

PATRISTIC THEOLOGY
The University Lectures of Fr. John Romanides



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The Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast shown forth the fishermen as supremely wise by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit, and through them didst draw the world into Thy net. O Befriender of man, glory be to Thee.

Apolytikion of Pentecost

PART ONE

THE RUDIMENTS OF ORTHODOX
ANTHROPOLOGY AND THEOLOGY



*Our Holy Father Gregory the Theologian,
Archbishop of Constantinople*

are strictly medical? Consider the fact that the *nous* is a physiological human organ that everyone has. It is not only Greeks and Orthodox that have a *nous*. So do Muslims, Buddhists, and everyone else. So all human beings have the same need for purification and illumination. And there is only one therapeutic treatment. Or do you think there are many therapeutic treatments for this illness? And is it really an illness or not?

3. ON THE DEVIATION OF WESTERN CHRISTENDOM FROM THE ORTHODOX ETHOS

Present-day Orthodox are hard pressed to respond to these issues, because they have become so far removed from this tradition today that they no longer think of the Orthodox Christian way of life in the context of sickness and healing. They do not consider Orthodoxy to be a curative course of treatment, even though all the prayers are perfectly clear on this point. After all, Who is Christ for Orthodox Christians? Is He not repeatedly invoked in the prayers and hymns of the Church as “the Physician of our souls and bodies”?

Now if you search through the Roman Catholic or Protestant tradition, you will not find the word ‘doctor’ used for Christ anywhere. Only in the Orthodox tradition is Christ called ‘the doctor.’ But why has this tradition died out among the Roman Catholics and Protestants? Why are they so surprised when we speak to them about a curative course of treatment? The reason is that the need for purification and illumination – the need for an inner change – is no longer a part of these peoples’ theology. For them, the one

who changes is not man, but God! For them, man does not change. For them, the only thing man does is that he becomes a 'good' boy. And when a 'bad' boy becomes a 'good' boy, then God loves him. Otherwise, God turns away from him. If man continues to be a 'bad' boy or becomes a 'bad' boy, then God does not love him! In other words, if man becomes a 'good' boy, then God changes and becomes good. And while before God did not love him, now He does! When man becomes a 'bad' boy, God gets mad. When man becomes a 'good' boy, it makes God happy. This, unfortunately, is the way things are in Europe.

But the bad thing is that this takes place not only in Europe, but also in Greece. This spirit holds sway over many in the Church here. Orthodoxy has sunk to the point of being a 'religion' of a moody God! When man is 'good,' God loves him, but when he's 'bad,' God does not love him.¹³ In

13 Professor George Mantzaridis in his comments related to Archimandrite Zachariah Zacharou's book entitled *Reference to the Theology of Elder Sophrony* (Essex: Sacred Monastery of the Honorable Forerunner, 2000), which was printed in the periodical *Synaxis* (85 [Jan-March 2003], 98), mentions the following:

"The unwavering criterion of the truth and the catholicity of the Church consists of love for one's enemies. In the teaching of St. Silouan and the Elder Sophrony, people are not classified as 'enemies' and 'friends' [or 'good people' and 'bad people'], but as those 'who have known' and those who 'do not know' God. Wherever 'enemies' are acknowledged, it means that part of the body of humanity is cast aside and universality is restricted. Keeping the commandment of love for one's enemies means that man embraces all human beings and becomes catholic, universal. And on an ecclesiastical level, love for one's enemies comprises the criterion that assures catholicity. *The true Church is that which maintains alive love for one's enemies*' [p. 350]. It is highly significant and especially

other words, God punishes and rewards. So, Orthodoxy in Greece today has essentially been reduced to moralism. Isn't that what they used to teach children in catechism class and in Greece's independent Orthodox Christian societies, those organizations that look to the West for models and have corrupted the Orthodox spirit?

After all I have said, if you are interested in learning why Orthodoxy has reached such a sorry state, you should read Adamantios Korais. After the Revolution of 1821, his reforms instituted this policy in Greece. He is the one who initiated the persecution of hesychasm, traditional monasticism, Orthodoxy and the only true cure for the human soul of man. But let's begin our inquiry elsewhere.

