

The value system reflected in the homiletic tradition of the 17th and 18th centuries

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The homiletic works, especially the commentaries and morals from Gospel texts read during the liturgy, have a didactic character. The didactic Gospels were written as texts intended for the spiritual training of priests and the faithful. The commentaries and morals written for Gospel readings on Sundays and feasts of the church year are considered to be guides to daily Christian life. They teach people to live in a system of values which form the basis of knowing oneself and one's place in the life of society. The church explains the need to preserve values for both secular and spiritual life, thus shaping in the believer an image of the world based on the truths of Holy Scripture, reflecting the church tradition and building a person's value system in the local milieu.

The texts contained in the Cyrillic manuscript collections of Carpathian provenance are usually very simple, unchallenging interpretations of Christian morality. They contain almost no references to historical events or descriptions of people's everyday life, but they are nevertheless a source of interesting linguistic material. The texts of the sermons written in the language of common people are preceded by translations of the pericopes from the Holy Scripture in the vernacular. The use of some passages from the New Testament in the language of the locals indicates the inspiration from the Protestant milieu, where the word of God is interpreted in the language of ordinary people. In addition, texts of this kind certainly prove the translation talent of the local clergy of the Byzantine rite.

Sermon as a genre is primarily aimed at instructing parishioners in the right path, reminding them of the truths of the faith, exposing their sins and encouraging Christians in their pursuit of God's grace. In this sense, the idea of all doctrines is the awareness of man's sinful nature, the struggle with it and the attainment of perfection; in a broad sense, it is a choice between good and evil. In this context, the interpretation of the notion of *good* is particularly important because it is what largely determines social values and serves as the measure of ethics and aesthetics.

Absolute goodness is God. The perception of God is anthropomorphic: the biblical words that man was created in the image and likeness of God are naturally perceived as an indication of physical resemblance to man. Humans interpret God as a person who appears in two forms: the Pantocrator or the Almighty has power over all that is on earth, over life and death, and Christ is close and intelligible to man. According to legend, it was Christ who entered into blood brotherhood with Prov and helped cure his father's blindness. In this context, blindness appears not only as a physical, but also as a spiritual disorder: by healing the sick, Christ revives their faith and thus becomes the mediator between the earthly and the heavenly. The presence of such a merciful God in man's life, however, evoked the consciousness of man's dependence on God as the supreme power, the one who holds our lives and destinies in his hands. Filled with the fear of sin and a thirst for salvation, man thus appears weak and regards all earthly life as the preparation for eternal life.

According to R. Berger¹, the church is a community of believers founded by Christ. The church came into being in the redemptive sacrifice of Christ on the cross and in his resurrection, the church was established before people during the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, and its end is expected at the end of time in the form of the heavenly communion of the redeemed. The texts of liturgical prayers refer to the church as the people of God and the body of Christ. The cycle of prayers at baptism refers to the church as the bride of Christ and mother of the faithful; baptism is viewed as the second birth and the transformation of a person into a Christian. The church as a temple (*ecclesia*) represents the communion of Christians; it is a place of mutual contact with God. At the beginning of the church, believers gathered for worship in their homes. From the 3rd century onwards, special buildings were erected for this purpose for the whole community of believers, where a special room was also set aside for the sacrament of Holy Communion. The basilica as a distinct architectural form appeared at the beginning of the 4th century and since then certain requirements have applied to the construction of churches. Christians do not consider the temple to be the house of God; this concept existed in antiquity when it was believed that a pagan deity lived in the temple and people were not allowed to enter the temple; sacrificial offerings were therefore brought to a specific place, but not to the temple. *However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says: Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool* (Acts 7:48-49). Even the temple of

¹ Berger, R.: Liturgický slovník [Liturgical Dictionary]. Verlag Herder Freiburg im Breisgau, 1999. Transl. Václav Konzal, Jaroslav Vokoun, Zdeněk Lochovský. Praha: Vyšehrad, 2008.

Jerusalem in the time of Christ was not the dwelling place of God. *The Word became flesh* (John 1:14): in the body of the resurrected Christ, transfigured by the Holy Spirit of Christ, the way is opened for those who go to God, to the temple, because they go to hear the Gospel and to participate in the sacramental celebration of God in the church. The Ugljan Didactic Gospel contains the following explanation of the necessity of temple attendance:

