

UNIT 2C: TRADITION

60: MODERN ORTHODOX THEOLOGIANS

(Note: this is a much longer lecture than usual, but this is to facilitate the essay choice that asks for an assessment of a contemporary Orthodox theologian. Maximum choice is being offered!)

Introduction:

Seven Strands of Contemporary Orthodox Theology and the Search for a Synthesis

The question might be asked: Is Orthodox theology today in the state of the French football team at the 2010 World Cup which was described as “satisfied with past glories” in a situation in which “nostalgia [is] the worst poison for the future”?¹ Certainly not! **Mary Cunningham and Elizabeth Theokritoff** have demonstrated the vitality of contemporary Orthodox theology in *The Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology*.² The 19 contributors to this insightful 321-page study present an exciting vision that “Orthodox theology cannot be separated from the Christian’s effort to live the truth,” because Orthodox theology is best viewed not as “an academic discipline or a set of philosophical propositions,” but as “an expression of the Christian life of prayer both corporate and personal,” with its sources in “Scripture, Tradition and the Church, especially the Church as worshipping community.”³ Cunningham and Theokritoff suggest that sound Orthodox theology “comes out of the experience of the Church” and is often based on “the Orthodox instinct ... to focus on a synthesis rather than on individual strands of thought.”⁴ For example, both **Metropolitan Kallistos [Ware] and Father John**

¹ Jacques Attali, “Three neuroses on their shirts”, *The Economist*, 26 June 2010, p. 42.

² Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

³ Cunningham & Theokritoff, “Preface,” pp. xv-xvi

⁴ pp. xvi-xvii.

Anthony McGuckin have attempted, with considerable success, both an historical and a theological synthesis.⁵

As an initial working definition of a viable synthesis of “the Orthodox instinct” that “comes out of the experience of the Church,” consider Father John McGuckin’s opening paragraph in *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture*:

In the course of my own winding, pilgrim’s road to Orthodoxy it was the tangible sense of beauty that served as a constant allure. . . . When Truth is a living person, we can no longer try to make it synonymous with mere accuracy. What is at stake is more a question of authenticity. Orthodoxy is often approached by those outside it as a system of doctrines. But it is far more than this, and this is why a book a book of systematic theology does not quite capture the reality. Orthodoxy is the living mystery of Christ’s presence in the world: a resurrectional power of life. It cannot be understood, except by being fully lived out; just as Christ himself cannot be pinned down, analysed, digested, or dismissed, by the clever of the world, whom he seems often to baffle deliberately. His message is alive in the world today as much as when he first preached it. The Orthodox Church is, essentially, his community of disciples trying to grow into his image and likeness, by their mystical assimilation to the Master who abides among them.⁶

Drawn by “a tangible sense of beauty” and the conviction that “Truth is a living person,” Jesus Christ, let us now each embark or continue on a personal “search for authenticity” as we each seek to “live out” Orthodoxy.

⁵ See Metropolitan Kallistos [Timothy Ware], *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Eastern Christianity*, Revised Third Edition (London: Penguin, 2015); *The Orthodox Way*, Revised Edition (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1995); and *How Are We Saved? The Understanding of Salvation in the Orthodox Tradition* (Minneapolis, MN: Light and Life, 1996). Compare Father McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture* (Chichester: West Sussex, 2010); *The Concise Encyclopedia of Orthodox Christianity* (Chichester, West Sussex, 2014); and *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology* (London: John Knox Press, 2004).

⁶ McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, p. xi. For an extensive study of beauty in Orthodox theology, see David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans, 2003).

A synthesis has been appropriately defined as “the building up of a complex whole by the union of elements, especially the process of forming concepts, general ideas and theories.”⁷ To build up an understanding of an emerging contemporary Orthodox synthesis, it is helpful to consider seven individual strands of thought and Orthodox life: (1) Russian theologians in exile; (2) elders in Greece and the Holy Mountain; (3) the input of Orthodox seminaries and monasteries in the United States; (4) the Judaic dimension; (5) the role of three metropolitans—Anthony [Bloom], Kallistos [Ware] and John [Zizoulas]; (6) contemporary Greek theology; and (7) spiritual guidance. Each of these strands has contributed certain nuances to an emerging synthesis. Father Andrew Louth suggests that a unifying focus in the search for such a synthesis is *The Philokalia* as “a way of approaching theology that had at its heart an experience of God, an experience mediated by prayer, that demanded the transformation of the seeker after God” firmly rejecting “any idea of turning God into a concept, a philosophical hypothesis, or some sort of ultimate moral guarantor.”⁸

1. Russian Theologians in Exile:

The St Sergius School—Florovsky, Lossky, Ouspensky, Bulgakov and Afanasiev

For twentieth and twenty-first century Orthodox theology, a good place to begin is with the Russian émigré theologians, driven West by the Russian Revolution to fulfil themselves as persons and as theologians outside a Russia which had firmly rejected them. One of the most influential émigrés was **Father Georges Florovsky** (1893-1979) who, with his strong commitment to the Faith and Order movement and the World Council of Churches, sought an ecumenical reconciliation with other

⁷ *The Cassell Dictionary of Word Histories* (London: Cassell, 1999), p. 612.

⁸ Father Andrew Louth, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers: From the Philokalia to the Present* (London: SPCK, 2015), p. xiii. This important work, “a history of Orthodox *thinkers*, rather than a history of Orthodox *thought*, or theology” covers some 30 men and women, many of whom are not considered in this lecture, including St Maria (Skobtsova) of Paris, St Justin Popović, Paul Evdokimov, Stelios Ramfos, Myra Lot-Borodine, Father Vasileios Gondidakis, Dimitris Koutroubis, Elisabeth Behr-Sigel, Olivier Clément, Mother Thekla and Father Sophrony.

Christian groups, grounded in “a common language” of “a neo-patristic synthesis.”⁹ All his life, Fr Georges sought to implement a remarkable vision—“a creative recovery of the patristic mind”, an awareness, in the words of Metropolitan Kallistos, that “the fathers are to be treated not as voices from the distant past but as contemporary witnesses; they are to be not only quoted but questioned, for holy tradition represents the critical spirit of the church.”¹⁰ Fr Georges’ vision of the contemporary relevance of the patristic mind-set is to a considerable extent now being implemented in numerous volumes from St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, as well as in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* in which patristic insights into each book of the Old and New Testaments are now available in English.¹¹

The respect of the Russian émigré theologians for the patristic tradition is joined with their affirmation of mystical theology and iconography. In *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, Vladimir Lossky (1903-1958) set out how “the Eastern [Orthodox] tradition has never made a sharp distinction between mysticism and theology; between personal experience of the divine mysteries and the dogma affirmed by the Church.”¹² Lossky believed deeply that theology and mysticism are not “mutually opposed”, but rather “support and complete each other” because “one is impossible without the other.”¹³ That unity of theology and mysticism is

⁹ Father John McGuckin, “Florovsky, Georges” in Adrian Hastings, Alistair Mason & Hugh Pyper (Eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 243. See also Louth, chap. 6, pp.77-93.

¹⁰ “Eastern Orthodox Theology”, in Hastings, pp.184-187; See also Andrew Blane (Ed.), *Georges Florovsky: Russian Intellectual and Orthodox Churchman* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press [hereafter SVSP], 1994).

¹¹ All 27 volumes of *Ancient Christian Commentaries on Scripture* are now available under the editorship of Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A. Hall, published by InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL. For an impressive overview of patristic exegesis, see Christopher A. Hall, *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998). There are chapters on exegesis at Alexandria and the response of Antioch, as well reflections on four doctors of the East (Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil the Great and John Chrysostom) and four doctors of the West (Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine and Gregory the Great). St Vladimir’s Seminary is continuing its helpful Popular Patristic Series; however, there are no indexes in this series. See also Louth, Chap. 6, pp. 77-93.

¹² Translated from *Essai sur la Theologie Mystique de l’Eglise d’Orient*, Paris, 1944 (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1991), p. 8.