Let's suppose that there is a research scientist who is not affiliated with any religion – he can be an atheist if you like – but one who does research on religious traditions. When he reaches the Orthodox tradition, he starts to dig around, discovers these things, and describes them. Then he says, “Hey, look at this! Here is a tradition that speaks about the soul, about the soul's noetic energy, and about a specific curative course of treatment.” Later in his research, this scientist comes to the realization that if this curative treatment were implemented in human society, it would have a very beneficial effect on the health of the individual and society as a whole. Afterwards, as he continues searching, he begins to establish when this tradition appeared, what its sources are, how many centuries it has been successfully put into practice, and where this took place. As he persists, he discovers why this tradition no longer exists today among the majority

appropriate for this point to be stressed in our age.”

of the Orthodox and why Orthodoxy has undergone this change and become so distorted. And as our researcher continues, he finds out that all this happened because hesychasm or traditional monasticism, the bearer of this tradition, was persecuted.

But why was hesychasm persecuted? It was persecuted because the countries in which it had flourished started to become Westernized politically as was the case in Russia after the reforms of Peter the Great and in Greece after the revolution of 1821. The modern historian Toynbee says that today Orthodox culture is gradually being absorbed by Western culture. He has written an entire book on this phenomenon. Of the twenty-six cultures that existed in the past, he finds only five still in existence today.¹⁴ These are the Hindu culture, the culture of the Far East (China and Japan), European culture, Orthodox culture, and the primitive culture that still exists today in some regions of Australia and Africa. And Toynbee's theory is that today all the cultures of the world are becoming Westernized.

In the past, an effort was made for this Westernization

14 Fr. John is likely referring to Arnold Joseph Toynbee (1889-1975), *Civilization on Trial* (1948). Toynbee was an English historian best known for his 12-volume *A Study of History* (1934-61), a monumental synthetic work on civilization. "Unlike Spengler in his *The Decline of the West*, Toynbee did not regard the death of a civilization as inevitable, for it may or may not continue to respond to successive challenges. Unlike Karl Marx, he saw history as shaped by spiritual, not economic forces.... Many critics complained that the conclusions he reached were those of a Christian moralist rather than of a historian. His work, however, has been praised as a stimulating answer to the specializing tendency of modern historical research." (Encyclopaedia Britannica CD) –TRANS.

to take place through the work of Western missionaries. In the past, Europeans used to send out armies of missionaries – and they still do so today – whose purpose was not only to convert other nations to Christianity, but also to Westernize them. And that is why all of these heretical groups are present in Greece and still active. Toynbee notes, however, that this missionary activity failed in the idol-worshiping societies of Africa, as elsewhere, because missionaries created divisions among the people. In a single indigenous family, for example, one son would become Lutheran, his brother would become Anglican, a third brother Baptist, their cousin Methodist, another cousin Pentecostal, another cousin Evangelical, and so on, so that they not only shattered the nation into small fragments through religion, but they even shattered families. It has been established, therefore, that this kind of missionary work was a great failure in Westernizing peoples of the third world.

Therefore in 1948, Toynbee suggested a new solution – that Westernization should take place by means of technology and the economy.

4. WHAT IS ORTHODOXY?

Nevertheless, in response to the process of Westernization, Orthodox people and Orthodox culture do fight back. But what is Orthodox culture? Is it a culture in the sense of Western culture? No, Orthodoxy is not a culture, even if Toynbee refers to it as “Orthodox culture.” Why? Because Orthodoxy is a science. And according to today’s criteria, it is a medical science. It is not a culture. Orthodoxy is

is not the book of Holy Scripture, but the transmission of this experience of illumination and *theosis*, which has been handed down successively from Adam to our own time.