И СЛЖХАНА СЛОВА БЖЕГО, КТО ЕГО ПИЛНО СЛЖХАЕ^ѣ, ВЕЛИКІЙ ПОЖИТО^{кѣ} ИМАЕ^ѣ. И ДОБРОДѢЙСТВО СЯ^м СОВѢ ЧИНИ^ѣ, И ТЫ^ѣ ДШН СВОЕ^ѣ. БЖДЕ^ѣ ЗНАТИ КОТОРОЮ ДОРОГОЮ БУДЕ^ѣ ХОДИТИ ПО РОКАЗАНІЮ БЖІЮ ІАКЪ МАЕ^ѣ БЫТИ ТРЪВАЛЫ^ѣ ВЪ ЗАКОНѢ. И СТАЛЫ^ѣ ОУ ВѢРѢ ІАКЪ БЫ^ѣ СЯ МѢЛЪ ЗАХОВАТИ ПРОТІВЬ БУ. И БЛІНЕМУ СВОЕМУ. И КАЖДОМУ ЧЛКУ. ТА^{кѣ} ОУБОГОМУ ІАКЪ И БОГАТОМУ ІА^{кѣ} БЫ^ѣ МА^ѣ ВЪ ВСЕ^ѣ ПАМАТАТИ. НА ОНЫИ ПИШЛЫИ ЧАСЫ ОСТА^ѣНИИ. ТО Е^ѣ СТРАШНЫ^ѣ ДНЪ СЖДНЫ^ѣ.

Those who listen intently to the word of God benefit greatly from hearing it and thus do a good deed for themselves and their souls. [They] shall know which path to follow according to God's commandment, how assiduous to be in the law and steadfast in faith, how to conduct themselves towards God and towards their neighbour and towards every human being, both poor and rich. How they must remember all things, even the coming of the last day, that is, the terrible judgment day.

Manuscript texts of homiletic character reflect the world view and approach to life of man who has not yet forgotten the medieval way of perceiving life and the surrounding world, its spiritual and material dimension, but who had also not yet gained a foothold in the forming culture of the modern age, which was influenced by various aspects of the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, the invention of the printing press and other discoveries. In her description of the axiological system of medieval man,² T. Vendina focuses on humans themselves, their world and society, where God has an important place as the only lasting value. However, in the homiletic works of the Carpathian region emerging in the 17th century, one can already trace a different, more developed perception of the issue of spirituality and spiritual and cultural values.

² Вендина, Т. И.: Средневековый человек в зеркале старославянского языка. [Medieval Man Reflected in the Old Slavonic Language]. Москва: Индрик. 2002, p. 275.

We will especially highlight the values associated with the house of worship, the church and the spiritual life of a simple believer of the Byzantine rite. These are, above all, faith, the communion of believers (the church), the human spirit and the filling of man by the Holy Spirit, particularly with regard to the institution of communal prayer in the house of worship, of man's eschatological views and of the coming of Christ as the incarnated divine love and of prayer and fasting.

The basis of life for a simple believer in the 17th century was faith in God. Faith in God is primarily a personal relationship; human's devotion to God is manifested in one's free consent to all the truth that God gives. Faith is God's gift; it is an exceptional virtue that comes from God and is centred on him. In order to awaken such faith in man, the helping grace of God and the inward help of the Holy Spirit are necessary, who can soothe the heart and turn it to the Lord, purify the mind and give a feeling of happiness in assenting to the truth and the belief in that truth. Faith and its daily manifestation in good works is regarded as the way to salvation and eternal life.

И ѿ вѣхъ ктокожекъ ималъ вѣръ и крѣтиѣся спсень бѣдеѣ.
А ктоорыи не имаетъ вѣры, и не крѣтиѣся, то ѿсоужденъ бѣдеѣ.

Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

The Ugljan Didactic Gospel also contains a moral on faith, describing its three cardinal virtues: faith, hope and love. In anticipation of God's judgment, it is not enough for a person to have faith to reach eternal life, but one should strive to live the earthly life according to the commandments. In this regard, Vendina states that in this way the denominational concept of faith becomes an ethical concept on the basis of which relationships between people are built.³ A person who has faith also has moral strength, virtue, the ability to distinguish right from wrong and to resist evil.

Прѣтла дѣа мала вѣ рѣцѣ своеѣи цноты вѣскѣи. котрыи
стопнамн называюѣся.
Першій стопень ѣсть до нѣа. Вѣра еднѣкъ мѣмо вѣдати,
же вѣрою глаголю не можеѣ члѣкъ збавленѣа достѣпнѣи.
трѣба до вѣры добрыѣ оучникѣ.

³ Вендина, Т. И.: Средневековый человек в зеркале старославянского языка [Medieval Man Reflected in the Old Slavonic Language], pp. 281-282.

[Д]р҃вгїи Ст҃епенѣ ѿ до Неба, Надѣла. бѣ надѣи не можеѣ чл҃вкѣ о҃угоди́ти Бг҃у, а́нѣ збавле́не досту́пнѣи надѣю е́мѣ збавле́ни.

Трѣтїи Ст҃опень ѿ до Неба Любеѣ. во ктѣо любви маетѣ. чтоѣ бѣ Бг҃ѣ мешкаеѣ. и бѣ бѣ неѣ мешкаеѣ.

The Mother of God had many virtues in her heart, which are called the stairway [to heaven].

The first step to heaven is faith. We must know that faith alone will not help a person attain salvation. Faith requires good works.

