

Syntheses on the Social-Philanthropic Activity of the Romanian Orthodox Church. A Grounded Theory Research

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Abstract: *The article contributes to the development of knowledge on the social-philanthropic activity of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The article gives a secondary analysis of the data obtained in the doctoral research, with the purpose of creating a specific framework of the charitable activity and of the social work in Romanian Orthodox Church in the professionalization process. The article is based on a qualitative Grounded Theory methodology. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with several social actors that have a direct connection with the institutionalized practices (Hunea et al. 2017: 17-25) or not institutionalized of social work: priests offering professional services licensed and accredited; priests and abbots who offer institutionalized charitable and social work services and who are not licensed or accredited, but who possess all the operating notices; social workers who work in the social work programs carried out by the Church. The research has as aim the study of social work and charitable activities carried out in institutional regime (accredited or uncredited) and those informally implemented which are not institutionalized, in the Archdiocese of Iasi. As a result of the analysis we could conclude that the social work carried out by the Romanian Orthodox Church respects the quality standards of the social services and, respectively, the ethical norms specific to the social work in general, to which is added a spiritual dimension related to the values of the love and of caring for the others. The characteristics of the social-philanthropic activity of Romanian Orthodox Church they are still under construction and customization, as long as part of the services are already licensed and part is in the intermediate stage between licensing and traditional philanthropy.*

Keywords: *philanthropy; charitable activity; professionalized social work; social-philanthropic activity; Grounded Theory.*

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Introduction

In Romania, the religious cults¹ are nominated as private providers of social services through the Government Ordinance no. 68 / 28.08.2003 (OG, 2003) amended and completed by the Government Ordinance no. 86 / 19.08.2004. The necessary condition for religious cults to be recognized as social service providers is for them to be accredited as providers. Also, Law no. 47/2006 regarding the national system of social work mentions the units of worship as potential organizers of social services. Also, Law no. 489 / 28.12.2006 regarding the religious freedom and the regime of the cults affirm the support that the State offers to the religious cults, in their capacity as social service provider. By organizing its own social work system, the Church aims to correlate its mission with the teachings of the Christian faith, in order to assist the needy people, but also to correlate its objectives with the legal requirements of organizing the primary and specialized social services or with a socio-medical character, by setting up / accrediting / licensing some institutions specially dedicated to this purpose, possibly in partnership with other secular or religious – public or private – institutions; training of the society in the active support of the disadvantaged groups, by creating and sustaining the existence of support networks organized at the community level; translating to the scientificization of the practice, by conducting social studies, participating in the elaboration of national or regional social policies, participating in scientific manifestations dedicated to the various social problems and publishing materials accordingly, carrying out actions in order to increase the social awareness of the need for community involvement in helping vulnerable groups (Țugui, Țigmeanu, 2010: 11-12).

The Social Work Network of the Romanian Orthodox Church

The social work network within the Romanian Orthodox Church was established in order to implement the Decision of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church of May 27, 1997 (The Holy Synod, 1997). This social work network operates within the organizational and administrative structures of the Church at the level of Patriarchate, dioceses, protopopiates, and parishes. Within the same Synod the Regulation on organization and functioning of the social work system (Unguru, 2019) in

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the Romanian Orthodox Church was approved. (Țugui, Țigmeanu, 2010: 11) The social activity of the Church is carried out in accordance with art. 53, 68 and 94 of the Statute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, as well as with the legislation in force in the field of social service providers (GEO no. 68/2003 as subsequently amended and supplemented and GEO no. 86/2004). Currently, Law no. 292 / 2011 of social work. It defines the general framework of operation of the national system of social work, including the modalities of establishing public-private partnerships and the way in which religious cults can organize accredited and/or licensed social work services.

In 2010 they worked in the Romanian Orthodox Church a number of 50 eparchial social work offices, 25 offices at the eparchial center level, as well as 16 offices within the archdiocese and 9 offices at the parish level, 339 social settlements, of which 121 for children, 35 for the elderly, 106 social canteens, 42 medical offices and social pharmacies, 9 counseling centers (Țugui, Țigmeanu, 2010: 12.).

We present below the development of the social work system of the Romanian Orthodox Church by comparison between the situation in 2012 and that of 2017.

Table I - Comparative situation between 2012 and 2017 regarding the development of the social work system of the Romanian Orthodox Church

Social work institution /service	2012(Cricovean, 2018:149) No. of Services	2017(Ionițe, 2017) No. of Services
social canteens, including social bakeries	154	172
medical services and social pharmacies	44	49
day centers for children	61	110
educational centers	34	
day centers for the elderly	22	23
residential centers for the elderly	34	47
community centers and social work offices	20	24
family-type centers	37	36
social and after-school kindergartens	34	50

protected housing	14	13
resource centers, information and counseling	105	98
educational centers (institutions conducting adult education)	4	48
emergency reception centers	18	15
camps	12	48
social institutions of other types than those mentioned	86	87

The beneficiaries of the philanthropic and social work services of the Romanian Orthodox Church

Regarding the number of beneficiaries served by the social work units of the Orthodox Church at the level of 2017, they were 93,555 persons. Of these, 34,691 children cared for in the Church's social settlements in the form of day or residential centers come from poor families, with many children and reduced care options or whose parents are away to work abroad. Also, in the social settlements of the Church, 5,918 adults with disabilities are cared for, along with people suffering from HIV/AIDS infection, people dependent on various narcotic substances, etc. In addition, there are 29,412 adults in difficulty, unemployed, released prisoners who do not have a home, victims of human trafficking or domestic violence, as well as natural disasters. Regarding the residential or day care centers for the elderly, they total 22,662 beneficiaries. A number of 872 persons are assigned to other categories of beneficiaries. Apart from the activity of social welfare institutions set up and coordinated by the Church, care activities are carried out in the form of 547 social projects and programs, which are carried out at the level of the eparchies within the Romanian Patriarchate. Of these projects, 28 benefit from external funding, 86 from internal public funding, and 38 from own funding of Church and, respectively, 53 projects benefit from mixed funding (Ionițe, 2017). In the document Synthesis of the activities of the Romanian Orthodox Church in 2017, issued by the Patriarchate of the Romanian Orthodox Church, it is specified that in support of the social-philanthropic activity, the Church spent in 2017 the amount of 110,782,632 lei (Ionițe, 2017), increasing from 95.841.602 lei in 2016 (Ionițe, 2017). To this is added a series of charitable expenses made at the level of parishes and monasteries, not financially quantified and / or not reported to the dioceses. A partial estimate of them

at the level of 2016 shows that the Church offered direct financial aids in the amount of 11,936,933.93 lei and material aids in estimated value of 21,628,322.7 lei (Ionițe, 2017).

The summary of the activities of the Romanian Orthodox Church in 2017 presents us with a series of philanthropic programs at national level, such as the one titled Meal of Joy, implemented in partnership with Selgros Cash & Carry and Carrefour Romania S.A. This program consists of the weekly donation by the two chains of spermagazine of food and hygienic-sanitary goods, which are subsequently used in the social centers administered by the Church. Within this program donations amounting to 1,050,000 euros were received. A similar program has been started since autumn 2017, in partnership with Auchan Retail Romania and titled The Taste of Charity, which aims to donate food to be distributed to beneficiaries of the Church and the NGOs that operate within it (Ionițe, 2017).

Purpose and objectives of the research

The purpose of the research is to create an analysis of the specificities of the charitable act and of social work in the Church within the professionalization process.

The operational objectives considered are:

O1. Identification of the specificity and significance attributed to the social-philanthropic activity of Romanian Orthodox Church in different environments of the Archdiocese of Iasi.

