

Introduction

Catholic social teaching has become known in Romania, especially after 1990. During the Communist period, only some historical aspects or some of its doctrinal outcomes were presented in the handbooks of the Faculties of Orthodox or Catholic Theology, or in those of the seminaries.¹ This was because of the policy of the State, and of the fact that the governing elite were not only persecuting the Church, but also thought that they were the only ones who could have a social doctrine, a secular one.

Some attempts, like the one of the Orthodox Patriarch Justinian Marina, who wrote *Apostolatul social (Social Apostolate)*,² which tried to find a way to bring together secular and religious social doctrine, can be noted in this period, but they did not contribute, as we would expect, to wider dissemination of the social doctrine of the Church. Moreover, this work has later been criticised by some of the historians who investigated his life and activity.

Therefore, shortly after 1990, when the Faculties of Theology that had been closed by the Communist regime were reopened and new books in theology could be published, this topic started to be studied again, both in Catholic and Orthodox contexts. Some of the authors preferred to emphasize the historical aspects of the topic, others its practical outcomes, while others still tried to take ideas from the Catholic tradition and put them into practice in the other, or used arguments from the Catholic confessional space in the other one. Therefore, using the information from the books or articles that have investigated these topics, we will try to synthesize here the way in which the aforementioned topic is presented in the Faculties of Orthodox and Catholic Theology in Romania after 1990. Our investigation will not only be a review of the literature, but also bring to attention the way in which Catholic Social Teaching has influenced the thinking of Romanian theologians like Radu Preda³ in the Orthodox tradition, and become important even for sociological and political discourse.

Catholic Social Teaching in Catholic and Orthodox Faculties of Theology in Romania after 1990

When one speaks about Catholic social teaching and its reception in Romania, one must mention, for sure, the name of Father Emil Dumea. Born in 1958, he is now Professor in the Faculty of Catholic Theology of Iași (Moldavian part of Romania).⁴ The former Rector of the Franciscan Roman-Catholic Institute (2000-2008), he graduated from the Roman-Catholic Theological Institute of Iași in 1984, and then from the Faculty of Ecclesiastical history of the Gregorian University in Rome (1986-1990), where he defended his PhD in 1997, under the coordination of Professor Kulič Jakov SJ.⁵ Although he is specialised in the History of the Church, rather than in Social Ethics or Morals, he has published several books on this latter topic.⁶ As the holder of the course on Catholic Social Doctrine, in 2015 he published a book in Romanian entitled *Social Catholic Doctrine in the Contemporary World*,⁷ which completes the ideas of an earlier book where he presents the landmarks of Catholic

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social doctrine.⁸ In both of them, not only does he present the history of Catholic Social Doctrine, starting from *Lumen Gentium* and preceding attempts to establish such a doctrine, but at the same time he investigates its meaning for the development of contemporary theology, and also its possible outcomes for the Romanian context. Of course, in books like the one dedicated to the relationship between the Church and state in Europe,⁹ where he investigates the relationships between these two institutions during different ages and highlights the changes that took place in different times between them, he also uses information about the aforementioned topic, referring to it and offering explanations from papal encyclical letters to some events. The same can also be noted in his book dedicated to the way relationships between the Catholic Church and Communism are reflected on the Internet.¹⁰ His ideas are clearly expressed, well documented and easy to read and understand. Familiarised with a methodological approach, he shows even from the beginning that the purpose of the investigation of Catholic Social teaching in his area is a missionary one,¹¹ but it is always linked with other important domains of the activity and mission of the Church and its theoretical research.

Interest in this topic should be noted in other confessional areas. For example, amongst the Orthodox, Radu Preda is one of the theologians who are also interested in the Social Doctrine of the Church. With his background in places like Hamburg, Vienna or Heidelberg, he proposes topics like the relationship between the Church and State in contemporary Romania and its challenges,¹² or an investigation into Communism and its main elements from an Orthodox perspective.¹³ Since 2014, he has been investigating the last topic further, in a practical way, as Director of the Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes in Romania and the Memory of Romanian Exile. As a theologian, he has been the first in Romania to propose lectures on social theology, at the end of 1990s. Therefore, although he is not an author who speaks only, or primarily, about Catholic Social doctrine, we should mention that he often uses references to it in his books, not only in comparison to other fields and confessions (like Orthodox or Protestant), but also in order to present the solutions offered by the Catholic tradition. Since he is considered the first professor of Social Theology and, up to now, the best known for it within Romanian orthodoxy, we think it is important to mention him there.¹⁴

We should also mention the fact that civil society, or lay people in Romania, are also interested in some aspects of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church. Such an example can be found in Professor Radu Carp, of the Faculty of Political Sciences of Bucharest University. Close to Radu Preda, with whom he founded the inter-religious and inter-cultural institute "Inter" from Cluj,¹⁵ he is also interested in the political outcomes of the social doctrine of the Church. Therefore, in books like: *The Principles of Common Thinking. Christian Demo-*

cratic Doctrine and Social Action, published in 2006,¹⁶ *Seeking for the Common Good*, published a couple of years later,¹⁷ *Religion in Transition* of 2009,¹⁸ or the text dedicated to the relationships between religion, politics and rule of law,¹⁹ he uses examples from Catholic Social Doctrine and its implementation in the Catholic tradition as models for illustrating some of his theories or the solutions he proposes for the Romanian situation.