10. IS ORTHODOXY A RELIGION?

Many are of the opinion that Orthodoxy is just one religion among many and that its chief concern is to prepare the members of the Church for life after death, securing a place in paradise for every Orthodox Christian. Orthodox doctrine is presumed to offer some additional guarantee, because it is Orthodox, and not believing in Orthodox dogma is seen as yet another reason for someone to go to Hell, besides his personal sins that would otherwise send him there. Those Orthodox Christians who believe that this describes Orthodoxy have associated Orthodoxy exclusively with the afterlife. But in this life such people do not accomplish very much. They just wait to die, believing that they will go to paradise for the simple reason that while they were alive they were Orthodox Christians.

Another section of the Orthodox is involved with and active in the Church, interested not in the next life, but chiefly in this life, here and now. What interests them is how Orthodoxy can help them to have a good life in the present. These Orthodox Christians pray to God, have priests say prayers for them, have their homes blessed with holy water, have services of supplication sung, are anointed with oil, and so forth, all so that God will help them to enjoy life in the present: so that they do not get sick, so that their children find their place in society, so that their daughters

are ensured a good dowry and a good groom, so that their boys find good girls to marry with good dowries, so that their work goes well, so that their businesses go well, even so that the stock market goes well, or the industry they work in, and so on. So we see that these Christians are not so very different from other people who follow other religions, for those people do the very same things.²²

From what we have said, we can clearly see that Orthodoxy has two points in common with all other religions. First, it prepares believers for life after death, so that they will go to paradise, whatever they imagine that to be. Second, Orthodoxy protects them in this life so that they will not have to experience sorrow, difficulties, disaster, sickness, war, and the like – in other words, so that God will take care of all their needs and desires. Thus, for this second type of Orthodox Christian, religion plays a major role in the present life and on a daily basis at that.

But among all these Christians we have just discussed, who cares deep down whether God exists or not? Who really yearns for Him and seeks Him out? The question of God's existence does not even come up, since it is clearly better for God to exist, so that we can appeal to Him and ask Him to satisfy our needs, in order for our work to go well and for us to have some happiness in this life. As we can see, human beings have an extremely strong predisposition to want God to exist and to believe that God exists, because we have a need for God to exist in order to ensure everything we have mentioned. Since we need God to exist, therefore,

²² As we noted in the Prologue, Father John's words are at times caustic.

God exists. If people were not in need of a God and could take measures to ensure sufficiency for the necessities of life by some other means, then who knows how many would still believe in God. This is what happens in Greece as a rule.

So we see that many people who were previously indifferent to religion become religious towards the end of their lives, perhaps after some event that has frightened them. This happens because they feel that they cannot live any longer without appealing to some god for help – that is, it is the result of superstitious beliefs. For these reasons, human nature encourages man to be religious. This holds true not only for Orthodox Christians, but also for adherents to all religions. Human nature is the same everywhere. Since as a result of the Fall the human soul is now darkened, people are by nature inclined toward superstition.

Now the next question is this: Where does superstition stop and real belief begin?

The Fathers' views and teachings on these matters are clear. Consider first someone who follows, or rather thinks that he follows the teachings of Christ, simply by going to Church every Sunday, communing at regular intervals, and having the priest bless him with water, anoint him with oil and so on, without examining these things very closely.²³ Does this person who remains at the letter of the law, but does not enter into the spirit of the law, stand to gain anything of any account from Orthodoxy? Now consider someone

23 Of course, genuine Orthodox Christians do these same things and it is not wrong for them to desire to do them. The problem is when someone stagnates at this level.

who prays exclusively for the future life, for himself and for others, but is completely indifferent towards this life. Again, what particular benefit does such a person stand to gain from Orthodoxy? The former tendency can be seen in parish priests and those who flock around them with the attitude described above. The latter tendency can be seen in some elders in monasteries, usually retired archimandrites waiting to die, and the few monks who follow them.²⁴

Since purification and illumination are not their main focus or concern, both these tendencies, from the viewpoint of the Fathers, have set the wrong goals for themselves. But insofar as purification and illumination become their focus and the Orthodox asceticism of the Fathers is practiced with a view towards attaining noetic prayer, then and only then can everything else be placed on a firm foundation. These two tendencies are exaggerations that reflect two extremes and share no common core. But there is a common core, a structure that runs throughout Orthodoxy and holds it together. When we take into account this one core, this unique structure, then every subject that concerns Orthodoxy finds its proper place on a firm foundation. And this core is purification, illumination, and *theosis*.