O2. Identification of the meanings attributed to the professionalization of charity, correlated with the professionalization of the social services of the Romanian Orthodox Church

O3. Clarification of the priest's roles in the process of combining philanthropy with professional services.

O4. The construction of a theoretical model regarding the social-philanthropic and welfare activities of faith-based organizations operating within or with the blessing of Romanian Orthodox Church

O5. Identification of new solutions in the development and adaptation of the social services offered within the Iasi Archdiocese.

The research universe

The research focused on the study of social work and charity activities carried out in institutional regime (accredited or uncredited) and those carried out informally, not institutionalized, in the Archdiocese of Iasi.

Thus, we had in mind:

- the 13 archpriests of the Archdiocese (of these, 3 do not have accredited services);
- 1221 parishes of the Archdiocese;
- 94 monasteries and hermitages.

Several social actors that have a direct connection with institutionalized or non-institutionalized social work practices were investigated:

- priests offering professionally licensed and accredited services;
- priests and abbots who provide institutionalized charitable and social work services and who are not licensed or accredited, but who possess all the operating permits;
- social workers who work in the social work programs carried out by the Church.

Methodological design

Due to the exploratory nature of this research, it was considered necessary to use a mixed methodological design, based both on qualitative research, which we carried out through the working methodology called Grounded Theory, and based on the resulting theoretical model. Following the qualitative research we carried out a quantitative research, which was based on the sociological survey through a questionnaire (whose data are not the subject of this article, previously published in the articles Nistor, P. (2019a) and Nistor, P. (2019b)).

Interview

The research was carried out in a qualitative register, with a set of three types of semi-structured interviews applied to the main actors involved in the activity of charity and social work in the Archdiocese of Iasi. Thus, we had in mind:

- priests who coordinate accredited services;
- priests and abbots who do not have accredited services, with different beneficiaries;
- social workers who work in the services of the institutions of the Archdiocese of Iasi.

Three interview guides were used in the data collection, one for each of the above categories.

The thematic axes of the interview guide

The thematic axes of the interviews, carried out both with priests coordinating specialized social services and with priests carrying out only social-philanthropic activities, as well as with social workers, are:

- the meaning of the term charity / philanthropy;
- the charitable (philanthropic) activity he carries out;
- the specificity of the coordinated social service;
- motivation for involvement in social-philanthropic and / or social work activities;
- the main social problems faced by the members of the community in which the philanthropic and / or welfare activity is carried out;
- the stages through which the philanthropic activity or the organized social service went through;
- the most important achievements/difficulties encountered during the course of social-philanthropic activity;
- the decision-making modalities and the persons involved in the decision-making regarding social-philanthropic and / or social work activities;
- the existence or not of an organization (association or foundation) through which the social-philanthropic activity is carried out and of a social worker(s) specially employed to carry out this activity;
- the role and criteria for the selection of volunteers;
- the need to professionalize the social activity within the Church;
- what risks are foreshadowed regarding the desire to institutionalize and professionalize the charitable activity (Nistor, 2018a; Nistor, 2018b).

Pretesting tools - interview guides

The interview guides were pre-tested and adjusted according to the data collection process according to the resulting discursive categories and the way in which the saturation of the model is prefigured. The first pretesting of the initial form of the interview was carried out on two subjects from each category, following the clarity and relevance of the questions, how they are received by the interviewees, the specificity of the answers received, etc.

Sampling and selection of participants

The sampling was carried out using the snowball method, starting from the requirement of being priests or social workers involved in the social-philanthropic activity of The Romanian Orthodox Church. The

research aims at a theoretical sampling, which means that the "saturation of the theoretical model" is pursued. The term saturation of the model represents the moment of the research in which new interviews conducted no longer bring significant additional information that can be classified as new theoretical categories. The total number of interviews is 25.

Data collection and open coding

The design of the qualitative research includes a series of interview axes, elaborated according to the research objectives. A total of 37 interviews were collected and interpreted, obtaining theoretical saturation of the model.

The interviews were carried out between September 2018 - February 2019 and they considered a number of 14 priests, of which 2 are monasteries abbots from Iasi and Neamț counties, 15 social workers and 8 others involved in providing social-philanthropic services within the Romanian Orthodox Church. Of these, 6 are lay persons (social inspectors, coordinators of residential centers, managers) and 2 are monks, as well as 2 social workers from organizations based on the Catholic and Protestant faith.

Of the interviewed people, 17 were from Iasi County (Iasi, Târgu Frumos, Hârlău, Pașcani), 14 from Neamț County (Piatra Neamț, Târgu Neamț, Roznov, Săvinești, Poiana Largului), 6 from Botosani County (Săveni, Darbani, Dorohoi, Botosani-city). We make a special mention about the existence of 2 interviewees who are not part of the social work system of the Romanian Orthodox Church, but interact with its activity within the social inspection. The results of the interviews with these people are highlighted in the general analysis of the data obtained from these interviews, being contrasted with those obtained from the interviews with the social workers who carry out their professional activity within the Church. The process of data collection takes place at the same time as open coding (Sbaraini, Carter, Evans, Blinkhorn, 2011). There are a series of operations aimed at: collecting data through semi-structured interviews, followed immediately by the transcript of the interviews and the primary analysis of the data, as they are collected; subsequently, the initial coding, also called open coding, which takes place as the transcript of the interviews is actually carried out, when it is sought to apply a series of "labels" on the different discursive fragments, then grouped semantically (Sandu, 2018).

The data analysis process is in the open or initial coding stage (Cheer, MacLaren, Tsey, 2015) which involves systematic reading of data

and making memo-type notes. In parallel, the classification of data into semantic categories is being pursued, and the coding stages called axial coding and selective coding are being developed, which aim to establish the predominant semantic categories in the speech of the interviewed persons (Sandu, 2018).

The semantic categories obtained inductively were: social problems of the Christian-Orthodox community (semantic category that allowed us to elaborate some considerations regarding the necessity of the social-philanthropic activities carried out by the Romanian Orthodox Church), philanthropy, charity (Sandu, & Caras, 2013) and service of the neighbor in the participants' discourse. philanthropy, the spiritual motivation of social-philanthropic practices, the conduct of social-philanthropic activities within the Romanian Orthodox Church, the sources of financial support of the philanthropic activity, the professionalization of charity (a category in which the perspective of the persons involved in charitable activities within the Romanian Orthodox Church on the transition process has been shaped to philanthropy (Nistor, 2019a; Nistor, 2019b) as a form of social work, to the help of the neighbor in the accredited social work services), particularities of Christian social work (based on Christian values). Another important thematic focus addressed in this chapter was the one regarding the influence that the professionalization of the charity could have in the aspect of a possible laicisation of the social-charitable practices of the Church, meaning that we followed the collaboration between priests and professionals (social workers), as well as the difficulties that this process of professionalization raises in the fulfillment of the social-charitable mission of the Church (from the perspective of those involved in these activities).

Subsequently, after a series of discussions regarding the organizational structure and management of organizations within the Church operating in the sphere of charity, we presented the model of functioning of the social-charitable services and of professionalization of the charity in the organizations affiliated to the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Discussions and limits

Due to the methodological specificity adopted, which is based on a form of Grounded Theory, the one founded by K. Charmaz (2000), (Sandu, 2018) in the process of operationalizing the research objectives, no research hypotheses were proposed, but a number of assumptions were formulated, who guided the process of collecting and interpreting qualitative data. These constructive assumptions were:

- The professionalization of the social services offered by the Church is based both on the desire to adapt them to the increasingly complex needs of the beneficiaries, as well as the secular pressure of the state, through the introduction of quality standards and by orienting the sources of financing towards services predominantly of social work.