¹³ Metropolitan Kallistos [Ware] in Hastings, *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, p.185. See also Louth, chap., pp. 96-105.

apparent in Lossky's collaboration with another Russian émigré, the iconographer, **Leonid Ouspensky** (1902-1987).¹⁴ In a beautiful book, *The Meaning of Icons*, Lossky sets out how “the possibility of Christian iconography” is founded “on the fact of the Incarnation of the Word” because:

Icons, just as well as the Scriptures, are expressions of the inexpressible, and have become possible thanks to the revelation of God, which was accomplished in the Incarnation of the Son. The same holds good for the dogmatic definition, the exegesis, the liturgy, for all that, in the Church of Christ, participates in the same fullness of the Word as is contained by the Scriptures, without thereby being limited or reduced.... The expression of the transcendent mystery has become possible by the fact of the Incarnation of the Word.¹⁵

Those three challenging sentences indicate how Lossky united the Scriptures, theology, mysticism, iconography and the Church.¹⁶

Reviewing Russian Christian thought, the former Anglican Archbishop Rowan Williams has suggested that Lossky is “the greatest of the Russian émigré theologians,” and that his theology “centred on the human person-in-community as image of the Trinity,” but with “an apophatic stress ... linked with the recovery of hesychast theology—sometimes called ‘neo-Palamism.’”¹⁷ Certainly, Lossky saw each human being as “at one and the same time a part, a member of the body of Christ by his nature, but also (considered as a person) a being who contains all within himself.”¹⁸ Thus Lossky gathered into his Orthodox synthesis a quite profound understanding of the Church as emerging from a focus on The Trinity, the human person and prayer, so that “as St Gregory of Nyssa puts it: ‘Christianity is an image of the divine nature.’”¹⁹

¹⁴ For a moving statement of Ouspensky's life in Russia and France, see the short biography by his wife at: www.gsinai.com/rw/icons/ouspensky_biography.php .

¹⁵ Translated by G. E. H. Palmer & E. Kadloubovsky (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 1952/1999), p. 14.

¹⁶ See also Leonid Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon*, 2 vols. (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 1980/1992), trans. by Anthony Gythiel, originally published in French as *La Théologies de l'Icone*; Patrick Doolan, *Recovering the Icon: The Life & Work of Leonid Ouspensky* (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 2008); Pavel Florensky, *Iconostasis*, trans. by Donald Sheehan & Olga Andrejev (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 1996).

¹⁷ In Hastings, pp. 630-633.

¹⁸ *Mystical Theology*, p. 174.

¹⁹ Lossky, p. 176, quoting *De professione christinana*, P.G. XLVI, 244C.

Two other prominent Russian émigrés are **Father Sergius Bulgakov** (1871-1944), Dean of the St Sergius Orthodox Theological Academy in Paris from 1925 to 1944, and his colleague and fellow priest, **Father Nicholas Afanasiev** (1893-1966).²⁰ In *The Bride and the Lamb*, Fr Sergius set out his understanding of the relationship between God and the world in terms of *Sophia* (Holy Wisdom), while in *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, Fr Nicholas focused on Eucharistic theology.²¹

2. Elders in Greece and the Holy Mountain

At the end of its first millennium of foundation in 1963 the monasteries of the Holy Mountain, Mount Athos, were in a very sorry state indeed. An aging population of monks had become unable to sustain the monastic life and the fabric of the monasteries themselves was disintegrating rapidly. This was not the first time that such a decline had been experienced on the Holy Mountain but many thought that this downturn would be both final and fatal. In fact, there were many virtuous Elders from the late 19th century onwards who had been vehicles of grace and guides to many and it is perhaps this quiet regeneration that at a certain point in the 1970's brought new life not only to Mount Athos and its dependencies but also to monasticism generally throughout Greece. Some monasteries, of course, never really recovered. Particularly tragic perhaps is the case of Meteora which became a tourist destination and little else. Elsewhere, however, and particularly on the Holy Mountain, the early 1970's witnessed a remarkable recovery.²² It is striking

²⁰ See F. L. Cross & E. A. Livingstone (Eds.), *Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), p. 248. See also Louth, chapter 4, pp. 42-59.

²¹ *The Bride and the Lamb*, trans. Boris Jakim (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1942/2002); cf. Ware, in Hastings, p. 185; *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Vitaly Permiakov (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971/2007); see also Aidan Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora: Church, Fathers, Eucharist in Nikolai Afanas'ev*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

²² Graham Speake, *Mount Athos: Renewal in Paradise, 2nd revised edition* (, Greece: Denise Harvey, 2014); Hieromonk Alexander, *The Living Witness of the Holy Mountain: Contemporary Voices from Mount Athos* (South Canaan, PA: St Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1996); Metropolitan of Nafpaktos Hierotheos, *A Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain: Discussion with a hermit on the Jesus Prayer*, trans. by Effie Mavromichali, 2nd edition (Vevadia-Hellas, Greece: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 1995). For a beautiful pictorial representation of both the decline and

that only in recent times has this monastic renewal, founded upon the hesychastic tradition of prayer, made such a great impact on the churches of the Greek-speaking world, rather than say in Russia, where a similar renewal took place in the 19th century. The reasons for this are not clear and are hidden in the providence of God; nonetheless, in the context of Greek society and its increasing secularism, this has proven to be a timely development.

The numbers speak for themselves. In the 15 years between 1972 and 1987 the number of monks arriving on the Holy Mountain averaged about 30 a year. From 1987 to 1996 this rate of increase doubled. Since then the numbers have continued to increase mostly consisting of much younger men such that the average age has fallen from about 65 to 48. In the communal monasteries (coenobia) the average age is much younger; between 30 and 40 even. Moreover, the level of education of these monks has increased significantly. From 1960 to 1964 only three holders of university degrees took up residence on Mount Athos, a mere 2.8%, whereas today there are about 350 monks, if not more, (30%) with such degrees. Some of course have degrees in theology but actually degrees in other subjects predominate.²³

The repopulation of the monasteries was inspired by individual ascetics, (of whom more later), but the accomplishment, initially at least, was achieved by groups of monks who moved *en masse* to the Holy Mountain from elsewhere. Sometimes for example, and strikingly in the case of Simonopetra, young monks moved from Meteora at the behest of their teacher and elder, the remarkable Fr. Aimilianos. Female monastics under his care, again as a group, moved to the ruined convent of Ormylia where a similar remarkable transformation took place. In other

renewal of numerous monasteries on Mount Athos, see the book by the professional photographer Douglas Lyttle, *Miracle on the Monastery Mountain* (Pittsford, NY: Greenleaf Book Group, 2002). Note that Hieromonk Alexander explains that it is because the Theotokos occupies such an “exclusive and privileged place on Mount Athos” that “access is forbidden to every other woman.” p. 105.

²³ These statistics have been gathered by Georgios Mantzarides who assembled them in an article entitled: “*Athonite Monasticism at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*”

http://www.pravmir.com/article_245.html.

examples, university students, inspired by godly teachers in the academic world, some of whom themselves became monks also made the journey to our Lady's Garden, (Mount Athos). As this influx of monks rejuvenated the existing 20 coenobia, eventually the hermitages, cells and other dependencies also regenerated as monks moved into them from these communal monasteries. Spiritually also there was a cross-fertilisation. Hitherto the fullness of liturgical life, not unsurprisingly, had been maintained by the coenobia; the hesychastic practice of prayer being mainly found amongst the solitaries. In more recent times there has been more interpenetration of both traditions to their mutual benefit.

The renewal of the monastic life in the Greek speaking world cannot of course be put down simply to social movements or ambient environmental conditions. For example, there is a paradox to the worldly mind in the fact that intelligent well educated young people, not lapsing into a kind of Orthodox fundamentalism, had begun to be attracted to the evangelical life in the second half of the 20th century at a time of increasing secularisation. The key to understanding this unforeseen development is in the character of the Elder, not necessarily an ordained person, but a man or woman of God whose transparent and radiant holiness attracts souls to the Light as candles attract moths. Perhaps such persons stand in greater relief and contrast to the aridity, spiritually speaking, of much contemporary Western culture that their lives truly become revolutionary, prophetic, not of this world and therefore able to transform this world. The lights that attracted these men and women to the monastic life are those contemporary saints who stand at the margins of society witnessing to a different way, the way of love. Whereas those disillusioned by consumerism in the 1960's in Western Europe resorted to other religions of the East, the Orthodox simply had to rediscover their own mystical theology. The Elders have always taught that such theology is a matter of direct personal knowledge and not simply a scholastic achievement.

