

Orthodox and Western Theology

In the Metropolis of the Patriarchate of Antioch
America, July 2016

First Paper

Orthodox and Western Theology

His Eminence Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and
St Vlassios

(Lectures given by Metropolitan of Nafpaktos, Hierotheos (Vlachos) at the July 18–22 Archdiocesan Clergy Symposium, convened by Metropolitan Joseph and hosted at Antiochian Village by the Antiochian House of Studies.)

When I am invited to speak to members of the Clergy who exercise the pastoral ministry I usually stress that theology is pastoral and the pastoral ministry is theology. When someone wants to shepherd a particular flock, and when he is shepherding human beings, he must necessarily speak theologically.

Theology, according to Fr. John Romanides, is distinguishing what is created from what is uncreated. Experienced theologians, those who behold God, have received God's revelation, so they can make the distinction between created and uncreated. They know very well that God's Light is uncreated, and that all the other things He has made, including, of course, the light of the sun, are created. When the Apostle Paul was on his way to Damascus, he declares that a light shone around him that was "brighter than the sun" (Acts 26:13). It was midday and he saw two lights: the created light with his physical eyes, and the uncreated light with the eyes of his soul, with his nous.

Because the saints realise from their experience that there is no similarity at all between what is uncreated and what is

created, they also know from their experience that there is a difference between uncreated and created energy. As a consequence, they know for certain when energy comes from God, when it comes from created things, and when it comes from the devil. This is how they guide their spiritual children, and this is actually what pastoral ministry is. We therefore assert that true theology is discerning between uncreated and created energies, and a theologian is someone who discerns “the spirits, whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1).

There is usually confusion nowadays between true theology and the ‘pseudomorphosis’ of theology, between the theology of the Fathers and secularised theology as it was, and still is, expressed by Western theology, which you know so well here in America.

I shall divide my first paper into two parts: the first will look at what patristic theology is, and the second at what Western theology is.

1. Patristic Theology

The holy Fathers are the genuine teachers of the Church, as they are the spiritual successors of the Prophets and the Apostles. The well-known apolytikion (dismissal hymn) that is sung on the feasts of many Fathers of the Church, including the Hieromartyr St Ignatius the God-bearer, says: “You shared the Apostles’ way of life and succeeded to their thrones; you found praxis a way up to theoria, O divinely-inspired Father; rightly proclaiming the word of truth, you struggled bravely in faith to the point of shedding your blood, Bishop and Martyr Ignatius, intercede with Christ our God that our souls may be saved.”

There is a connection between the way of life of the Apostles and their thrones, between praxis (practical virtue) and theo-

ria (divine vision), and between right faith and martyrdom.

When we mention Prophets and Apostles, we ought to emphasise that the Prophets saw the unincarnate Word, the Angel of Great Counsel, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity without flesh, whereas the Apostles saw the incarnate Word, the Son and Word of God in the flesh. This is an important point when considering the relationship between the Prophets and the Apostles. The Fathers were genuine successors of these great God-seeing theologians and inherited their spirit.

There is amazing unity between the Prophets, the Apostles and the Fathers. In the whole ecclesiastical tradition it is taken for granted that the Church's theology is not speculation but the revelation of God to the deified, to the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers down through the ages.

The *Synodikon of Orthodoxy* often repeats the statement that we proceed "in accordance with the divinely-inspired theologies of the saints and the devout mind of the Church." This phrase is alleged to have been formulated by Philotheos Kokkinos, a fellow-monk of St Gregory Palamas and Patriarch of Constantinople. It refers, of course, to the theology of the hesychast Fathers, particularly St Gregory Palamas. No other theology – whether post-apostolic, pre-patristic, or post-patristic – exists in the Church.

St Gregory Palamas proclaimed that the teaching of the Prophets, Apostles, and Fathers is one: "What else but that saving perfection in knowledge and dogmas consists in thinking in the same way as the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers, with all those, basically, through whom the Holy Spirit bears witness concerning God and His creatures." The Prophets of the Old Testament beheld the unincarnate Word and the Apostles and Fathers of the New Testament are in communion with

the incarnate Word.

There is unity in faith, as they share a common experience and the common precondition for this experience, which is Orthodox hesychasm combined with the Mysteries of the Church. This experience is participation in the mystery of Christ's Cross and Resurrection, but also experience of the mystery of Pentecost. In the Church we do not accept in isolation the Christ of history or the Christ of faith, that is to say, the faith that the first Christians held concerning Him. We also accept the Christ of revelation, the Christ of glory, Who is manifested to those who are worthy of the revelation. The Christ of revelation cannot be linked with philosophical speculation.