- There is reluctance on the part of some of the Church's representatives regarding a professionalization of the charitable mission of the Church through the establishment and functioning of accredited and licensed social services, due to the traditional social vision on the philanthropy, which is the basis for the fulfillment of the social mission of the Church.

These assumptions were not raised to the rank of hypotheses and their validation was not pursued, but they were benchmarks in the construction of the methodological design of the research. In order to ensure a greater credibility of the theoretical model, a process of parallel reading of the data was carried out (partially), in order to ensure the triangulation of the researchers. Along with the triangulation of the researchers in the elaboration of the final paper we will also approach a triangulation process of the research methods, the main elements of the generated model will be subjected, in a second study, to a quantitative evaluation by questionnaire-based inquiry.

The limits of the research are given by its exploratory nature and the qualitative approach of this study. The generated model is especially valid for the social services offered by the Romanian Orthodox Church through its institutions within the Archdiocese of Iasi, but it can be generalized with a high dose of plausibility for the social-charitable and social work services offered by Romanian Orthodox Church nationwide (transferability principle). As regards the generalization of this model for the analysis of the social services offered by faith-based organizations, other than the Orthodox one, a series of particular limitations given by the specificity of this faith are added, namely its social-humanistic vocation, the ecumenical vocation of the Church and its prayerful, healing, paramount salvation mission. The continuity between the philanthropic activity and the social assistance activity highlighted by the professionals is confirmed by the beneficiaries. The priest has a central place in initiating the provision of social-philanthropic services and is a key element in their coordination, thus being a feature shared with other faith-based organizations, as is the case with those analyzed by Sider and Unruh (2004).

The massive involvement of priests in social-philanthropic activity requires, in our opinion, the offering at eparchial level of training programs

in the social-philanthropic activity, intended for priests, and even the introduction of philanthropy and social work courses at the Pastoral sections of the faculties of theology.

The training in the priest's care should not substitute for his pastoral training, but allow him to carry out the social mission effectively, when he assumes it, carrying out philanthropic actions both in a traditional manner, in strict accordance with the Christian teaching, based on the tradition from St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil the Great, with Christian values of mercy, compassion and self-giving, but also benefiting from the professional experience of modern social work, integrated and internalized as Christian social work.

Grounded Theory categories analysis

Social problems in Christian communities. The need for social-philanthropic activities

One of the most important social problems to which the Orthodox Church responds through its philanthropic work is poverty, both material and spiritual. The society far removed from God is spiritually impoverished and, even under the conditions of social-political freedom, the process of spiritual poverty is deepening, due to the alienation of the people of God, due to daily care, material poverty, worries for tomorrow.

"First of all, the material poverty. This being spiritual poverty as a spiritual state inherited from communism, which the situation of freedom - paradoxically - aggravates it even more "(PR1).

The spiritual motivation for the involvement in social-philanthropic activity is one of the most important, the religious persons, and especially those who are part of the clergy and the monks, aware of the need for social work through the shown empathy and the direct participation in the suffering of the neighbor (MON1).

This awareness is correlated with the desire to "follow Christ in the Word and in fact" (MON1), especially in the current crisis situation of the values that the contemporary society faces. The interviewees consider that precisely in this context of social and moral crisis, Christian values should be present in society through social action based on faith. In our opinion, the interviewee expresses in his words, the need for the active involvement of the Faith Based Organisation in the current post-secular society (Nistor, 2018b; 2018c), precisely in order to make heard and understood through the own example of the members of these organizations the Christian values,

especially those related to compassion, love of neighbor, Christian mercy, serving the neighbor etc., and their possible beneficial transformative impact in today's society.

At the moment, humanity is going through a social and spiritual crisis that needs trained people to overcome it. There is a need to train people who can spread the word of Christ by both deed and word. The involvement in the social work activity also occurred through the direct participation in the pain to which some elderly and young people are subjected. The main reason for engaging in this kind of activity is to preserve the orthodox tradition by catechetically training young people who have receptive spiritual skills. [...] They need models, people to guide them, to help them, to support them and to order them [...] (MON1)

Helping and stimulating the rediscovery of the social dimension of the Christian life is the main duty of the Orthodox priest. Social solidarity, as a re-articulation of the Church as a body of Christ, as a rediscovery of the communal valences of neighbor love, represents the service through philanthropy, present in all parishes in the Orthodox Church.

[...] "philanthropy really means to break something of what I have, not only love, but something in the concrete way, that is, to offer something from me and then it is not just a service, it is something, it is something a gesture I offer, is something more than that; it is not just a service; then, I truly believe, this word is closely related to the values of the Church "(AS2).

The answers received from the respondents reached an extremely current social problem, in an individualistic society and connected to the rules of the market, in which everything can be judged according to the equation: request - offer. Basically, the act of philanthropy is re-established in a much broader concept, that of giving (Mauss, 1997; Gavriliuță, 1998).

He defines human nature in its depths and saves man from the consumerist individualism or selfishness of nowadays life. Resumed in Christianity, the theme of giving is connected with that of sacrifice and love of the neighbour. Nicolae Steindhart captures the essence of giving in Christianity. It not only concerns the material dimension of life, but also has an unseen part, much more efficient and working than the visible part. I can give to the Other, comfort, attention, time, love, etc. and this will make him almost feel our warmth and recognition, which could cause a change of substance in his inner forum which will eventually become visible on the outside. It will give up the vices, it will change its lifestyle, it will value more its members, the work, the things and the people that surround it. However, the exercise of giving in Christianity is a much more complex one: God does not ask us to give from our overflow, nor from our foreskin, but from what

we do not have. This would mean a total dedication: to give hope when you fall, to give smiles when your soul and eyes cry, to give you confidence when you feel that you have no solutions when you do not know how to solve your problems.

This metaphysics of the gift has a profound transformative effect in us and in our social life: it multiplies and contaminates the one offered by the Other. Specifically, it can be made between specialists and beneficiaries, between volunteers and those in difficulty, between people of different generations, etc. Thus, the connection between young and old in the community is seen by the respondents in this positive light that produces real transformations. This philanthropic activity is especially enjoyed by the elders of the parishes, "wounded by the constraints of communism", then the youth who need to exercise the deeply human values of the dedication, philanthropy and neighbor's love.

The lack of solid values and their social practice is, in most of the answers, the main problem of the social environment in the Archdiocese of Iasi, on which the social service, which is most needed in most parishes, should be applied.

"[...] (through nn) help between the young and the old, heal some wounds of the past are healed, bringing them closer to the Church, involving them in this mutual help, in order to make them not feel lonely and forget, in them causing them to open their hearts to one another and to trusting one another. Because the greatest fear left in their souls by the communist regime was distrust"(PR1).

The lack of a solid education in the family and in the school institutions is considered a major social problem, together with the inactivity of the inhabitants and their lack of aspirations. A culture of poverty is often invoked, on the basis of which emphasis is placed on school dropout.

"[...] "the main problems are the lack of education, the self limitation and the acceptance of precarious living conditions. These, accentuated by the financial shortages and a poor job market in the area, lead to a low standard of living and to school dropout at an early age"(PR2).

In this context, the role of church-sponsored care institutions is a much more complex one: it regards, first of all, the unseen part, the one on which our whole existence is based. The cultivation of healthy values with natural Christian roots, an education in the spirit of these values, their transposition into attitudes, actions and ways of being in the world can become the royal way of true and harmonious living in the world. The material dimension of philanthropic activity becomes, in this case, a natural complement or consequence of a real transformation.