The second step to heaven is hope. Without hope, man can neither please God nor attain salvation. We are saved in hope.

The third step to heaven is love. For he who has love dwells in God, and God dwells in him.

The extensive text of the manuscript is devoted to love. Love is the first and greatest of the three divine virtues. Love comes from God, resting on faith and concerning the Holy Trinity. Above all, the church teaches to love God and one's neighbour more than anything else, the neighbour being not only a person who lives near you, as in the strict sense of the word, or a close friend or relative, but also a stranger or even an enemy.

Двоа́кѣ ѿ Любеѣ злѣа, и добраа. Злѣа любѣ стѣа. колѣ когѣо любви дла богаѣ стѣа. же бѣ него побныи шкату́лы, комѣры, ѡбо́ры, стаѣковѣ вшеа́кнѣ: и сподѣвѣемѣа ѿдѣ ѿ него взѣа́ти. во така́а Любеѣ нестѣа́чнаа. покѣ чл҃вкѣ бога́ты", по́ты егѣо бѣе любѣаѣ. кланяюѣа е́мѣ. шани́юѣ егѣо. мило́стивѣа Пѣноѣ называ́ютѣ и слѣжаѣ е́мѣ. А колѣ чл҃вкѣ зорѣа́не о҃убѣгыѣ, никтѣо егѣо не любѣиѣ: не смѣтѣаѣ на него и не знаюѣ стѣо.

Злѣа и тѣо любви, кгда когѣо любви же е́стѣ кра́сныа. во покѣ чл҃вкѣ живѣи, здоро́вѣ, тѣо кра́сный ѿ, а колѣ о҃умѣрѣа, тѣело егѣо зорѣеѣа, и бѣ гнѣи пѣюга́выѣ а ѡбе́рнеѣ. Зачнѣ и любѣ ѿ него а ѡмѣннѣа. злѣа и тѣо любви гды когѣо любви ведалѣа грѣхѣ, же з на́ми грѣѣ чннѣ, а́вѣо позвола́еѣ наѣ грѣши́ти. во та́кѣ грѣха́ ненави́днѣ Бг҃ѣ, та́кѣ и того́ чл҃ка котрыѣ грѣшиѣ, кара́еѣ, и гнѣва́еѣа на него. Добраа за́аѣ любѣ стѣа, гды когѣо любви и шани́емо дла мо҃у́дрѣсти: во и та́ми мо́жемо ѿ него мо҃у́дрѣсти а

ΝΑΟΥΧΗΤΗ. ἢ Ἐ ΠΟΤΡΕΒΕ ΝΑΨΟ" ΜΟΪΕΜΟ Ξ ΝΕΓΟ ΔΟΒΡΟΥΙΟ
ΠΟΡΑΔΔ ΜΕΪΤΗ.

Love is twofold: good and evil. Love is evil when we love someone because of their wealth, because they have chests, pantries and stables full of all kinds of possessions, and therefore we wonder what to take from this person. Such love is wrong, for as long as people are rich, everyone loves them, bows down to them, worships them, addresses them as kind masters and ministers to them. But when a person remains poor, no one loves them anymore, no one looks at them and knows them.

It is also an evil love to love someone for their beauty: as long as people are alive and healthy, they are beautiful, but when they die, their bodies fall apart and rot, and the love for those people also withers away. Evil love is also when we love because of sin, that it leads to sin in us, for it allows us to sin. Just as God hates sin, he also hates the person who sins, rebukes them and is angry with them. Good is such love when we love and honour someone for their wisdom as we can learn from their wisdom ourselves and we can also receive wise counsel from them when needed.

God stands at the centre of medieval man's value system, defining the boundaries of what is allowed and what is not, what is good and what is bad. It was religious values that shaped social mores and morals. The most important value in a person's life was faith, which determined the meaning of all human life, shaping the worldview and relationships in society. The contrast between one's own, the correct faith and the false, heretical one is also associated with this concept in a person's mind. Protestants, most often Calvinists, but also representatives of the Catholic Church and the emerging Uniates, i.e. Greek Catholics, were considered heretics. In addition, there was an opposition with the so-called 'heathens', i.e. non-Christians, and the Jews, with the Jewish tradition being considered more valuable than the pagan one, and sometimes also more valuable than the heretical tradition i.e. than a different Christian denomination. Faith in the value system generally did not only mean a personal relationship with God and the affiliation to a particular tradition and community; it was translated into the category of ethics because it characterised relationships in society that were built on trust or distrust. *A loyal person* is both a representative of a particular

denomination and a person who can be trusted. The affiliation to a certain community is thus an evaluation of one's ethical qualities.