It is clear from the whole tradition of the Church that to be a theologian someone must meet the necessary preconditions. Otherwise, instead of being an exponent of the empirical life of the Church, he expresses himself alone.

We shall look at the teaching of St Gregory the Theologian on this point.

Through his 'Theological Orations' St Gregory the Theologian opposed the heresy of the Arians, and particularly of the Eunomians of his time, who were the predominant heretical group among the Arians. The Arians used philosophical arguments, and St Gregory the Theologian needed to set out at the beginning of his 'Theological Orations' the preconditions for speaking about God. He pointed out who could and should speak about theology.

St Gregory the Theologian refers there to "those who pride themselves on their eloquence", who rejoice in "profane and vain babblings" and the contradictions "of what is falsely called knowledge". They are also "sophists, and absurd and strange jugglers of words." On account of the philosophical reasoning

of the Eunomians, “our great mystery is in danger of becoming a triviality.”

He calls the Eunomian, who talks philosophically about God and lives outside the tradition of the Church, “a dialectician fond of words.” This is why he clarifies what the basic preconditions for Orthodox theology are. He says that theology is not just any occupation, and certainly not one of lowly origin. To speak theologically is not for everyone, but for “those who have been tested and made progress in *theoria*, and have been previously purified in soul and body, or at very least are being purified.” This is essential, because it is dangerous for “the impure to touch what is pure,” just as the sun’s rays are dangerous for ailing eyes. Someone who speaks about God, therefore, ought first to be purified, otherwise he will end up a heretic. And in order to meet these preconditions for theology, one must pass through *hesychia*. In other words, we can speak theologically “when we are free from all external defilement or disturbance, and our commanding faculty is not confused by illusory or erring images,” which is like mixing fine handwriting with ugly scrawl, or the fragrance of myrrh with filth. One must first be quiet in order to know God. “For it is necessary actually to be still to know God.”

This teaching of St Gregory the Theologian, which comes at the beginning of his ‘Theological Orations’, clearly shows that the preconditions of Orthodox theology are regarded as very important. If these preconditions are altered, people are inevitably led to deviate from the truth, and they fall into false beliefs and heresy as a consequence. The essential preconditions for Orthodox theology are sacred *hesychia*, godly stillness, purification of the heart from passions, and illumination of the nous. What St Gregory the Theologian talks about is not a dif-

ferent, more recent ecclesiology, but correct ecclesiology as we encounter it in the Apostles and the Prophets of the Old Testament. When this is abolished, it is not at all certain that Orthodox teaching and ecclesiology are being expressed.

In his oration on Theophany, St Gregory the Theologian speaks about purification, illumination and deification as the essential preconditions for Orthodox theology, in order to attain the spiritual gift of truth and serve “the living and true God”. It is only then that someone can “philosophise” or speak theologically about God. He goes on to define the method of Orthodox theology: “Where fear is, there is keeping of the commandments; and where there is keeping of the commandments, there is purification of the flesh, that cloud which covers the soul and does not allow it to see the divine rays clearly. Where there is purification there is illumination; and illumination is the satisfying of the desire of those who long for the greatest things, or the greatest thing, or that which is beyond the great.” This is indispensable, “so we must purify ourselves first, and then converse with Him Who is Pure.” This is obviously a reference to purification, enlightenment and illumination, and to progress towards “the great”: the vision of the uncreated Light, beholding God, when true knowledge of God is acquired.

Sacred hesychia is the Orthodox way of life as we encounter it in Holy Scripture and the Church’s tradition, and as it was lived by the Prophets, the Apostles and the saints throughout the centuries. This is not a later form of ecclesiology that undermined and did away with ‘primitive ecclesiology’, as some theologians claim.

When we speak about the hesychastic way of life we mean the whole life of the Gospel, which refers to the struggle against the devil, death and sin; the healing of thoughts; purification of

the heart; activation of the noetic faculty so that the nous pray purely to God; the acquisition of unselfish love; the therapy of the three parts of soul, and so on. This ascetic lifestyle is very closely linked with the sacramental life and is the very essence of the evangelical and ecclesiastical way of living.