The philanthropy, charity and service of the neighbor. Perspective of the personnel involved in philanthropic activities in the Romanian Orthodox Church

Serving the neighbor appears as a Christian's duty. Thus, the love of the neighbor is not just a simple emotional reaction to the presence of the Other. It is doubled by our duty to do good to others. The term philanthropy is composed of the Greek expressions "philos" (love) and "anthropos" (man). The first meaning of philanthropy is therefore the love of people. In social practice, this is systematically transposed into actions based on spiritual or at least profoundly humanistic beliefs, to devote the whole life or at least a significant period of time to helping others. The term "philanthropy" includes the determination to contribute material and financial resources or time to help one's neighbor. The term has a strong Christian connotation.

The research participants, priests and social workers involved in the social-charitable activity of the Church, place a special emphasis on the idea of philanthropy, which they place at the basis of the Church's social activity.

"Philanthropy is the basis of the social activity of the Romanian Orthodox Church". (AS1)

"Philanthropy" and "charity", synonymous terms that denote love for man, especially for those in need, are a calling for every Christian and accessible to anyone, regardless of social status and even religious affiliation. Social work is the moment when the feeling of love for one's neighbor is expressed in the form of social action or in terms of one of our interviewees: "mercy as a fact". This exercise of mercy in the form of social action requires a concrete framework, institutionally and normatively configured.

Respondents define "philanthropy" in close correlation with "near love" transformed into reality. The gesture that expresses the love of neighbor can take different faces and express us entirely. The institutionalization of charity is regarded as a form of legal rationalization of a human feeling generated by the love of neighbor, the feeling of the mercy.

[...] generosity, love towards those who, for various reasons, do not have access to a decent life, mercy as a fact, not just as a feeling, gets a legal framework, in which the one doing philanthropy, both those who benefit from philanthropy meet certain criteria (PR3).

An example is the existence in the church of the box of mercy, which invites believers to express Christian love through philanthropic acts: "the box of mercy, which comes as a principle of Christian philanthropy, of mercy" (AS1).

The interviewees point out that philanthropy must be an attitude of each person: "the philanthropist can be any of us" (AS1).

The role of the church is to teach the believers and not only to have a philanthropic attitude, to be actively involved in serving the neighbor: "A box of mercy in the middle of the Church, which will cause every believer to put a penny there for any poor man" (AS3).

The full assumption of a philanthropic and charitable attitude on the part of the church's servants becomes an eloquent example that the values we share are the foundation of human action.

[...] to know that there are cases of priests from villages, hamlets, which are social cases, but they have never come to seek support from the Good Shepherd Fund (...). Believe me, they either find themselves on the list or pass them off because they know their situation, but they never come to ask. [...] (AS1).

A definition of the term from a Christian-Orthodox perspective formulated by another interviewee states that "philanthropy" is the practice of active human giving and self-help, coupled with the responsibility of serving one's neighbor as a model of fulfilling God's commandment to love your neighbor as you love yourself (MON 2).

Therefore, the social categories or beneficiaries of the help services run by the church are expanding. They look at the real problems in the parishes, as well as the ones their husbands or their families are facing, specifying that priests and their families do not usually ask for help for them, but for their peers, regardless of the difficulties they are facing. It is also a form of philanthropy and charity. It concerns the Christian dimension of existence assumed and lived to the end. An interesting approach to the problem is one of the monks interviewed, who in the capacity of abbot at a monastery that offers social work services is directly involved in offering those services. According to the monk interviewed, "philanthropy" has both a material side - which consists of the material help of the people who do not have the necessary means of living, as well as a spiritual one - which aims at the spiritual help of these people. Social work on the other hand is regarded as having only one dimension of material help, being devoid of a spiritual component. We consider that this understanding of social work as devoid of a spiritual component, is due to the predominance in society of lay social work, but also to the laicizing processes to which the Church is subjected, which intends to implement social work services due to the accreditation and licensing standards of social work services.

This perspective places the philanthropic practices on the spiritual horizon of the social-charitable activity of the Church, the welfare ones

being practically reduced to the social benefits. The agent component of social change – which should be specific to social work, a change that could come through spiritual counseling, for example regarding the change of lifestyle, in the case of people where this is possible, finding a job, or mobilizing the community in support of the vulnerable person or family, diminishing the phenomena of marginalization of vulnerable people, within the community (Huidu, 2019; Sandu & Unguru, 2018)., etc. – is ignored, either is voluntarily, or not. Of course, this is not always possible, caring for people in vulnerable groups or communities is an important option for charitable activities as well as social work activities (Howe, 2001). The legislation specific to social work provides for the use of both care strategies and those that generate social change for people and groups in difficulty. Even if social work is limited to care, it can be accompanied by a significant spiritual component. (MON1)

A significant part of the social-philanthropic activity carried out within the Romanian Orthodox Church is based on the volunteering activity carried out by priests, monks and faithful believers. The selection of the persons involved in the activity is based on the desire to get involved in social activities and to support the different people and vulnerable categories.

In the volunteering activity, people who have a range of professional skills and competences in the healthcare sphere, but also social skills in general and even artistic or cultural ones, are preferred. In the case of some of the faith based organizations within the Church, in the selection of the volunteers involved in the social-philanthropic activity, the religious affiliation and even the existence of a certain spiritual dimension (MON1) is important.

This is motivated by the need to be able to convey the spiritual values to the beneficiaries. Not all interviewees mention this requirement for volunteers, on the contrary, other interviewees emphasize professional skills, and a sincere desire to help.

[...] The volunteer must have a certain spiritual dimension in order to be able to transmit the values imposed by the Foundation. There are students, students who regularly participate in different activities of the Foundation, considering the acquisition of experience (MON 1).

The spiritual motivation of social-philanthropic practice

The philanthropic activity is based on the religious faith of the assistants or the social workers. The religious motivation, to help the needy

people, in their capacity as spiritual beings, created in the image and likeness of God, (AS3) increases the aspiration to provide social services to the highest possible quality. This intrinsic motivation can be the basis of the professionalization of social and charitable services within the Church, through specific vocational training, of the people who feel the spiritual call to help those in need.

The most important value that I guide in my work as a social worker is faith in God and the fact that man is face to face and that every man is a value in himself and is unique and that when man is in a need, he must and deserves to be helped to overcome the problematic situation. (AS3)

Volunteering in the specific philanthropic care environment of the Orthodox Church motivates some of those passionate about caring for people in difficulty to go further in the sense of following a specific professional training.

That's how I started, being a volunteer student, working with people in need, working at children's homes, old people's homes, hospitals ... and slowly I got into taste. In fact, I realized then that I find a lot in this activity. [...] I made the Faculty of Theology (Social Work nn) so out of a desire, exactly to work with people, especially with those who are in a situation of suffering of any kind and I felt the need to help [...]. (AS3)

The motivation of the care practice is, for some of the social workers interviewed, the merging of the values specific to the social work with the spiritual ones specific to Orthodoxy. This match between the (ethical) values embedded in professional practice and the spiritual values assumed by the individual through deep religious belonging, creates a sense of distinct professional identity, the profession exceeding the vocation stage to that of the mission, accompanied by the feeling of being in the right place (AS3)

The conduct of philanthropic activities in the Romanian Orthodox Church

The philanthropic activity is organized by the Romanian Orthodox Church at parish level and through social-philanthropic organizations operating at their level. The social-philanthropic programs are based on a series of activities of voluntary work of the different categories of vulnerable people. A series of examples of such programs, such as the one called Meal of Joy, are aimed at receiving donations from a supermarket in foods near the expiration of the term of validity and distributing them to direct beneficiaries or to the parishes that - they expressed their willingness to share them with low-level resources parishioners.