An important part of the articles of faith in a multi-denominational and heterogeneous ethnic milieu is the issue of protecting of one's own faith as well as the issue of relationships with non-Christians. The Cyrillic teaching materials express criticism of Calvinists, especially concerning the Eucharist, and criticism of Uniatism, priests and people who converted to the Church of Rome. There is a considerable number of such passages of sincere criticism in the handwritten records; this shows the topicality of the problem. This is highlighted by the calls to defend one's own faith. The polemical attacks clearly reflect the attitude and reaction of the Orthodox part of society to the processes of Latinisation and Reformation that took place in the northeastern part of the Kingdom of Hungary at the end of the 17th century. For example, the texts of the commentaries on the Gospel pericopes in the Uglian Didactic Gospel point to this complex current state of affairs in the church:

И БЫЛИ ЛАТИНЬНИЦИ ВЕСПОЛЪЗ ИЪЗ ГРЕКИ. ПРИ ЕДИННОМ
УСТАВѢ .У ЛѢТѢ И ПИ И Е ЛѢТѢ. И НА ВШНѢКОМ ЕДИНО БЫЛА.
ПРОСКУРОЮ СЛЪЖИЛИ. МАЛЪЖЕНЪКИ СЛЪБЕНИИ МАЛИ. ЦЕРЕМОНИИ
ЕДИНОСТАЙНИИ БЫЛИ ЦРКОБНИИ. ТАКО ТО НИИѢ ГРЕКОВЕ И РЪСЪ.
ДРЪЖИМО ЗА ЛАСКОЮ МИЛОГО БѢ. И НЕТРЕБА СѢ ШЦИПАТИ Ш
ОУСТАВЫ АПЛЪСКОИ. КОТОРАА ТО УСТАВИЛА СѢЛА СЪВОРАА
АПЛЪСКАА ЦРКОВ. ДО СКОИЧЕНА СВѢТѢА НЕ БЪДЕ ЗНИЦІЕНА. Б
ГРЕЦЪКОМ И В РЪЖКОМ ЗАКОНѢ МИЛОМ.

The Latins [representatives of the Latin rite] formed a community with the Greeks [representatives of the Byzantine rite] and they had a common status for 485 years, being united in everything. They had wives with whom they swore oaths, they conducted church ceremonies together, as now the Greeks and the Russians celebrate because they are together for the love of the dear God. There is no need to separate ourselves from the apostolic provisions established by the holy universal apostolic church, for the church will not be destroyed by Greek or Russian beloved law, not even until the end of time.

Another moral criticises Lutherans for being traitors to the church as they disobey the holy church and wilfully depart from its law because they listen to Luther's false teachings.

НЕВѢРНЫ́ХЪ ЛЮДІЙ. КОТОРЫ́И НЕПОСЛАВШИИ ЦѢКВИ СТО́И. И
ВЫСТУПЖЮ́ И ЗАКОНЪ. НА СВОСВЯЗСТВО. СЛЖУЮЧИ НАОУ́КИ
ФАЛЬШИВО́И ЛЮТЕРЬСКО́И.

In other contemporary texts, the criticism was much harsher. Well known in this regard is, for instance, the Sokyrnytsia manuscript, which includes direct insults to the supporters of unification.⁴

тыи священници, которые прияша сатанинскую вѣру
през унѣю, за попадѣ, за чада своя двоякая, за покой и за
славу сегосвѣтную краткую, продашася римляномъ во
всепугубное безуміе ихъ.

*The priests who have embraced the satanic faith in the union,
through their wives and children, for peace and short-term
glory in this world, have sold themselves to the Romans [rep-
resentatives of the Latin rite] into their destructive madness.*

Relationships with non-Christians are clearly defined in the Uzhhorod Pseudozonar Manuscript:⁵ the document imposes a prohibition of eating

⁴ For more see Вашичкова, С.: Реакция на процесс латинизации, отраженная в текстах Угрянских рукописей [Reaction to the process of Latinisation reflected in the texts of Uglian manuscripts]. In: Medzikultúrne vzťahy východnej cirkvi s latinskou v Uhorsku do konca 18. storočia. Košice – Bratislava [Intercultural Relations of the Eastern Church with the Latin Church in the Kingdom of Hungary by the End of the 18th Century. Košice – Bratislava]: Centrum spirituality Východ-Západ Michala Lacka in Košice – Teologická fakulta Trnavskej univerzity – Slavistický ústav Jána Stanislava SAV, 2017. pp. 153-170.

⁵ Ženuch, P. – Beľakova, E. V. – Najdenova, D. – Zubko, P. – Marinčák, Š.: Užhorodský rukopisný Pseudozonar. Pravidlá mníšskeho a svetského života z prelomu 16.–17. storočia / Ужгородський рукописний Псевдозонар. Правила монашеской и светской жизни рубежа XVI–XVII вв. [Uzhhorod Pseudozonar Manuscript. Rules of Monastic and Secular Life from the Turn of the 16th – 17th Centuries]. Monumenta Byzantino-Slavica et Latina Slovaciae, V. Bratislava: Slavistický ústav Jána Stanislava SAV; Slovenský komitét slavistov: VEDA, vydavateľstvo SAV; Moscow: Institut rossijskoj istorii RAN; Sofia: Kirilo-Methodievski naučen centăr BAN; Košice: Centrum spirituality Východ-Západ Michala Lacka, 2018, p. 45 and XLV,1-29; LXX,6-23; LXXII,3. On this subject, see also Ženuch, P.: Rukopis s pravidlami svetského a cirkevného života z prelomu 16. a 17. storočia v kontexte medzikonfesionálnych vzťahov pod Karpatmi [A manuscript with rules of secular and ecclesiastical life from the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries in the context of interfaith relations under the Carpathian Mountains]. In: Medzikultúrne vzťahy východnej cirkvi s latinskou v Uhorsku do konca 18. storočia [Intercultural Relations of the Eastern Church with the Latin Church in the Kingdom

