

# **CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN SOCIAL CARE PLAN. CHRISTIAN SELFLESSNESS**

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**Abstract:** The author presents a perspective of the social work assistance in Romania through the history of the relation between the state and the Christian Church. In the public social work in Romania, because of the relationship of Church-State cooperation, you will meet priests performing spiritual activity not only in social work centers; find chapels or churches built in the public spaces of social care funded entirely by the State, find partnerships between Dioceses and the District Centres for Social Assistance and so on, things that can not be done or would be difficult to achieve in the European Union, where there are secular states such as France, Spain, Netherlands, Belgium.

**Key words:** cooperation Church-State, political implication, social inclusion, Romanian history, differences between Western European countries and Romania

Cooperation between Church and State in terms of social action must be based on the assumption of human dignity.

The Christianization process of Europe started a long time ago, from the Enlightenment period, if not earlier to some people, and it brought a large part of the secularization of the world states. Thus, most of the countries of the world, sooner or later, completely broke from the influences or even symbiotic ties with the Church, they displayed before the Enlightenment (between XVII-XIX centuries).

Father of "sociology" is August Comte. In the work, *The subject matter of sociology*, professor Floare Chișea says: "The Sociology term was first used by the French philosopher Auguste Comte in 1839, after initially the body of knowledge about society was included in the following disciplines: social history, social statistics, social physics, etc. *The social Physics ...* A. Comte believes that the new discipline is designed to crown sciences that have already been formed, which in his opinion is an ascending series that can't be modified or inverted, starting with mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry and ending with biology. In the mid-nineteenth century, A. Comte thought that this pyramid remains incomplete because it turns off only at the living being sciences. In his opinion, the science supposed to conclude this pyramid and become "queen of sciences" will be precisely the new discipline, which he calls "sociology", which will be designed to carry out the "positive" study "positive" of human acts." (Chișea, 2006, p. 87).

Comte argued that the single highest form of knowledge is the description of sensory phenomena. „Comte argued that there are three stages of human faith: the theological, the metaphysical and ultimately the positive one, so named because it is limited to what is given in a positive way, avoiding speculation.” (Blackburn, 1999, p. 311).

Starting from such statements, European states, especially Western states, gradually broke away from the influences of Christian nature and aligned to other current, rather political, which will later lead to the

separation of secular power of any form of religion and any metaphysical influence.

Regarding Romania, it is a factor that tends to contradict the "trend" adopted by many developed countries of the European Union (France, Netherlands, Belgium, Spain etc.) on total secularization and Church involvement not even as an advisory partner in political matters or the decisions made. In our country, Church-State relationship is very good. State supports Church. It is notably here the Protocol on cooperation in social inclusion, to regulate the actions of cooperation between the Romanian Government and the Romanian Patriarchate, signed by the both mentioned institutions on 2 October 2007 in Bucharest, at the Victoria Palace.

Regarding social work, we can even speak of an intertwining. Church representatives (priests) are present in foster homes too and in all institutions of social protection, whether on the child protection social work gerontological etc.

We could see which were the church-state relations in Romania from the beginning, that is to say from the foundation of Romanian states. In the history of Romania we find the following: „ After the Byzantine model, the ruler of the Romanian Land was the representative of divinity on earth, the Lord's anointed. By setting the Metropolia (here is about the Metropolia of the Romanian Land) he strengthened his throne, his position, becoming, like the Byzantine emperor, a civil and religious monarch. Being "anointed" gave the monarch, like the metropolitan bishop, priestly powers. The ruler was "anointed" by the metropolitan bishop, but the metropolitan bishop in turn had to be recognized as shepard of the belivers by the ruler.” (Romanian Academy, 2001, p 250).

This relationship did not work in the Middle Ages, only politically and not only at the administrative level, institutional of state/ruler involvement in helping the Church as spiritual power, but it was a significant

relationship in terms of assisting and then developing a system of social assistance.

In “The History of Romanians” we find evidence certifying the said by me above: “In May 1359, by the decision of the Ecumenical Patriarch and his Synod was officially inaugurated the Metropolia of the Romanian Land (named of the Ungrovlachia, ie of the Romanian Land bordering Hungary) by shifting the seat from Vicina. Dependent on the Patriarchy of Constantinople, the new diocese was to have its head metropolitans appointed by the Byzantium. The headquarters of Metropolia of the Romanian Land was at Curtea de Arges, the capital of the country.”

In 1370, in the reign of Vladislav Vlaicu, after potting the Banat of Severin in the Romanian Land’s borders and preventing Catholic proselytism, came into being a second Metropolitan Church of the Romanian Country, Severinului Metropolitan Church, whose first metropolitan bishop was Antim (1370-circa 1381), resident at Severin or perhaps at Vodita Monastery. His successor was Athanasie (circa 1381-1403). Once it returns to a single Metropolitan Church, whose headquarters is usually where the reign resides in the capital city. From Curtea de Arges capital city moved to Targoviste, in the reign of Mircea cel Batran. The seat of the Metropolitan Church remained in Curtea de Arges, the moving in Targoviste being made only in Neagoe Basarab time.” (Romanian Academy, 2001, pp. 250-251).

In light of the above we showed that the Church in our country has had an important role in terms of social assistance, which began and developed first near Church (especially during the Romanian voievodes), so that afterward, the transition from traditional Christian assisting in developing a professionalized social system, in Romania, to bring together the Church with the State. In Romania, Church-State relationship is not one of neutrality, and on social assistance things are completely different from other European Union countries. Perhaps it all starts with the genesis of the Romanian people. The difference between Romania and the European states

is given by this issue, namely how the Romanian people came into being. That is why, we speak of a great rapprochement between Church and State, especially on social assistance. I chose the quotes that I will play, both of which outstanding the difference that occurs between Romania and other European countries on social assistance and how the State can collaborate with the Church.