[...] we have philanthropic activities. We have the "Meal of Joy" program, which we carry out with a supermarket in Iași. [...] We receive food that has a few days until it expires and we distribute it to beneficiaries or institutions that have beneficiaries; institutions that have asked for our help. [...] We are the beneficiary of the partnership and we are the ones who choose the final/direct beneficiaries [...] (AS1).

Another activity considered philanthropic is the care of the pilgrims, both on the occasion of the holidays of Saint Parascheva, as well as at any monastery or hermitage in the archdiocese of Iasi. The interviewees and the abbesses brought to their attention the fact that the monasteries offer accommodation, a hot meal, financial support, but above all, the spiritual help, for any pilgrim who breaks the threshold of the monastery.

The example of the Hadâmbu monastery that offers [...] food and accommodation every Sunday and every Holiday for over 500 pilgrims from all over the country and not only [...], and at the monasteries there are over 2000 believers. Everyone receives a meal at the monastery entrance and accommodation at the communal dormitories, at the arbondaric"(PR5), the Sibistria Monastery, Petru Voda, Paltin etc.

Within the monasteries, the tradition of carrying out philanthropic activities for the care of the elderly, orphans and widows continues. Specifically, one of the interviewees, a member of a monastic community, shows that within the respective spiritual establishment, a Foundation was set up that administers a Home for the elderly, which provides material and spiritual help to the elderly who cannot support themselves, they also receive spiritual help within the center. The Foundation also manages a Center for young people in which they can participate in painting, sculpture, foreign languages, Romanian language, mathematics, but also in a series of catechetical activities (MON1). Both Centers actually carry out specific social intervention services based in particular on care practices/in the case of the elderly, and simultaneously on care and facilitating social change, by training the competences for the autonomous social life.

The social activity within the monastery is founded on a social, material aid of some elderly people who cannot support themselves and especially through a spiritual help within a shelter for the elderly. [...] (MON 1).

In the practice of social work offered to children and young people in difficulty, the particularities of this type of beneficiaries must be taken care of, so that the child feels a maternal presence in the caregiver. In the social work system offered by The Church, education must be offered with

love and humility in order for the beneficiary to feel warmth of soul and to become able to offer affection in turn (MON2).

Social work, and in general the care professions, must be approached from a spiritual perspective, with soul openness and compassion. These spiritual qualities should be added to the system of competences generally required by the profession. The minimum standards of any care profession require empathic ability, but the vocation to such care professions often brings with them the skills to express their emotions, generally an increased level of emotional intelligence.

The feeling of brotherhood must be induced in children, in order to feel protected as in a large family, but not as a strictly professional orphanage. Often, the child sees personally, respectively in the mother to whom it is entrusted, the mother's model, which is why it is advisable to combine education with love, with humility so that he can feel warmth and be able to later give in to himself affection (MON 2).

Sources of support for philanthropic activity. Philanthropy Fund

The financial support of the social-philanthropic activity is usually done from the own funds of the parishes or of the protopopiates, or from sponsorships and financings attracted.

[...] they have philanthropic activity, they also share in the Philanthropy fund and is a real difficult situation, because they also spend their own funds for social cases. They carry out philanthropic activity, but they will never be able to accreditate their activity (AS1).

The financing of the social-philanthropic activities is based on Article 15 of the Fiscal Code, which states that the surplus resulting from the economic activity of the Church – the sale of books or objects of worship, pilgrimages, other lucrative activities – must be reinvested in charitable or cultural social activities, in accordance with the social and cultural mission of the Church (AS1). Basically, this mode of functioning by self-financing, by reinvesting in welfare activities the surplus from the lucrative activities, represents a constituent element of the activity of the type of social economy, although the interviewed person does not realize this specific, considering that the organization of which he is part would not be eligible for social economy activities. In order to self-finance through the redistribution of the surplus obtained, the interviewee considers, it is necessary to accredit as social services some of the philanthropic activities carried out by the Church or, where possible, the professionalization of these services and their licensing as specific services (AS1; AS2).

The faith-based organization within the Church calls for public funding sources such as those available through the European Union structural funds, or national funding programs and schemes such as those carried out by the Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity, respectively to different local funds from the Local Councils or from City Halls. To these must also be added an own contribution of the CBO, which can not be less than 2% of the value of the financing in the case of European funds and of 50% in the case of local ones.

Funding is also from the Ministry, and European funding, but there are also own funds. [...] That is, any project that we want to develop or request to obtain financing, either from the state budget, or from the external donor, or from the European Union, also involves a part of our own contribution. So it is not 100% external financing (AS2).

Professionalization of charity. From social-philanthropic services to accredited social services

The most important philanthropic activity is seen as pastoral service itself. This prayerful service at the same time represents the most important social mission of the Church. For the believers, the Church is the visible body of Christ, and therefore the service of the neighbor signifies above all the service of God.

The philanthropic activity I carry out? First of all in the serving of a shepherd, to try, as St. Paul says, to make me "everything for everyone" [...] Let us not forget that the merciful Samaritan par excellence is Christ, the Son of God incarnate for us and to our salvation (PR4).

The model of mercy towards the poor is inspired by the deeds of the early Christians, still from the apostolic times. Saint Paul urged the Christians in Corinth: "As for the gathering of aid for the saints, as I have ordained for the Churches of Galatia, so do you. On the first day of the week (Sunday), each of you put aside, tightening as much as possible, so that the tightening will not be done until I come. And when I come, those whom you will count, I will send them with letters, to bring your gift to Jerusalem" (I Corinthians 16: 1-3). Charity in the early Christian centuries and in the Middle Ages was aimed primarily at people who were not self sufficient. The missionary activity was combined with the care activity, which is an expression of the Christian virtues.

Still in the operational definition of the term philanthropy, the interviewees indicate that this, as a form of social action, is based on the Christian love for the person in difficulty, and the real and sincere desire to help

people in difficulty. Philanthropy is thus defined as a love of fellows as a response to the love received by the individual from God. (AS3)

The interviewees point out that it is good to focus on helping the members of the Christian community, developing the community spirit and the need to feel responsible for the welfare of the other (Adloff, 2006: 1-30). It shows the need to take into account that by carrying out the philanthropic activity people are not harmed in "that core of dignity".

How can we solve this fact? Training in the help of those around them, because no one knows better than them about the pains that are in the soul of others and how beneficial this healing is (PR1).

Philanthropy is perceived as a connection between individuals and God through the feeling of mercy and the act of mercy. Being merciful and have mercy are not synonymous, only the latter means for the person interviewed true philanthropy, as it generates a personal relationship between the social worker and the beneficiary. The interviewee makes a distinction between philanthropy and charity – a distinction that does not appear in the case of other interviewees – and which emphasizes the individual dimension of philanthropy as a relationship between the social worker and the beneficiary, and that of the collective action of the charity, which is based on communication and collaboration with other institutions, public or private, and the provision of specialized social services for different categories of beneficiaries. In this sense, it speaks of a professionalization of charity in the sense of specialization of services that remain philanthropic in themselves, based on the personal relationship between social worker and beneficiary.