with non-Christians and mixed marriages. Although a generally favourable attitude towards Jews, in some places even better than towards Calvinists, can be found in the didactic Gospels, the Pseudozonar warns of the ceremonial impurity of wheat and oil, products bought from Jews, while forbidding their use in the preparation of liturgical bread. Communication with heathens could defile a Christian and automatically led to his or her excommunication, except in situations where the pagan converted to Orthodoxy during that communication.

In the value system, the opposite of God is evil. Evil talk, malice is something that characterises only humans, but it does not come from God. It is inherent in the earthly nature of man, who is as inclined towards good as towards evil. Sin plays a decisive role in people's lives. Sin can affect time, space, work, the relationship with God, the formation of social bonds, ritual practices – a person's whole life and their relationship with the world.

Historical time is divided by sin: before and after the fall of Adam, before and after the birth of Christ, before and after the Last Judgment. The stages of human history follow one another according to key events in the history of sin: the transition from original perfection to a state characterised by the presence of sin, the fall of Adam and Eve; the process of salvation, that is, deliverance from sin begins with the incarnation of Christ; end times will bring final judgment on sinners and eternal glory to those who have not sinned. Within this historical time, individual time passes: it begins at birth when a person takes upon themselves the sin of their ancestors; it continues after baptism when, freed from original sin, a person is given the opportunity to fight off the sins around them; and it ends with physical death, when they are eternally condemned or saved because of their deeds. Sin also defines space: there is no place for it in paradise; the earth is full of sins, but it is also possible to create a sin-free environment on earth such as a monastery; the afterlife is also divided into parts according to the presence or absence of sin in it, into heaven and hell – there is also the notion of purgatory in the Catholic tradition.

The sin is at the beginning of a series of individual and collective rituals such as baptism, confession, fasting, repentance, prayer and pilgrimage – all of them are carried out for one specific purpose: to limit the impact of sin on the human being and on the world as a whole. Sin also manifests itself in

of Hungary until the End of the 18th Century]. Košice: Centrum spirituality Východ-Západ Michala Lacka in Košice, Teologická fakulta Trnavskej univerzity; Bratislava Slavistický ústav Jána Stanislava SAV, 2017, pp. 45-69.

a whole range of relationships, which form the basis of a person's life. Power can lead to ambition and vanity, social status to envy, economic activity can lead to avarice. All aspects of a person's life in society can lead to and are permeated by sin. The society to which a person belongs is a congregation of sinners. For forgiveness of sins and healing of the soul, man turns to God.

Sin also determines the dynamics of the relationship between body and soul within one person. Once their original perfection has been tainted by sin, soul and body exist together in a state of constant tension, out of which sin arises again. On the one hand, there is carnality as the source of hard-to-control impulses, but on the other hand, there is the nebulous spirit, which does not own the body where it resides, yet it is constantly hindered in the effort to do good. The punishment for original sin also determines the structure of sin. The flesh must work hard to survive, and the intellectual labour which results from the curiosity of a strong spirit overcomes the ignorance into which the flesh has been plunged by sin.

Every sermon focuses primarily on sin and includes reflections on the origin and existence of sin, its impermissibility and harmfulness. Mankind began to speak of sin before anything else. The fall of Adam and Eve is recorded in the Scripture; the church speaks of sin to make people feel a revulsion against evil and to steer them towards good; Christians regularly speak of sins in confession during their lives and before they die. Apparent anti-value thus becomes a subject much more discussed than virtue itself.

At the other end of the value system is *purity*. In cultural perception, the attribute 'čistý' (meaning 'pure' or 'clean') represents an absolutely positive value, which is associated with such concepts as *white, first, new, pristine, right, holy, divine* and with the meaning of *one's own*. The opposite of pure or clean is *dirty, old, used, sinful* and *foreign (different)*. Everything can be clean: *a person, an object, a plant, an animal, a time, a place, a natural phenomenon*, etc. An important part of the concept of purity is the religious perception of this name for the condition, even though the religious context of the meaning is later and figurative.

