“Imagination is of three kinds: joined with belief of that which is to come; joined with memory and that which is past; and of things present, or as if they were present.”

Francis Bacon

“It is only through imagination that men become aware of what the world might be.”

Bertrand Russell

“Imagination is more important than knowledge; knowledge of the past and present is essentially ‘dead’, and requires imagination to bring it to life and put knowledge into action.”

Albert Einstein

“For those of us who were raised on radio and not music videos we know one undeniable thing: Music videos have ruined the imagination of our young people… Music videos, as a matter of being, defeat those terms of imagining, and the result is a paralysis of innovative thought.”

David W. Boles

“Facts. Obviously the facts are never just coming at you but are incorporated by an imagination that is formed by previous experience. Memories of the past are not memories of facts but memories of your imagining of the facts.”

Philip Roth

“The future exists first in imagination, then in will, then in reality.”

Robert Anton

“The imagination modifies images and gives unity to variety; it sees all things in one.”

William Oxley

“When the proper use of imagination ceased, art fatally declined and spirituality itself became unintelligible.”

Elemire Yolla

“Imagination is thought to be nonrational and therefore not to be taken seriously. A little reflection, however, makes it abundantly clear that our imagination informs our view of the world considerably, and thus our behaviour toward that world.”

Laura Sewall

“What is proven now was once only imagined. The world of imagination is the world of eternity. It is the divine bosom into which we shall all go after the death of the vegetated body. This world of imagination is infinite and eternal, whereas the world of generation is finite and temporal. There exist in that eternal world the eternal realities of everything which we see reflected in this vegetable glass of nature.”

William Blake

“It is often said that men are ruled by their imaginations; but it would be truer to say they are governed by the weakness of their imaginations.”

Walter Bagehot

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THE ROMANIAN INSTITUTE OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY

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invite you to

The Fifteenth Ecumenical Theological Symposium

Theology and Literature: The Deification of Imagination and Its Cathartic Function in Spiritual Growth

Saturday, December 1st, 2007
3:00 PM

at the Romanian General Consulate
200 E 38th Street
(3rd Ave. at 38th Street)
New York, NY 10016
Being the oldest social phenomenon in the history of human civilization, religion produced literature from the very beginning when the written word was invented, but even before that, since the oral creation of the unwritten tradition can be rightly considered literature before literature.

What people put in writing was, in particular, the highest value of the entire set of values on which they centered their life at any given moment, and at the top of this set or hierarchy of values was always, and it is still today, religion. Religion generated the theological field, which deals with the elaboration of its fundamental principles in the form of dogmas and doctrines, and as well with their interpretation in the context of, and for the daily life of, the believer.

Since man is essentially a religious being, *homo religiosus*, as Mircea Eliade put it, the human element is ever present in religion in very pregnant ways. The human imagination plays a central role in one’s understanding of God. If religion is an act of the divine revelation, if we look at it theologically, then it is accepted fact that the divine reveals itself to the human mind, reason and imagination. Jesus Christ, for Christianity, spoke in parables, thus addressing the human imagination for a better understanding of His message about the Kingdom of God.

But even in the case where religion is considered from an atheistic point of view based on which religion is the deification of human imagination, even there, human imagination plays a central role, because this imagination, once deified, becomes the platform on which the believer builds his or her life.

This theological and ecumenical symposium by tradition, and at the same time inter-disciplinary by recent practice, discusses the issue of human imagination in religious context, as it is to be found at the basis of man’s permanent religious experience, with the intention to generate critical reflection and dialogue on its nature, and the many implications it has in the post-modern life of today’s man in his or her search for God.