All this experience of the Church found concrete expression in the three degrees of spiritual perfection that we encounter in Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church of the early centuries, in St Gregory the Theologian, St Dionysius the Areopagite, St Maximus the Confessor, St Symeon the New Theologian, St Gregory Palamas, and all the later 'neptic' Fathers. These three stages are purification of the heart, illumination of the nous and deification. This is also the subject-matter of the *Philokalia of the Neptic Saints*, which is subtitled: *Collected from our holy and God-bearing Fathers, through which, by moral philosophy in praxis and theoria, the nous is purified, illumined and perfected.*

Within the tradition of the Church there are, of course, three different stages of the spiritual life, as we see in St Macarius of Egypt, St Symeon the New Theologian, but especially in our own time in St Silouan the Athonite and the teaching of Elder Sophrony. These are: God's appearance to man in the Light, the withdrawal of divine grace, and its coming anew.

No essential difference exists, however, between these two traditions, as they are mutually complementary. Someone is able to realise how unclean his heart is when he receives a ray of Light, and the desire for repentance kindles. Later on, divine grace reduces, this first love is lost, and then, after a great struggle, he acquires stability. In both traditions, depending on each one's way of life, there is purification, illumination and deification, as well as the coming of divine grace, its withdrawal and its return.

It is significant that we encounter both these traditions in the teaching of Elder Joseph the Hesychast, which means that they are intertwined with each other even within the life of one man.

When we speak about degrees of spiritual perfection, we mean that divine grace is one but has many powers, and it is given different names according to its results. When grace purifies human beings it is described as purifying, when it illuminates them it is called illuminating, and when it deifies them it is said to be deifying.

Obviously, a theologian is someone who is familiar with the mystical life of the Church and by it he leads his spiritual children – like another Moses, as St Gregory of Nyssa analyses in his treatise *On the Life of Moses* – so that they pass through these stages of the spiritual life.

Once the true theologian has acquired unerring knowledge of God, he is usually sent by Him to lead His people in various ways, as happened in the case of the Prophets, Moses, the Apostles and the great Fathers of the Church. This spiritual knowledge is indispensable for the salvation of human beings. This is how St Gregory of Nyssa interprets the work of Moses. Without examining the subject in more detail here, we shall draw attention to some of the points that St Gregory of Nyssa stresses in his analysis of the life of Moses.

Each human being's journey from the land of Egypt to the promised land is very difficult and dangerous. Only a prophet and theologian can bring this task to a successful conclusion.

St Gregory of Nyssa repeatedly speaks of “the Egyptian life”, which we must reject and put to death. At one point he says that we should leave “the Egyptian life” behind. In another passage he speaks about liberation from “the Egyptian tyranny”. Elsewhere he refers to those who “live as the Egyptians do.”

These are all allusions to the life of slavery to the passions and to the ruler who cultivates the passions.

Liberation comes about through repeated purifications, which are achieved by means of temptations and God's miraculous interventions. The indispensable guide on this journey is, of course, the theologian who beholds God. He will discern between delusion and truth. He will point out the true path, and lead the people safely to the land of freedom, which is deification, man's union and communion with God.

A characteristic passage refers to purification from the Egyptian and foreign life, in order that every kind of Egyptian food may be emptied out of the depths of the soul, to enable it to receive heavenly food within it. It says:

“[We learn] by what purifications one should purify oneself of the Egyptian and foreign life, in order to empty the bag of one's soul of all the evil food prepared by the Egyptians and thus to receive within oneself with a pure soul the food that comes down from above. This food was not grown for us by sowing the earth, but it comes from heaven and is found upon earth as ready bread without sowing or cultivation.”

In this context St Gregory of Nyssa says that we should flee from the Egyptian life and wipe out “the first birth of evil”, because when the very beginning of evil, which is desire, is destroyed and killed, as happened with the slaying of the first-born Egyptians, we have no fear that adultery and murder may follow. At this point he borrows the teachings of secular philosophy about the soul having three parts: its rational, desiring and incensive aspects. The desiring and incensive aspects are below, whereas the rational aspect is above, like the beam of a pair of scales and its scale-pans. Reason keeps desire and anger secure, and they do the same for reason. When, however, this

arrangement of the scales is overturned – when reason falls down underfoot, and desire and anger are on top of it, the destroying angel enters into the human being.

It is not sufficient for us merely to put the firstborn of the Egyptian children to death. At the same time we must anoint the doors with blood to protect the Israelite offspring, so that what is good may come to perfection.