What will happen to man after death was not an overriding concern for the Fathers. Their primary concern was what will man become in this life. After death, his *nous* cannot be treated. The treatment must begin in this life, because “in hades there is no repentance.”²⁵ This is why Orthodox

24 As a rule, this is seen when the spiritual father and his monks are not interested in hesychasm.

25 St. John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*,

theology is not outside of this world, futuristic, or eschatological, but is clearly grounded in this world, because Orthodoxy's focus is man in this world and in this life, not after death.

Now why do we need purification and illumination? Is it so that we can go to Heaven and escape Hell? Is that why they are necessary? What are purification and illumination and why do Orthodox Christians want to attain them? In order to find the reason for this and to answer these questions, you need to have what Orthodox theology considers the basic key to these issues.

The basic key is the fact that, according to Orthodox theology, everyone throughout the world will finish their earthly course in the same way, regardless of whether they are Orthodox, Buddhist, Hindu, agnostic, atheist, or anything else. Everyone on earth is destined to see the glory of God. At the Second Coming of Christ, with which all human history ends, everyone will see the glory of God. And since all people will see God's glory, they will all meet the same end. Truly, all will see the glory of God, but not in the same way – for some, the glory of God will be an exceedingly sweet Light that never sets; for others, the same glory of God will be like “a devouring fire” that will consume them. We expect this vision of God's glory to occur as a real event. This vision of God – of His Glory and His Light – is something that will take place whether we want it to happen or not. But the experience of that Light will be different for both groups.

Therefore, it is not the Church's task to help us see this glory, since that is going to happen anyway. The work of

the Church and of her priests focuses on how we will experience the vision of God, and not whether we will experience the vision of God. The Church's task is to proclaim to mankind that the true God exists, that He reveals Himself as Light or as a devouring fire, and that all of humanity will see God²⁶ at the Second Coming of Christ. Having proclaimed these truths, the Church then tries to prepare Her members so that on that day they will see God as Light, and not as fire.²⁷

When the Church prepares her members and everyone who desires to see God as Light, She is essentially offering them a curative course of treatment that must begin and end *in this life*. The treatment must take place during this life and be brought to completion, because there is no repentance after death. This curative course of treatment is the very fiber of Orthodox tradition and the primary concern of the Orthodox Church. It consists of three stages of spiritual ascent: purification from the passions, illumination by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and *theosis*, again by the grace of the Holy Spirit. We should also take note. If a believer does not reach a state of at least partial illumination

26 Of course, all people have a partial experience of this vision of God immediately after the departure of the soul from the body at their biological death.

27 "In the fire of revelation on the final day, the deeds of each will be tested by fire as Paul says. If what one has built up for himself is a work of incorruptibility, it will remain incorruptible in the midst of the fire and not only will it not be burned up, but it will be made radiant, totally purified of the perhaps small amount of filth..." St. Nikitas Stithatos, "On Spiritual Knowledge," §79, *The Philokalia*, vol. III, page 348 [in Greek] [in English, page 165].

in this life, he will not be able to see God as Light either in this life or in the next.²⁸

It is obvious that the Church Fathers were interested in people as they are today at this moment. Every human being needs to be healed. Every human being is also responsible before God to begin this process today in this life, because now is when it is possible, not after death. Everyone must decide for himself whether or not he will pursue this path of healing.

Christ said, "I am the Way."²⁹ But where does this Way lead? Christ is not referring to the next life. Christ is primarily the Way in this life. Christ is the Way to His Father and our Father. First, Christ reveals Himself to man in this life and shows him the path to the Father. This path is Christ Himself. If a man does not see Christ in this life, at least by sensing Him in his heart, he also will not see the Father or the Light of God in the life to come.³⁰

28 "We have fallen so far from the vision of Him, corresponding to the dimness of our sight, since we have voluntarily deprived ourselves of His Light in this present life." St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Extant Works*, Discourse 75 [in Greek].