Below I will refer to two texts belonging to personalities of our nation, texts that seek a characterization of the peculiarities of the Romanian people.

The first text belongs to the famous philosopher, psychologist, educator, politician, playwright, Romanian theater director, academician and president of the Romanian Academy between 1938-1941, Romania's leading figure in the first half of the twentieth century, Constantin Radulescu-Motru says:

*„ A feature of the Romanian soul, which can be seen again at first glance, is showing no tenacity at the work they once started. Romanians find difficult to start up something, they easily left it. Yet, everything about Romanian is said, with the same right, that is slow to anger, it is conservative and traditionalist.*

*Let us consider more closely the lack of tenacity at work. It is particularly true for Romanians, but provided it isn't extended it to any thing. There are things that the Romanians hardly start and easily leaves, but there are things that if they start, they will never leave. A Romanian landowner is the most persevering farm worker. Although the gain is small, they don't bear to leave their field. This perseverance of Romanian workers not to leave their plot of land even when the batch is small and does not ensure their subsistence is, for the prosperity of the national economy, a serious obstacle, according to some.*

*Along with the perseverance to work in agriculture, they could cite other instances of perseverance to the Romanian population. It is true,*

*however, that today these cases are less numerous than in the past. In the Romanian past, even in the closest one we meet whole regions indulged in professional occupations continued from father to son. Such as villages of farmers, fishing villages, wheelwrights, shepherds, waggoners, winemakers etc., where most people didn't change their occupation. As clothing was set by region and no one had the courage to modify it , so was the way to work. A person from Banat, a Transylvanian, Wallachian, a Moldovan etc. were not in our past simple geographical names, but were characterizations of clothing and occupation, were social types.” (Rădulescu-Motru, 1998, pp. 18-19).*

The second text I wish to refer is stated by world-renowned theologian, Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, who said:

*„The most imbued nation with the Orthodox spirituality is the Romanian one. It was born Christian. It is not based on another religious structure that imbalances the Orthodoxone. The fact that he lived so long away from other spiritual streams, only in the Christian belief contributed to the full crystallization of the soul in its meaning.*

*The romanian people separates the two life plans: the earthly and the heavenly one. In his conscience the faith in the future life is therefore more awake as in any other people. Because he knows he can not achieve the absolute good in this life.*

*However, our people do not go as far in this direction, believing that there isn't any spark of good in the earthly world and any effort to do something better is in vain. The romanian nation is merciful, is full of moral scruples.*

*Is it bad or is it good the lach of utopianism and the spirit of adventure of our people? Either way, it's a reality and it stays one of the features of our originality. I don't think it is bad. I think it is a good thing. The passion for adventure can bring some glow in the life of a nation but a not lasting one. The fall as a result of discouragement and burnout may be*

*fatal. We have no passion for adventure as Latins, no trends of domination as Germans, who, believing in its power to achieve good, cynically ponder in solitude plans of conquest, but we haven't their risks and inevitable failures. We have another much more powerful force, which makes us a great nation that we can write many pages of brilliant spiritual culture: high birth rate, because we are faithful people, charm and kindness of our nature that assimilates every nation and Orthodoxy, that if we keep with all its exhortations moral and spiritual and aspirations it can ensure us a long life and an undisturbed prosperity, as it preserved us in much more difficult times.” (Stăniloae, 1998, pp. 51-52.)*

Both rev. Stăniloae and Constantin Radulescu-Motru identify some issues that differentiate Western European countries and Romania. These are not just from the religious level, as the Pr Stăniloae says, or at the level of „*the lack of tenacity at work*”, as Constantin Rădulescu-Motru says, but again appear in the Church-State relationship, especially at the level of the social assistance.

In the public social work in Romania, because of the relationship of Church-State cooperation, you will meet priests performing spiritual activity not only in social work centers; find chapels or churches built in the public spaces of social care funded entirely by the State, find partnerships between Dioceses and the District Centres for Social Assistance and so on, things that can not be done or would be difficult to achieve in the European Union, where there are secular states such as France, Spain, Netherlands, Belgium. No wonder that „when signing the European Constitution on 30 October 2004, headlines in Romania signaled the conclusion of a process of amending the definition to Europe and the European citizen until then. Articles like "EU Constitution without Christianity started out" by George Coman appeared in Ziua newspaper, dated 30 October 2004, or that of Mihai Ionescu, entitled "Godless Constitution, signed by leaders of the 25" appeared in Romania libera, on 30th October 2004, or article "Christianity decisive factor in

European history" of Claudia Stănilă appeared in Ziua newspaper, on 30 October 2004, observed the greatest shortcoming of European law: total ignorance of the Christian roots of Europe." (Bonțeanu, 2007, pp. 72-73).

A Christian thinker, C.M. Martini, before drafting the European Constitution, stated on construction of a common European home, that it is the task of the Church, not just the Catholic Church, but also of other Churches and religions in Europe. General principles of relations between the Church and Europe are subject to high and universal principles that transcend any society: familial, private, universal. These principles can be considered supreme because they relate specifically to the Church and Europe as a community. He also thought that above all, with a universal validity, independent of any faith, the primacy of the human person and the primacy of God are standing, recognized by everyone, it is a theistic conception. (Martini, 1992).

Although the European Constitution was drafted in 2004, alignment to the European Union on 1 January 2007, did not compromise in any church-state relations in our country, at least for now. This relationship goes far enough especially on social assistance. Romanian Orthodox Church still maintains its privileged position in the social assistance field, this is because most of these institutions had until 1948 character an ecclesiastical.

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