

THE MYSTERY OF MARRIAGE – COMMUNION, CREATION AND FULFILLMENT IN CHRIST

Abstract

This study explores the Mystery of Marriage as a dynamic reality of communion, creation, and fulfillment in Christ. Grounded in the divine model of Trinitarian love, marriage is presented as a sacred union that transfigures human relationships and reveals their ultimate meaning in God. The work examines marriage as an icon of the mystical union between the soul and God, as well as a manifestation of Trinitarian communion within human existence. It highlights the Christian family as the ‘church at home,’ the primary space where loneliness is overcome, and personal identity is fulfilled through love and selfgiving. The study also analyses the family as a place of creative love and the realization of human vocation, while addressing the contemporary crisis of divorce as a rupture of communion and a distortion of the family’s spiritual calling. The conclusions affirm that Christian marriage is not merely a social institution but a path to holiness, mutual sacrifice, and cooperation with God, where love becomes incarnate and fruitful in the life of the family.

Keywords

Marriage, Communion, Family, Loneliness, Divorce



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Introduction

Conjugal communion finds its ultimate foundation in the divine reality. In family life, Christ – true God and true Man – becomes the bridge. Through Him, the grace, uncreated energies, and eternal love of the Holy Trinity are imparted to the spouses. Christ unites the Christian family with the ‘divine family’ of the Trinitarian Persons (Galeriu 1960, 485). He reveals that true communion has its source in God. Human life is born of love. The wedding symbolizes, both theologically and symbolically, humanity’s first great celebration. In the Mystery of Marriage, creation is celebrated and renewed. The love between husband and wife becomes an icon of God’s creative love (Galeriu 1960, 484). The great wonder of existence lies in this: God made ‘two from one’ and the two, through love, remain a mysterious unity. This “one” does not annul the persons but fulfills them in communion.

If there is anything that must be restored in the world before all else, it is love – the deep communion and authentic communication between the spouses who form the family. Without this communion, society itself loses its foundation. Human history begins in the family, through the creation and blessing of the first humans, Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden. It also finds its eschatological fulfillment in the mystical wedding between Christ – the ‘Unwedded Bridegroom’ and the Church – the ‘Unwedded Bride’ (Apoc 19:7; 21:2,9). Thus, marriage is not merely a social contract or a natural institution, but a sacred reality, a Mystery of the Church.

At first glance, defining marriage as a Mystery may seem inappropriate, given that it is practiced equally by believers and non-believers, by people who neither know nor assume its spiritual dimension. Yet, in the Orthodox perspective, the Mystery of Marriage is not reduced to simple cohabitation; it reveals the profound meaning of the union between man and woman: participation in God’s love and in His work of sanctifying the world.

Marriage – Icon of the Mystical Union Between the Soul and God

The spiritual content of Marriage as a Mystery presupposes a profound understanding of the human being: he is not merely a biological, psychological, or social entity, but a citizen of the Kingdom of God, called to live every moment of his existence – especially decisive moments – In the light of eternal values and in the presence of God Himself. The purpose of the Mystery of Marriage is the free and responsible union of

two persons in real cooperation with divine grace, so that their communion becomes a threefold communion: husband, wife, and Christ.

In the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, Saint Paul offers the Christian interpretation of marriage, distinct from the utilitarian Jewish perspective or Roman legalism: “This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church” (Eph 5:32). The Apostle shows that husband and wife are called to transfigure their human agreement into a reality of the Kingdom, assuming the responsibility of transforming their love into an icon of the love between Christ and the Church. At the same time, the New Testament does not negate human responsibilities toward the world and society; rather, “true Christianity never calls for a denial of the world” (Meyendorff 2007, 19), but for its transformation.

In Christian understanding, the family is inseparable from marriage – more precisely, from marriage as a Mystery. The first communion instituted by God was the family, and the founding of a family presupposes “the association of two free beings to live together and to share all things” (Macariopolsky 1967, 232). The Mystery of Marriage, which in antiquity was closely united with the Holy Eucharist, is not merely a blessing of the union between man and woman, but the integration of this union into life in Christ. In the early centuries, weddings were celebrated within the Divine Liturgy and concluded with the spouses receiving Holy Communion, for – as St. Symeon of Thessalonica affirms – “the end of every church service and the seal of every divine Mystery is Holy Communion”^[1]. Thus, the Mystery of Marriage does not merely sanctify a natural phenomenon but elevates it, orienting it toward the Kingdom of God^[2].