29 *John* 14:6.

30 "...At Christ's Second Coming, all mankind will be raised and will be judged according to their works. The sinners who did not acquire spiritual eyes will not cease to exist. They will continue to exist ontologically as persons, but they will not participate in God. The righteous will both participate in God and commune with Him. As Saint Maximos the Confessor teaches, the sinners will live with an 'eternal lack of well being,' while the righteous will live in a state of 'eternal well being.'" Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos, *The Person in Orthodox Tradition* (Levadia: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 1994), p. 162 [in Greek].

together with the entire man, if God so wills. Therefore, is there such a thing as an illumined liberal or an illumined conservative in this context? Of course not. You are either illumined or you are not. You have either reached *theosis* or you have not. You have either undergone this treatment, or you have not. Apart from these distinctions, there are no others.

30. ON DIVINE INSPIRATION

Today Protestants and Roman Catholics are under the impression that *God* gave Holy Scripture to the Church. This idea has so greatly influenced modern Orthodox thought that the Orthodox even agree with Protestants and Roman Catholics on this point. Moreover, Orthodox and Roman Catholics agree that God also gave Sacred Tradition to the Church. With respect to Tradition, the Protestants are showing some signs that they are reconsidering their position.

But now the Orthodox Church has to face a certain paradox. When you read the Old Testament, the New Testament, and even writings from Tradition, you will run across opinions that science proved to be false at least 150 years ago, especially on account of the breakthroughs in research made by the exact sciences. Naturally, this creates a serious problem for someone who does not fully grasp what the Fathers mean when they speak about divine inspiration. This problem mainly applies to the study of the Bible.

In their tradition, the Franks followed Augustine in

identifying revelation with the revelation by God of concepts to man. In fact, they identified revelation not only with concepts, but also with the expressions, that is, terms and words, that conveyed these concepts. But if you accept this opinion, then you have already subscribed to the so-called literal divine inspiration of the Bible. This means that God manifests Himself in order to dictate, as it were, expressions and concepts to the writers of the Bible. Once you adopt this train of thought, however, you inevitably reach the conclusion that God is really the author of the Bible rather than the prophets and evangelists. Since Western theology followed this way of thinking, the appearance of modern science created a serious problem when it overturned certain positions found in the Bible. It was as if science were proving that God is a liar, since He Himself had earlier dictated or said something else.

It is now a commonly held opinion that the work of divine inspiration is restricted exclusively to what is documented in the Bible. When we say 'divine inspiration,' the Bible, the prophets, and the Apostles immediately come to mind. Now if you are also a conservative, you will bring to mind some ecumenical council outside of Holy Scripture, since a conservative Orthodox Christian believes that the decisions of the ecumenical councils are also divinely inspired. If you are even more conservative, you will bring up the Church Fathers. If you are even more conservative still, you will point to canon law, the liturgical life, and even priestly robes and head coverings. In the last case, you are completely conservative. On a scale from 50 to 100, you have hit 100. You are one hundred percent conservative.

But what is important in all of this is that most believers

suppose that divine inspiration extends over large segments and many facets of life in the Church, if not over the entirety of life in the Church. Contemporary Orthodox theology is quite confused on this point. There is confusion as to what divine inspiration is, what it means, and where it is found.

All Christians, Orthodox and heterodox alike, can agree that the Bible is divinely inspired. Of course, we are not looking at any definitions for divine inspiration or making any qualifications about which portions of the Bible are really divinely inspired. For the time being, we simply assert that Holy Scripture is divinely inspired.

Since Holy Scripture is divinely inspired, what Holy Scripture says holds true, including Christ's promise to His Apostles that He would send the Holy Spirit Who would guide them into "all truth."⁸⁵ So it is the person of Christ Who sends the Holy Spirit and it is the Holy Spirit Who guides into "all truth." Nevertheless, the question is raised: to whom in particular does Christ give the Holy Spirit and whom in particular does the Holy Spirit guide into the fullness of truth?

