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THE MIRACLES PERFORMED BY JESUS CHRIST
- An exegetical and sacramental perspective -

- Abstract -

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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INTRODUCTION

The Holy Scriptures present many testimonials about our Saviour Jesus Christ, from the view point of His person as part of history (Mk. 1,1u; Mt. 1,18u; Lk. 1,26-38; 27-19; Jn. 1,29b), about His teaching and miracles. None of the authors that wrote about our Saviour Jesus Christ, whether in Gospels, other new-testamentary books, or other writings mentioning His life and activity, presented the subject from an exhaustive angle. All the nuances of this research topic are old, since Jesus Christ was born (Mt. 2,1-12). What led to a major interest over the time, for all the people who heard and discovered Jesus Christ, were the miracles: “When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him. So he questioned him at some length; but he made no answer” (Lk. 23, 8-9). What the Scriptures are suggesting is that the miracles were at Jesus’ hand and they were accompanying Him everywhere. The evangelists say, in short, that Jesus Christ cured all the diseased in the places he visited (Mk. 1,32.34). The entire teaching of Jesus Christ, as the Saviour of the world, was supported by the performance of miracles. A strong connection can be traced between them: „And He went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people” (Mt. 4, 23). The same aspect is also underlined in the Gospel according to Luke: “On their return the apostles told him what they had done. And He took them and withdrew apart to a city called Bethsaida. When the crowds learned it, they followed him; and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the Kingdom of God, and cured those who had need of healing” (Lk. 9,10-11).

There are though, in the contemporary world, people who do not believe in miracles anymore. We are not making reference now to the people that are atheists, but to those Christians who consider themselves to be religious, but they do not accept, discover and see possible miracles in their lives. The character of their faith, attached to God’s character that they consider to be theirs, eliminates the possibility of true miracles. They think the same about nature’s character, that it excludes the miracle. The man, following this perception of life, seeks for faith in a God who does not produce miracles. In this situation, their god will not produce miracles for sure.

This is one of the reasons for which this research topic was chosen, considering that the miracles of Jesus Christ are not a subject about the past. The

belief comes from the liturgical experiences, which prove a permanent and present reality in the Church, as long as the holy bread and wine honoured in His *memory* (Lk. 22, 19c) are the Body and Blood of the Saviour, through the blessing of the Holy Spirit and the priest's prayer: "And make this bread the precious Body of Your Christ; And that which is in this cup the precious Blood of Your Christ; Changing them by Your Holy Spirit. Amen. Amen. Amen.; So that they may be to those who partake of them for vigilance of soul, forgiveness of sins, communion of Your Holy Spirit, fulfilment of the kingdom of heaven, confidence before You, and not in judgment or condemnation."

In front of those who deny the miracles, this reality, experienced with every liturgy, became the strongest argument in stating that the same way the Holy Eucharist is a permanent miracle in Christ's Church, if it is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3, 15) and "we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones" (Eph. 5,30), in it and in us, the power of Jesus Christ's mission has a continuous meaning, because God is alive (Mk. 12,27; Mt. 22,32; Lk. 20,38), and "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13,8). If God is alive, it means that He accompanies us throughout our lives, and the same way He made miracles in the past to save people from their own trespasses, He can still perform miracles to save us from our sins. It means that He is preoccupied by people's problems, regardless of what era they live in, working with each of us for our salvation. When it is obvious that behind a miraculous reality stands God, then the miracle becomes revelation. It does not deny the existent laws, but only intervenes and improves situations when the laws are weak; it re-establishes the flow of life within the safety bed it had always provided. By performing miracles, Jesus does not harm the general laws (Mt. 5,17) but sends the cured ones to follow Moses' law (Mk. 1,44), to appear in front of the priests and take their lives back (Mk. 1,44; Lk. 17,14). The Saviour's miracles re-establish the harmony that was created by God. Through most of the miracles, Jesus Christ only follows His Father's will: "the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what he seeth the Father do" (Jn. 5,19). Practically, the facts that happen in life, less observed (Mk. 4,26-28), can be produced by God in specific moments, by command, in unusual ways for people, diminishing the natural process that would be human for such phenomena: transforms the water into wine (Jn. 2,1-11), multiplies the bread (Mk. 6,3-44; 8,1-10), cures groups of people (Mk. 1,32.34). The situations created by our Saviour Jesus Christ are manifestations of divinity, in

essence, which happen permanently in our world since its creation, but people cannot always perceive them. The faith unveils the path and language to make them accessible to the man who believes in our Saviour's mission (Jn. 6,68), for Jesus Christ re-creates the world through miracles, and cultivates it through His presence in the Holy Mysteries offered to the disciples, to the Church and to the followers. Jesus' miracles have no correspondent in the created life. The re-birth and re-creation of the world through His mission, was only possible through miracles. The life restoration works, done by Jesus Christ, define a new creation of the world: resurrection from the dead (Mk. 5,35-43; Lk. 7,11-17; Jn. 11,1-45), His own transfiguration (Mk. 9,2-8; Mt. 17,1-9; Lk. 9,28-36), His Resurrection (Mk. 16,1-8; Mt. 28,1-8; Lk. 24,1-8; Jn. 20,1-2) and His ascension to heaven (Mk. 16,19; Lk. 24,50-53; Ac. 1,1-12).

All manifestations of Jesus' divinity have the motivation as target for people to believe his words and, by this, to receive eternal life (Jn. 20,31). The presence of God's grace in each person's life, through the Church (in which is included "every man that cometh into the world" - Jn. 1,9), towards the final salvation, is sustained by the permanent character of the miracles, to the end of ages.

The faith that Scriptures teach is that the miracles are a continuation of Jesus' mission in the seen world after His ascension to heaven.

It often happens that the man cannot see essential facts happening around him. This is the reason for which he usually needs someone to accompany him and point the miracles out to him. Then he will be able to see them, to make them part of his belief, to go deeper into their meaning and to perceive the mystery of his own existence. This target implies having the ideal of discovering an „exact-truth,” which to put, as Maiorescu did, next to the folk wisdom: „Lay for the way/ like the field grass/ in the blow of the wind.” Rilke would say: „Be alone, like a child among grown-ups.”

The solitude unveils to a man more than one can expect or imagine. It becomes the best way to understand the mysteries, when the man communicates with himself and with God. Jesus Christ's solitudes were connected to the great transformations: after curing the demon possessed from Capernaum, Peter's mother in law or the crowds, Jesus retired to pray in the desert; the first feeding of the multitude took place after one of these retirements (Mk. 6,31a); the walking on water happened following a time of solitude (Mk. 6,46), after feeding the multitude ; before curing the ear of Malchus, before his passions, He retired in the garden of Gethsemane and He

prayed alone with “drops of blood” (Lk. 22,44). Jesus’ miracles are the result of different prayers as well as His co-working with the Father. The man can also discover, through similar exercises, the mystery of life and comforting thoughts. All life levels unveil themselves with what they contain more deeply, hidden and everlasting or temporarily. In these disclosures, the man may find his place in the world and not only, can he even decide his ideal reason of life. All these can influence the human life, pass behind the living state and give us “more life” (Jn. 10,10), by introducing us to the Mysteries with the One who is “The Way, the Truth and the Life” (Jn. 14,6) “the resurrection and the life” (Jn. 11,25).