Since the Resurrection of the Lord, love acts in the world as a divine force: creative, illuminating, purifying, and sanctifying. It generates truth, fidelity, joy, and justice. Yet, in the same history, the irrational forces of disordered eroticism also act, distorting human freedom and endangering marriage and family.

Contemporary society has profoundly altered the meaning of marriage and family. We live in an age in which people speak of ‘trial marriages,’ ‘unions between persons of the same sex,’ and, within families, many acts undermine stability: abortion, divorce, cohabitation, abandonment of children, and the relentless pursuit of pleasure. All these are deep wounds of the Christian family and of society. The departure from Christian values – love, humility, self-denial, and the spirit of sacrifice – inevitably leads to individualism and selfishness, which in turn cause the breakdown of marriages, the

disappearance of family life, and an increasingly acute social and psychological crisis. A person who distances himself from the God of love can no longer love his neighbour.

Given these realities and challenges, a deeper understanding of the Mystery of Marriage and a reflection on the role of the Christian family in contemporary society are necessary to rediscover the authentic meaning of conjugal communion and its vocation in God's plan.

Marriage – A Manifestation of Trinitarian Communion in Human Existence

From a Christian perspective, God is not an impersonal monad, but a Trinity of Persons united in love. A single divine Person could not fully express the dynamic of selfgiving and communion; without this reciprocal giving, we could not speak of a God of love. Love, in its essence, is always relational and trinitarian: “we love through God, the essence, source, and model of love” (Galeriu 1960, 486). Christian marriage, therefore, finds its foundation in Trinitarian communion, which becomes the supreme model of the union between husband and wife. In God, love and life are inseparable; likewise, in marriage, conjugal love and openness to the gift of children form an organic unity. God, unceasing and eternal love, is a Trinity of Persons who give themselves to one another and to the world. Thus, in marriage, we encounter not only the distinction of persons but also their profound unity. The divine Persons share the same nature, each containing the other two in perfect communion, the ‘circuit of intradivine love’ (Moldovan 2014, 22).

Holy Scripture presents the first human couple as the ‘image of God’: “And God made man in His image... male and female He made them” (Gn 1:27). The Church Fathers unanimously affirm that the ‘image of God’ does not refer merely to human nature, but to the human person, who encompasses in a unified manner both soul and body. The distinction between nature and person – essential in Christian theology – reflects the way God reveals Himself: “One in essence and three in Persons.” Thus, God is not an impersonal Essence or a primordial cause devoid of consciousness, but a hypostatic Trinity, a personal communion of love (Popa 1995, 147). The image of God in the human being is not a merit acquired through virtue, nor is it lost through sin; it is an ontological given, “a reality eternally inscribed in the structure of the human being” (Scrima 2005, 58), “an inalienable and indestructible attribute of human nature” (Ozolin 1998, 31). Man was created out of God's love to participate in God's personal mode of existence, in the freedom of love that constitutes true life (Pop 2001, 31).

The ontological unity of humanity does not annul the plurality of persons, just as plurality does not destroy the unity of nature. Precisely based on this unity, the relationship between spouses becomes a true communion, “a participation of one in the life of the other, a perception of the other in his or her intimate particularity” (Moldovan 2014, 23). Reflecting the unity of the Trinity, marriage becomes the most complete image of God in the world. Through the Mystery of Marriage, “the spouses share in one another’s gifts and virtues” (Clément 1996, 75), according to the Apostle’s words: “the unbelieving husband is sanctified through the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through the believing husband” (1 Cor 7:14). As a bond accomplished by Christ through the priest, Marriage seals the union of man and woman in peace, wisdom, love, and holiness. They no longer appear as two separate individuals, but as a copersonal unity in which each discovers himself or herself through the other. The man acquires a new ‘self’ through the woman, and the woman a new ‘self’ through the man. They become ‘one flesh’ (Gn 2:24; Eph 5:31), completing one another.

The Church urges the husband to love his wife with the love he shows to Christ.