Listen to the words of the Elder **St Paisios**, (1924-1994), perhaps one of the most influential of all the contemporary Athonite fathers:

The goal of reading is the application, in our lives, of what we read. Not to learn it by heart, but to take it to heart. Not to practice using our tongues, but to be able to receive the tongues of fire and to live the mysteries of God. If one studies a great deal in order to acquire knowledge and to teach others, without living the things he teaches, he does no more than fill his head with hot air. At most he will manage to ascend to the moon using machines. The goal of the Christian is to rise to God without machines.²⁴

St Paisios is but one member of a monastic choir singing the Lord's song in a strange land, [Psalm 136(137):4]. Others have included **Elder Amphilochios of Patmos** (1889-1970), **Elder Epiphanius of Athens** (1930-1989), **Elder Iakovos of Evia** (1920-1991), **Elder Joseph the Hesychast** (1898-1959), **Elder Philotheos of Paros** (1884-1980), **St Porphyrios of Kavsokalyvia** (1906-1991) and **Elder George of Drama** (1901-1959), but there are many, many more.²⁵

In the way they have lived these Athonites and other fathers and mothers have trodden along the well-worn path of the saints in every generation and century, but in our time they have done so with an unusually vivid and personal testimony, perhaps reflecting early Egyptian monasticism at its best where an elder would impart life-giving words to a spiritual son or daughter. This then is the significance theologically speaking of monastic renewal in recent times in the Greek speaking world. It presents a Christianity which is not theoretical but rather one which is based on the direct personal knowledge of God in the purified heart. It applies that knowledge to all sorts and conditions of men not in publications in learned journals but in the confessional and in the cell. It recovers the living fire of Christ for a Christian world that has grown dull and cold through abstraction and contentiousness. Truly then, this is a beacon of hope not for monastics themselves alone, but for everyone.

²⁴ The five volumes of St Paisios the Athonite's Spiritual Counsels, including Volume 4 On Family Life, are available from Holy Cross Orthodox Bookstore at: <http://holycrossbookstore.com>

²⁵ Short lives and a choice selection of the counsels of these holy fathers are to be found in Herman A. Middleton, *Precious Vessels of the Holy Spirit: The Lives and Counsels of Contemporary Elders of Greece*, Vol. 1 (Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2011).

3. Three American Seminaries:

St Vladimir's, Holy Cross and St Tikhon's—Schmemmann, Meyendorff, Pelikan, Chryssavgis, Stylianopoulos and Staniloae

In their teaching, training of priests and publishing activities St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, New York, St Tikhon's Orthodox Seminary in South Canaan, Pennsylvania and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts have all made significant contributions to modern Orthodox theology.²⁶ The first two are associated with the Orthodox Church of America, and the third with the Greek Orthodox Church. St Vladimir's has provided a supportive base for many Orthodox theologians, including **Father Alexander Schmemmann** (1921-1983) and **Father John Meyendorff** (1926-1992), as well as helped inspire the Lutheran historian, **Jaroslav Pelikan** (1924-2006) to become Orthodox in 1998. The theologians of Holy Cross Seminary include **Father Theodore G. Stylianopoulos** and **Archdeacon John Chryssavgis** (1958-), who now serves as an advisor to the Ecumenical Patriarch. St Tikhon's Seminary is better known for its monastery (as is Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, New York linked to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia),²⁷ but St Tikhon's also has published many liturgical and prayer books, as well as the Romanian Orthodox scholar, **Father Dumitru Staniloae** (1903-1993).

Father Alexander Schmemmann's extensive writings often deal fluently with “the bottomless sadness and tragedy of our nominal Christianity” and seek to empower us to “recover the vision and the taste of that *new life* which we so easily lose and betray.”²⁸ Fr Alexander contends that “it is the worship of the Church that was from the very beginning and still is our entrance into, our communion with, the

²⁶ The respective websites are www.svots.edu or www.svspress.com, <http://svots.edu> and www.hchc.edu or <http://store.holycrossbookstore.com>.

²⁷ The monastery website is www.jordanville.org/news.html. An extensive range of theological and liturgical resources are available from: www.bookstore.jordanville.org .

²⁸ *Great Lent* (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 2001), p. 13. See also Louth, chap.13, pp. 194ff.

new life of the Kingdom.”²⁹ So he is saying to us: “Come to church and worship regularly!” Fr Alexander is deeply aware that in many parishes in the United States “baptism is performed. But it has ceased to be comprehended as the door into a new life and as the power to fight for this new life’s preservation and growth in us.”³⁰ At times, as in *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West*, Fr Alexander, like Bill Bryson, struggles with “a continent that was doubly lost: lost to itself through greed, pollution, mobile homes and television; lost to him because he had become a stranger in his own land.”³¹ However, Fr Alexander’s Orthodox faith is ultimately brutally honest and firmly triumphant in *The Journals of Alexander Schmemmann (1973-1983)*.³²

Fr Alexander does not flinch from asking “What brings a man [or woman] to Christ? What makes [them] believe?” and he responds to his own question with the conviction that “conversion is not an event in the realm and on the level of ideas, as so many people think today;” but rather that “there always remains the mystery of the unique relationship between God and each human person whom God created for Himself.”³³ Therefore, for Fr Alexander and for us, baptism “is truly an escape from darkness and despair. One comes to Christ in order to be *saved* because there is no other salvation.”³⁴ The candidate for baptism, child or adult, “above all ... is fleeing from ‘this world’ which has been stolen from God by the Enemy and has become a prison.”³⁵

At times, Fr Alexander does become depressed by the state of both the Orthodox Church in the United States and many individual American Orthodox

²⁹ *Great Lent* (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 2001), p. 13.

³⁰ *Of Water & the Spirit: A Liturgical Study of Baptism* (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 2001), pp. 9-10.

³¹ (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 1980. Bryson, *The Lost Continent: Travels in Small-Town America*, (London: Black Swan, 1990)

³² See either the original 353-page English edition, trans. Juliana Schmemmann (SVSP, 2000) or the 983-page French edition, trans. Anne Davidenkoff, Anne Kichilov & René Marichal (Paris: Syrtes, 2009).

³³ *Of Water & the Spirit*, p. 19.

³⁴ *Of Water & the Spirit*, p. 20.

³⁵ *Of Water & the Spirit*, p. 20.

Christians, but he sets out a quite practical vision in which the ascetic preparations of Lent do give way to the joys of Pascha, when we go regularly to Holy Communion:

What we need ... is, first of all, the real *rediscovery* in the Church and by her faithful members of the true meaning of the Eucharist as the Sacrament of the Church, as that essential act in which she always *becomes what she is*: the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, the gift of the new life, the manifestation of the Kingdom of God, the knowledge of God and communion with Him. The Church becomes all this by the ‘sacrament of gathering’—many coming together to constitute the Church, by offering as one body united by one faith, one love, one hope, the Holy Oblation, by offering ‘with one mouth and one heart’ the Eucharist, and by sealing this unity—in Christ with God, and in Christ with one another—in the partaking of the Holy Gifts.

What we need furthermore is the rediscovery of Holy Communion as the *essential food* uniting us to Christ, making us partakers of His Life, Death and Resurrection, as the very means of our fulfilling ourselves as members of the Church and [fulfilling] our spiritual life and growth.³⁶

Fr Alexander’s life and theology is worthy of reflection, especially if we become despondent at times about the spiritual condition of our own parish or our own spiritual inadequacies.³⁷

Fr Alexander’s life-long colleague at St Vladimir’s, **Father John Meyendorff**, is rather steadier in his life and his writings.³⁸ Given both men’s Russian émigré origins, it is not surprising that the relationship between St Sergius and St Vladimir’s appears somewhat seamless.

³⁶ *Great Lent*, p. 132 [emphases in original].