Living today means finding a sense to our own lives and to life in general, a possible reality to the man with true judgement only. This was the advice St. Anthony the Great gave in the desert to the disciples who were looking for him, saying that “great is the faith, great is the hope, great is the love, but, if the true judgement is missing from your mind, how can we know to value these three great virtues, how can we understand the great use of life?” This reality, which for the man is the image of God illuminating the mind, can be found in the miracles of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

By looking at the miracles, it is easy to understand that in us coexist a material life, in the body, and a spiritual one, in the spirit. The man, as a dichotomous being, is not limited to a biological life only, but he also has an everlasting, spiritual one; from the beginning, with the creation, God made the unseen everlasting world (Gen. 1,1) and then the seen, perishable one (Gen. 1,9-31). In the material world, one can observe that God offered many material laws that the world follows. The earth, the material world of the rocks and minerals has behind a mysterious life, which they follow exactly, in parallel with the vegetal and animal worlds. The miracles performed by the Saviour proved that all these worlds are subdued (Mk. 4,39). As a consequence of this manifestation of authority, the disciples “feared exceedingly, and said one to another: What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (Mk. 4,41). The two worlds, seen and unseen are driven by unique inner laws towards finality. Of all, the man is the one who builds his own life and has the full liberty to action in the world created by God. In this life, there is something mysterious, of which people know parts, but not everything.

Through the present research we suggest a rediscovery of our Saviour Jesus Christ’s miracles as they appear in the Scriptures and decode them, as they work within the Holy Mysteries of the Church.

This research dissertation comprises seven chapters, which will be presented, briefly, below.

I. The Relation between Miracle and Sign presents dates and notions regarding the etymology of terms *miracle* and *sign*, underlining the theological dimension of the Greek terms θαυμάζω and τέρας. Using their meaning as a start-point, it draws the semantic and symbolic relations between σημεῖον and ἔργον, then the theological relation between σημεῖον and πίστις. The research has expanded to also include a theological dimensional evaluation of σημεῖον, λόγος and δόξα. All relations between the concepts led us towards researching the Σημεια of the Resurrected One. In the same way we arrived at the conclusion that there is an independent nature of utilising the concept σημεῖον in the Gospel according to John, reason for which we searched the base of usage for σημεῖον, followed, at the end of the chapter, by the typological character of the Johannine σημεῖον.

II. Synoptic and Johannine Interferences in the Narrative and Prominence of the Miracles

The second chapter highlights the miracles performed by Jesus. Without nominating them or describing their synoptic presentation, as it appears in Jesus' mission of preaching the Kingdom of Heaven, the miracles cannot be analysed thoroughly to understand their message and to discover their cause in Jesus' authority, as the Messiah. For this reason we presented them, regarding their narrative by each of the evangelists, separately. The presentation comprises four subchapters, each dedicated to one of the Gospels, as follows: miracles narrated in the Gospel according to Mark, miracles narrated in the Gospel according to Matthew, miracles narrated in the Gospel according to Luke and miracles narrated in the Gospel according to John.

III. Possible Taxonomies of the Miracles

One of the most difficult parts of the research was the classification of miracles, for the diversity of causes and the delicate situations that enforced them, regardless of the life segment they belonged to. Whether the miracles were produced in the vegetal, natural, human or spiritual life, they did nothing but to emphasize the divine authority of Jesus and to justify people's existence, for the Kingdom of Heaven.

Analysing each miracle separately, the research arrived at a classification from three perspectives: the miracle's subject, the physical miracles common to the evangelists and the evangelists' theological perspective.

The first category analyses the composition of miracle regarding the subject on which it is produced, from the perspective of details related to diseases, spirits, nature, and resurrection from dead, as well as the details related to the human nature, the working power or the specifics of a disease.

The second characteristic after which the miracles can be classified includes the physical miracles common to the evangelists. They are grouped in the following categories: miracles over nature; over people, including cures, exorcisms, resurrections from the dead; theophanies, considered miracles that are produced over the human nature of Jesus; physical, common to all the evangelists (they are classified the same way as the ones in the second category – cures, exorcisms and the ones on the human nature of Jesus); miracles common in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, Matthew, Mark (and John), Matthew and Luke; miracles common in the Gospels of Mark and Luke; physical miracles specific to only one of the evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke or John.

In the same chapter, we also registered collective cures, mass cures, individualised but not nominated, cures through the power given to the disciples, cures performed by other people outside the circle of disciples, through the Name of Jesus, the theophanies in after Resurrection appearances, as well as a category of possible miracles in the Name of Jesus Christ, in the Church, for the ones who will believe.

Another classification of the miracles, considered to be necessary, comes from the theological perspective of the four evangelists.

Thus, for the Gospel according to Mark, we created a classification by the two constitutive sections: the first section (comprising three stages) and the second section; for the Gospel according to Matthew, the first stage defined by the short length of the narrative in which the evangelist narrates the miracles and the second stage highlighting three aspects that the disciple emphasizes by elimination of characters and details, preaching that Christ is the realization of Scriptures and that Jesus is of divine origin, as well as the role of faith in producing the miracle.

In the Gospel according to Luke there are underlined two periods of the miracle manifestations by Jesus: a Galilean one and a Judean one, as well as three of

the miracle's relations (related to faith, related to the practical aspect of life and the one implied by love).

The last part of the chapter describes the miracles from the Gospel according to John, reflecting on his selection of miracles and the limit aspect of the miracle, conferred by the loved disciple.

IV. Narrative Characteristics of Miracles' Presentation in the Gospels

In this chapter, the narrative aspect of miracles' presentation is treated by the redactional characteristics of the miracles' registration in the synoptic Gospels: The Gospel according to Mark, to Matthew and to Luke. Further on, the redactional intention of the miracles from the Fourth Gospel, while at the end of the chapter the miracle is described as sign transferred in the Church : Σημεῖον in the Apostles' mission.

V. Analysis of the Miracles. A Sacramental Perspective Reflected in the Holy Mysteries

This part of the dissertation is the most extended one and comprises the miracles grouped by their theological message which stands, from the research perspective, as the base for the Holy Mysteries of the Church (see subdivision III.10. of the dissertation). The miracles are treated by the following algorithm: placement of the miracle within the Gospel, comparison of the texts that narrate the miracle, exegesis of the miracle texts and the miracle theology. The miracles exposed by a single evangelist are excluded from this subdivision of the research, as a comparison does not apply. Following this research plan, miracles are treated as the foundation of the Holy Mysteries.

The miracles performed by Jesus Christ upon His own person are not part of the research subject.