In marriage, the third between husband and wife is God, is Christ, and we must always have Him as the icon of love, that we may love as He loved us – with divine love. An ancient catacomb painting depicting the mystery of marriage shows Christ standing between the spouses, with His hands upon their heads, blessing and uniting them. (Galeriu 1960, 486)

Only in this light can the husband understand that his wife is not an object of pleasure, but a person in whom Christ dwells; and the wife, in turn, can help her husband grow in spiritual love, making Christ ever more present in their relationship. “Love grows from mutual responsibility, and responsibility grows from love” (Stăniloae 1978, 193-4). As each discovers the depth of the other, Christ becomes increasingly transparent in their life, guaranteeing the eternal value of each person.

Like all the Holy Mysteries, Marriage requires a continual cultivation of the grace received. Conjugal intimacy and communion with Christ are not obtained automatically, but through constant mutual sacrifice and the offering of both spouses to Christ. “The life of spouses is a continual sacrifice and resurrection, a continual overcoming of egoism for a full life in communion” (Stăniloae 1956, 204). Conjugal love is, by its very nature, sacrificial love. The grace of Marriage is God’s primordial gift to humanity, the

foundation of the love between spouses. It gives rise to free and conscious responsibility, calling them to perfection in love, to likeness with God. True conjugal selfgiving is fulfilled at the convergence of love and life, where grace transfigures everything.

United by Christ and in Christ, spouses are called to remain in Him through all that they accomplish. The Mystery of Marriage implies the transfiguration of bodily love into a perfected spiritual love. In communion with Christ, the spouses discover the inestimable value of the other and the power of grace that strengthens their love.

Every grace, in its fullness, stands at the end of a sacrifice. Spouses receive it when they commit themselves, in their sacerdotal dignity, to stand before the heavenly Father and offer Him in Christ the sacrifice, the ‘rational offering’ of their entire conjugal life. The grace of the wife’s sacerdotal service shapes and forms the conjugal being after the image of the Church. (Evdokimov 1994, 137)

Through Marriage, man and woman are no longer two distinct entities, but a copersonal unity (Stăniloae 1978, 190) in which each discovers his or her mystery through the other^[3]. Each carries the mystery of the other as his or her own, and love draws them closer in this intimacy. A human being can be fulfilled only through another person like himself, who stands before him as a unique and original face. “This face is always a cathedral, not a collection of stones” (Moldovan 2014, 23).

The Christian Family – ‘The Church at Home’

Family Communion – The Antidote to Loneliness and the Space of Personal Fulfillment

Within the family, man and woman offer themselves to one another in virtue of the image of God that each bear. This selfgiving is not a simple natural act, but a true spiritual art, comparable to iconography: just as the icon transfigures matter to make it transparent to divine light, so conjugal love transfigures persons, enabling them to see one another as manifestations of God’s love. It is no coincidence that St. Paul places his teaching on marriage within the context of ecclesiology, calling the family ‘the Church in their house’ (Rom 16:5). In the same spirit, St. John Chrysostom calls the family ‘the little Church’ (ἐκκλησία μικρά) (Evdokimov 1994, 135), emphasizing its sacred character and communal vocation.

The familial bond between man and woman mirrors the mystical union between Christ and the Church. Continuing Saint Paul's interpretation – who says that “Adam is a type of the One who was to come” (Rom 5:14) – the Church Fathers develop the idea that Eve prefigures the Church; just as Eve was fashioned from Adam's side, so the Church was born from the side of Christ. This image shows how spouses, themselves embraced within the union of Christ and the Church, are united in Christ when they marry. Extending the union of Christ and the Church in a particular form and for a specific purpose, they reproduce it in their own way and collaborate in its mission. Their union with each other is therefore grounded in their mutual union with Christ. Like a branch of a tree, it is at once an extension, an image, and an organ (Radu 1978, 313).

In this sense, the family is the first and smallest cell of the social organism, but also a ‘miniature church’ within the larger ecclesial community. It is founded through the Mystery of Marriage, that is, through the free and responsible union of a man and a woman for life. In the family, people are born and raised; here, personality, sociability, and the capacity for communion are formed – elements that shape one's entire existence.