Of course, he is only one of many other important voices from the civil space who have become more interested in social theology and the interaction between politics and theology in the public sphere. This also explains why an important publishing house in Romania, located until 2014 in Cluj-Napoca and since then, in Bucharest, namely Eikon, has initiated a collection entitled "Theologia socialis." In this series, theologians, historians, politicians, specialists in law, politics, media and many others offer interesting and useful approaches to different aspects of social theology, using, where necessary, aspects of Catholic Social Doctrine and aspects of the official documents of the Holy See. A sign that confirms the relevance of this collection and of the topics presented there for readers consists in the fact that the most important meeting of librarians and a bookfest from there has awarded this Publishing House²⁰ with an important prize. A quick look at contemporary research in this field will show that almost all the titles from this collection are quoted in every serious investigation dedicated to one of the topics related to the social teaching of the Church and social action.

Conclusions

As we have tried to emphasize here too, social teaching has become an important topic in Romanian theological and lay debates after 1989. Professors from the Faculties of Catholic or Orthodox Theology have proposed lectures on this topic and used many elements of Catholic Social Doctrine to speak about topics like the relationships between Church and State or the interaction between politics and theology. Catholic Social Teaching is not only an important topic for Catholic theology, where professors and researchers like Father Emil Dumea have published several books, highlighting both the historical landmarks of this domain, its contents and relevance, but also for the Orthodox one, where people like Radu Preda or Ion Petrică have used important elements of it in comparisons or as examples. It has been also important for the public sphere, for political analysts, for historians and specialists in different research fields, where people like Radu Carp have deepened several aspects of it, or important publishing houses have initiated collections where it has an important place.

Its use and increasing relevance in today's Romania shows the desire of people from this area to be more open-minded and to find solutions to their daily problems by using information from this tradition, or by learning from their previous experiences.

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¹Like: Ioan Rămureanu, Milan Şesan, Teodor Bodogae, *Istoria Bisericească Universală (Universal Church History)*, 1st volume, Press of the Biblical and Missionary Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 1987.

²Justinian Marina, *Apostolat social (Pilde și îndemnuri pentru cler) (Social Apostolate – Stories and Examples for the Clergy)*, Press of the Biblical and Missionary Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 1949.

³Romanian orthodox theologian, professor at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology of “Babeş-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, and Executive President of the Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and the Memory of Romanian Exile (IICCMER), in Bucharest. He was also the founder of Social Theology in Romanian Orthodox Theological Faculties. Among his most important books, the following can be mentioned: Radu Preda, *Biserica în stat – o invitație la dezbateri (Church in the State – an Invitation to Debate)*, Scripta Press, Bucharest, 1999; Radu Preda, *Comunismul – o modernitate eșuată (Communism – a Failed Modernity)*, Eikon Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2009; Radu Preda, *Cultura dialogului – pledoarii și exerciții (The Culture of Dialogue – Pleas and Exercises)*, Eikon Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2009; Radu Preda, *Jurnal cu Petre Țuțea (Diary with Petre Țuțea)*, Humanitas Press, Bucharest, 1992; Radu Preda, *Ortodoxia & ortodoxiile: studii social-teologice (Orthodoxy and Orthodoxies – Socio-theological Studies)*, Eikon Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2010.

⁴For more information about his biography, see:

http://emildumea.ro/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/CV-Emil-Dumea-29-sept.-2016_romana.pdf, accessed 12. 09. 2018.

⁵*Ibidem*.

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¹¹DUMEA, Emil, *Doctrina socială catolică în lumea contemporană (Catholic Social Doctrine in contemporary world)*, p. 2-3.

¹²PREDA, Radu, *Biserica în stat – o invitație la dezbateri (Church in the State – an Invitation to Debate)*.

¹³Cf. PREDA, Radu, *Comunismul – o modernitate eșuată (Communism – a Failed Modernity)*; Radu Preda, *Cultura dialogului – pledoarii și exerciții (Culture of Dialogue – Pleas and Exercises)*.

¹⁴Of course, there are also other authors like father Ion Petrică, who is specialised in social assistance and published several books on this topic, but he is rather perceived as a voice of sociology that as one of the theology, because of his approaches and space of work. See, for example: Ion Petrică, *Biserica și asistența socială în România (Church and Social Assistance in Romania)*, Press of European Institute, Iași, 2007 (there he not only presents a detailed situation of the social assistance from this space, its challenges and results, but also presents a history of the problem and speaks about the Social Doctrine of Catholic Church and its relevance for the development of this topic and its outcomes in the investigated space), and: Ion Petrică, *Religiozitatea și instituțiile sociale în România (Religiosity and social institutions in Romania)*, Press of European Institute, Iași, 2013.

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