For me the word philanthropy means to have mercy, not to be merciful; I see philanthropy at the individual level, ie the treatment of each individual person, that interpersonal relationship; you and he and God; me and you and God. Charity is a kind of philanthropy, but at one point they split up. I see charity at a collective level, I see them together, but charity means working with all institutions, in order to develop myself, to create something specialized. Charity means specialized service for the elderly, children, adults, groups that are vulnerable. Philanthropy is that personal relationship between the social worker and the beneficiary. That's how I perceive it, that's my perspective. (AS4)

Some respondents consider that philanthropic activity is more complex than social work, because within it there is an additional dimension/spiritual work. Social work is considered to be limited to providing a system of helping to persons who are not able to provide the necessary means of living (MON3). In the opinion of the respondent, the

social work carried out within the Centers under the coordination of the Romanian Orthodox Church in which it operates is a philanthropic activity, carried out in compliance with the law. This allows us to state that for some of the persons involved (MON1 MON2, MON3) the social work activity is confused with the social-philanthropic one, but the terminology specific to social work is used, for reasons of compulsory compliance with the law of the state, which however, the law of the state is by no means superior to the divine law. It doesn't bring anything extra (MON3). The fact that secular terminology - derived from social work - is used because of legislative constraints and not because of the perception of a real difference between philanthropic and welfare practices, can be considered a form of partial laicisation of the services offered, to which the Romanian Orthodox Church it is indirectly positioned in the position of superiority of the charitable Christian model of care based on philanthropy.

[...] The learned social philanthropic action emphasizes the charitable act, emphasizing the spiritual side. The spiritual program includes service, prayers, confession, fellowship, etc. Social work is limited to. And, if I'm thinking well, I think that this kind of social work is also a kind of philanthropy in our monastery, [...] what we do here is clearly philanthropy, but we respect the law. (MON3)

Analyzing the welfare practices of the respective institution they are similar to those specific to the social work as defined in the law, but the dimension of the spiritual work offered to the beneficiaries is added.

The activity of the social worker within the Home consists of evaluating the file of the beneficiaries of the Center or of the future beneficiaries, establishing an action plan, providing material, social support for the elderly who are not able to provide the necessities for their life, medical supervision and spiritual support, which is noticeable through conversations in which the elders confess their dissatisfactions, failures and joys accumulated throughout their lives. [...] (MON3)

Even the interviewees who have specific social work (theological) training show that there is a congruence between the values of the professional ethics specific to the social work (Caras, 2013:133-141; Frunza, 2018:1-17) and the Orthodox Christians ones, the latter being deeper and broader, more suitable for the provision of care. Assistive practices are sometimes limiting due to the need to formalize it in the form of documents that have to be elaborated in order to highlight and justify the activity, that is, of elements perceived subjectively as bureaucratic.

The practice of philanthropy is from this point of view preferable to the social work that demands the compliance to standards imposed by the

normative frameworks in force. The interviewed person insists on the social cooperation and co-operation between the social worker and the beneficiary, only this being in his opinion the true social work, but in practice the interviewee indicates a series of bureaucratic and procedural formalisms that remove the social work from respecting its constitutive values (Frunza, Sandu, 2018) of spiritual origin.

[...] This is the real intervention, when you work together with the beneficiary, that he also works with us, the specialists, to work for his change and then, if this does not happen, it is clearly a dissatisfaction. And, I tend to say that I would rather do a philanthropic, purely philanthropic activity, than social work with many limitations and constraints, with many files, with many reports, standards, procedures to follow, sometimes it can be even in a rigid way, because it is required so. (AS3)

Another distinction between the philanthropic activity itself and that of social work is the motivation of the practice, including in the case of volunteers. They make available to the Church their time, work and knowledge without pursuing any material interest, but only out of love for God and for man, situation to be considered philanthropy. If the volunteer pursues a material purpose, such as gaining experience, improving his/her CV, etc.; it represents volunteering itself, and less charity. From this perspective, the professionalization of the charity represents a specialized activity of the human resource involved in volunteering activities, in support of increasing their competences in the activity of supporting the beneficiaries.

[...] Those who come and give selflessly from their experience, from their time for the one next to him, as a sacrifice of what they have, I mean time, experience, because they did not need recognition, validation, of social progress, they make, of course, philanthropy. Because they did not need CV, experience for employment, or did not pursue employment, they had no other worldly interest. [...] (AS3)

Maintaining the charitable tradition of the Church should, in the opinion of some of the interviewees, be appropriate to the needs of the spiritual and social work of the Church in the 21st century.

The priest could solve through confession, but not necessarily, but through religious/spiritual counseling and with philanthropy, he could solve most of the problems in the parish. Most people need to be listened to and guided. They have no one to talk to, who to tell about their pain and who to consult with, who to make decisions with. If they become emotionally stabilized, they will find resources in them to move forward, solve other problems (AS4)

If the person is emotionally fallen, his soul is on the ground, he does nothing for himself, "if he is not encouraged, he has no one to share his pain... he/she is anxious, she/he starts drinking, she takes her children and leaves [...] these are the social cases we face ... our elders are left alone, isolated" (AS1).

It is emphasized the role of the Orthodox priest to be a binder in the community, a person who activates the solidarity resources existing at the community level. The intervention of the priest makes the social problems that arise in the community more easily solved, as this can be a catalyst for the solidarity and responsibility of the parishioners. The interviewed persons are especially confident in the capacities of manifesting the solidarity of the Romanian community, especially when the spiritual impulse is present and the feeling of brotherly communion of Christians is aroused.

[...] If the priest were to be involved, he would be the binder or the one who sets the tone and would know how to mobilize people, [...]. And he would do that in a few days. This idea must be used. So, there is no community that cannot handle its dramatic cases. [...] If it is not someone who produces the mobilization, the problem is not solved by itself (AS1).

The need to intensify and diversify the philanthropic activity of the Church is made aware, and its (at least partially) professionalization is considered important. This would increase confidence in the Church institution and in its social work, increasing unity and communion between parishioners.

[...] we take a village, from somewhere in the parish you want, where children eat once a day, and not enough so to feel satiated. With a professional church service (I mean that parish), in that sense, you could bring them to school, hold them in after-school, feed them and you know that when they go home at night with the homework done and are nourished. And it would bring them closer to the Church, including their parents. Because they would see that the Church is doing what neither the city hall, nor any other institution or organization could do [...] (AS1)

The importance of the involvement of the parish priest and his inclination to carry out within the parish some of the most efficient and useful social services for the members of the community in need is discussed. Where the involvement of the parish priest is special, with his goodwill, resources are identified outside the community, through sponsorships or performing worship services for believers who do not live in the parish, and some of the funds are directed to social services (AS3).

One of the parish priests interviewed shows that "the social activity carried out in the parish through the social work office of the parish consists

in particular in support of families in difficulty, who have dependent children, regardless of age (PR2)". The social work activity has gradually developed, emerging from the philanthropic support of families with children.

The philanthropic activity is the financial aid offered to families with newborn children. Starting from here, the parish social work office has been developed to provide support services for families affected by poverty, children with parents (Huidu, 2019: 200-219) who went to work abroad, left in the care of grandparents, other relatives or even older siblings, children and still, families who need support to keep their children in school, families who have alcohol addicts, etc. Also, the attention of the social work offices in the parishes is directed towards the persons suffering from various diseases, to the elderly, widowed women, etc.

The transition from charitable activities to professionalized social work services has been realized starting from the understanding of the need to coordinate charitable activities, especially those offered to people in poverty. However, the need to step up the aid offered, depending on the response of the helpers, their desire to overcome the problem situation, was made aware. Thus, the need for the selection of beneficiaries arose, depending on their co-participation in the aid process and the responsibility shown by them towards overcoming the precarious social condition that they or their family face. The selection of the beneficiaries and the directing of the aid especially to those willing to work to overcome the crisis situation in which they were led to the need for specialized services, which would effectively allow them to solve social problems.