VI. Jesus' Miracles – A Permanence of Grace Manifestation in His Mysterious Body, the Church

Our Saviour Jesus Christ's actions are connected to the needs of the people who came in contact with Him, in a subjective manner, and to the problems that people had in fulfilling the laws, in an objective manner. He did not come to solve the problems of one generation or one era only, but of the entire humanity, thus any

person passing through the seen world, if they discard the perishable aspects of life as their aim, they will have the certainty that if they follow His laws, they will be happy (Jn. 13,17) and “will have everlasting life” (Jn. 3,35). The warranty of this reality is given by Jesus through the way He introduces Himself as “the way, the truth and the life” (Jn. 14,6), “the bread of life” (Jn. 6,48), “the living bread which came down from heaven” (Jn. 6,51), preaching “the words of eternal life” (Jn. 6,68) and being Himself “the everlasting life” (Jn. 17,3-4).

He introduces the exercise of this reality to His disciples gradually, at different stages of their capacity of accepting their mission: He informs them about the mission (Mk. 10,10; Jn. 1,38-39), suggests that they should take over the mission (Mk. 1,17), then introduces them to the crowds as His disciples (Lk. 6,13-16), building their intellect (Mk. 4,10-11.12-22) and presenting the divine mysteries to them (Mk. 9,11); He proposes a first practical mission exercise to them (Mk. 6,6-13; Mt. 10,1; Lk. 9,1-3), repeated later (Lk. 10,4-11), giving them power over the devil (Mk. 3,15; Mt. 10,7; Lk. 10,9).

Jesus always assures and comforts His disciples, making reference to faith (Mk. 11,24; 16,16; Mt. 17,20; 21,21; Lk. 24,25; Jn. 3,36; 5,24; 6,29.35; 7,38; 11,40; 12,44; 14,1), essential aspect of life for which Jesus Himself prays (Lk. 22,32; Jn. 17,9-10), so they are safe in front of the devil (Jn. 17,17), while the Father blesses them into His truth (Jn. 17, 17).

In this respect, the disciples are enthusiastic about what they could accomplish in their missionary actions and confess this to the Teacher (Mk. 6.30; Lk. 9,10). Later, passing on to them more and more of His mission’s mystery, He gives them authority and power to accept it and practice it in the peace He had offered to them (Jn.14,270) through love (Jn. 15,9;.12.17), through authority (Mk. 16,15-16; Mt. 28,18-20; Jn. 17,18; 20,21b) and through power (Mk. 16,17-20; In. 20,22-23).

The subdivisions of the sixth chapter are presented below, as this chapter comprises most of the authenticity of the research and the motivation that miracles stand behind the sacramental work of the Church, through the Holy Mysteries.

VI.1. The miracle (evidences, criteria of the discovery and work of God)

Albeit the contemporary world, based on the intellectual capacity of man for research, believes that miracles do not exist, but they are only facts that still need to be scientifically proved, in faith this is not accepted, although Jesus Christ’s testimony

(Jn. 16,4) was proved in front of the apostles and the crowds that followed Him (Mk. 7,30; Mt. 26,75; Lk. 24,45; Jn. 2,22; 4,51-52; 12,16).

The research emphasizes that miracles were performed with a providential scope and they are:

- overwhelming for the mind (Mk. 1,27);
- able to cancel the human imperfections and the laws of nature (Mk. 6,41; Lk. 13,10-17; Jn. 2,7-9);
- done for consolidating people's faith (Jn. 2,11);
- done for consolidating a truth of faith (will make signs and miracles; Mk. 16, 16-17);
- from the Holy Spirit, since the curing powers are His (miracles of any type; Jn. 16,13-14);
- a gift from God in the ability of performing them (I Cor. 12, 10);
- essential condition in the disciples' mission, as an objective act (Mk. 16,15-18) and for our salvation, as a subjective one (Jn. 6, 56).

At the same time, the research discovered that the miracles' message is validated in the following realities:

- they are a criterion, a path, a way to understand God, Who reveals Himself through them (Jn. 9,6-7.37);
- the first miracles were performed by God and He is the One Who tolerates and encourages the miracle to the end of ages (Mt. 26,53);
- Jesus Christ accomplished His objective mission, the salvation of humanity, while the subjective salvation can only be realised through His Resurrection in the Church, His mysterious body, which people are a subjective part of (Jn. 17,11b);
- the salvation itself is a miracle among the others, as what can happen in the world after Christ's Resurrection and Ascension to heaven, and after the advent of the Holy Spirit in the world (Gen. 2,41);
- the miracle can be produced through faith only with the condition left by our Saviour Jesus Christ (Jn. 16,13-14);
- the miracle becomes possible after the Descent of the Holy Spirit (Ac. 2,1-3.46b.8.11), being a gift from God to the ones to believe and follow Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15, 46).

The miracles' message is convincingly expressed in the Church, in the Liturgy, where God is and the human nature is weak.

VI.2. Miracles' Motivations in the Holy Mysteries

The Holy Mysteries of the Church are the tools through which God, Our Saviour Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit act, helping people to recover (Mk.16,16), to reconsider themselves (Jn. 20,22-23), to regenerate (Lk. 22,17.19-20), to complete themselves (Mt. 19,5), to accomplish their lives (1Cor. 7;14: Eph. 5,21-25.28), to receive the Kingdom of Heaven (Mk. 10,52; Mt. 18,3; Lk. 7,50; 8,48; Jn. 3,17). All these perspectives come from what Jesus Christ accomplished with his miracles.

The miracle is a state created by God to help people meet Him, giving a sign of His presence in the world and to reveal Himself to the people as an authority, for different reasons:

- the elimination of human sorrows and proof of His divinity (Mt. 11,3-6);
- the recovery of human body and soul, degraded by their fragility or a destructive power (Mk. 3,10-11);
- the reconciliation of people with God and their liberation from Satan, "destroying the work of the devil" (I Jn. 3,8);
- the salvation of people (Mk. 10,52; Lk. 7,50; 8,48; Jn. 3,17).

Starting from the reasons for which God creates the state of miracle, the research established criteria that make possible the access to miracles and, implicitly, to the superconsciousness, which are connected to be the revaluation of people by:

- seeing the world through a child's eyes (Mt. 18,2); this is about rediscovering the innocence, not cultivating the infantilism (Mt. 18,3);
- taking responsibility (Lk. 10,31-32; 18,23); the problem of adults is that they became infantile and are avoiding their responsibilities (Mt. 25,40);
- the restoration of innocence; Our Saviour Jesus Christ says that – the state when we do not judge (Mt. 7,1-2), do not punish (Lk. 6,37), are not obsessed with our private income (Mt. 6, 19.21) – our life can be part of the Kingdom of Heaven (Lk. 9,48), because it did not perish (Mk. 10,15; Mt. 18,3; 19,14; Lk. 18,16-17); this is the reason for which the miracle is easy to see; it depends on how people relate to God and how strong their faith is (Mt. 8,10; 15,28).

