, ”Biblische Begründung der Heiligkeit und Heiligung”, in SCHINDEHUTTE Martin, ILLERT Martin (Hrsg.), *Theologischer Dialog mit der Rumänischen Orthodoxen Kirche*, Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Leipzig 2014, 199.

<sup>28</sup> See some explanations on the origin of the notion ”Liturgy after the Liturgy”, in Ion BRIA, *Liturghia după Liturghie. O Tipologie a misiunii apostolice și a mărturiei creștine azi*, București 1996, 17-29.

once chained us. Perhaps, although our circumstances may be even more difficult than in the past, we will observe that we do not react negatively to them as we used to, and that we have more faith in accepting that our life is in the God's hands.

If we observe these things, we must thank God and not trust in ourselves, remembering in this respect the words of St. Diadochus: "Only the Holy Spirit can purify our mind." Then, continuing to practice inner vigilance, let us look deeper into ourselves, in order to discover there more hidden and subtle passions that must also be put to death on the altar of sacrifice for the sake of Christ.

### **Conclusions**

1. The beginning of spiritual transformation takes place in Baptism.
2. Spiritual transformation is a lifelong process and identifies itself with the striving after holiness.
3. In Christianity there is no other way of spiritual transformation, except that which goes through Christ and through his Church.
4. Holiness is perfection achieved by sweat, the radiance of the glory of Christ in human nature and a proof of His infinite power which, from dust and sin, forms "the household of God - οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ " (Eph 2:19).
5. The Christian Spiritual Life is the life lived by a believer who has received the Holy Spirit and is spiritually alive to God.
6. Spiritual transformation is a new spirit-led life in which the person's spirit, joined to the Holy Spirit, directs the person's life, renewing their mind and redirecting their emotions, resulting in a will that is increasingly yielded to God and a heart that is transformed so that the person lives an increasingly Christ-like life.
7. Spiritual Transformation is a permanent "living state" in a continues metanoia (repentance)