

When in 1996, with the blessing of His Excellency Yulian Voronovskyy, Bishop of Sambir-Drohobych, the Drohobych Seminary began its work (still under the name of Theological Faculty of the Eparchial Catechetical Institute), the Byzantine tradition, as the basis for the life and development of the Church of Kyiv, was the foundation for its spiritual life, teaching and educational activities.

We had emerged, it would seem, from basic logic: our Church is one of the Churches of the Christian East and should belong to that same East not only historically and in a ritual-liturgical sense, but also in the nature of its education. Therefore, a theological seminary of the Eastern tradition was required.

What may have seemed self-evident in theory was quite different in practice. After analyzing the approaches, curriculum and educational processes of the already existing seminaries of Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, we saw that, generally speaking, they were carbon copies of Latin seminaries (philosophical and theological courses were actually translated into Ukrainian from Latin courses and could have been taught in Roman Catholic seminaries in Ukraine without any changes being made. The exceptions to this were Liturgical Studies, and later with the appearance of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches in 1991 - "Eastern" Canon Law also).

Seeing the situation in the Ukrainian Church seminaries, a group of the first teachers of our Seminary looked for possible examples in the seminaries of the Byzantine tradition in other Eastern Catholic Churches (Romanian, Slovak, Hungarian), and made contact with the Professors of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. Unfortunately it turned out that nowhere could such a Byzantine seminary be found. The realization of this idea was of great interest to the Professors of the Oriental Institute. Consequently we re-worked and perfected our seminary program in close collaboration with Frs. Špidlík, Rupnik, Čemus, Taft, Gargano, Guggerotti, Marani. Our collaboration with them helped us to continue along the path that we had chosen. Now that this rather dramatic period of investigation and searching has passed, we can essentially say that it is possible to build a training program based on the Byzantine tradition. The roots of the structure of education in our Seminary, consisting of philosophical and theological courses, date back to the Antiochian and Alexandrian schools, and especially to Constantinople with its Pandidakterion (University), founded in V century.

In comparison with the Philosophy and Theology cycles in our modern Latin counterparts, it could be said that we have dramatically increased the liturgical-patristic element. We have oriented our Philosophy component to be a preparation for the theology of Fathers of the Church. In this sector we analyze ancient philosophical terms, in the light of their later use by the Fathers. On the other hand, we show how the preaching of the Gospel was inculturated by the Fathers into Greco-Roman philosophical and cultural concepts.

In the theological sector we use the Patristic method of theology to emphasize the importance of inner experience. We do not limit ourselves only to Dogmatic and Moral Theology. In fact Liturgical Theology prevails in our approach to Dogmatic Theology, where liturgical rather than systematic thinking is more influential (especially the Eucharistic Anaphora). Moral Theology is built on the dynamics of the Christian movement from law to grace, from the image of God to Divine likeness, which is not legal and casuistic, but rather personal-divinizing. The idea of the deification of man is opened out in the course on Mystical Theology, which is aimed at promoting the transition from faith to the mystical vision of God.

Closely related to this is the teaching of Patristic Theology, in which the consensus of the Conciliar Fathers (consensus partum) is demonstrated and the action of the "Spirit of truth" in the Church is identified. In presenting Patristics, it is important to show that the Fathers of the Church belong not solely to a specific historical period, which ended with the VIII century. Being a Father of the Church, which includes being a Spiritual Father, is the vocation of every Christian, who is initiated into the Divine Mystery through the Mystagogy of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.