The Roman Catholic answer to this question is that the Holy Spirit was originally given to the Apostles and that when they consecrated the bishops, the bishops also received the Holy Spirit. As for the priests, they also participate in the Holy Spirit after a fashion. This conviction of the Roman Catholics can be clearly seen in their service for the consecration of a bishop when the consecrating bishops say to the candidate being consecrated, "Receive the Holy Spirit." This gives the impression that the person being consecrated has lived his

⁸⁵ *John* 16:3.

entire life until this time without the Holy Spirit Whom he now receives at the moment of his consecration.

There is no doubt that the act of interpreting the Bible is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit Who guides interpreters to interpret Holy Scripture correctly. But how does this guidance take place?

When medical scientists claim that a given drug treats a particular disease, they usually know from previous studies how that drug acts therapeutically within the human body. In every science, when we observe a specific phenomenon and say that something happens or takes place, we can usually determine what that something is. In our case, the question is how does the Holy Spirit lead someone, whom does He lead, and of what does this leading consist. Some people say that when an ecumenical council decides something, that decision is infallible, because ecumenical councils are divinely inspired, and so forth. It is as though they want to force us to accept as an infallible teaching whatever an ecumenical council has decided and proclaimed. Of course, they are right. An ecumenical council is infallible. Yes, it teaches infallibly and contributes to our faith. But how did it become infallible? What makes it infallible? Why is it infallible? Why are its decisions infallible?

Modern Orthodox theology speaks a great deal about divine inspiration. But as far as I can tell from what I have read, Orthodox theologians talk about divine inspiration, but I have not found any description of this divine inspiration that they are discussing. We have already noted that the Orthodox, Roman Catholics, and Protestants agree that the Bible is divinely inspired. But what does divine inspiration mean? What characterizes the state that can be described

as divinely inspired? And if this state survives somewhere, where does it survive? Someone may well say, so were the prophets and the Apostles the only human beings who were divinely inspired? After the Apostles, are there no more divinely inspired people? Do we have no divinely inspired texts outside of Holy Scripture? Do we possess no divinely inspired writings by other writers who were likewise divinely inspired? If our answer is yes, who are these divinely inspired people? And if they exist, how do we know that they are divinely inspired? We know that the prophets were divinely inspired. We similarly know that the Apostles were divinely inspired. Leaving the prophets and Apostles aside, who else was or is divinely inspired? Moreover, what are the different stages of this divine inspiration and how can they be distinguished? How does God inspire someone? How do we know that someone is inspired by God and not by the devil or by hallucinations?

When Christ said that He would give us the Holy Spirit Who will guide us into “all truth,” He was not speaking about ecumenical councils. He did not say that this would take place in the Church’s ecumenical councils. This new teaching about the infallibility of the ecumenical councils is not contained within Holy Scripture. Christ simply said that the Holy Spirit is the Person Who will guide us into the fullness of the truth. Before saying this, however, He said, “If you have love for each other, I and my Father will come and dwell in you.”⁸⁶ He also said, “now you see Me,

⁸⁶ “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” *John* 14:23.

but later you will not see Me. But if you have love, you will see Me. And the Spirit will come and dwell in you and will guide you to all truth.”⁸⁷

Christ made all these statements in those chapters from St. John’s Gospel that are read by the priests on Great Thursday and are quite basic. But why are these chapters so basic? Why is Christ’s high priestly prayer so very important? Why did Jesus pray for the unity of the Apostles? What kind of union was He praying for? Was He praying perhaps for the union of the churches? What is this union? When Christ says that the Spirit “will guide you into all truth,” He certainly means for it to be understood within a certain context. What is that context?

Chapters 14-17 of the Gospel according to St. John go into great detail on the relationship between love and the Apostles’ spiritual state. They also refer to the outcome of love. However, the fullest expression of love is revealed in the experience of *theosis*. *Theosis* is the fullest expression of love. This love that wells forth from the experience of *theosis* completely heals the human person.