The mystery was made accessible to people by Jesus Christ, through His divine nature. Ever since, He is permanently present in our world with authority over the earth and heaven alike (Mt. 28,18b), reality that He developed through the power of word – directions that He gave to His disciples : “Give ye them to eat” (Mk. 6,37); “This do in remembrance of me” (Lk. 22,19c); “receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained” (Jn. 20,20). It is important to mention that, until this moment, the disciples already had power over the negative spirits, from Jesus (Mt. 10,1b).

The miracle began with unveiling the gifts shadowed by sins and controlled by the devil (Mk. 5, 1-20 ; 9,14-29; Mt. 8,28-34; Lk. 13,10-17). The created situation, seen from this perspective, opens new themes:

- the miracle taking place in the shadowed spiritual space;
- the miracle taking place in the physical plan, virused by the effects of sins.

From the experiences of Nathanael (Jn. 1,47-51), Nicodim (Jn. 1-21), the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4) or Zacchaeus (Lk.19,1-11), we realise that the *spiritual miracle* changes the human nature. It is a moral one that resurrects the mentality and shapes the behaviour, bringing them back to the state before the sin. The best examples are Jesus’ parables and dialogues from the Gospels (Lk. 15, 11-32 ; 18,10-14; 19, 2-9 ; Jn. 1,39.43.47-49 ; 3,1-21; 4,7-42). The spiritual miracle works for all generations that are conscious of: “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (Jn. 9,5); that we have to whom to go to [to Jesus, because]: “Thou hast the words of eternal life,” as Peter says (Jn. 6,68); we can ask Jesus to illuminate our souls. The result of faith is that we have “the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (Jn.1,29), who came on earth and saved His people from the sin; there is always a chance for everybody and in any situation, for Jesus says : “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Lk.5,32); that He gave power to his disciples in the Church, saying : “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven” (Mt. 18,18); He showed the true life: “thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance” (Ac. 2,38); He reveals to the dignified : “Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest : it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” (Saul Ac. 9,5); gives the option of recovery to the ones who trespassed : “I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee” (Prodigal Son Lk.15,18); and an encouraging conclusion :

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I Jn.1,9); because through Him is done the prophecy that “there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots” (Is. 11,1u), in which situation we can discuss convincingly about salvation : “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1,6u).

The *physical miracle* is a reality which is not enough for salvation, but it is possible to repeat for everybody who is close to Jesus Christ (Mk. 1,40-41; 2,5). Usually, it changes only physical aspects that apply to the seen world, and not what is vital for the Kingdom of God. Here we can mention the lepers and the reactions of the crowds (Lk.17,11-19(v.17); Mk. 2,22; Mt. 9,34; Lk. 11,15-16). Jesus gives revealing answers to the opponents: “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (Jn.5,16). They did not understand that the miracle is mysterious and contains history, most of the times unknown by the crowds.

These motivations of miracles are the support of the Holy Mysteries of the Church, for they also are a result of connectivity between man and God. In the Holy Mysteries, as in the miracles, the finality is the compatibility between human nature and divinity, which is that God performs miracles as a result of prayers, whether they come from the one who suffers, someone related to them or the entire Church. The Orthodox Church holds many examples about how God answers every prayer, whether personal, from relatives, from a priest or from the Church.

VI.3. Holy Mysteries in the life of the Church (the continuous redemption through Christ’s sacrifice)

It is not necessary to enumerate examples of the great miracle performers of the church calendar, who cured people from any disease or sin. For even with the prayer of a priest, nowadays, as in the past, the sick can be cured, while through the miracles of God, the Virgin Mary and all the saints, these miracles are nothing but the answer of the Father to His children. This fact can be confirmed by the entire orthodox world (Mt. 7, 11). From this point of view, we believe that the Church is the Kingdom of God on earth (Mt. 16, 18—19). Through the Holy Mysteries the Church delivers the gift of God and continues the sacrifice without blood towards our salvation (Mt. 26, 28). At the same time, the Church has its own target, especially to save the lost souls (Lk. 10, 29 ; Gal. 5, 14) and, “He which converteth the sinner from

the error of His way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (Jms. V, 20).

This is possible because Christ is the Head of the Church (Eph. 5,23), won through Crucifixion, with His blood (Ac. 20, 29). The miracles, especially, discovered Him as the Son of God. Through His mysterious body people found salvation (Mt. 18,17; I Tim. 1,20), His work being continued by the Apostles and transmitted to the disciples, with the power of forgiveness of the sins (Jn. 20,20-23) and the authority to establish the harmony between the members that constitute Him, generations after generations (I Cor. 5,13 ; II Cor. 2,5-11).

The Apostles were the reality on which God’s Church was built (Mt. 16, 18 ; Eph. 2, 20 ; Rev. 21, 14), which is the pillar and the foundation of truth (I Tim. 3, 15), the Saviour being in and with it until the end of ages (Mt. 28, 20). For this connection and for the presence of the Saviour, the Church is considered to be One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic (cf. Eph. 5, 5), and it lives through the faith and deeds of the faithful (Jms. 2, 17). The Church is the place where:

- believers’ faith is consolidated by Christ (Heb. 12, 2), Who underlined that not the one who says “Oh Lord, Oh Lord,” but the one who “doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven” (Mt. 7, 21);
- the faith works through love (Gal. V, 6), being a gift from the Holy Spirit and appears as a human sentiment (Mt. 10,42 ; I Cor. 15,28; Heb. 6,10 ; 10,35);
- the faith in Christ is a continuation of thinking, a support for rationality (Heb. I, 1), impossible to become superficial (I Tim. 4,7; 6, 3—5; II Pet. 2,3, 4,18—22), in connection with the advice “seek and ye shall find” (Mt. 7, 7);
- in faith works the Gift which is the beginning of salvation (Gal. 2, 20; I Cor. 15, 10);
- the Gift of the Holy Spirit is delivered to all the believers once they receive the Holy Mysteries, as a reconciliation with God (Mt. 19,17; II Cor. 5,20; Is. 1,19—20).

The Holy Mysteries were performed by the Holy Apostles in the same manner that miracles were performed by their Teacher. Their being is part of the gift of the Holy Spirit, sent on earth by Jesus Christ and from the Father. This preaches about the Son and continues His work (Jn. 16,13-14). While in the Holy Scripture the miracles

show a route of the sacramental aspect, in the Church, mysterious body of Christ, we can trace a reverse track, towards what it says about miracles. This track can be understood from the content of prayers serviced in the Church, concentrated in the service books in use.

VI.3.1. Miracles' elements found in the service of the Holy Mysteries in the Molitfelnic

The Molitfelnic includes most of the prayers from the public cult of the Church, mostly the services of the Holy Mysteries and hierurgies, prayers for different diseases, needs, for blessing cult objects, for fasts and holidays, etc.

We constructed an analysis of the Holy Mysteries and the new testamentary content they use or make reference to, following the references to Jesus Christ's miracles.