³⁷ For an evangelical Protestant response to the modern secular world, see David F. Wells, *God in the Wasteland: The Reality of Truth in a World of Fading Dreams* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1994). For a Roman Catholic response, see Aidan Nichols, O.P. *Christendom Awake: On Re-energising the Church* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999). Nichols sets out the desirability of Orthodox and Roman Catholic unity, which “could only have the effect of steadying and strengthening those aspects of Western Catholicism which today are most under threat by the corrosives of secularism and theological liberalism.” p. 187. See also Louth, chap. 13, pp. 194ff.

³⁸ See the SVSP publications *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (1979), *Catholicity and the Church* (1984), *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia* (1990) and *Marriage: An Orthodox Perspective* (1984) that views Christian marriage in the context of the Eucharist. See also Bradley Nassif (Ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Theology: Essays in Memory of John Meyendorff* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996). See also Louth, chap. 12, pp. 178 ff.

A further significant Orthodox theologian linked to St Vladimir's is **Jaroslav Pelikan**, deeply influenced by Father Georges Florovsky and known by his friends at the Seminary as Jary.³⁹ Pelikan affirmed his unity with his "late friend Father Alexander Schmemmann" and confronted the challenge that Father Alexander lay down in his *Journals*:

I become filled with disgust for the role I have been playing for decades.... I feel that everybody around me knows what to do and how and what for, but I only *pretend* to know. In fact, I don't know anything; I am not sure of anything; I am deceiving myself and others. Only when I serve the Liturgy I am not deceitful.⁴⁰

Pelikan's response to Fr Alexander's despondency is to reflect that:

'the need for creed' entails as well the need for dogma, defined as the official public teaching of a community of faith, whose development from the New Testament to the end of the twentieth century I have charted in the five volumes of my history, *The Christian Tradition*.⁴¹

Intriguingly, Pelikan's resolution of the challenge that Fr Alexander poses is strikingly similar to Fr Alexander's own striving to establish a community motivated by faith, for Pelikan asserts that "it will, I hope, be clear that the locus of creed and confession is the believing community, and therefore that an essential component for creed is the need to be situated within that [believing] community."⁴²

Thus both Fr Alexander and Pelikan see the challenge that confronts modern Orthodox theology as, in Pelikan's words, to participate in "the creative engagement of [Christian] creed with each new culture into which it comes."⁴³ That is the positive side of Pelikan's epigram quoted in Lecture 53: "Tradition is the living

³⁹ See John H. Erickson, "Jaroslav Pelikan: The Living Legend in Our Midst," in Valerie Hotchkiss and Patrick Henry (Eds.), *Orthodoxy and Western Culture: A Collection of Essays Honoring Jaroslav Pelikan on His Eightieth Birthday* (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 2005).

⁴⁰ Hotchkiss & Henry, p. 166; quoting from Schmemmann's *Journals*, p. 273.

⁴¹ Pelikan, "The Will to Believe and the Need for Creed" in Hotchkiss & Henry, pp. 166. *The Christian Tradition* is published by University of Chicago Press (1971-1989). See also *Creeks and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, ed. with Valerie Hotchkiss, 4 vols. (New Haven CO: Yale University Press, 2003).

⁴² p. 177.

⁴³ p. 176.

faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.”⁴⁴ In an important insight, Pelikan stress that when, in the ninth century, Saints Cyril and Methodius of Thessalonica brought Orthodox Christianity to the Slavs “they did not Hellenize the Slavs, but they Slavicized the liturgy and the gospel; this is why the subtitle of a recent book about them reads ‘The Acculturation of the Slavs.’”⁴⁵ So now, for Pelikan and for Orthodox theologians, the challenge is acculturation—the modification of modern Western *secular* culture through contact with truly Orthodox *Christian* culture.

Pelikan drives his theology to further insights. He suggests that the motto underlying his favourite illustration of acculturation, the Masai Creed from East Africa in the 1960s⁴⁶ is: “We must Africanise Christianity, not Christianise Africa.”⁴⁷ In other words, the task we share today with Orthodox theologians is not to “Christianise” secular culture, but to make Orthodox Christianity relevant to

⁴⁴ p. 176; cf. *The Vindication of Tradition*, New Haven, CO: Yale University Press, p. 65.

⁴⁵ p. 176; see also Anthony-Emil Tachiaos, *Cyril and Methodius of Thessalonica* (SVSP, 2001).

⁴⁶ The Mesai Creed states: 1. We believe in the one High God, who out of love created the beautiful world and everything good in it. He created man and wanted man to be happy in the world. God loves the world and every nation and tribe on the earth. We have known this High God in the darkness, and now we know him in the light. God promised in the book of his word, the Bible, that we would save the world and all the nations and tribes. 2. We believe that God made good his promise by sending his Son, Jesus Christ, a man in the flesh, a Jew by tribe, born poor in a little village, who left his home **and was always on safari**, doing good, curing people by the power of God, teaching about God and man, showing that the meaning of religion is love. He was rejected by his people, tortured and nailed hands and feet to a cross, and died. He lay buried in the grave, **but the hyenas did not touch him**, and on the third day, he rose from the grave. He ascended to the skies. He is the Lord. 3. We believe that all our sins are forgiven through him. All who have faith in him must be sorry for their sins, be baptized in the Holy Spirit of God, live the rules of love, and share the bread together in love, to announce the good news to others until Jesus comes again. We are waiting for him. He is alive. He lives. This we believe. Amen. (Hotchkiss & Patrick, pp. 176-177, quoting from Pelikan & Hotchkiss’s 4-volume *Creeds and Confessions of Faith*. Vol. 3, p. 569. Bold print is from Pelikan & Hotchkiss to highlight examples of acculturation.

⁴⁷ pp. 176-177; quoting from Eugene Hillman, *Toward an African Christianity: Inculturation Applied* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), pp. 30-32.

modern Western nations—to “Americanise” the Orthodox faith, to give a British or French expression to the Orthodox faith.⁴⁸ Quite a challenge!⁴⁹

Two Greek Orthodox theologians, both linked at times to the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, who have sought to face the challenge posed jointly by Schmemmann and Pelikan are **Archdeacon John Chryssavgis** and **Father Theodore G. Stylianopoulos**. In *Light through Darkness: The Orthodox Tradition*, Chryssavgis suggests that “two fundamental elements of Orthodox spiritual thought” are communion and martyrdom, with these two elements being brought together in a recognition that:

... the secret of Orthodox spirituality lies in that which is unseen and unheard. The depth of its spiritual teaching is discerned in its sense of mystery, which is always experienced paradoxically and never simply understood philosophically. Hence, the vision of God is an encounter of light, but only in an awareness of the reality of darkness. The liturgy is an act of communion, but only after the recognition of human isolation and fragmentation. Icons reveal the divine face of God, but only when we have confessed the shattered image in ourselves and in our world. Deification is encountered as the way of perfection and salvation, but it is only experienced through the way of imperfection. And the rigour of ascetic discipline is not so much an exercise of human interdependence as a realisation of our dependence on God.⁵⁰

Archdeacon John’s resolution of the conflict between the world and the Church that permeates the Western world is to stress the importance of the cross⁵¹ and to reflect

⁴⁸ The story of how Orthodox Christianity *originally* came to North America is “largely a Russian story”, claims James H. Billington, Librarian of Congress (see “The Orthodox Frontier of Faith” in Hotchkiss & Henry, pp. 125-137). However, the extensive work of Colonel Philip Ludwell III should also be noted. See www.ludwell.org The Orthodox Church of America with its two seminaries (St Vladimir’s and St Tikhon’s) has sought to plant an “Americanised” Orthodox faith. However, it is the Antiochian Orthodox Church that has perhaps been the most open to receive American converts.

⁴⁹ Other theologians linked to St Vladimir’s Seminary who have made significant contributions include Fathers Thomas Hopko, John Behr, John H. Erickson, Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev and many others whose works are available from www.svspress.com.

⁵⁰ (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2004), pp.16-17.