The account in Exodus and St Gregory of Nyssa's interpretation of it vividly show the therapeutic treatment that people must undergo as they travel to the promised land under the supervision and guidance of a theologian Father, who performs his task with God's energy. There is obviously an eschatological perspective to this journey. It is not a journey to transitory happiness, but to the entrance of the Kingdom of God.

Examining the true meaning of the day of Preparation (Friday) in relation to the Sabbath (Saturday), which was the day of rest, St Gregory of Nyssa says that the day of Preparation is this life in which we prepare ourselves for the coming of the Sabbath, when we shall live at leisure and enjoy the fruits that we sowed in this life.

Man's journey has a definite starting-point. It begins with catechism, during which he is purified from the passions, and proceeds to Baptism and Chrismation, by which he is illuminated and receives life through the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist. It is an ongoing journey, an endless submersion, which takes place under the guidance of a theologian Father. This shows that in the Orthodox Church theology is linked with spiritual fatherhood, and spiritual fatherhood is a complete science of freeing people from slavery in the land of Egypt and journeying to freedom in the promised land.

Essentially, people want to fulfil the aim for which they were

created, namely, to progress from being in God's image to being in His likeness. The purpose of obedience to spiritual fathers is not merely that Christians should subject their free will to them, and certainly not that they should become psychologically and socially dependent, or even sick from the Church's point of view. Its purpose is to cleanse their hearts and the eyes of their souls, so that they may see the face of Christ in His glory.

2. Western Theology

By Western theology we mean the theology that has departed from the basic principles of patristic theology, which we considered earlier. It is scholastic theology and biblical theology.

Scholastic theology is divided into four periods: pre-scholastic theology that began in the eighth and ninth centuries; scholastic theology proper that developed between the eleventh and thirteen centuries; the decline of scholastic theology during the fourteenth century; and the appearance later on of neo-scholastic theology.

The term 'scholastic theology' derived from the schools that functioned in the universities of that time. Theological subjects were studied in these schools, always in combination with philosophy. The word 'scholastic' was synonymous with "belonging to the university" or "academic". (P. Trembelas)

Originally in the West there were three important schools from which universities later grew: "the school of St Geneviève", "the monastery school of St Victor", and "the school of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris". Subsequently the first universities developed in Salerno, Bologna and Paris.

Literature, the arts, philosophy and theology were cultivated at the universities. The University of Bologna was called "the teacher of Europe", and Pope Honorius III described it as "the

Governor of Christians”. At the University of Paris the largest school was the school of arts, which was equivalent to the philosophical faculty. In this school the trivium (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and the quadrivium (music, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy) were taught. Graduates of this school were called *artistes* (masters of the liberal arts). (P. Drakopoulos)

In order to study scholastic theology, students must have graduated from the school of arts. They had, therefore, necessarily learnt the dialectic method of investigating things, and they used reasoning and logic. As a result “the main features of scholastic theology are the methodical use of reasoning, and the systematic classification of the subject-matter of faith into closed, structured units.”

With scholasticism, theology ceased to be empirical and charismatic, and became academic and rationalistic, in other words, scholastic. “Theology adopted basically the same method used by secular branches of learning, and the scholastics accepted that what is capable of being known in theology had the same characteristic features as the known facts in other branches of knowledge.” Scholastic theology, therefore, laid particular emphasis on dealing with subjects through rational processes.

The Fathers of the Church spoke about two different methodologies. The method of scientific investigation, which uses rational processes, is different from the theological method, which uses the *nous* situated in the heart. Scholastic theology, by contrast, had only one methodology, so the rational faculty investigates the knowledge of created things and also investigates God. In fact, scholastic theologians claimed that only “the dialectical method of syllogisms is a superior and secure path to knowledge of God, whereas the Fathers of the

Church based theology on experience.” (N. Matsoukas)

Obviously, scholastic theology in the West, which had departed from the theology of the Fathers of the Church, aimed, on the one hand, to establish the dogmas of the Church through reason and to make Christian teaching systematic, and, on the other hand, to study the writings of Aristotle thoroughly. The meticulous study Aristotle’s writings in every detail was the reason why later on the term ‘scholastic’ “came to denote someone who is obsessed with details, trivialities and banal matters, and is indifferent to the essence of things.” (T. Pelegrinis)

The fundamental characteristic of Western theology was that it used the classical metaphysics of Plato, Aristotle and the Neoplatonists. Above all, it was shaped by the principles of the feudal social system of the Franks.