VI.3.1.1. Baptism

From the prayers of the first part of the Holy Mystery of Baptism, we can observe that in the exorcism (αφορχισμοι) the priest asks God to banish all the evil influence of the devil from the catechumen, received through the falling of the forefathers (Eph.2,2). It is easy to realise that this practice is taken from Jesus, Who was liberating the demonized from devil (Mt. 17,18) and then taught this practice to the disciples (Mt. 16,17-18u; Mt. 10,8). Thus, the Church created prayers for banishing the negative spirits, which form the introductory part of the Baptism. The exorcisms include expressions addressed to the devil, referring to miracles: "I forbid you, through Him that walks on the waves of the sea as upon the dry land, Who forbade the storm of the winds...Who says to the deaf and dumbdeamon „Get out of the man, and enter no more into him." Depart! Know the vainness of your might, which had no power even over the swine!" In exorcisms we can find the following miracles included: the walking on water of Jesus and Peter (Mk. 45-52; Mt. 14,22-33; Jn. 6,16-21), the calming of the storm and winds on the sea (Mk. 4,35-41; Mt.8,23-27; Lk. 8,22-25), the cure of a mute and deaf man (Mt. 9, 32-34) and the liberation of the demonized men from Gadarenes (Mk. 5,1-20; Mt. 8,28-34; Lk. 8,26-39). To these it is added the Eucharistic Mystery and the Judgement: "I abjure you by the saving Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, by His Precious Blood and All-Pure Body, and by His terrible Coming Again" (Mk. 14,22-25; Mt. 25,31).

The following prayers are the Castings, exercise from Christ's practice, Who was asking for faith when He was banishing the devil (see the case of the epileptic, where the father talks in the name of his son – Mk9,14-29).

Within the Baptism service, the Apostle that is read is the underlining made by the Apostle Peter to the Baptism (Rom. 6,3-11), while in the Gospel Jesus Christ the Resurrected One asks the disciples to continue (Mt. 28,16-20) what He Himself has done, related to the nativity from water and Spirit, that He told Nicodim about (Jn. 3,2-23).

VI.3.2.1.2. Chrismation

The Chrismation means sealing the one who is baptised with the gift of the Holy Spirit, introducing the new Christian to the fruit of the Holy Spirit's gifts, which are enumerated by St. Apostle Peter in his Letter to the Galatians (5,22-26; 6,1-2). The multitude of spices from which the Holy and Great Chrism is made, proves that it contains multiple gifts and powers of the Holy Spirit, which can activate the Christian virtues, imagining Christ, named by Solomon "ointment poured forth" (SOS 1,2). The Chrismation began with Jesus Christ in the miracles where He used the anointment with saliva and earth, carrying His divine energies: curing the blind from birth (Jn. 9,6) or curing the deaf mute (Mk. 7,31-37).

VI.3.2.1.3. Holy Eucharist

The Holy Eucharist is materialized firstly in His offer at the Last Supper, which became liturgy from His command: "this do in remembrance of Me" (Lk. 22,19), materialized then in Emmaus (Lk. 24,30-31) and offered with message on the Tiberias sea-side (Jn. 21,5.12-13). That this became practice can be observed in the Apostles' acts" (Ac. 2,42) and in St. Apostle Peter's letter (I Cor. 10,16).

VI.3.2.1.4. Confession

The Confession can be traced through the dialogues that Jesus had with all the ones whom He wanted to give as good examples to the others, for the way they confessed to Him: Nathanael (Jn. 1,4-7-51), Nicodim (Jn. 3,2-22), the Samaritan woman and the people from Sihar, Samaria (Jn. 4,7-42), the woman from Canaan (Mk. 7,24-30), the centurion (Mt. 8,5-13; Lk. 7,1-10), the governor (Jn. 4,46-54), Iair (Mk. 5,21-24.35-43), the leper from Capernaum (Mk. 1,40-45), Mary and Martha, Lazarus' sisters (Jn. 11), (by underlying meaning, the dialogue with) the sinful woman who washed His feet with tears and oiled His head (Lk. 7,40-50), the paralytic from Bethesda (Jn. 5,1-18), Peter (Jn. 21,15-23). From these approaches, Jesus made

us understand the content of the prayer: “for You, O Lord, have said, „You have no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather he turn from his wickedness and live”; and that „sins shall be forgiven even unto seventy times seven” (Mt. 9,12; 18,21-22); or: “for You, O Master, have said, Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.” For “You alone are without sin... “(Jn. 8,46; 20,22-23).

VI.3.2.1.5. Marriage

Beside the blessed ones from the Old Testament: Avraam and Sarra (Gen. 11,26-25,10)), Isaac and Rebecca (Gen. 22,8.13; 30,18;35,23), Jacob (Gen. 13,15;17,7u) and all the patriarchs; Joseph and Anisette (Gen. 30,24; 35,25;37,3;33,2.7), Moses and Semfora (Exodus 2,10), Joachim and Anna , Zacharias și Elisabeth (Lk. 1,5-80); beside the ones protected by God: Noah in the Ark (Gen. 5-6), Iona (Jn. 1-4), the three young saints, sending them dew from heaven (Daniel 3,22-27); the ones that God remembered: Enoch (Gen.5,22.24;6,9), Shem (Gen. 5,32; 6,10) and Elijah (II Kings 2,11), the Holy Mystery of Marriage is the reflex of what happened at the Wedding from Cana (Jn. 2,1-11), pericope read at the Holy Mystery.

Among the prayers, we can find the Saviour’s words: “For this cause a man will leave his father and mother, and will join to his wife, and the two will become one flesh, so that they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate” (Mk. 10,9; Mt. 19,6), or references to what happened in Cana: “Who through Your unspeakable Grace and plentiful goodness were present in Cana of Galilee, and blessed the marriage there, that You might show a lawful union, and a generation therefrom, is according to Your Will.”

The Apostle read at the Holy Marriage (Eph. 5,20-33) underlines the duties of husband and wife, while the Gospel certifies the status and blessing of the family as a divine act (Jn. 2, 1-11).

The ending is about the family of King Constantine and his mother Elena, as well as the Martyr Procopius who protected her.

VI.4.2.1.6. Holy Unction

The Mystery of Holy Unction is the most extended one and richest in references to Jesus’ words and His acts. It comprises seven apostolic pericopes and seven Gospel fragments at the end of which there is a prayer for the ones in illness, remembered in the mystery.

At first, the Apostle being read brings our attention to our Christian duties among others, regarding our existential context. In the way St. Apostle Peter expressed it, the advice comes from a frequent practice: “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he had committed sins, they shall be forgiven him” (Jms. 5,10-13.14.15-16). The Gospel supports, through the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk. 10,25-37), the work for God and with God: “Do Thou, the same Master, O Lord, vouchsafe unto us Grace in this Thy ministry, as Thou didst vouchsafe it unto Moses, Thy servant, who found favour in Thy sight; and unto Samuel, Thy beloved; and unto John, Thy chosen one; and unto all those who, from generation to generation, have been acceptable unto Thee. In like manner, make us also to be ministers of the New Covenant of Thy Son upon this Oil, which Thou hast acquired unto Thyself through the precious Blood of Thy Christ” (Mk. 14,22-25).

