

Empirical Dogmatics Volume 2

“Although the Fathers try to define the revelation concerning the Holy Trinity, the Holy Trinity always remains an ineffable mystery. Thus we make a distinction between the dogma of the Holy Trinity, which is intellectually comprehensible, and the mystery of the Holy Trinity, which is beyond human comprehension.

‘In the era before the First Ecumenical Council there was a major effort by the Fathers to reach consensus on matters of terminology. Contemporary researchers are under the impression that the Fathers were seeking to make sense of the dogma of the Holy Trinity, that they were attempting to understand the dogma. And once they understood the dogma, they would express it.

We can neither understand God nor express God. St Gregory the Theologian’s words, “It is impossible to express God and even more impossible to conceive Him,” are the key to everything. The Fathers knew that they could not express God, but nevertheless they strove to find a form of words. Why? Because the Fathers shared the identical experience of illumination and glorification.

All of them, both Eastern and Western, except for Augustine, knew that it was impossible for someone to formulate the mystery of the Holy Trinity. The mystery of the Holy Trinity always transcends understanding. The strange thing is that, when someone reaches glorification in the next life, the mystery of the Holy Trinity will remain a mystery. The mystery of God will never be solved.’ [Fr. John Romanides]”

Dogma and Mystery of the Holy Trinity

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“The role of the rational faculty is different from the role of the nous. Through the rational faculty we know the created things around us, and through the nous we know God.

‘The rational faculty has its place in theology. At the stages of purification and illumination the rational faculty definitely participates. It understands what we can know about God and what we cannot know about God. Also, the rational faculty understands that the aim of these words is to inspire us with concepts. These concepts, however, are guides to glorification and cannot be equated with glorification.’ [Fr. John Romanides]”

The Creation of Man

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“Yahweh in the Old Testament, the Angel of Great Counsel, becomes Christ in the New Testament. The Word of God becomes Christ, after the human nature has been anointed with the divine nature. In the Old Testament the kings were anointed and were called the Lord’s anointed (christoi in Greek). At the incarnation the human nature was anointed by the divine nature. So when the Disciples saw Christ, they saw the Father, but this came about in the Spirit.

‘In the Old Testament, Christ did not have a human nature. He is only the Word. He is the Word and nothing else, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, Who is called the Lord of Glory and Yahweh in the Old Testament. He is the Angel of the Lord, the Angel of Glory, the Angel of Great Counsel, Who appears to the Prophets.

When the Prophets see the Angel of the Lord, they see God.’ [Fr. John Romanides]”

Christ-Messiah

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“The experience of Pentecost is the greatest experience of divine vision.

‘The experience of Pentecost is the supreme experience of glorification, before the Second Coming. There is nothing higher than Pentecost.’

‘Why in Orthodox theology can there be no further revelation after Pentecost, but the revelation came to an end with Pentecost and there are no other revelations? Every time someone reaches the experience of glorification, the same experience of Pentecost is repeated. One can reach the experience of Pentecost. One cannot reach any other experience, because the revelation comes to an end: all truth is revealed at Pentecost.’ [Fr. John Romanides]”

The Mystery of Pentecost

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“The participation of the faithful in the Body of the Church and their partaking of the uncreated grace of God through the Mysteries and prayer saves them from death, the devil and sin. Christ saves people through His Church and in any other way known to Him, but we know the way to be saved: through the Mysteries of the Church and Orthodox devotion, which means purification, illumination and glorification...

‘There is no salvation outside the Church. Christ offers saving grace to everyone. When someone is saved outside the visible Church, this means that Christ Himself saves him. If he is a non-Orthodox member, he is saved because Christ saves him; the ‘offshoot’ to which he belongs does not save him. His salvation is not accomplished by the ‘Church-offshoot’ to which he belongs, because the Church that saves is one, that is, Christ.’” [Fr. John Romanides]

The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church