In the spiritual literature,⁶ the term *čistý* (in this context *clean*) is used to denote such objects and realities which people could use because they were harmless to them. Unclean things and realities were to be avoided because

⁶ See, for example, Ďurica, J. (ed.): *Stručný katolícky teologický slovník* [Concise Dictionary of Catholic Theology]. Bratislava: Dobrá kniha, 2016, p. 185-186 and Lapko, R.: *Čistý a nečistý vo Svätom písme*. [Clean and Unclean in Holy Scripture] In: *Slavica Slovaca*, 2020, vol. 55, issue 2, p. 307-312.

they defiled people. Among the unclean were realities related to sexual intercourse, decay and death (semen, menstruation, sweat or corpse) and unclean animals (reptiles, swine, etc.). Purity denotes God's holiness and is therefore sometimes equated with the sacred, while impurity falls into the category of profane concepts. Every transition from the sacred to the profane and vice versa causes impurity, which necessarily calls for purification.

Purity is a concept common to all older religions. In fact, purity is a prerequisite for man to be able to approach sacred, cultic objects. The Dictionary of Biblical Theology⁷ points out that the meaning of the word *čisty* (in this context *pure*) may additionally include the concept of moral virtue. However, purity is gained through rites, not moral actions, and is lost through physical contact with unclean objects. Purity means legitimacy for the participation in the cult or in the life of the holy community. It involves physical purity, the removal of what is unclean, sick and corrupt, constituting a protection against paganism. Purity governs the use of all that is holy: everything that pertains to the cult must be pure and must not be approached inappropriately. Though also understood as sacred, some morally good powers of life still cause defilement. Purification is therefore achieved by waiting (usually until the end of the day on which the defilement occurred; in the event of suspected illness, a time limit of one week is set, after which a person may be considered purified) or by taking part in purifying rites: washing the body and clothes, offering sacrifices for expiation or other rites on the Day of Atonement.

Jesus' teaching adds a new aspect to the perception of purity as a value: already the prophets declare that neither washing nor sacrifices as signs of ritual purification have any value in themselves if they are not accompanied by an inner purification and an effort to maintain purity of person and heart. We find in Psalms that the love of God is directed to those who are pure in heart (Psalms 73:1), that those may approach God who have innocent hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to vanity and swear deceitfully (Psalms 24:3-4), and that the Lord will reward those who are righteous and whose hands are clean (Psalms 18:21). Therefore, the main requirement for a person to be attached to God is cleanness of hands, purity of heart, flesh, prayer, i.e. irreproachable moral conduct. This purity can only be given to man by God, which is why we turn to him with a plea for mercy: 'God, create in me a pure heart' (Psalms 51:12). Purity means resist-

⁷ Léon-Dufour, X. (ed.): Slovník biblickej teológie [Dictionary of Biblical Theology]. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1990, pp. 163-168.

ance to immorality, and it is especially about abstaining from and avoiding everything that could pollute and endanger the soul. Genuine purity is the capacity to love, but perfect love for God is incompatible with a tainted heart. Purity of heart enables us to see in God not only our supreme Lord, but also a loving Father. The pure is the one who triumphs over selfishness and is able to live according to their gifts for the benefit of others.⁸

In Jesus' words, the only uncleanness is internal (Mark 7:14-23): 'Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.' From within, from the human heart, come evil thoughts. In this context, one can point out the observation that the ideal of purity is God, and therefore all heavenly creation is pure in itself, and that is why demons are also called unclean spirits. The observance of fasting, prayer and almsgiving serves to purify the believer.

A human being can be pure as well. In folk culture there is an idea of the original impurity of the human body because, though created by God, it was later defiled by Satan. Unlike the body, the human soul is originally pure as it was breathed into the body by God. The purity of man depends on the physical cleanliness of the body and clothes, on age (children and the elderly are pure, middle-aged people may not be pure), on sex and physiological condition (health, fertility, all physiological phenomena associated with female fertility from menstruation to pregnancy and postpartum purification were considered impure) and on the type of diet (Lenten food was considered pure). Purity is influenced by a person's moral and religious conduct (fasting, prayer, baptism, receiving the sacraments) and verbal expressions (silence and prayer are pure, swearing and cursing defile).

Folk tradition knows its own rituals, for which purity was essential. These are the so-called rites of initiation, e.g. at the beginning of farm-work, e.g. ploughing, sowing, mowing, weaving, etc. The farmer started his first ploughing and the first sowing of the year in a clean white shirt, he washed himself and abstained from intercourse with his wife on the eve of the first ploughing and sowing. The symbolism of the colour white is also carried over into the outcome of the work, which is why flax or wheat was sown from a white sack or in a white shirt to achieve a good result, and sometimes not only the man but also the whole family wore clean clothes during the sowing so that the rye would be harvested clean. Cleanliness

⁸ Léon-Dufour, X. (ed.): *Slovník biblickej teológie* [Dictionary of Biblical Theology]. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1990, pp. 163-168, and <http://www.katechizmus.sk/index.php> [17 May 2022].

was essential when beginning traditional women's work, e.g. women had to start spinning and weaving in a state of cleanness, after prayer, even while working they tried not to be angry 'so as not to spoil the threads'.⁹

In folk thought whole nations could be pure and impure; their purity was determined according to the principle of 'own – foreign'.¹⁰ Foreign nations were regarded as heathens and unclean. In this context baptism is viewed not only as gaining true faith, but also as joining the community. The presence of strangers or foreigners defiles the place and food of Christians.¹¹ Even personal relationships with people of different faiths were condemned, women were sent to convents as punishment, men were excluded from the church, etc.