The family is the place where loneliness is banished. The episode of the paralytic at Bethesda, who confesses: “Lord, I have no man...” (Jn 5:7), expresses the profound drama of human loneliness. Loneliness is one of the heaviest burdens a person can bear. It is healed when one opens to another, when one offers one's inner richness to another existence with whom one seeks to coexist. “Communion – says Ernest Bernea – cannot be achieved without living in the other, without giving oneself to another self, who is you” (Bernea 2004, 16). A house ruled by silence and isolation becomes like an inhabited tomb, where a forgotten being dwells. Loneliness is a painful emptiness, an ‘immense and hollow sack,’ as poets would say, weighing upon the soul even amid material abundance.

Romanian literature captures this drama masterfully: Bacovia calls loneliness ‘a burden of silences torn by sighs,’ while Octavian Paler writes:

“You who return home
and after closing the door
say ‘good evening,’
you do not know what it means
to enter through a door in silence” (Paler 2008).

For this reason, Paul Evdokimov affirms that “there is only one suffering: that of being alone” (Evdokimov 1994, 174).

There is, of course, a chosen solitude, beneficial for reflection and prayer, but it is temporary and oriented toward interiorization. Even in monastic life, solitude is not an end, but a prelude to communion with God and with others. Great ascetics seek the community, disciples, and spiritual dialogue, because absolute solitude becomes ‘the noonday demon’ – *akedia*, as the Philokalic Fathers call it, the bitter state of the soul. Even the greatest ascetics seek the brotherhood or gather a few disciples, for solitude dehumanizes^[4]. Monastic solitude transforms into hospitality: the cell becomes a place of welcome for pilgrims, the poor, the wealthy, the saints, and the sinners. In this way, even solitude becomes communion.

Thus, the Christian family is the space in which the human being finds fulfillment, the place where loneliness is healed through love, selfgiving, and communion. It is “the Church at home”, the place where love is learned, responsibility is cultivated, and the presence of Christ is lived daily.

The Family – A Space of Creative Love and the Fulfillment of Human Vocation

For Christians, the family represents the sacred union between a man and a woman, a communion of love that reflects the mystery of the union between Christ and the Church. Saint John Chrysostom emphasizes that the purpose of marriage is not limited exclusively to the birth of children, although this is a fundamental dimension grounded in the divine command: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth...” (Gn 1:28). Yet the great Father of the Church also teaches that Marriage has a spiritual purpose: “Marriage was given for the creation of children, but even more to extinguish the burning of nature” (Mantzaridis, 311.201). Elsewhere, he states that there are “two reasons for which marriage was instituted: that we may become wise and that we may become parents,” and among these, ‘the reason of wisdom’ has priority, for marriage is the calling to transform desire into responsible love^[5].

When conjugal love does not open itself to a reality higher than itself, when it does not reflect Trinitarian communion and does not expand into selfgiving, it risks turning from an icon into an idol. The couple is called to transcend mere mutual reflection – a mirror of the self in the other – and to become a living icon of the Church. Just as the Church is ‘one, holy, catholic, and apostolic,’ so too the Christian family is called to reflect unity, holiness, fullness, and mission in the world.

Conjugal love must be fruitful, and its natural fruit is children. A marriage in which children are refused, or unwanted, is founded on an egoistic love reduced to its bodily dimension. By giving life, the human being participates in God's creative work; by refusing this openness, one not only distances oneself from the Creator but distorts one's own humanity.

Until the twentieth century, Western thought – especially Roman Catholic theology – was deeply influenced by the interpretation of Blessed Augustine, who viewed sexuality as the vehicle for transmitting 'original sin.' In this perspective, marriage was justified almost exclusively by procreation, and the conjugal dimension was regarded with suspicion (Meyendorff 2007, 72–3). The encyclical *Humanae vitae* (1968) attempted to move beyond this view, affirming the positive value of human life and conjugal love, yet it remains partly indebted to Augustinian conceptions of sexuality.

In Orthodox theology, however, sexuality and marriage are understood in the light of the Incarnation and Trinitarian communion. Conjugal love is called to be sacrificial, open, creative—a love fulfilled in selfgiving and fruitfulness. The family thus becomes the place where the human being fulfills the vocation to love, to create, and to offer oneself, participating in God's work in the world.

Divorce – The Breakdown of Communion and the Crisis of the Family's Vocation

A family that no longer functions in a natural and harmonious way becomes a disorganized family, and its dysfunctions are most visibly manifested in situations of divorce. When a marriage fails, the separation of the spouses generates, in most cases, harmful consequences for the entire family structure, affecting especially children who are minors or adolescents. Among all events that can destabilize the family, divorce undoubtedly exerts the strongest negative influence on the child, who is extremely vulnerable to such ruptures and often deeply traumatized by the separation of the parents.