⁵¹ “On the cross, we encounter the struggle between **the power of love** (as it is revealed in Christ) and the **love of power** (as it is perceived by our world). The powerlessness of Christ has always threatened the powerfulness of the world. And the silence of the cross is the most eloquent sermon about the power of love. Despite what we know in ourselves and whatever we see in our world, the cross proclaims what love can and will achieve. The scandal of the cross is

on the importance of spiritual direction—“the spiritual guidance of the human person:”

We all need someone from whom we can learn that we are loved and by whom we may be directed through the way of darkness. What is ultimately at stake here is our ability to experience freedom in communion with God, as opposed to pursuing a separated, autonomous, non-communal existence....

People need others because often the wounds themselves are too deep to admit to oneself; sometimes, the evil is too painful to confront alone. The sign, according to the Orthodox spiritual way, that one is on the right track is the ability to share with someone else. This is, of course, precisely the essence of the sacrament of confession or reconciliation. To seek God may resemble an abstract search; to acquire purity of the soul may sometimes feel like an arbitrary goal; but to seek and find oneself in one’s neighbour is to discover all four: God, purity, our selves and the other person. Perhaps this is what Antony of Egypt meant when he observed: ‘Life and death is found in my neighbour’ [Ethical Discourse, VII.399-405]. This is why, in confession, one discovers the abyss of sin and the mystery of grace alike.⁵²

Thus “in the context of searching for meaning in life ... the practice of spiritual direction reveals that the ultimate content and reference point of meaning lies in the knowledge and vision of God in and through the other”.⁵³ We each live our lives to a considerable extent through relationships with others.

that, in despite of our wrongs and the wrongdoings of our world, God loves us to the point of death, even death on the cross.” p. 141, emphasis in original.

⁵² pp. 127, 137

⁵³ pp. 137-138. In response to the absence of a suitable spiritual elder, Chryssavgis points out that: (1) “The Orthodox tradition encourages one to search for religious **communities** with an established life of prayer and silence”; (2) “A great deal of spiritual discipline and personal formation can be received from an ordered **daily rule** of prayer and liturgy, of balanced labour and recreation”; (3) “The powerful presence of spiritual elders in **prayer** and reflection—the invocation and meditation of those who have passed away but whose memory still guides and guards the community—can be evoked at all times and in all places by those who know how to trust and who wish to learn to love”; (4) “If a suitable elder cannot be readily found, then the ascetic tradition encourages one to turn to the **reading of Scripture** and the writings of the Church Fathers. The crucial point is always to look outside and beyond oneself, to open up oneself, to begin to trust another, for healing will come only once one learns to love, when one is willing to bear the burdens of others and assume responsibility for others”; (5) “A spiritual elder is to be sought in prayer and repentance. Should one not find such an elder, then there still remains the call to prayer and repentance;” (6) It is to Christ ultimately that one is opened, laid bare for diagnosis and therapy. If you find a spiritual guide, writes Symeon the New Theologian, then tell that person your thoughts; if not, then simply raise your eyes prayerfully and humbly to Christ”; (7) “... recognise the inherent **flexibility** in the relationship between

In *The New Testament: An Orthodox Perspective, Volume One: Scripture, Tradition, Hermeneutics* **Father Theodore Stylianopoulos** sets out a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between faith, reason and the Church in interpreting Scripture, showing how “responsible teaching” can “provide a way for students to work out a sound balance between faith and scholarship.”⁵⁴ His approach to Biblical exegesis is built on Fr Georges Florovsky’s neo-patristic synthesis with its doctrinal and spiritual dimensions which seek to recover “the mind of the fathers” and guide us to prayer.⁵⁵ In reading the Bible, one seeks to understand the meaning, then to perceive the theological interpretation, and finally to appropriate personally the biblical truth in a manner that transforms one’s life.⁵⁶ This focus on the three dimensions of exegetical, interpretative and transformative study largely rejects modern historical-critical analysis which he views as reducing Biblical study to “an historical discipline ... a complex, if impressive, museum of literary, historical, and religious data.”⁵⁷

In concluding this reflection on the impact of Orthodox Christian seminaries in the United States on modern Orthodox theology, it is appropriate to note the role of the Romanian Orthodox scholar, **Father Dumitru Staniloae**, whose work has been

elder and disciple. Some spiritual leaders may be endowed with rare gifts of the Spirit, while others are simply able to provide only the very basic guidance that is required. Some disciples may need to contact their spiritual elder frequently, whereas others may be satisfied with and equally inspired by infrequent visits. One must never forget the dynamism of the unique moment of a personal encounter: Symeon the Elder held Christ only once in his arms; John the Forerunner met Christ once; and Mary of Egypt took communion but once in her life”. pp. 138-139; emphasis in original. For further discussion of spiritual direction, see section 7 of this lecture. See also John Chryssavgis, *Remembering and Reclaiming Diakonia: The Diaconate Yesterday and Today* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2009).

⁵⁴ (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1999), pp. xvii-xviii.

⁵⁵ pp. 163-165.

⁵⁶ pp. 163-165.

⁵⁷ p. 139. His approach is largely followed by his Holy Cross colleague, Father Eugen J. Pentiu in *Jesus the Messiah in the Hebrew Bible* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2006), which will be considered in the next section of this lecture. See also Father Stylianopoulos’ *Encouraged by the Scriptures* (2011), *The Making of the New Testament: Church, Gospel, and Canon* (2014) and *The Apostolic Gospel* (2015), all published by Holy Cross Orthodox Press.

published by both St Vladimir's Seminary Press and St Tikhon's.⁵⁸ As Father John Meyendorff explains in his Foreword to *Theology and the Church*, Fr Dumitru presents in seven essays “a dynamic presentation of the Orthodox doctrine of the Trinity as the basis of ecclesiology and anthropology.”⁵⁹ Perceptively, Fr Dumitru also points out that:

Orthodox theology can be of great help in bringing the Churches together because of the close connection it makes between doctrine and spirituality, and because of the living spiritual core that it looks for in every doctrinal formulation. In this process the doctrinal formulae of one Church cease to be rigid and opaque expressions opposed to equally rigid and opaque expressions used by the other Churches. Instead, they are seen to suggest the meanings of a living reality which shines through the formulations of one Church and encounters the living meanings of the doctrines of the other Churches.⁶⁰

This ecumenical perspective is in keeping with the tendency of the Orthodox Church to propose spiritual guidelines—challenging, but realistic guidelines, rather than explicit “rules”—on how its members should live their lives. This interpretation of “a living reality” is rather different from the monk on Mount Athos who a few years ago told a visiting Anglican minister that the world was suffering from three ills—“alcohol, drugs and ecumenism.”

Introducing Fr Dumitru's 400-page magnum opus, *Orthodox Spirituality*, Alexander Glubov notes the danger posed by “the mediocrity of the faithful, who take themselves far too seriously and impose on others their mentality.”⁶¹ Glubov

⁵⁸ See *Theology and the Church*: trans. Robert Barringer (SVSP, 1972/1980) and *Orthodox Spirituality: A Practical Guide for the Faithful and a Definitive Manual for the Scholar*, trans. Jerome Newville & Otilia Kloos (South Canaan, PA: 1981/2002). See also Louth, chap. 9, p.127 f.
⁵⁹ p. 7. The final essay, “The Problems and Perspectives of Orthodox Theology,” pp. 213-226, originally published in 1971-1972 by the Romanian parish in London, recommends the reflections of modern Orthodox theologians on the work of both St Gregory of Nyssa and St Gregory Palamas: Anthony Meredith, *Gregory of Nyssa* (London: Routledge, 1999); Georgios Mantzaridis, *St Gregory Palamas* (trans. Liadin Sherrard & L. Sherrard; SVSP, 1984); and Dumitru Staniloae, “The Relation of Spirit and Son in the Thought of St Gregory Palamas,” in *Theology and the Church*, pp. 29-33; and St Gregory Palamas on apophatic theology in *Orthodox Spirituality*, pp. 238-241.

⁶⁰ pp. 221-222.

