

International Conference
The Dialogue between SCIENCE, THEOLOGY, and PHILOSOPHY
(2nd edition)
with the theme of
“MEDICINE AND SPIRITUALITY”
(Timișoara, November 7-9, 2024)

Starting from the work of Alexis Carrel, *L'homme, cet inconnu*, in which he finds a certain dimension of “anthropological apophatism”, Father Dumitru Stăniloae asserted imperatively the fact that “medicine must recover from its atheism”. He noted a certain form of “crisis of medicine” which also originates from the fact that man is considered only as a material body, and the disease, as being placed in an organ, the only one with which the physician handles, setting down between him and the sick person only some simple medical instruments. As a remedy, the Romanian theologian predicts “the consideration of man as a being that also has a soul” and demanded that the doctor approach the man as a whole, i.e. by his person with his own person, thus placing himself “in a personal relationship, from soul to soul, with the whole person”.¹ That is why, he emphasized, in his own analysis of the relationship between medicine and faith, “the Church service of the priest, like the doctor, is founded on the consciousness of a 'mission of man to man' ” but also “Christianity, as medicine, is based on the same 'mercy' towards man in suffering and helplessness”. For Christianity, the meaning of disease does not only apply to the suffering of the body, but also refers to spiritual inadequacies and anomalies, a disruption of the deep connection with the source of spiritual life, with God. Spiritual healing also generates an external healing, and thus, “The priest is the essential collaborator of the doctor in healing the sick people”.² The priest is the one who does everything as, through the faith that ignites the person and through the love with which he envelops the sick, the latter fellow to mobilize from the depths of his soul.

In disease, which must no longer be considered only a “natural concept”, moral causations are mixed and, in the course of it, engages the soul. Thus, from the way medicine considered healing through purely material means and purely mechanical laws, today, it is heading towards a holistic vision, where medicine is a “whole person” approach. By treating the whole person, rather than just the symptoms, medicine to approach the whole man, as a being that owns body and soul. Within the experience of serious illness, empirical evidence research reveals an indelible connection between medicine and spirituality—broadly defined as the way in which people seek to express their meaning of suffering, through which they experience the connection with oneself, with others, with spirituality. Through acknowledgement of this relationship of reciprocity, the neglect of spirituality by medicine represents today a passed stage, working together to provide a common response to the experience of contemporary man suffering.

The role of social cohesion, which the Metropolis of Banat, the spiritual pole and the Romanian Academy, the scientific pole, have it in the heart of Banat, in the city of Timișoara, is expressed this time as well, within the organization of an international Conference, entitled “Medicine and Spirituality”, which aims to unite Christian intellectuals, researchers from the big four universities in the city on the Bega.

¹ Dumitru Stăniloae, „Medicină și credință” in *Cultură și Duhovnicie. Articole publicate în Telegraful Român Vol. II (1937-1941)* (București: Basilica, 2012) 326-332, here p. 330-331.

² Dumitru Stăniloae, „Preotul și medicul” in *Cultură și Duhovnicie. Articole publicate în Telegraful Român Vol. III (1942-1993)* (București: Basilica, 2012), p. 446-448.

In this way, with the blessing of His Eminence, John, Metropolitan of Banat, between 7-9 November 2024, at the “King Mihai I” University of Life Sciences from Timișoara, will host the first edition of this scientific event, dedicated to the “Homage Year of pastoral care and concern of the sick”, to which university professors from within the West University of Timișoara, the Politehnica University of Timișoara, the University of Medicine and Pharmacy “Victor Babeș” from Timișoara and, last but not least, the University of “King Mihai I” Life Sciences in Timișoara have agreed, which will provide the location and logistical support for the proper conduct of the event.