The Franks imposed a system according to which God has absolute mastery in the world. There is order in creation, so every sin is the abolition of this order. As a result, God becomes angry and punishes rebellious humankind. Therefore Christ had to become man in order to propitiate divine justice and to restore order in creation. This belief began with Anselm of Canterbury and entered Protestant theology as well.

It is impossible to understand Western theology completely without analysing the terms *analogia entis* and *analogia fidei*. What do these expressions mean?

Analogia (‘analogy’ in English) means correspondence or correlation. It signifies the analogy and correlation that exists between the supreme Being and beings that are in the world. The word *entis* means ‘being’, and *fidei* means ‘faith’, so *analogia entis* denotes ‘analogy of being’ and *analogia fidei* denotes ‘analogy of faith’. In reality this is a way of linking the Christian

faith with metaphysics, as happened in the West.

The *analogia entis* (analogy of being) regards philosophy as the source of faith, as demonstrated in scholastic theology. The *analogia fidei* (analogy of faith) regards Holy Scripture as the source of faith, as do the Protestants. These two traditions express Western Christianity absolutely. In the West, a Christian worldview developed that resembled that found in the metaphysics of Plato and Aristotle. For that reason, Western Christian theology was identified absolutely with metaphysics, whereas this is not the case with Orthodox theology.

Apart from scholastic theology, biblical theology also evolved in the West. The term 'biblical theology' is encountered for the first time in 1652 in C. Zeller, and in 1708 it was used as the title of a book by C. Haymann. This branch of learning was created after the accusations made by the Protestants against the dogmatics of scholasticism, in an attempt to base Christian teaching on Holy Scripture. It is a reaction by the Protestants against the scholastic theology of the Roman Catholics.

The Fathers of the Church certainly interpret the texts of Holy Scripture through the experience of the Church. Biblical theology, however, in the form in which it exists today –completely or partially isolated from patristic and dogmatic theology – is a Protestant achievement. In the medieval West biblical studies had died out, so the Protestants, influenced by humanism, were interested in the interpretation of Holy Scripture. Philip Melanchthon in 1521, John Calvin in 1536 and Sebastian Schmidt in 1671 played a leading role in this work, by revising the dogmatic teaching of the Bible.

The main characteristic features of biblical theology in the age of reason of the seventeenth century and the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century were as follows: a)

research into all the historical subjects in Holy Scripture; b) the examination, together with historical subjects, of subjects referred to outside the Bible and in other religions, including the religions of the Egyptians, Babylonians and Persians, and all other spiritual phenomena; c) the comparison of Judaism with early Christianity; and d) the historico-literary analysis of the sources of Christianity.

With Ferdinand C. Baur (1792-1866) and the Tübingen School that he founded, biblical theology began to flourish in earnest. Baur completely severed the link between biblical theology and the concept of revelation, and it became a historical science. He regarded Christ's teaching as the starting-point for the historical development of the New Testament, and he interpreted the New Testament as the product of very intense antagonism between the 'Gentilism' of St Paul, on the one hand, and the Judaism of the synoptic Gospels, the General Epistles, and the book of Revelation, on the other hand, together with the compromise between these two trends attempted by St John the Evangelist.

Historical pragmatism and positivism in the early twentieth century gave a new impetus to biblical theology. All the spiritual trends, including pietism, scepticism and romanticism, influenced the character of biblical theology in different ways. Thus the historical branches of theology developed, whereas biblical theology became the history of religions. As a result, 'religious historicism' dominated, according to which biblical theology is not expounded systematically, but is regarded as an expression of the personal faith and life of each writer in Holy Scripture. Since then, biblical theology of the Old Testament has assumed the character of the history of the religion of Israel, and biblical theology of the New Testament has become

the life of the first Church.

This means that biblical theology, a Protestant creation, was detached from dogmatics. It took a polemical stance against the scholastic theology of the Middle Ages and it became linked with history. Subsequently it not only created a split between the Prophets and the Apostles, but it also studied the theology of each individual writer in the New Testament as though no organic unity existed between them.

After the First World War there was a noticeable change in the research undertaken in biblical theology, because its interests turned away from its historical basis towards the deeper spiritual meaning of religious things. The systematic examination of the content of the biblical theology of the Old and New Testaments prevailed, although interest in comparative religious aspects of issues of biblical theology was not completely set aside.