⁶¹ p. 5n. quoting from Paul Evdokimov, *Ages of the Spiritual Life* (SVSP, 1998), p. 16.

points out that Fr Dumitru's study was originally intended as a text for Orthodox theological schools and seminaries in Romania in which the "intellectual content is quite low, imprisoned by old-fashioned spiritual manuals with their limited ideas and apologetics no longer accepted today"⁶²—a problem at times evident today in other theological schools and seminaries in many countries. This study from Staniloae does follow the traditional structure of a spiritual manual that guides its reader away from the passions, toward purification, illumination and perfection in which "a certain level of perfection is reached and culminates in love."⁶³ Yet its astounding clarity marks it as one of the outstanding books of twentieth century Orthodox theology.

On the one hand, Father Dumitru is deeply aware of the importance of human relationships as well as how God reaches out to each of us:

You can't know your neighbour in a personal way only on your own initiative, or by an aggressive expedition. In order to know him he must reveal himself, on his own initiative; he does this in proportion to the lack of your aggression to know him. How much more so with God, the Supreme Person and one who isn't clothed in a visible body; man can't know Him, unless He reveals himself. So the first thesis of Christian spirituality is confirmed: The vision of God can't be reached without a special grace from Him...⁶⁴

Moreover, Father Staniloae is also aware of how we can each grow in our relationship to God over the course of our live

In the light of Orthodox spirituality, Christian morality no longer appears as the simple fulfilment of duties imposed by God's commands, duties that in this life lead nowhere, but only assure him [or her] of salvation as an exterior reward in the next life. **The Christian grows in God**, even in the course of this life because response to these commands brings

⁶² pp. 1, 5, quoting Evdokimov, p. 16. It should be noted that this comment may well have applied to the quality of theological education in Romania in the 1970s, but does not necessarily apply today.

⁶³ p. 21.

⁶⁴ Staniloae, *Orthodox Spirituality*, trans. by Archimandrite Jerome Newville and Otilia Kloos (South Caanan, PA: St Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary Press, 1981/2002), p. 38.

about a step by step transformation in his [or her] being; [each person] is filled more and more with the working presence of God.⁶⁵

That is precisely what many of us seek as Christians and why we choose to participate in these E-Quip courses—to grow in God through “a step by step transformation” over three years in which we are “filled more and more with the working presence of God.”

4. The Judaic Dimension of Modern Orthodox Theology

Most Orthodox Christians are aware that the Old and New Testaments of the Bible are a unity in which the promises of the Old Testament are fulfilled in the New; however, they are often not aware of how significant Judaic influences are in modern Orthodoxy. Both the Hebrew and Greek canons of the Old Testament were preserved by the Jewish community in three different versions (or “text witnesses”): (1) the Hebrew text from a variety of sources and dates, especially the texts found at Qumran; (2) the Greek translation, “The Septuagint” or “LXX”, named for the 70 or 72 scholars who are traditionally ascribed to have translated the Hebrew into Koine Greek in Alexandria during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC for the benefit of Greek-speaking Jews;⁶⁶ and (3) the much later Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible in which a Jewish group, the Masorenes, added vowels to the consonants between the 6th and 8th centuries. By combining all of these translations we draw closer to “the autograph”—the original Hebrew Text of the

⁶⁵ P. 23 [emphasis added]. In more formal theological language, Staniloae writes: “Deification in a broad sense begins at baptism, and stretches out all along the whole of man’s spiritual ascent; here his powers are also active, that is, during the purification from passions, the winning of the virtues, and illumination. In this ascent the natural powers of man are in continual growth, and reach their apogee the moment they become capable of seeing the divine light—the seeing power is the working of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we can say that the deification by which this revival and growth is realised, coincides with the process of the development of human powers to their limit, or with the full realization of human nature, but also with their unending eclipse by grace.” p. 363

⁶⁶ See R. Timothy McLay, *The Use of the Septuagint in New Testament Research*, Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003. For an excellent translation of the Septuagint into modern English, see Albert Pietersma & Benjamin G. Wright (Eds.), *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), available free on line at: www.ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/ .

Jewish Bible/the Old Testament.⁶⁷ Clearly, modern Orthodox theology is now benefiting greatly from this continuing attempt by Jewish and Christian scholars to identify and interpret the original Hebrew Bible that Christians know as the Old Testament.

For Christians, one result of this renewed attempt to recover the Hebrew Bible has been greater understanding of “the depth and breadth of the Messiah’s presence in salvation history.”⁶⁸ The Jewish Messiah Jesus, or to give Jesus his Hebrew name, Yeshua, came to both the Jews and the Christians. Several powerful novels have been written about the Jewish life of Jesus.⁶⁹ Whether these novels contain truths or fantasies—and it is no doubt a mixture—Jews, Protestant Christians, Roman Catholic Christians and Orthodox Christians all agree with Timothy that “All Scripture is inspired by God” (2 Tim 3:16).⁷⁰ The different groups do disagree about precisely what is “all Scripture” and how that inspiration relates to the person of Jesus Christ and to time.⁷¹

Arising out of this Biblically-based religion, whether it be Jewish or Christian, is the creed and confession of faith in Deuteronomy, the *Shema* (the Hebrew word for “hear”): “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one Lord” (Deuteronomy 6:4). Remarkably, Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss place this creed, the Jewish

⁶⁷ See Eugen J. Pentiuc, *Jesus the Messiah in the Hebrew Bible*, New York: Paulist Press, 2006, pp. xiii-xvi.

⁶⁸ Pentiuc, p. xiv.

⁶⁹ See Moelwyn Merchant, *Jeshua: Nazareth to Jerusalem* (Swansea: Christopher Davies, 1987); Anne Rice, *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt* (New York: Ballantine/Random House, 2008); and Anne Rice, *Christ the Lord: The Road to Cana* (New York: Anchor, 2009).

⁷⁰ Cf. McLay, *The Use of the Septuagint in New Testament Research*, pp. 2-4.

⁷¹ Father Lev Gillet develops further the importance of Jesus as Messiah: “A Jew who accepts (not only intellectually) Jesus as Messiah enters into communion with the Messiah *as Jesus*, and with the community of the followers of Jesus. Reciprocally, a Christian who becomes aware of the Jewish content of his own faith and inwardly responds to this new awareness enters into communion with Jesus as *Jewish Messiah* and invisibly the Messianic community of Israel [i.e. the essence of Jewish life] insofar as the Messiah displays an immanent activity inside it” *Communion in the Messiah: Studies in the Relationship between Judaism and Christianity* (London: Lutterworth, 1942), p. 196.

Shema, first in their three-volume study, *Creeks and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, because:

all the thousands of pages of Trinitarian creeds that follow may properly be seen as glosses on it, steadfastly affirming the oneness of God as the non-negotiable presupposition of everything else, including and especially the dogma of the *homoousios* at Nicea and the dogma of the Trinity at Constantinople I and the dogma of the Incarnation at Ephesus and Chalcedon.⁷²

This historically grounded dogmatic theology has profound implications for the nature of modern Orthodox theology and its relationship to Judaism. In the words of Jaroslav Pelikan:

However much or however little I may be able to believe on my own, existentially, as of this precise moment, I affirm myself to stand, trembling, in the continuity and heritage of that [Jewish] community which has been confessing without interruption for entire millennia, ‘Shema Yisroēl Adōnoi Elōhēnu, Adōnoi Echod; Credo in *unum* Deum [Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; I believe in **One** God].⁷³

With that powerful affirmation of God’s singularity, Pelikan is certainly implementing his mother’s constant reminders that he should not “get by on brains and glibness.”⁷⁴

The Orthodox monk **Lev Gillet** (1893-1980) is best known by his pseudonym, “A Monk of the Eastern Church”, especially for *Orthodox Spirituality: An Outline of the Orthodox Ascetical and Mystical Tradition*, *The Jesus Prayer* and *The Year of the Grace of the Lord: A Scriptural and Liturgical Commentary on the Calendar of the Orthodox Church*.⁷⁵ Of particular interest in the context of the Jewish dimension of modern Orthodox theology is the lesser known *Communion in the Messiah: Studies in the Relationship between Judaism and Christianity*.⁷⁶ A key purpose of *Communion in the Messiah* was to create a dialogue between Jews and Christians

⁷² (New Haven, CO: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 168.

⁷³ Pelikan, “The Will to Believe and the Need for Creed,” in *Orthodoxy and Western Culture*, p. 169.