Divorce may be defined as

a complex psychosocial phenomenon representing the final stage of the dissolution of conjugal life, altering the lives of the partners and their descendants. It involves tensions, conflicts, frustrations, and dissatisfactions whose effects extend beyond the court's ruling. (Voinea 1996, 65)

From a legal standpoint, divorce is “the judicial dissolution of marriage when, for wellfounded reasons, the relationship between the spouses is seriously harmed, and the continuation of the marriage is no longer possible” (Rusu 2003, 21).

Divorce is not a simple, isolated event but a process that is often traumatic, involving accumulations of tension, conflict, and frustration that extend far beyond the formal moment of separation. Beyond the civil analysis, the theological perspective emphasizes that maintaining conjugal communion represents the will of God, while the dissolution of this communion for human reasons constitutes a serious violation of this divine will, with often dramatic consequences for those involved. Divorce is, in essence, the breaking of a mystery, for the love that once united the two has weakened or disappeared. In contemporary society, divorce and family fragmentation have become a true plague, fuelled by secularizing ideologies that have diminished the sense of the mystery of the person and of conjugal communion. Marriages of interest, relationships based solely on physical attraction or the satisfaction of selfish needs, are destined to fail, for the spouses quickly grow bored with one another and seek the infinite in finite and empty realities (Radu 2007, 114).

Conjugal love, the foundation of family communion, has often come to be understood in a distorted manner. Psychologist Alfred Adler observes that the structure of authentic love presupposes a ‘definitive outcome,’ an orientation toward eternity, reflected in children and in their upbringing. The trivialization of love – visible in promiscuity, prostitution, perversions, or nudism – robs it of its greatness and beauty, sowing distrust between partners and making mutual selfgiving impossible. Adler emphasizes that the degradation of love leads to the disintegration of individual, family, and community life (Adler 1995, 47).

Sociological studies confirm the complexity of the causes of divorce. B. Strong, C. DeVault, and B. Sayad (1998) classify the determining factors into four categories:

- *societal factors* (changes in family structure, individualism, reduced social integration);
- *demographic factors* (occupational status, income, education level, ethnicity, religion);
- *lifecourse factors* (age at marriage, intergenerational transmission of divorce, premarital pregnancy);
- *familyprocess factors* (presence of children, marital satisfaction, family problems) (Iluț 1993, 177).

The most frequent causes identified in the literature are domestic violence, infidelity, excessive alcohol consumption, the economic emancipation of women, the liberalization of social life, and the level of education. From the perspective of revealed

theology, the profound causes of divorce are unbelief, sin, and the lack of reference to Trinitarian communion, to Christ, and to the life of the Church. When the family separates itself from the source of divine love, conjugal communion collapses, and divorce becomes an almost inevitable consequence.

Conclusions

Through the Mystery of Marriage, a true conjugal consubstantiality is realized, a unity of life and destiny in which the spouses no longer appear as two parallel existences, but as a personal communion founded in Christ. Before God, the husband is responsible not only for his own life but also for the life of his wife, and together they are called to live the same life in Christ. Through the sacramental union of Marriage, the two become members of the ecclesial body of the family, where each offers himself to the other, and the identity of each is fulfilled in communion. The family thus becomes an extension of the Church, a 'church at home,' in which Christ is served not only in liturgical worship but also in daily life.

As gifts of God, man and woman receive one another and offer themselves to each other, and Christ is the One who strengthens their bond and imprints mutual respect and responsibility. In this joy of communion, God also grants the blessing of children, who are the fruit of the parents' love and the gift of Christ to the family. Through the birth and upbringing of children, the spouses become coworkers with God in His creative work, contributing to the increase of life in Christ.

The created world was, in the beginning, full of beauty and harmony. Today, however, the family often loses its beauty and stability, being affected by the accelerated pace of modern life, materialism, and division. Many contemporary families bear deep wounds that drive away communion and love. The sin of abortion, justified by arguments such as poverty, career, or unsuitable age, remains a grave violation of the gift of life, and no reason can legitimize the suppression of an existence. Consumer society, professional pressure, the lack of shared ideals, and inner isolation generate a sense of spiritual emptiness, and the family remains the only place where a person can still find safety, meaning, and love.