The substance of the Holy Mystery is also specified and reasoned: “that they who shall be anointed with this Oil of regeneration may be strong unto their adversaries, and may shine in the radiance of Thy Saints, having neither spot nor wrinkle” (the deaf mute Mk. 7,31-37 and the blind from birth Jn. 9,6.11).

The second stage from the mystery’s order underlines the duty of doing the good, supporting the idea: “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Rom. 15,1.2-7), the Gospel with Zacchaeus (Lk. 19,1-10) giving a solution to the good intention that is applied and its finality: “This day is salvation come to this house” being the expression of Saviour’s capacity to produce miracles in people’s souls; in the prayer that follows the Gospel, “You are the one who said,” five references to Jesus are made and two references to parables (the lost sheep Mt. 18,12-14 and the lost drachma Lk. 15,8-10).

The third stage values the responsibility each man has in society to work through love, as so profound said in I Corinthians (12,27-31; 13,1-8), the hymn of love. The Gospel shows the duties attributed by Jesus to the disciples (Mt. 10,1.5-8): “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying, give without pay” (v.8).

The prayer uses the idea of touching Jesus’ body, from His mission: “touch the body to stop its heat,” referring to the cure of Peter’s mother-in-law (Mk. 1, 29-31).

In the moment that follows the believer realised that he is the “temple of the living God” (II Cor. 6,16-18), creating a filial status where God believes the man to be (II Cor. 7,1), supported by the Gospel of Peter’s wife’s mother’s cure (see V.6.4.), miracle that should happen again for the sick. It is also the reason for which the fourth prayer asks for Jesus’ generosity, invoking: “O Thou, who healest every infirmity, heal also Thy servants” (Mk. 6,56; Mt. 4,23).

What follows next is an underlining of Jesus’ generosity, but also an advertisement, both through the Apostle (II Cor. 1,8-11) and through the Gospel with the ten virgins (Mt. 25,1-13).

The prayer defines Jesus as the “doctor of the sick” (Mk. 1,32.34), having the capacity of forgiving the sins (Mk. 2,5), the One who “came and took her by the hand, and raised her up. The fever left her, and she served them” (Mk. 1, 29-31), highlighting the fact that He is the only one without sin, and the right judge.

The sixth prayer has a thanksgiving tone. In it we are reminded of God’s protection towards people, curing their wounds; of His attitude, as the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10,1-17) who is seeking the lost sheep (Mt. 18,12-14; Lc. 15,1-7); there is a reference to the cure of the bleeding woman (Mk.5,25-34), to the cure of the Canaan woman’s daughter (Mk. 7,24-30), the cure of the man with palsy and forgiving his sins (Mk. 2,1-12), the publican (Lk. 18,9-14) receiving the malefactor on the cross (Lk. 23,43), revoking the sins of the world (Jn. 20,30).

The last part of the Holy Unction is optimistic, both through the Apostle from I Thes. (5,14-23), and through the Gospel (Mt. 9,9-13) of Matthew following Jesus: “Follow Me!” (v.9).

The final prayer brings our attention to the examples from the Scripture, regarding the good effects of the repentance.

We realise that in the sacramental space of the Church, the Holy Mysteries have an essential role in the evolution of the faithful. This evolution is, at the same time, tied to the mysterious work of God, independent from the limited human capacity of understanding (Mk. 4,26-29). Some of the Mysteries are strongly connected to our salvation (Baptism, Chrismation, Holy Eucharist, Confession), others are complementary (Marriage, Holy Unction), while the Orders covers all of them.

From the construction of the mysteries it results that Christ is their spring. In the Church practice, the ceremonies are only external acts, where Christ is present with His sacrifice, as the beginning of people's salvation (Rom. 6, 5).

VI.3.2. The miracles from the Holy Gospel Book, grace extension in Christ's mysterious body, The Church

Although in the taxonomies chapter the miracles were treated as people's manifestation of faith and source of divine energy, this aspect will resume as, in the Orthodox Church, Jesus Christ is perceived as a continuous presence in the faithful's life, which He renews (Rom.6,4.8.9.23), Him being always the same, while they are "the body of Christ" (I Cor. 12,27). This is the reason for which our Saviour Jesus Christ's miracles accompany and give strength to Christians' faith, leading to fulfilment, cures from diseases and sins, during the liturgical church year.

VII. Conclusions

We believe that the miracles are the most delicate reality of the Christian faith. The entire activity and mission of Jesus Christ is connected to unique moments of daily life, some of them forgotten since the time of prophets Moses, Elijah or Eliseus.

The scopes of Jesus' miracles were considered *obvious*, *evangelical*, *empathic* and *eschatological*. Trying to establish relations between miracles and faith led to the conclusion that sometimes the faith is the one that leads to the miracle, while other times the miracle gives birth to the faith. The problems of Jewish customs, social barriers, compassion for the sick, as well as the good generated by faith are important subjects, that the miracles are based on. The main motivation of producing the miracles remains, though, to demonstrate that Jesus is Messiah and that He preaches the Kingdom of God (Mt. 11, 4-6 ; Lc. 11, 20). These realities also gave birth to other manners of understanding and seeking Jesus Christ's powers of curing.

Some of the researchers who studied the *miraculous acts* believe that, being exceptional events by definition, they should not be demanded from God. The experience of the ones who were seeking for signs was not agreed by the Saviour, thus He did not perform miracles for the meddlers, but for the faithful: "And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven, but the prompt answer came: An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah" (Mt.16,1,4;

another similar answer at Mk. 8,12). His unique approach to work through miracle and sign only reacts to infirmity.

The placement of different events by the synoptic evangelists Matthew, Mark and Luke, demonstrates that they had a similar access to the work of Jesus in Galilee. The argument is the presence of the same realities in the synoptic Gospels: the urge for repentance, the calling for apostles, miraculous acts, cures and miracles. The Jews' wisdom, conventional with the new Gospel, formed a new family that followed Jesus and produced hostility amongst the religious leaders of His time. In all prevails the vibrant presence of the Kingdom of God. From this perspective, each of the evangelists emphasizes the strong power of Christ, which imposes a new mentality, expressed in a hidden deepness of consciousness, registering an entire history of people's thoughts and feelings.

There is a significant difference between seeing and feeling. What we see we forget easily, but what we feel remains with us. The Apostles' experiences are eloquent in this respect. Although they have seen the miracles performed by Jesus, their faith did not consolidate proportionally with them, as it should have, perhaps because of fear. Peter the Apostle is the clearest example. Caught by fear he lost the deepness of his faith and gratitude. The reality and the mystery are in the hands of the inner feelings. The feelings that govern us are very strong and make us believe that we can keep the balance between light/truth and darkness/false. We need to find the balance between the written law and our conscious faith, as a tradition given from one generation to another.

Jesus' acts were written from disciples' conviction, who urge us *to believe*, with a mature, deep faith, and to always remember that the goal is not the faith itself, but the salvation into eternal life: "Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed" (Jn. 20,8). We discover this reality in the life of good Christians, who already began living the everlasting life on earth.