⁷⁴ Pelikan, “A Personal Memoir” in *Orthodoxy and Western Culture*, p. 31.

⁷⁵ These three books were published, respectively, in 1945/1961, 1987 and 1989—the first by SPCK and the two others by St Vladimir Seminary Press.

⁷⁶ London: Lutterworth, 1942 and Edinburgh: James Clarke, 2003.

conducted in “a living reciprocity” (a phrase from the Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber) focused on communion as fellowship grounded in mutual respect, rather than a Christian mission to convert Jews to Christianity.⁷⁷

Gillet is writing in 1941, deeply aware that “European Judaism is now in danger of being exterminated,”⁷⁸ yet his message is remarkably similar to that of Jaroslav Pelikan more than sixty years later, with its insistence that both “Jews and Christians alike have to acknowledge and even to experience in their spiritual life the immanence of Israel in Christianity”—that is, the essence of Judaism, its commitment to the oneness of God.⁷⁹ Yet at the same time, both Gillet and Pelikan would agree without hesitation that it is also important for Christians to recognize that God is three in the Trinity. In Fr Dumitru’s summation: “The Trinity alone assures our existence as persons.”⁸⁰

This awareness that relationships within the Trinity are a model for the way we each live our own lives is certainly influenced by Martin Buber’s 1923 study *I and Thou* (in German: *Ich und Du*), in which we choose whether to have an “I-Thou” relationship of meaning with God, with people and with books⁸¹ or whether to limit

⁷⁷ Gillet, pp. 2, 196. Father Gillet envisages both “total communion,” a distant goal in which Jews and Christians both believe in “the same personal Messiah” and a “partial communion” which “can be reached today and progressively enlarged” in which Jews and Christians are committed to “Messianic values common to both [groups]” p. x. However, it is not appropriate to agree with Claude Montefiore’s claim that: “The purpose of Judaism was to produce Christianity; the purpose of Christianity is to produce more Judaism” (p. 197). In reality, the initial purpose of Judaism was to grow the people of God in an awareness of the singularity of God and the coming of the Messiah, while the purpose of Christianity is to bring the people of God to maturity, to live at one with Jesus Christ until (and after) His second coming, and to bring the Good News to the whole of humanity.

⁷⁸ *Communion in the Messiah*, p. x.

⁷⁹ *Communion in the Messiah*, p. xi. In the context of uniting the human body and the human soul, Guy Claxton, Emeritus Professor of the Learning Sciences at the University of Winchester, UK, has argued that “in the rabbinic and kabbalistic traditions [of Judaism] ... the preferred time for sex is on the Sabbath, when physical and spiritual pleasure can be unified. A medieval Jewish essay on sex called ‘The Holy Letter’ claimed that sex is holy because it ‘expresses and enacts the secret of oneness.’” *Intelligence in the Flesh: Why Your Mind Needs Your Body Much More Than It Thinks* (London: Yale University Press, 2015), p. 21. Cf. Philip Sherrard, *Christianity and Eros: Essays on the Theme of Sexual Love* (London: SPCK, 1976; and Limni, Evia, Greece: Denise Harvey, 2002).

⁸⁰ See chap. 4, “The Holy Trinity—the Basis of Christian Spirituality, pp. 46-55.

⁸¹ Buber urges us to treat “a text not as data, not as an object or an *It*, but as a *Thou*. To enter into a meaningful dialogue with a text Buber proposed making the words immediately present,

ourselves to an individually-based “I-It” relationship in which there is minimal relationship to the other and no change within us.⁸²

Most Orthodox Christians are aware that the Eucharist is a re-enactment of Christ’s last meal with his disciples, in a Passover format, making use of unleavened bread, and possibly first held on the actual eve of Passover. However, fewer Orthodox Christians realize that the iconostasis (the icon screen) that separates the altar from the remainder of the church, as well as the clergy from the laity (but also unites the altar and the nave), has been modelled on the “Holy of Holies” in the mobile tabernacle that the Israelites carried from Egypt to Palestine, as well as the area behind the Holy Veil in both the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem. The seven-branched candlestick behind the altar also is a bringing forward of a similar candlestick in the Tabernacle and both temples.⁸³ It is not surprising then that some Jews who have become Orthodox Christians experience that they have moved from being “synagogue Jews” to becoming “Temple Jews.”⁸⁴

as if hearing the voice of the speaker....But how does this way of reading work? Essentially a text becomes person-like, or a ‘*Thou*,’ by virtue of its unique, personal address understood in a back-and-forth conversational movement. In summary form, reading a text from a Buberian perspective involves at least four dialogically oriented points. The first points to reading the text with open *receptivity*, to hearing a ‘living voice,’ which quickly moves readers to enter into active give-and-take dialogue with the author’s voice. Then, the otherness of the text reflects back the reader’s own historical and cultural *presuppositions*. The third pointing calls the reader to reflect on the *meaning* of the text. The reader then *applies* the text by sharing interpretations with a larger community of readers. In this way, through faithful openness and by returning again to the text with new questions, the reader is able to grow through ever-new dialogues with the unique person’s words, thoughts, and feelings addressing him or her.” Kenneth Paul Kramer & Mechthild Gawlick, *Martin Buber’s ‘I and Thou’: Practicing Living Dialogue* (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), p. 9; emphases in the original.

⁸² See especially the autobiographical fragments from Buber, edited by Maurice Friedman, *Meetings* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court Publishing, 1973).

⁸³ See a number of articles in Wikipedia on the iconostasis, the Holy of Holies, the Tabernacle, the Temple in Jerusalem, the Orthodox Church and especially Orthodox Church building.

⁸⁴ For a fuller development of these liturgical themes, see George A. Barrois, *Jesus Christ and the Temple* (SVSP, 1980) and Benjamin D. Williams & Harold B. Anstall, *Orthodox Worship: A Living Continuity with the Synagogue, the Temple and the Early Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Light and Life Publishing, 1990). Metropolitan Philip, Primate of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America closes his Foreword to the latter book with the words: “May the Lord bless this book and those who read it with a new understanding of divine worship and the riches that will be ours as we enter into it” (p. iii).

While the account of the Jewish dimension of modern Orthodox theology given in this lecture has thus far been uncontroversial (with the exception of Lev Gillet's rejection of trying to convert Jews), there is considerable confusion about the relationship of God to his people in covenants with his people over time; and this issue confronts modern Orthodox theology. Some Christian theologians (Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant) emphasise that the New Covenant is "better" than the Old (Hebrews 7.22), as the New Covenant with Jesus essentially replaces the Old Covenant with the Jewish people. This approach (called "replacement theology") is somewhat misleading, because it implies that God has now rejected the Jewish people and that their role in his plan has now finished—a view strongly rejected by St Paul in Romans 9 to 11.

A sounder and more Orthodox approach to covenantal theology is to affirm that God is faithful and a "promise keeping God" who has kept his promises (or covenants) with Noah (Genesis 9.8-17) Abraham (Genesis 15.9-21 and Genesis 17), Abimelech (Genesis 20:2-18), Moses (Exodus 19-24), Phinehas (Numbers 25.10-13) and David (2 Samuel 7.8-16), as well as the new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31.34) and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 36.25-27) effected in Jesus Christ.⁸⁵ Although the covenants with Abimelech and Phinehas are clearly not as significant as the five other covenants, the central issue is understanding how God works out "His ongoing covenantal purposes through each aspect of Israel."⁸⁶ Modern Orthodox theology has

⁸⁵ See Alex Jacob, *A Promise Keeping God: Exploring the Covenants, Israel and the Church* (Farnsfield, Notts: CMJ, 2010). See also Jacob, *Receive the Truth! A collection of 20 questions and 10 Bible talks focusing on key issues in contemporary Christian-Jewish relations and Christian spirituality*, published by Glory to Glory Publications (2011) for CMJ—The Church's Ministry among the Jewish People.