Christian marriage and the Christian family require the assumption of a cross. Spouses are called to crucify their egoism, selfsufficiency, and tendency toward selfidolization, as well as exaggerated attachments to their family of origin. Each must remain close to the other, supporting and accompanying the other on the path toward

salvation. Conjugal life thus becomes a continual exercise of sacrifice, selfrenunciation, and mutual giving, through which love matures and is transfigured into spiritual love.

In conclusion, the Mystery of Marriage is not merely a social institution but a calling to communion, holiness, and cooperation with God. The Christian family is the place where love becomes incarnate, is offered, and bears fruit, becoming the space in which the human being finds fulfillment and the true meaning of existence in Christ.

Notes

[1] The newlyweds...must be united before God, in the church, that is, in the house of God, for they are children of God, in a church where God is mysteriously present in the Gifts, where He gives Himself to us and where He is seen in our midst.... But to those who are not worthy of Communion – for example, those who are getting married for the second time, and others – the Divine Gifts are not given to them, but only the common cup, as partial sanctification, as a sign of good companionship and union with the blessing of God (Sf. Simeon al Tesalonicului PG 155, 512-513).

[2] Until the 9th century, the Church did not know any marriage ordinance separate from the Eucharistic Liturgy. Normally, after the celebration of civil marriage, the Christian couple received Holy Communion, and the reception of the Holy Eucharist was, according to Tertullian, the seal of marriage, implying all Christian responsibilities. From an epistle of St. Theodore, the Studite from the 9th century, we learn that the coronation (also known as the Sacrament of Marriage) was accompanied by a short prayer read by the priest or bishop before the entire congregation at the Sunday Liturgy. Also, liturgical books of the same period (such as the famous Barberini codex) include several short prayers like the one mentioned by Saint Theodore the Studite. All these prayers are designed to be read during the Holy Liturgy. We conclude that, until the end of the 9th century, religious marriage was performed within the framework of the Holy Liturgy, but it was not obligatory, as we learn from the writings of the great patriarch Photius; he also recalls that the union between husband and wife is done by blessing, by coronation, or by agreement. The decisive step by which religious marriage became a legal obligation was taken at the beginning of the 10th century; also at this time, an ordinance of the Sacrament of Marriage appeared as a service separate from the Holy Liturgy. This decision was attributed to the Byzantine emperor Leo VI (d. 912), who, by decree, requested a distinct Church ceremony for the Sacrament

of Marriage. The consequence of that decree was that the Church was entrusted with the responsibility of conferring a legal status on marriage. There were also 'disadvantages' of this decree of the Byzantine emperor, because until then the Church disapproved of second and third marriages, which from that moment could no longer be applied. Moreover, Emperor Leo VI, the author of the decree, himself forced the Church to approve his fourth marriage to Zoe Carbonopsina in 906. However, the only compromise that the Church could not accept was the disregard of Holy Communion; it could not, for example, commune a non-Orthodox, or a couple entering into a second marriage. The change was easier to accept because the obvious connection between church marriage and the Eucharist was lost as soon as church marriage became a legal requirement.

[3] Marriage is a true living mystery of duality, or of dual unity, which begins to be felt and realized from the moment the two are joined in marriage – or even earlier – yet it unfolds its potential throughout the entire course of their life together, without the spouses ever growing weary of one another (Stăniloae 1978, 193).

[4] You feel that you live differently when you live in communion. You always have someone to help you. Monasticism, too, is a form of communion, because monks themselves cannot live in complete and perpetual solitude. Solitude is an exceptional form of life, but if it were to remain absolute, it would fall into egoism. Even monks live in communities, where they seek counsel and support one another (Plămădeală 1983, 178).

[5] This does not mean, of course, that for St. John Chrysostom marriage is nothing more than a refuge for avoiding fornication. The same must be emphasized in the case of the Holy Apostle Paul who, addressing the issue of fornication in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, urges Christians to avoid it. According to the Apostle, bodily relations may exist only between spouses: „But because of fornication, let each man have his own wife and each woman have her own husband” (1 Cor 7:2) (Hieroteos 2001, 160).

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