Biblical theology is a creation of Protestant theology. Roman Catholic theologians, however, have also worked on biblical theology, particularly since the First World War. Their biblical theology is distinguished by three main characteristics. Firstly, it is opposed to Protestant scepticism, to historicism, and to the extreme views of the exponents of comparative religious studies. Secondly, it examines the essence of revealed divine truths outside the historical forms of the Old and New Testaments. Thirdly, it looks at the subject-matter of biblical theology from the perspective of the dogmatic principles of the 'Roman Catholic Church'.

It is clear from all this that throughout the historical development of biblical theology four main methods of research stood out. The first method is the strict separation of biblical teaching from all other teaching of the Church. The second method is historical research into the content of biblical

teaching. The third method is simply that of comparative religious studies. And the fourth method is the systematic exposition of the subject-matter of biblical theology in such a way as to promote and build up the Christian faith. There have also been attempts to combine methods, such as, for example, the historical and systematic methods, or the structural and historical methods.

In the Orthodox Church, although the historical character of biblical theology is not overlooked, divine revelations are investigated, where it is clear that God acts through the circumstances of human history in order to instruct people. And everything is examined through the life of the Church.

Also, there is no distinction in Orthodox theology between biblical and dogmatic theology, or between the Old and New Testaments. Nor is there any antagonism between the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers. The deified Prophets, Apostles and Fathers have the same experience. They simply differ in how they record this experience, as there is a difference between uncreated words and created words, concepts and images. The theology of the Church is one and indivisible.

3. The ‘Pseudomorphosis’ of Contemporary Orthodox Theology

There is a great difference between patristic, ecclesiastical theology, which is basically empirical, and both scholastic and biblical theology, which are rational and moral. When Western-style theology is prevalent even among the Orthodox, there is ‘pseudomorphosis’ in Orthodox theology, as Fr. Georges Florovsky has observed and Fr. John Romanides underlines.

Such cases of ‘pseudomorphosis’ are “the ontology of the person”, so-called “eucharistic ecclesiology”, and “the

dichotomy between the mystery of the Cross and the mystery of glory.” Andrew Sopko, in his book *The Prophet of Roman Orthodoxy: The Theology of John Romanides*, in the chapter ‘Romanides and Contemporary Orthodox Theology’, refers to these ‘pseudomorphoses’.

According to Andrew Sopko, Romanides stresses three basic dangers that Orthodox theology faces today: “personalism”, which is connected with existentialism and has threatened Orthodoxy since the collapse of the credibility of scholasticism; “eucharistic ecclesiology”, the idea that the Divine Eucharist “makes the Church”, whereas the opposite applies: the Church is what makes the Eucharist really the Eucharist; and the split between “the theology of the Cross and the theology of Christ’s glory”.

More specifically, the first danger for the Orthodox today is “the theology of the person”. Vladimir Lossky, in spite of his contribution to Orthodox theology, “was tempted to look to Trinitarian theology as an inspiration” for “an anthropological dogma.” This was something that patristic theology did not do, because it did not accept the *analogia entis*, but recognised that there is absolutely no similarity between God and the world. Other theologians developed “the theology of the person” further.

God, however, transcends all the categories of human and created existence. For that reason, we can use personal names for God, such as Father and Son, but also impersonal names, such as Holy Spirit, Cloud, Light, Darkness, Rock, Fire, and so on.

Fr. John Romanides rejects personalism in theology, bearing in mind the following points of patristic teaching: in God there are properties that are common and properties that

are not common, so there is no communion of Persons; the union of the divine nature with the human nature in Christ is hypostatic; and man's communion with God is participation in God's energy. Thus, according to Fr. John Romanides, personalism is a 'pseudomorphosis' in contemporary Orthodox theology, just as scholastic theology was a 'pseudomorphosis' in the past. There is actually a resemblance between the two, because in personalism divine energy is identified with the divine hypostases, whereas in scholasticism divine energy is identified with the divine essence.

Personalism "has tried to make ecclesial community analogous to the Trinity." Such a theory downgrades the therapeutic method of purification, illumination and glorification, which gives man the possibility of being in God's image and likeness. This is the perspective in which man acquires unselfish love "which is identified with the life of the Trinity." This unity "is expressed neither by persons or essences, but by selfless love. For this reason neither personalism nor essentialism reveals this, but only the glory of the Lord."