The eschatological teaching of the church is based on the belief in the immortality of the soul, which is a common value for all Christians. The life goal of believers is to attain the kingdom of heaven. According to medieval ideas, man did not die but fell asleep forever, hence the name of the Dormition, for example, the Dormition of the Theotokos (15 August). The idea of what happens to the soul of a Christian after death is not elaborated in the homilies, but in folk tradition, there is information about it of apocryphal nature. However, in the Ugljan Didactic Gospel, we find interesting observations about the souls of those who passed away before Christ's coming to earth.

Двоаѣкъи были люде на свѣтѣхъ перѣ прїиѣхъ^м Хѣбы^м,
ѣдны погане, друѣгѣи хрѣтіане, погане были ѣвѣпѣтане,
Филїстїмове, молвїтѣ, і ѣншіи народове, вѣ ѡни не
вѣрїли вѣ Хѣ. котрыи мѣлз прїити на свѣтѣхъ. Хрѣтіане заѣхъ
были ѡ початѣхъ свѣтѣхъ. Іадамъ, Нѡи, Лѡтѣхъ, Мелѣхисѣдекъ:
вѣ ѡни вѣрїли вѣ Хѣ, котрыи мѣлз прїити на свѣтѣхъ.
таѣже і ѣншіи хрѣтіане были, прѣрци, котрыи прѣрковали ѡ
прїиѣхъ Хѣ^м, тыи тѣ вѣхъ люде, прѣ нарожѣныи Хѣбы^м.
коли оумирали, ишли до пѣкла, аѣ не на ѣдно^м были
мѣлзѣ. погане были вѣ гѣенѣхъ ѡгнѣно^м, гдѣ трѣпѣклъ мѡуки:

⁹ Валенцова, М. М.: Чистый [Clean]. In: Славянские древности: этнолингвистический словарь [Slavic Antiquities: ethno-linguistic dictionary], т. 5. Москва: Международные отношения, 2012, pp. 547-552.

¹⁰ For more details see the article Белова, О. В.: Свой – чужой [Friend or foe]. In: Славянские древности: этнолингвистический словарь, т. 4. [Slavic Antiquities: ethno-linguistic dictionary] Москва: Международные отношения. 2009, pp. 581-582.

¹¹ Ženuch, P. – Beľakova, E. V. – Najdenova, D. – Zubko, P. – Marínčák, Š.: Užhorodský rukopisný Pseudozonar [Uzhhorod Pseudozonar Manuscript], op. cit., pp. 45-69.

Хрѣтіанѣ зѣ быхѣ на ѿшо^м мѣстѣхъ: котрѣе называе^тсѣ ѿ хлѣанноу пекелю. перѣ ты^м тѣе мѣстѣце называно дѣномъ ѿбраамовы^м. гдѣ хрѣтіанѣ жѣноу мѣки не тѣпѣхѣн.

There were two kinds of people in the world before Christ came: some were pagan, others Christian. The heathens were the Egyptians, Philistines, Moabites and other nations because they did not believe in Christ, who was to come into the world. But Christians from the beginning of the world were: Adam, Noah and Melchizedek, for they believed in Christ who was to come into the world. But there were also other Christians, who were prophets and prophesied Christ's coming. When they all died before Christ was born, they went to a special place in hell. The heathens were in Gehenna, where they suffered torments, the Christians, on the other hand, were in another place, which is called 'otchlañ' – 'the mouth of hell' [limbo, vestibule or anteroom of hell]; before that, this place was called Abraham's bosom, where the Christians suffered no great torments.

Otchlañ, the mouth of hell, in medieval Catholic terminology *limbo*, or *the vestibule or anteroom of hell*, is the state or abode of those souls who are neither in heaven, nor in hell, nor in purgatory. According to medieval ideas, the souls of those who did not deserve eternal horrible torments but could not be admitted to heaven ended up in limbo. Limbo houses the souls of unbaptised children and the souls of righteous non-Christians (for example, the souls of biblical prophets) who died before the birth of Christ. In Dante's work, *limbo* represents the first circle of hell.