TOPICS:

1. Mind suffering (nous) and the brain

- The dialogue between cognitive sciences, neurobiology of morality and *Ethics* in artificial intelligence
- *Algorithms and Virtues* – the codification of morality in an Artificial Intelligence system (*Autonomous Artificial Moral Agents*)
- “Mind and its processes” in Philosophy of Mind (*mind-soul-body* relationship)
- mental suffering and mental health disorders
- the asceticism of the mind, the hesychast prayer and the psychosomatic method of the descent of the mind into the heart
- *Transhumanism* - the anthropological revolution, critical perspective
- Rethinking human consciousness (cybernetic transfer of consciousness, “mind-uploading” and *Human Brain Project*)
- Peace of mind: Fighting thoughts (therapeutic role of *abba*), healing sadness (*akedia*) and of fear ($\phi\acute{o}\beta\omicron\varsigma$ and $\alpha\iota\delta\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ – “to feel fear”; anguish, concern - *souci; Sorge*)

2. Heartache and the “Doctor of Souls and Bodies”

- From *myocardium* (heart muscle) to *kardia* (spirituality of the heart)
- The piercing of the heart (*componctio cordis*) and the gift of tears
- Human illness and suffering, holistic healing of the person
- the suffering between medical practice and moral act
- medicine and diseases of the 21st century
- Illness, suffering, healing – a theological-medical approach
- The relationship between medicine and religion throughout history
- Miracles from the medical record. Doctors as hands of God
- Healings from the Old and New Testaments - God, the “The Physician of souls and others Bodies”, the Doctor par excellence
- Bioethics, the passions and the transmission of spiritual diseases (the pathology of desire and pleasure)
- Embryo, body and soul (medicine and spirituality)

3. Speech and communication pathologies

- Life education
- “Critical thinking and fakenews”
- Homoconecticus & Idea Design - dialogue between science, art and technology
- Theology of *The Word* in dialogue with linguistic Philosophy
- Catechetical dialogue and *social media*
- Communication in the process of educational counseling and intervention in school and vocational guidance

- Contemporary *polis* and communication channels (cultural, social and psychological context)
- *Logos* - with the double meaning of “word” and “reason”. Icon language *versus* digital language
- Correct use of language (truth and logic) and “listening” education
- *Words* – linguistic sign, sense (noima), meaning and symbol
- Ethics of communication (notions of *reality*, *truth* and *belief*) or why it is truth important for a “Post-Truth” society
- *Truth* and consensual-rhetorical interpretation - about instrumentalization and reification of the truth






4. Ecotheology - intersection of spirituality, ecology, and climate change

- Environment, nature and creation
- Man and the Cosmos in Patristic Thought (*Cosmic Liturgy*)
- Ecology – the beauty of the visible world and its meaning
- Environmental problems, an interdisciplinary response
- Masters or priests of creation?
- The theme of the environment as an existential problem (environment and security – crisis and challenges of the 21st century)
- Microcosm & mediator; macro-anthropos
- Monasticism and the sanctification of matter (asceticism, fasting and the ecological crisis)

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ORGANIZERS:

The Archdiocese of Timișoara, in partnership with:

-  Romanian Academy, Timișoara branch
-  West University of Timișoara
-  Politehnica University of Timișoara
-  “Victor Babeș” University of Medicine and Pharmacy Timișoara
-  “King Michael I” University of Life Sciences Timișoara

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

- Prof. dr. MIRCEA DUMITRU (Vice-president of the Romanian Academy)
- Rev. dr. CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT (University of Cambridge)
- Prof. dr. PHILIPPE GAGNON (Université Catholique de Lille)
- Prof. dr. NATALIE DEPRAZ (Université de Rouen Normandie)
- Rev. dr. STELIAN TOFANĂ (Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj)

Rev. dr. DRAGOȘ GIULEA (Theological Center St. Maximus the Confessor Montreal)

Rev. Dr. RĂZVAN IONESCU (Centre Orthodoxe d'Études et de Recherches Dumitru Stăniloae Paris)

Prof. dr. ADRIAN LEMENI (University of Bucharest)

Prof. dr. CĂTĂLIN-ȘTEFAN POPA (Romanian Academy)

TOPICS:

The suffering of the human mind (*nous*) & brain

The suffering of the heart and “The Doctor of souls and bodies”

Pathologies of the word – communication

Ecotheology - intersection of spirituality, ecology, and climate change

CONFERENCE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE:

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