[...] Being aware of the fact that there are people who want to do good, but who are unhappy with the fact that they offer certain goods to people who do not value or do not use the help they receive to overcome the crisis they are in, I have tried to select the beneficiaries according to their willingness to evolve (PR4).

Accreditation and licensing of social services

The professionalization of the social work services offered by the Church implies the observance of the national standards regarding the quality of the social services. In order to be recognized by the Romanian state, the organizations offering social services have to accredit and within three years to license at least one social service. The accreditation and licensing process requires the implementation of laboriously documented quality standards and a visit from the County Agency for Payments and Social Inspection Iași inspectors, to verify the conditions of the social

services and to comply with the licensing criteria. The process is considered cumbersome, complicated and demanding.

As documentation, licensing is a very cumbersome, time-consuming and demanding process (AS1).

After the modification of the specific legislation in the social work, the licensing can be done for day and residential services. Before the mentioned changes, the social services offered could be primary and specialized, but at this moment all services are specialized. This is considered unprofessional, because not all beneficiaries require specialized social services and at the same time, not all social service providers actually carry out specialized services.

The law of social work before: primary services and specialized services. We didn't provide specialized services, but primary. Now, that the legislation has changed, those who are now in the Ministry – in their unprofessional perspective, and I say it with all responsibility, I repeat, unprofessional – have done all day services and residential services, but not differentiate as primary and specialized services. In other words, we all have specialized services, which is not true (AS1).

Among the most important conditions for accreditation and licensing of social services are the full-time employment of at least one social worker and a psychologist, who can be hired with part-time work, depending on the number of beneficiaries and the volume of work.

It is mandatory for a social worker, to accredit a service, to work 8 hours (AS1). We negotiated the ones from Iasi, with the Iasi representative from the Ministry, for the psychologist to be hired part time. [...] (AS1).

The legal obligations of having qualified personnel make it impossible to license the social services offered in certain parishes or protopopias, especially the poor in the rural area.

They have small protopopias and will never be able to support professionalized social services and pay social worker. [...] (some protopopiate n.n.) will never be able to hire a social worker. They have a social work office; [...] (AS1).

In order to comply with the legal standards (Ignătescu, 2017) for the provision of social services, wherever possible, solutions are sought for the most favorable legal classification of the type of services offered, these being usually defined as day services and crisis intervention services.

[the services that the protopopiates have are day and intervention services in crisis situations n.n.] Because we had to find a way in the list of social services in order to have social work activity (AS1).

In the parishes and protopopiates where the standards of accreditation and / or licensing, cannot be met, including due to the financial inability to hire a full-time social worker, it will remain at the level of philanthropic activity. It is important to underline the fact that from the interviewee's discourse it follows that the social work activity is considered a qualitative stage superior to the philanthropic one, in the sense that specialized services are offered, but basic for the fulfillment of the social mission of the Church, will remain the philanthropic activity, because this it can be held in each parish, being able to reach and provide a minimum of social help to people in need from any community, no matter how small and poor.

What diocese C. has is a philanthropic activity. They will never be able to accredit themselves, nor will they ever be able to hire a social worker (AS1).

Even though some of the dioceses have set up social work offices, due to the lack of funds they will not be able to accredit social work services, remaining at the level of philanthropic activities.

[...] They will have a social work office, but they will not be accredited because they do not have the financial capacity to support, according to the standards, a social worker and a psychologist (AS1).

In the process of accreditation and licensing of services, some social workers who work in the Romanian Orthodox Church considers that it faces discriminatory attitudes from inspectors who check how accreditation standards are met. (AS1).

The interviewees (AS1, AS4) showed that at the level of dioceses, it was generally chosen to accredit and license social work services for crisis and emergency situations, as in general they work with adults in difficulty. Accreditation and licensing is seen as a form of professionalization of social services offered by the Faith-Based Organizations.

We have accredited ourselves and now we have also licensed. I'll have control. We graduated with support services for emergency and crisis situations. All the dioceses follow the same, but also the parishes. We chose to license this type of service because we mainly work with adults. In principle I work with adults, the elderly or single-parent families, single persons, families with problems, children from families with problems, families at risk, domestic violence and many more. (AS4).

An interesting perspective on the professionalization of the social work activities within the Church and their correlation with the social-philanthropic ones it comes from the view of a interviewed social worker, with double training in theology and social work, who appreciates that in offering social services in the center where she works, and which belongs to

a Faith-based Organization within the Orthodox Church, are offered in accordance with all the quality standards in force, and on the basis of which the Center was licensed, but in addition to these are offered a number of services that are not defined in standards, which exceed these standards and which the interviewee considers philanthropy. The provision of services and benefits from the Organization's own funds is considered a philanthropic activity, and this exceeds the specificity of the social work activity.

[...] When we carry out a social service we always refer to the quality standards and how they are defined by the legislation in force. When are doing a philanthropic activity, we do more than the services that are defined by law and that comply with these quality standards. And as I said before, everything we offer from what we have as an organization, from our own assets, from our own funds, from our own resources, better said, is philanthropy. (AS3).

Philanthropy can be seen, at least in the case of specific social work programs, which benefit from public funds, as represented by the Organization's own contribution, both financially and in human resources and logistics. Summarizing those presented by the interviewee AS3, but also by others, such as MON1, MON3, etc., it seems that for some of them, philanthropy refers to the support activities of the beneficiaries offered from the own funds of Faith Based Organization, while the social work is represented by the activities implemented according to the standards imposed for the licensing of social services and are carried out especially with financing from public funds. Philanthropic activities are seen as exceeding those specific to social work, as they are not limited by quality and cost standards, and may include a human dimension, spiritual communion with beneficiaries, and even a spiritual dimension through effective religious activities, either at least through the specific attitude and involvement of the social worker, the social workers in general, or even of the representatives of the clergy.

[...] Philanthropy in the case of funded projects is also summarized in my personal contribution. I ask for funding, but I also bring something. This I refer strictly to the financial part, but we bring the human resource, we bring the expertise, we bring our organizational capacity, the experience of the organization, we bring the experience of each person in particular, the logistics. It is a set of capabilities, skills that sometimes you cannot quantify, but without which you cannot carry out a project, you cannot offer a service, these aspects are very important [...]; we are an interdisciplinary team (Center Coordinator - Father Protopop, myself as a social worker, psychologist and economist). (AS3).

Regarding the licensing of the social services offered by the Faith-Based Organization (FBO), this implies the fulfillment of quality standards, which implies a series of constraints regarding the practice, the voluntary submission of the FBO to controls by the state institutions,

the professionalization [...] would be: to be a more structured service. I do not think that it would have a negative impact, the risk that it would be is like this: that there are several limitations, constraints, because when you get licensed, you force yourself to meet some standards; you have this stress that the control body comes, it comes on the license monitoring visit [...] (AS3).

The licensing of services is only necessary for the purpose of access to public funding. These additional funds attracted, in principle, can be used for the purpose of increasing the quality of services, they are even conditioned by the existence of a certain quality of the social services provided by the FBO. However, the funds are insufficient and their own contribution is required. The bureaucratic dimension related to the documentation required to carry out the licensed social services, generates stress among the social workers, which ultimately leads to a decrease in the quality of services, especially from the perspective of the time spent with the beneficiary and the availability of working with him/her.