In the manuscript of the Uglian Didactic Gospel, there is an apocryphal account of the descent of Jesus Christ into hell. It reads that all the holy fathers who dwelt in limbo were overjoyed because they believed they would be saved soon after the coming of Christ into the world. Among those are not only all the witnesses of Christ's birth and his earthly life such as the prophet Simeon or John the Baptist, who after their deaths went to limbo to announce the coming salvation to everyone there as well. After his Passion and physical death, Christ also descended into hell. However, in three days he emerged and brought with him the souls of the holy fathers, Adam, Noah, Lot, Melchizedek and the other prophets and patriarchs of the Old Testament, and ushered them into heaven, leaving the Egyptians, the Philistines and other nations in hell.

Just as *law* is a set of norms and customs that govern relations among people, so the notion of *justice* in man's perception has been inextricably linked to God. This is what the concept of the Last Judgment is based on. *Just* in this context means nothing other than 'true, correct and objective'. People turned to God, enumerated their sins in confession and expected just retribution for them, hoping not for vengeance but for mercy and forgiveness of sins. Like many others, the concept of *justice* is both religious and ethical. Belief in God's justice compelled people to judge their actions in accordance with the rules of morality and ethics.

Since a human being has a soul and a body, spiritual growth presupposes physical action: fasting is therefore always accompanied by prayer. A prayer is essentially every expression of reverence for God; it is the fundamental activity of religion. The culmination of Christian prayer is the celebration of the Eucharist and other sacraments. The prayer of the gathered community includes the private prayer of the individual, since an individual is behind every communal prayer. Prayer as communication with God requires total concentration. Prayer accompanies fasting, which serves as an expression of humility before God: one petitions the Lord from a position of total devotion and dependence, and God mercifully listens to one's supplications. The faith of a person praying that they will be heard is the condition for prayer: *if anyone does not doubt in their heart, but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them* (Mark 11:23).

ω цю вѣдѣ^а просити ѿго Сѣоу мѣти. ѿно вѣдѣса
 вѣ ѡпѣкѣж ѿ вѣ мо^и прѣ вѣрѣ своѣ. ѿ прѣ полагѣшѣнзствѣ.
 ѿдномѣ сътворителеви своемѣ гѣж вѣж. тебѣи пекѣлны^а
 моца не вчинитѣ тобѣ ниць. аѣфаючи оу гѣ вѣѣ. тѣ
 видѣши ѿко ѿго сѣла мѣти ѡвѣцѣѣ^и ти рѣговѣти. вѣ
 вѣшнѣкѣи фразѣнъкѣ. ѿ вѣронѣти ѿ чѣакогѣо не прѣтѣла.

What shall I ask of his Holy Grace? One thing: place yourself under the care and rule of your Creator and Lord God, through your faith and obedience. And then the infernal powers will not harm you. Trust in the Lord God, for you see that he promises to defend you from all temptations and to protect you from the enemy.

The fast itself consists of giving up food, drink and sexual intercourse for one or more days. For reasons of asceticism, supplication, mourning and purification, fasting has an important function. The feeling of hunger and

thirst is an expression of the necessities of life; the conscious renunciation of physical needs raises the spiritual life to a higher level. Hunger and thirst is a positive reality only when one approaches fasting with the aim of opening one's heart to God, a different kind of hunger is considered evil, and since the time of the Old Testament, there has been a commandment to feed the hungry and give water to the thirsty.¹² Jesus, too, says that the hungry and thirsty shall be filled (Luke 6:21). There may be various reasons and causes for fasting, but the main one is always the attitude of humility and the determination to accept God's actions and thus to place oneself in the presence of God.

Fasting was also required by Jewish tradition. We know from Scripture about the forty-day fast of Moses (Exodus 34:28) and Elijah (1 Kings 19:8). It also served as a model for the forty-day fast of Jesus in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-2), who began his messianic mission by putting himself into the hands of God the Father. The example of Jesus' fast is a model for all Christians.

* * *

The didactic commentaries, collections of sermons and morals on the texts of Holy Scripture reflect the value system of the Christians who used them and for whom such texts were intended. The Ugljan Didactic Gospel also elucidates the everyday life of the Orthodox Christians of the Mukachevo eparchy at the turn of the 17th–18th centuries, who were tested by various unfavourable social situations.

In this study we examined selected expressions of religious life that were associated with issues about dogmatics and faith, which is conveyed in various expressions of piety. The value system of Christian life described in the studied source texts from the 17th–18th centuries still constitutes an integral part of the spiritual paradigm of the faithful of today's church of the Byzantine rite. In the current situation of a crisis of values, even such a conservative view on spiritual tradition may represent an opportunity for progressive thinking to preserve the traditional cultural values of society.

As expected, the didactic Cyrillic records of Carpathian origin, create an image of right living and warn against falling from God's grace because of sin. The morals offer the only reliable way to overcome any crisis through the avowal and protection of one's own values, which are God, goodness and faith.

¹² Léon-Dufour, X. et al. (eds.): *Slovník biblickej teológie* [Dictionary of Biblical Theology]. Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1969. Transl. Ján Dieška SJ, Emil Krapka SJ, Alojz Litva SJ, Vojtech Mikula SJ. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1990, pp. 287-290.