

OPINION

of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lubomir Angelov Ignatov, SU "St. Kliment Ohridski",
Faculty of Theology

for the scientific works presented by Associate Professor Dr. Archpriest Ivan Stoyanov Ivanov in connection with participation in an announced competition for a "professor" in a professional direction 2.4. Religion and Theology (Liturgical), announced in SG No. 35 of 18.04.2023

The opinion is prepared on the basis of:

Order of the Rector of the University No. RD 38-224 of 17.09.2021

Protocol No. 1 of the Scientific Jury dated 26.06.2023.

1. Brief information about the candidate

Associate Professor Dr. Archpriest Ivan Stoyanov Ivanov is the only candidate for the competition announced in the State Gazette. The documents submitted on time in connection with the competition show that the candidate meets the minimum national requirements for the position, according to the requirements of Art. 2b, para. 2, para. 3 and para. 5 of Law on the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

He was born on February 10, 1972 in Lom. In 1991, he was accepted as a student at the Faculty of Theology at the SU, and in 1996 he was already a master of theology. He continued his education at the Vocal Faculty of the National Academy of Music "Prof. Pancho Vladigerov", where in 1999 he received his bachelor's degree. After successfully defending a dissertation on the topic: "The liturgical tradition of hesychasm in musical and hymnographic monuments in the XIV - XV centuries", he was awarded the scientific and educational degree "doctor" (2005), successively holding the academic positions of "assistant" (2004 -2006) and "principal assistant" (2006-2009). Only four years after the defense of the above-mentioned dissertation work (2009) he won a competition and was elected by the Faculty Council at the Faculty of Arts of the SU to the academic position of "associate professor" in professional direction 2.4. Practical theology (Liturgical). In the meantime, he was ordained a deacon (October 10, 1999) and a presbyter (January 17, 2021), accepting obedience to pastorally care for the Bulgarian church community in Rome, subsequently receiving the office of "archpriest" (December 6, 2022).

Over the years, Associate Professor Dr. Archpriest Ivan Ivanov has specialized and held a number of positions and responsible ministries, mostly outside our country. He undertakes and carries out numerous scientific appearances, being honored with many awards and distinctions.

2. General characteristics of the candidate's research activity and achievements

The candidate is a long-time teacher of Liturgy at the Faculty of Theology of the SU with numerous publications and is one of the few contemporary Bulgarian liturgists. Bulgarian theological science has produced prominent and significant personalities in this field, recognized for their activities internationally and far beyond the diocese of our native Church. With our well-known studies of Prof. Dr. Archpriest Ivan Ivanov, which have gained popularity through a number of publications, it should be recognized that he is already one of them. Without, of course, belittling the considerable work done in recent years by his contemporaries – Bulgarian liturgists, it can be reasonably said that the publishing activity of Archpriest Ivan Ivanov shows remarkable activity, which makes him one of the scholars raising the level of our native liturgical theology.

His priority and deep liturgical interests lately are in the area of the Holy Eucharist. However, despite the really serious achievements in this field during the last and the present century, our theological science has been deprived of a systematized study and a corresponding publication, summarizing and supplementing the results so far. The main work for the competition is an attempt to answer precisely this need for such a liturgical creation.

3. Characteristics of the candidate's main work

The work presented for evaluation, entitled "The Eucharist – *Mysterium fidei – Mysterium vitae*", has a clearly defined ambition of the author to present to Bulgarian inquisitive readers a very current liturgical issue related to the teaching of the Holy Eucharist from a historical, liturgical, canonical, dogmatic, mystical point of view, structurally and last but not least – from a catechetical point of view.

I agree with what Archpriest Ivan Ivanov said at the end of the "Scientific characteristics", that his work provides "an objective adaptation of the research done by the heritage for their better understanding in the present" (p. 21).

The candidate's professorial work consists of: Preface, Scientific characteristics, which part sets out the main parameters, methodology, objectives, object and research principles of the study; Instead of an introduction; four chapters containing a comprehensive presentation of the issues related to the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, and in particular: in the **First chapter**, the main characteristics of the study of the Eucharist are commented, in the **Second chapter** the history, individual parts and peculiarities of the liturgical sequence are presented, in the **Third chapter** – the specific directions in the Church's doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, and in the **Fourth chapter** – the meaning of Christ's redemptive sacrifice for humanity and its participation with the angels in the service and glorification of the Creator; followed by **Summary, Concluding Remarks, Appendix and Bibliography**.

The presentation of the thesis, presented within 577 pages (and another 28 with a bibliography) is a testimony that the candidate has a really excellent knowledge of the problem under consideration and the sources and research literature related to it. A total of 573 resources were used, of which 94 sources, 464 publications related to the topic (including 21 of his own published studies) and 15 electronic publications. A total of 1,479 citations and explanatory notes are placed under the line, further emphasizing the scientific value of the work.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Archpriest Ivan Ivanov participated in the competition with a significant number of other publications – 21 studies and 5 articles, as well as a book chapter. Together with the monograph, they form the focus of his scientific activity and show the persistence of his interest in questions of liturgical theology.

4. Main critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical remarks about the scientific production presented.

Here I dare to offer the candidate a view of my own in the field of liturgical terminology. The definition "liturgical" is usually accepted as a doublet meaning, uniting the specific idea of the sequence Liturgy, in the sense of "liturgical", and the more general meaning representing the concept of the very science of Orthodox worship – Liturgy.

In my opinion, with a view to applying greater accuracy of expression, referring to the Bulgarian language norms, it would be better to clearly distinguish the two ideological directions, and to use the definition "liturgical" for issues related to the Orthodox liturgy in general, what is the Bulgarian tradition in this regard, and when referring to the Liturgy sequence, as we see on page 39 in the work presented for consideration – "the eastern liturgical order", and in many other places, the word form "liturgien" should be applied, as this is done on page 73.

I recommend Associate Professor Dr. Archpriest Ivan Ivanov to continue his thorough research in other areas of Liturgy, while at the same time choosing a correct form for textbooks and teaching aids corresponding to the needs of the Faculty of Theology of SU.

5. Final assessment

My general evaluation words for the presented monographic work are that it is an exposition of a successfully realized liturgical study, which is actually something new for Bulgarian liturgical science. A work on the Holy Eucharist on such a scale and in-depth is written for the first time in Bulgaria and has qualities that define it as an indisputable contribution to theological science in general.

Based on the excellent impressions obtained and presented above about the scientific liturgical creativity and contributions of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Archpriest Ivan Ivanov, I find it reasonable to give my positive assessment and to recommend to the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council for his election to the academic position of "professor" in the BF of the SU by professional direction 2.4. Practical theology (Liturgical).

17.08.2023

Prepared the opinion.....

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lubomir Ignatov)