VII.1. Conclusions regarding the efficiency of the present research

In drawing conclusions regarding the efficiency of the present research, it is required to answer three questions:

1. What was the purpose of this research?
2. What are the particularities that motivate the transfer of the Miracles from the New Testament into the Holy Mysteries?

3. What was accomplished?

The purpose of the present research was to present the Miracles performed by Jesus Christ, from an exegetical and sacramental perspective, for underlining the fact that they were the foundation for the new human and spiritual life of the people, which opened the path towards the Kingdom of Heaven. Following the track of the academic research on miracles over the last two centuries, the rationalistic view and the Tübingian school, the neo-critical school in opposition with the Tübingian one, that approached the scriptures and Christ's miracles with an exaggerated critical spirit, the research became tempting both for the intellect and for the spiritual side of it. The research should find the miracle's message beyond the linguistic limit in which it was expressed, looking for the divine message in it. Jesus was not a simple man, thus we cannot analyse His activity unless we believe that He was delivering heavenly messages to us. The changes were necessary for us to receive the teaching of Jesus Christ, expressed through miracles, and led to a qualitative determination for people to discover the work of God.

The context in which the miracles were produced, the comparison of texts, where applicable, but mainly their exegetic and theological analysis, led to the conclusion that our Saviour Jesus Christ's miracles are the mysterious manifestation of Messiah, the source of energy for the Holy Mysteries of the Church. This was the initial target of the research, which was achieved convincingly, not claiming an exhaustive work, but rather having the sentiment of pioneering.

We believe that this vision will open a new perspective in approaching the miracles, highlighting the following: Jesus could have used His authority to solve any problem that He encountered. It is notorious that He was not well received in Samaria (Lk.9,54) and the resistance of disciples when He was caught in the garden of Gethsemane (Mt. 26,53). Jesus Christ did not want to make use of His authority to defend Himself or to punish the people who "know not what they do" (Lk. 23,34).

Jesus Christ's miracles were moments when people were asked to understand several aspects of humanity (Jn. 4,50), of illness (Jn. 5,7), of demon possession (Mk. 9,21-22), of their sins (Mk. 2,5) and the effects of the sins (Jn. 5,14b), of whom is standing in front of them and cures them (Mk. 5,36; Jn. 4,26; 9,37), how they relate to the Law and to God personally (Mk. 9,23; Jn. 9,38; 11,27) or as a group (Mt. 22,42). All these details can be traced over the miracles performed by Christ, as well as over

the work of his Disciples (Ac. 2,41; 3,6; 6,6; 20,10), of the priests and bishops, in the order of the Holy Mysteries (see VI.3.1.).

For a long time, the miracles of Jesus Christ were the pillar of all Christians. The Gospels narrate them, although this was not their main purpose. The miracles were present in everything Jesus was doing. In some verses, the evangelists write that He cured everybody who was brought to a certain place, for being helped (see III.2.5; III.2.6).

The critics did not find any similarity between what were called the pagan or Jewish miracles and the ones performed by Jesus Christ. What we can say, though, by comparison, is that the miracles from the Gospels and the others only have a few common forms and narrative motifs. The New Testament ones have some particularities, such as:

- a) in Jesus' miracles there are no attitudes against life or people ; there is no magic, conspiracy, or the curse of people ;
- b) He never performed miracles with the scope of punishment ;
- c) He did not use his miraculous powers to remove His own difficulties: the moment of temptation (Mt. 4, 1-11), in Nazareth, when he was taken to the edge of the mountain, to "cast him down headlong" (Lk. 4, 28-30), after they caught Him in the garden of Gethsemane (Mt. 26,53) or when He was on the cross (Mk. 15, 30);
- d) Jesus Christ rejects demonstrations that could unveil His message, mission, divine state in superficial ways, for those who were asking for signs (Mk. 8, 11-12);
- e) He asked the cured ones not to publicize His intervention (Mt. 8, 30; Mk. 5, 43; 7, 36; Lk. 8, 56);
- f) He respected the Old Law, sending the cured lepers to go in front of the priests and to keep Moses' commands, and to go back with the healthy ones (Mk. 1, 44; Lk. 5, 14);
- g) He looked for people; wanted them to meet Him and His miracles (Lk. 17, 11-19);
- h) He was looking not for highlighting the miracles, but the human problems, with all the physical and spiritual needs, which sometimes created tension with the people around Him (Mt. 8, 28-26,34; Mk. 5, 1-17; Lk. 8, 26-37);

- i) in many places, Jesus Christ emphasizes the forgiveness of sins over His miracle of curing someone from their disease (Mk. 2,5b);
- j) He relates cures to the faith; cures the ones who have faith to prove to the ones who don't (Mt. 12, 24; Mk. 3, 22; Lk. 11, 15);
- k) Christ's miracles make eschatological references (Lk. 7, 14; 11, 20); through miracles, He was preaching the Kingdom of God, as the universal balm;
- l) through their motivation (mercy and love for people), the miraculous acts underline the unicity of Saviour Jesus Christ, as well as His divine authority (Mk. 7, 37);
- m) for the question *Are Jesus' miracles different from the legends and traditions of the Mediterranean world?* The answer comes from J.M. Hull: *Jesus did not pretend to be a magician. The scientists agreed that the government of Jesus' miracles was in many ways different.*

Besides these aspects, the present research also brings some elements of originality, demonstrating that:

- the moment from the Gospel according to Luke (4,24-30) is a *premonitory reality* of Jesus' mission history, until the moment of crucifixion ;
- at the Wedding from Cana *all* disciples were present; nominating Andrew (and the one who was accompanying him, probably John the evangelist), or Peter, Philip and Nathanael (Jn. 1,29-51) informs us on how Jesus chose His disciples ;
- the leper from Capernaum (Mk. 1,40-45; Mt. 8,2-4; Lk.12-16), after the cure, was not banished by Jesus (Mk. 1,43), but sent to the priests (Mk. 1,44);
- the paralytic from Bethesda (Jn. 5,1-18) was not a denouncer of Jesus Christ, but one who spoke about Him to his community, the same as the leper (Mk. 1,45), the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4,29), or the demon possessed from Gadarenes (Mk. 5,20);
- the saliva and the earth, becoming clay, that Jesus used to cure the blind from birth (Jn. 9,6) or the deaf mute (Mk. 7,33), is the primary form of manifestation for the Mystery of Holy Chrismation;
- the cursing of the fig tree (Mk. 11, 21; Mt. 21,19c) does not happen as a result of Jesus' cursing, but it is a spontaneous reaction of repentance of the fig tree (Lk. 23,43);