When the Holy Spirit enters the human heart, this love is awakened and the believer becomes a dwelling place or temple of the Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in man, He brings with Him both the Father and the Son. Then, the entire Holy Trinity dwells in the believer. But how does the believer know that he has become “a temple of the Holy Spirit”? How is this determined? A genuine spiritual father can recognize when his spiritual

87 “A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.” *John* 16:16.

child has received the Holy Spirit and become a “temple of the Holy Spirit” because there are specific Patristic criteria on this subject. What are they?

When Christ speaks about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Church and on the faithful, He is not speaking in the abstract. This outpouring does not imply that He will send the Spirit to the entire Church in general. It also does not mean that the entire Church as a whole will receive the Spirit because of apostolic succession in the ordination of bishops and priests. This outpouring also does not mean that the Holy Spirit is somehow guaranteed to dwell permanently within the hierarchy on account of the consecration of bishops, because the presence of a bishop does not guarantee that the Holy Spirit will be active in the midst of a council. Proof of this is the existence of many bishops within the Church who have been condemned as heretics. If these bishops possessed the Holy Spirit, they would not have fallen into heresy. Therefore, consecration to the episcopacy neither proves nor guarantees that the Holy Spirit dwells in a particular bishop. Hence, the grace of the episcopacy is not what leads the Church into “all truth.”

In this passage from St. John, Christ is speaking about something else. The Fathers clearly teach that in this passage Christ is referring to two states. In one section, He refers to illumination while in another He refers to *theosis*. When Christ says, “that all may be one” to whom is He referring? Naturally, He is speaking about the Apostles. He asks the Father that the Apostles become “one as we are one.” Note that Christ does not use the masculine form of the word ‘one’ (*eis*), but the neuter form (*en*). So how are the Father,

Son, and Holy Spirit one (*en*)? The answer is that They are united as one by glory (energy) and by essence, but not in their Persons or *Hypostases*. They are not united through Their Persons, because the Fathers teach that with respect to each other, the Persons in the Holy Trinity are *akoinonita* – they cannot be merged or reduced to a common entity or person. What is common in the Holy Trinity is the essence and the natural energy of the essence or glory. How then can we become one (*en*) as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one (*en*)? What is this oneness (*en*) and what kind of oneness can we and the Holy Trinity share? What is this common trait? The answer is that we can become one (*en*) in glory.

As the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one in glory, because They have glory in common, so we will likewise become one when we all participate in the glory of God. We will become one when all of us, or at least those of us who are accounted worthy, become partakers of the grace of the Holy Spirit and behold the uncreated Light. When someone is glorified, he becomes a communicant of the uncreated glory of the Holy Trinity. Then he is united with both the Holy Trinity and his fellow believers who are also united with the glory of God at that particular moment.

So at the mystical supper, Christ prays first of all for the purification of the believers, then for their illumination, and finally for their *theosis*. Consequently, when Christ says that the Holy Spirit will “guide you into all truth” He is not referring to all people in general, but specifically to those who will share in the experience of *theosis*. Only when a person reaches *theosis* will he be “guided into all truth.” Consequently, “all truth” (about God, but not about the

created order) is known only in the experience of *theosis*.

All the Fathers have had this experience or similar experiences, since some of them were in a state of illumination while others were in a state of *theosis*. This is why they all approached Holy Scripture in precisely the same way and likewise interpreted fundamental passages in Holy Scripture and texts by the other Church Fathers in the same way.

What can we conclude from all of this? When the Fathers were in a state of illumination or *theosis*, were they or were they not divinely inspired? Naturally, they were divinely inspired. After all, what does divine inspiration mean? It means that someone is inspired by God in contrast to being inspired by the devil or demons. In the latter case, that person would be diabolically inspired or demonically inspired.

In terms of divine inspiration, the highest form of revelation and the supreme illustration of *theosis* were experienced by the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. Pentecost is the key to Orthodox theology regarding divine inspiration. If you grasp the meaning of Pentecost in the Patristic tradition, at least you will know what theology is and what a theologian is, even if you are not a theologian. Just as you do not need to be a doctor to know what medicine is and what a doctor is, in the same way, you can know what theology is and what a theologian is and who is making theological remarks, without personally being a theologian or making theological remarks.

END OF PREVIEW

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