[...] then if you get it (license n.n); why do we want to be licensed? Usually, to attract some funds, so we can access some funds. Now that is the case, accessing some funds is subject to your licensing, your knowledge as a specialized service. And then you have the desire to access some funds that somehow improve your activity, develop it, but you also have this stress that the controls are coming and you must always be up to date with everything, by all it means. documentation, with all that means, conditions that you must meet, you must prove that you meet these conditions, that you meet these standards [...] (AS3)

Difficulties encountered in fulfilling the social-charitable and social work mission in the Romanian Orthodox Church

The greatest difficulties encountered by those who devote themselves to the social charitable and social work activities of the Church are represented by the attitude of the beneficiaries, by their non-involvement in solving their own problems. Focusing on failure and continually waiting for help coming from someone else, be it a state, a church, charitable organizations, etc. it is a generalized attitude among the beneficiaries. The self-marginalization of many of the beneficiaries is doubled by the lack of responsibility towards their own person and the contempt for any form of support, and even towards work. Public support of the type of guaranteed

minimum income discourages work. The lack of a work culture and even the refusal of work – even at the price of poor living conditions – are very difficult elements to change.

"The biggest difficulties, you should know, are given by the fact that beneficiaries they do not involve in solving their own problems. [...] Many of them think that you are the one who has to solve the problem. [...]" (AS1)

This non-involvement of the beneficiaries can be attributed to the spiritual poverty of the people who feel lonely and helpless, who refuse their own welfare. The lack of spiritual openness hinders the communication and soul communion and, implicitly, the spiritual and even material support that the Church could bring. The interviewees draw attention to the fact that the wounds of the soul lead to a form of vengeance on the others and on themselves, which ultimately weakens the person's faith and diminishes the trust in others.

"The first weight is that of spiritual poverty, which also creates a depression specific to the one who feels lonely and helpless [...], the wounded soul not only does not want to heal, but has a tendency, an uncontrolled need for revenge those around him because of his heartache [...]" (PR6)

In certain situations, the beneficiaries are not only not involved in solving their own problems, but they are even reluctant to provide the information and documents necessary to provide social work services. Also, the dependence on the social services is felt by the interviewed persons as another major problem that the social services face and from which the social services offered by the Church are not exempted.

"The biggest burden I have encountered and I still encounter, is that people in need are not always open to providing the information and documents needed to prepare a file for social work. Equally difficult is to try to make them understand that the purpose [...] is to help them overcome a crisis situation in their life, in order to improve the quality of life." (PR2)

The non-involvement of the beneficiaries is sometimes associated with a refusal of communication from them, difficulties in adapting the beneficiaries to the program imposed by the common life in the social settlements (the Elderly Home in this case), as well as the inability to communicate some of the beneficiaries. There is also a certain irresponsibility of the beneficiaries towards spiritual values and even a lack of spiritual maturity. It was the spiritual program accompanying the social activity of the Center that eventually led to the solution of the problems that had arisen.

We note in the case of the interviewed person a certain spiritual requirement applied to the beneficiaries, which, at least in his opinion, is able

to ensure an efficiency of the activity of the social service in care. The spiritual demands, as manifested in the discourse of the person concerned, should be accompanied, at least in front of the beneficiaries, by the manifestation of a real Christian love, and a genuine caring for one's neighbor, a real human and spiritual compassion. In the absence of these specific manifestations of an attitude of brotherly love towards one's neighbor, the spiritual commandment of one's neighbor's love, and the attitude of non-judgment towards one's neighbor, would be violated. This attitude is all the more recommended, as even in lay social work, the nonjudgmental attitude of the social worker towards the client is required.

[...] In the case of the elderly, there were difficulties in adapting them to the program imposed by the Home, due to the lack of dialogue from the beneficiaries. The irresponsibility to the moral values, the inability to communicate, the lack of spiritual maturity of the beneficiaries, the living beings, were impediments that were solved due to the spiritual program. (MON1)

The interviewed person points out that, in the young beneficiaries, there are a number of language and communication deficiencies accompanied by the inability to accumulate knowledge or to express their feelings. The social workers of the Foundation have managed to eliminate these shortcomings of the beneficiaries by making real social and spiritual progress. With humility and the axiological neutrality necessary for expression in a scientific text, we mention that certain sociological theories consider that the way in which opinions about social facts are expressed, has major implications in how they are transposed into practice. Although some young people may have behaviors that seem or may even be in line with the spiritual order, labeling beneficiaries with the term "human degradation" is questionable, both from a Christian point of view and from social work.

In the case of young people, difficulties were encountered in their behavior, language, the inability to accumulate knowledge, the inability to express feelings, desires. The human degradation of young people was annihilated by the spiritual progress achieved due to the activity learned by the members/social workers of the Foundation (MON1)

Another difficulty encountered by the workers in the social work system of the Church is the extremely limited involvement of the state, which leaves all the burden of supporting such cases in the case of non-governmental organizations, including those of religious origin.

"We have beneficiaries since the office was established in '96, continuous beneficiaries. There are beneficiaries who can not only with our support overcome their situation, as long as the Romanian state does absolutely nothing

for them to help them and then, I admit, they are permanent beneficiaries.
"(AS1)

The bureaucracy in the public social work system is seen as a difficulty encountered in the process of referring cases to this system. In order to be able to make the communication with the representatives of the public social work services more efficient, one uses personal relations with his representatives, the communication being a personalized one and less an institutional one. However, the results of communication with public social work institutions are considered satisfactory from the perspective of the actual results of the social interventions offered.

"[...]Also on the personal relationships of the social workers. Because when I send someone to a state institution, I first call a friend or someone I know better from there and I tell him: "please see that I send you case x ..." and it goes targeted. Because if I send the person to stay in line, to go through the entire bureaucratic procedure at the respective institution, they would be lost on the way. "(AS1)

Another problem faced by the people involved in the social services offered by the Church is the public perception regarding the so-called wealth of the Church, which correlates with the reluctance expressed by some individuals, organizations or institutions to support this activity of the Church, for example, by offering sponsorships. Refusal to sponsor the Church is sometimes accompanied by defamatory or humiliating expressions.

[...] One of our difficulties is that when I go to ask for support, it is said clearly to me: "well, if the Church does not have money, you are crazy". As many offenses as I and my two colleagues took after sponsorship, I did not receive in my life, believe me.(AS1)

It is also aware of the need for a modernization of the social services offered and of the philanthropic practices, as well as of the institutional and normative aspects needed to provide the welfare services (AS).

Sometimes, the decision to professionalize social services is based on an impulse from the members of the priest's family, who have knowledge about what social work means and the benefits of professionalizing philanthropic activity. This makes us consider the education of the priests about the significance of social work and the possible beneficial results for the community of parishioners to be important.

Main Results and Conclusions

The main results of the model resulting from the empirical research that were the basis of the elaboration of the present research are those that the social work carried out by Romanian Orthodox Church it respects the quality standards of social services and, respectively, the ethical norms specific to social work in general, to which is added a spiritual dimension related to the values of love for one's neighbor and his service. The love of the neighbor and the understanding of the care activity as a personal mission are leading to a high motivation of the practice, accompanied by a persistence of the care practice.

The characteristics of the social-philanthropic activity of Romanian Orthodox Church they are still under construction and customization, as long as some of the services are already licensed, and the part is in the intermediate stage between licensing and traditional philanthropy. Also, philanthropy seems to remain a form of support to people in need that will work in parallel with the Romanian Orthodox Church's accredited social services, where philanthropic activities will be spontaneous, discontinuous, context-dependent and community capacity of coalition for the purpose of granting punctual aid, in specific situations.

Where the situation of the beneficiaries requires it, and the human resources and the financial resources can be correlated in order to obtain constancy in time of the provision of services, it is noted a continuity that implicitly generates a form of professionalization, beyond which the next step is to dismiss the activity as one of social work itself.

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