- through the resurrections from dead, the people are conferred a new birth, which embodies the Holy Mystery of Baptism ;
- the miracles: walking on water (Mk. 6,45-52; Mt.14,22-33; Jn. 6,16-21); calming the storm (Mk. 4,35-41;Mt. 8,23-27; Lk. 8,22-25); cursing of the fig tree (Mk. 11,12-14.20-24; Mt. 21,18-22); healing the woman infirm for eighteen years (Lc. 13,10-17); liberation of the demon possessed from Gadarenes (Mk.5,1-20; Mt. 8,28-34; Lk. 8,26-39) and of the one from Capernaum (Mt.12,22-24); the epileptic (Mk. 9,14-29; Mt. 17,14-20; Lk. 37-42) contain exorcisms, castings and baptisms, being primary manifestations of the Holy Baptism;
- the two feedings of the multitude (Mk.6,31-44; 8,1-10; Mt.14,13-21; 15,32-39; Lk.9,10-17; Jn.1,15) and the lunch from the miracle of draught of fishes (Jn. 21,3,21), express the primary form of the Holy Eucharist and Communion;
- curing the bleeding woman (Mk. 5,25-34; Mt. 9,20-22; Lk. 8,43-48) and the deaf mute (Mk. 7,31-37), of the blind from birth (Jn. 9,1-38) and all the curing through touching are primary works of the Holy Chrismation;
- all the dialogues from the miracles performed by the Saviour Jesus Christ comprise the most authentic confessions, and are primary forms of the Holy Confession ;
- Jesus' participation at the wedding from Cana (Jn. 2,1-11), as well as the miracle of turning the water into wine are the new foundation for families, and the blessing that the couple receives in the order of the Holy Marriage; curing the man with dropsy (Lk. 14,1-6), the man with withered hand (Mk. 3,1-5; Mt. 12,9-13; Lk. 6,6-10), Peter's wife's mother (Mk.1,29-30; Mt. 8,14-15; Lk. 4, 38-39), the ear of Malchus (Lk. 22,51) represent the incipient state for the Holy Unction;
- the miracle of draught of fishes (Jn. 21,3-13) – the second part, the Lunch (vv.9-13) and the first feeding of the multitude (Mk. 6,31-44; Mt.14,13-21; Lk. 9,10-17; Jn. 1,15) are practical manifestations of the Holy Orders, for the disciples to embrace their future duties;
- in the episode with Malchus' ear (Lk. 22,49-51) the divine love is mentioned, remembering what happened in Nazareth (Lk. 4,24-30) and premonitory for the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

The miracles were connected to the worship practice and were done with faith. Over the time people were seeking *to know more* rather than *to feel*. *To know* led to a loss of spirituality in the Christian world, diminishing the meaning of *to feel*, which is related to Jesus' words and the Scriptures, displayed in the Sacraments of the Church.

VII.2. Difficulties, obstacles, limits

During the research process we encountered difficulties, obstacles and limits, due to the complexity and the extension of the subject. We will mention some of them:

- the limited number of bibliographical resources on the subject, in Romanian ;
- the limited critical material of biblical research in Romanian (the lack of up-to-date exegetical commentaries) ;
- very few commentaries in the Romanian language, on the Gospels ;
- old bibliographical material (articles and studies) ;
- preaching books translated from German and Italian ;
- difficulty in acquiring exegetic commentaries in modern languages ;
- difficulties created by the critical analysis of miracles in the neo-protestant theological literature ;
- exaggerated interpretations, with symbolic alterations of the miracles' message ;
- very few bibliographical resources treating the theology of miracles ;
- great differences in the theological interpretation between the synoptics and the Fourth Gospel ;
- excess of information on miracles' exegesis (of place, time and space) ;
- excess of exegetical, narrative material (no analytic) ;
- abundance of information towards the end of research.

The research encountered obstacles from the very beginning. The broad subject became more and more complex with the research progress. The literature is a mixture of humble, canonical writings and aggressive scientific studies that forget about the divine and mystical side of the miracles. Some of them were only talking about the relationship between people, not between people and God. Some of the New Testament subjects have been analysed as history, actions that only happened in Jesus Christ's time, and have no implications in the contemporary world. In this research

the miracles are treated as living acts, contemporary to each of the generations, under the authority of God. The analysis of different translations of the Gospels also led to some unorthodox results, which created difficulty in finding the right path to direct the research.

The previous narration accounts the method through which the miracles of Christ were transmitted to His Apostles to be part of the Holy Mysteries of the Church. This is the part with the largest degree of originality in the present dissertation, proving that the miracles were discovered as roots of vitality and foundation for the Holy Mysteries.

VII.3. Suggestions for future research

The miracles are God's methods of work in creation. Their physical aspects usually led to inner miracles of the spirit (Mk. 5,36; 9,23-24). In principle, the greatest miracle is the internal transformation of the man – the human side that has access to the Kingdom of Heaven, which Jesus Christ is preaching as the essence (Mt. 16,26), is unveiling to the people (Lk. 17,21) and is preparing the man for (Mt. 5,3.10).

Miracles were always provoked by sins, which mutilated the people in a way that they could not be healed by their own strength. Miracles are not past. They began with the Genesis, were continued by Jesus, and followed by the Apostles and disciples, through the Church onto us and our times. This manifestation is present in John's prayer (chapter 17), when Jesus explains the dialogue with the Father, regarding his two types of presence in the world: first in the body (Jn. 17,1-10) and then in spirit (Jn. 17,11-26).

The relationship between Jesus and the Father is followed by the disciples, so they are all One (Jn. 17,21.24.26). While He descended from the Holy Trinity to raise the people to heaven, this cannot succeed without the love of God, which does miracles. Love itself is a miracle, carrying the strongest positive energy that was given to people by God (Lk. 7,41-43). This truth should be sought for in miracles. If people will understand love as the spring of life and the force that generated miracles and mysteries, then they will also understand that the physical miracles were just a spring for the spiritual ones, which connects the man with God (Mk. 5,18-20). The mystery of miracle is the love that works through the Holy Mysteries of the Church (Jn. 15,9-14). Love can help people to meet God, by following Jesus Christ's teaching and the loving power of the Holy Spirit.

The new-testamentary theological research can launch a new faith motivation, by analysing the miracles as the roots for all manifestations of the Church practice, especially the Holy Mysteries, the essence of ecclesiology. Miracles are possible if the man sees himself as member of Christ's mysterious Body, valuing the love by the route: I like him (neighbour) alike Him (God).

Our future preoccupation remains the research of miracles as source of divine energy in our lives, and mainly the spiritual miracle, which makes us compatible with God.

In conclusion, miracles are part of Christianity, which cannot exist without them, because there is no Christianity without Holy Liturgy. As the faithful believe in miracles, they will always be a lively subject for debate, during all times, because they work, sprout and always have something new to say for each generation.

Karl Barth asserted: "When the biblical miracle stories excite serious and relevant wonderment, they intend to do this as signals of something fundamentally new, not as a violation of the natural order which is generally known and acknowledged. [...] Though these changes were isolated and temporary, they were nevertheless radically helpful and saving. What took place were promises and intimations, anticipations of a redeemed nature, of a state of freedom, of a kind of life in which there will be no more sorrow, tears, and crying, and where the death as the last enemy will be no more" (Karl Barth, *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979, pp. 68-69).