

## Orthodox Spirituality

“Within this framework we can detect some characteristic traits of Orthodox spirituality. It is, firstly, Christ-centred, since Christ is the only medicine for humankind, by virtue of the hypostatic union of the divine and human nature in His Person. Secondly, Orthodox spirituality is also centred on the Holy Trinity, since Christ is always united with the Father and the Holy Spirit. All the Sacraments are performed in the name of the Triune God. Christ, however, is the Head of the Church and cannot be thought of without the Church. Consequently Orthodox spirituality is also Church-centred, since only within the Church can we come into communion with Christ. Finally, as we shall explain later, Orthodox spirituality is sacramental and ascetical.”

*Defining Orthodox Spirituality*

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“The heart is the place which is discovered through ascetic practice in a state of grace. It is the place wherein God is revealed and made manifest. This definition may seem abstract, yet it is a matter of spiritual experience. No one can fully describe the place of the heart by rational and speculative definitions...The fact is that when a person lives the inner life, when his nous returns to his inner world from its previous dispersion; when he experiences mourning and, in the deepest sense, repentance, he is then conscious of the existence... of the heart. It is there that he feels pain and spiritual sorrow; he experiences the grace of God; there also he even hears the voice of God.”

*The Core of Orthodox Spirituality*

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“A spiritual person is one who has the Holy Spirit bearing witness in his heart and knows for sure that he is a dwelling-place of the Holy Triune God. Thus he understands clearly that he is a son of God by grace, and within his heart he cries out in the Holy Spirit, ‘Abba, Father.’ According to the testimony of the Saints, this heartfelt cry is essentially noetic prayer or prayer of the heart.”

*Defining Orthodox Spirituality*

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“Purification of the heart comes first, whereby all thoughts are expelled from it; then man becomes a son of God by grace and prays naturally by saying ‘Abba, Father.’ It is then that he becomes a real member of the Church since, according to St Paul, ‘If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His’ (Rom. 8:9).

The Apostle Paul calls this state illumination: the advent of divine grace in man’s heart first purifies then illuminates it. ‘For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ’ (2 Cor. 4:6). Spiritual darkness is the benighted nous. The grace of God, coming ‘in the person of Jesus Christ’, shines in the heart of the illumined Christian and grants him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God...

“In the New Testament, therefore, both in the words of Christ and the sayings of the Apostles, reference is made to the three stages of the spiritual life, the degrees of spiritual perfection and man’s healing: the purification of the heart, the illumination of the nous and deification. This is indeed man’s true way towards deification.”

*Degrees of Spiritual Perfection*