

Georgij. E. Zakharov

Georgij. E. Zakharov(Moscow 1986) studied at the Orthodox University of St Tikhon and at the Institute of History of the Russian Academy of Sciences; his dissertation was on the “The Church in the social system of the Balkan-Danubian region in the fourth and fifth system”. Since 2007 he has been teaching history of the Church and patrology at the Orthodox University of St Tikhon. He is among the editors of the Russian edition of the complete works of St Ambrose of Milan and is studying the relations between the Roman See and the Eastern Churches in the time of the Arian controversies, on which he has written two books.

“We are All One in Christ”. Martyrdom and the Unity of the Church in St Ambrose and the Latin Fathers in the Fourth Century

In the context of rapid changes in the relations between church and state after Constantine’s conversion and of the Arian crisis, which threatened catholic unity at all levels of church life, the theme of martyrdom acquires a special significance. The paper examines three types of “martyrdom narrative” in the Latin tradition, in authors such as Ambrose of Milan, Lucifer of Cagliari, Hilary of Poitiers, pope Liberius, and pope Damasus, Nicetas of Remesiana: 1) interpretation of martyrdom as a witness of faith; 2) imitation of martyrs as a form of spiritual asceticism; 3) martyrdom and the ideal of Rome’s renewal. At the end of the fourth century this narrative becomes part of a more universal and integral conception of the catholic Church as a communion in holy things and communion of saints (*communio sanctorum*). Such communion is not limited by social, ethnic, geographical, or temporal limits and manifests catholic unity *always and everywhere*.

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