The second danger that becomes a 'pseudomorphosis' in contemporary Orthodoxy is "eucharistic ecclesiology". The release of the Orthodox tradition from Western captivity may lead to a misunderstanding of the theology of the Mysteries and to an ecclesiology that identifies the Church with celebrating the Divine Eucharist.

Nikolai Afanasiev regarded the Divine Eucharist as the foundation of the Church and left out the therapeutic method of purification, illumination and glorification. This came to be accepted by many theologians (*Zizioulas*).

According to Sopko, Fr. John Romanides, in one of his early studies on Ignatius of Antioch "leaned towards a eucharistic

ecclesiology, but soon found it unconvincing,” because this whole theory omits other essential expressions of ecclesiology. In the end, he considers that, because of the bishop’s charismatic authority, other aspects of Church life should also be emphasised as well as the celebration of the Divine Eucharist, such as prophetic preaching and the non-eucharistic assemblies of the faithful for the purpose of prayer. “Thus, the life of the Church comprises a unity of the celebration of the mysteries, scripture and prayer”, and no one activity ought to be overemphasised at the expenses of the others. He thinks that correct ecclesiology exists when every local community has its bishop, who presides at the Divine Eucharist, but who also preaches as a prophet.

Ultimately, for Romanides, “the Divine Eucharist is not an end in itself, but the confirmation of this end”, “putting the Divine Eucharist before and above everything else in the life of the Church leads unavoidably to a form of eucharistic idolatry.”

The third point stressed in this section is “*simul Theologia Crucis et Theologia Gloriam*”, in other words, the theology of the Cross is at the same time the theology of Christ’s glory. The separation for centuries of the theology of the Cross from the theology of glory constituted a ‘pseudomorphosis’ in Christianity. It is usually said that Protestantism and Roman Catholicism stress the Cross, whereas the Orthodox emphasise Christ’s Resurrection. Andrew Sopko asserts that Fr. John Romanides considered that in the entire tradition of the Church the theology of the Cross and the theology of glory are synonymous, and this constitutes “probably the greatest gift that Romanides has given contemporary Orthodox theology and the whole of Christianity.” Fr. John Romanides continuously stressed that “the uncreated cross” of illumination and glorification “places the historical crucifixion

in its correct perspective”, as “the uncreated, unselfish love of the Trinity reveals the glory of the Cross from eternity and it is revealed anew to all who love unselfishly by means of illumination and glorification.”

Anselm of Canterbury’s theory about the propitiation of divine justice through the sacrifice on the Cross contributed to the creation of a ‘pseudomorphosis’ in the Christian theology of the Western world, and this has influenced the Orthodox as well. Fr. John Romanides emphasised that the real miracle was that the Lord of Glory was crucified and rose again. That is to say, he equated the *theologia crucis* with the *theologia gloriae*. He also saw the Mysteries in the light of the mystery of the Cross: he saw the Mysteries of the Church (Baptism, Chrismation, Divine Eucharist, Ordination) in the context of purification, illumination and glorification. When Baptism in water was separated from Baptism in the Spirit, and the other Mysteries were removed from the context of therapeutic treatment, this can be interpreted “as a form of sacramental minimalism”. Fr. John Romanides does not doubt the paschal character of Baptism and Holy Communion, but he also connects this paschal character with the glory of the Cross, with purification, illumination and glorification. For Romanides the true ‘mysteries’ “are first and foremost purification, illumination and glorification, because they reveal the mystery of the Cross in its fullness.”

This identification of the theology of the Cross with the theology of glory in the Mysteries and the eucharistic life of the faithful, which Fr. John Romanides made in his theological work, provoked, and continues to provoke, major reactions, because it constitutes the very core of the Orthodox tradition, as this has been expressed by the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers.

It overturns all the new ‘pseudomorphoses’, the influences of Western theology on the Orthodox Church.

The conclusion of this first paper is that there is a wide difference between patristic ecclesiastical theology and both scholastic and biblical theology. When scholastic or biblical theology prevails, there is ‘pseudomorphosis’ in Orthodox theology, as Fr. Georges Florovsky has observed and Fr. John Romanides underlines.

Such ‘pseudomorphoses’ include so-called “eucharistic ecclesiology”, “the ontology of the person”, and “the dichotomy between the mystery of the Cross and the mystery of glory”. But these issues will be analysed in the papers that follow.