⁸⁶ p. 13. Jacobs, a Protestant theologian, sees the term, "Israel," as being used validly to describe three quite different groups—ethnic Jews who do not believe Jesus is the Messiah ("unbelieving Jews"), Messianic Jews ("the faithful remnant of Israel") who do believe that Jesus is the Messiah, and the Christian Church in its various denominations ("the ecclesia of Jewish and Gentile believers"). He believes that all three groups contain "expressions of God's work," so that in terms of a theology of mission, Christians should "invest in universal mission," as well as seeking to convert individual Jews and support the state of Israel which "points to an even greater future restoration of Jewish people to their Messiah" (pp. 11-14). There is no agreement in modern Orthodox theology on these questions. Further information on these issues is available from CMJ [Church's Mission to the Jews] by e-mail at: enquiries@cmj.org.uk.

not yet resolved these issues, but does need to move beyond “replacement theology.”

Unfortunately, it also should be acknowledged that ignorance of the Jewish roots of the Orthodox faith, as well as latent anti-Semitism toward the Jewish people at times hinders Orthodox Christians from appreciating the fullness of their Jewish heritage and its relevance to Orthodox theology. In many parts of Russia and Eastern Europe, hostility toward Jews is still sufficiently active that Christian affirmation of any Jewish ideas and life is minimal. Even in other parts of the world, relationships in the past between Christians and Jews have been appalling and still today are often strained.⁸⁷ At times, we forget how all the twelve apostles were either Jews or “God-fearers” already worshipping with Jews, as well as how 3,000 Jews were baptised at the first Pentecost (Acts 2.41); and soon afterwards Peter and Paul and the apostles and elders agreed at the Council in Jerusalem to accept non-Jewish followers of “The Way” as Christians without being circumcised or obeying the strict Kosher food laws (Acts 15.6-29). Throughout the centuries many Jews have come to believe that Jesus is truly the Messiah; and while some of these believers have remained as “Messianic Jews” without a full understanding of the Christian Church, others have become Orthodox Christians. It is appropriate then that after nearly 2,000 years we should stop focusing hysterically on the Jewish leaders who participated so fully with the Romans in crucifying Christ, and instead model ourselves on the risen Christ who reaches out to all humanity.

In considering those Jews who have come to Christ, three contemporary Jewish Orthodox Christian theologians in three continents deserve special mention: **Father Alexander Men** in Russia, **Father Alexander Winogradsky** in Jerusalem and

⁸⁷ See Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Antisemitism*, 2nd Revised Ed. (New York: Paulist Press/Stimulus Books, 2005) and William Horbury, *Jews and Christians in Contact and Controversy* (Edinburgh: T & N Clark, 1998). For a list of more than 30 books on Jewish- Christian relationships, see the website of the Stimulus Foundation at: www.stimulusfoundation.org.

Father A. James Bernstein in the United States.⁸⁸ Intriguingly, St Romanos the Melodist (d. 530), a young and illiterate deacon at Hagia Sophia, was born of Jewish parents, baptised as a young boy and after a vision of the Theotokos⁸⁹ became a renown composer of more than 1,000 kontakia (i.e. metrical sermons chanted to music), some of which are considered “among the masterpieces of world literature.”⁹⁰ St Romanos is today a popular patron saint of church singers.⁹¹

Born a Jew, but baptised at the age of seven months with his mother in the banned Catacomb (Orthodox) Church, **Father Aleksandr (or Alexander) Men** (1935-1990) wrote a large number of helpful books read by thousands of Russians who had minimal knowledge of Christ⁹² He became a fearless and quite famous pastor who baptised an untold number of people, founded an Orthodox Open University and nurtured one of the first Sunday Schools established under Communism. Although he was murdered near his home in Semkhoz by an unknown man with an axe, “his influence is still widely felt and his legacy continues to grow among Christians both in Russia and abroad.”⁹³

⁸⁸ There is also a facebook website at: www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=260273761593&v=info for Orthodox Christians of Jewish descent.

⁸⁹ The young lad from Emesa, Syria came to Constantinople but “was illiterate, had no musical training and had an irritating voice, but he loved to sing in church. He was despised by some of the clergy. He prayed, weeping to the Theotokos. She appeared to him in a dream and told him to swallow a piece of paper that she handed to him. It was Christmas day [518] and Romanos went up to the ambo and sang with an angelic voice that has come down to us as the Kontakion of the Nativity. (This text and a stylized icon of the saint are at:

www.comeandseeicons.com/r/inp13.htm). As the Orthodox Wiki website cited above describes the scene: “When it came time that night for him to sing, Romanos received the Patriarch’s blessing ...stepped onto the ambo [at Hagia Sophia and] began to sing: ‘Today the Virgin gives birth to Him who is above all being ...’ The emperor, the patriarch, the clergy and the entire congregation listened in wonder at the profound theology and the clear, sonorous voice which issued forth [from the illiterate lad]. They all joined in the refrain: ‘A new-born Babe, the pre-eternal God.’ Later Romanos told the patriarch about his vision, and the singers who had made fun of him prostrated themselves in repentance and humbly asked [Romanos’s] forgiveness.” He is thought to have composed more than 8,000 kontakia, but only 80 have survived; and not all of these are genuine.

⁹⁰ Cross & Livingstone, p. 1411.

⁹¹ An icon of St Ramanos holding a kontakia [Greek for “scroll”] is available at: http://orthodoxwiki.org/Romanos_the_Melodist.

⁹² See Men’s best known work, translated into English by Samuel Brown, *Son of Man* [Great Neck, NY: Oakwood Publishing, 1998.

⁹³ See the impressive *Aleksandr Men, Christianity for the Twenty-First Century: The Prophetic Writings of Alexander Men*, Eds. Elizabeth Roberts & Ann Shukman (London: Continuum Publishing, 1996) and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Men .

Another Russian, well known in Jerusalem through his work at St Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church in the Old City, but less known in the rest of the world is **Father Aleksandr (or Alexander) Winogradsky**. Father Alexander has developed a significant ministry throughout Israel working in Hebrew and Russian with some of the estimated 400,000 baptised Orthodox Christians who have come to Israel in the past twenty years mainly from the former Soviet Union, but also Georgia, Romania, Hungary, the former Yugoslavia and Albania. He performs the Liturgy in Hebrew⁹⁴ and hears confessions in Russian, Hebrew and Yiddish⁹⁵

Father A. James Bernstein (1946-), pastor for the past twenty years at St Paul Antiochian Orthodox Church in Brier, Washington, a suburb of Seattle, has written a comprehensive reflection about how he as a New York Orthodox Jew became an Orthodox Christian, completed training at St Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary and in 1988 became an Antiochian Orthodox priest.⁹⁶ The great strength of his book is that it is written out of more than twenty years of experience in leading catechumens to Christ, and it is especially valuable in explaining the deficiencies of both Roman Catholic and Protestant theology. Hieromonk Jonah (Paffhausen), later Metropolitan Jonah, formerly Primate of the Orthodox Church in America writes in the Foreword:

Conversion to Orthodox Christianity means that we have to change our basic presuppositions in order to open ourselves more fully to the great mystery of God's Presence, love, and mercy. We have to discard the old ways of thinking about God and salvation, which, insofar as they are erroneous, block the experience of God and present obstacles on the path to salvation.

One of the strengths of this book is that this theological challenge is presented not so much in terms of polemics or apologetics (though these

⁹⁴ To hear a brief selection from the liturgy sung in Hebrew go to: www.youtube.com/user/Avramba and listen to the "Church in Jerusalem" 1:04 selection on the right. Cf. the main 4 minute video of Father Winogradsky lecturing in Hebrew.

⁹⁵ See the final entry on the page at: www.stpaul-orthodox.org/ministries.php and also the Orthodox Church Mission Center Magazine for August 2007 posted on the Ancient Faith Radio website at: <http://ancientchristiandefender.blogspot.com/2009/09/article-about-fralexander-winogradsky.html> in which Father James Bernstein interviews Father Winogradsky.

⁹⁶ Father A. James Bernstein, *Surprised by Christ: My Journey from Judaism to Orthodox Christianity* (Chesterton, IN: Conciliar Press [now Ancient Faith Press], 2004).

are not absent!), but primarily in terms of personal realizations along the path of intellectual and spiritual growth.⁹⁷

For example, in considering the Orthodox rationale for the Incarnation, Father James points out:

The Orthodox teach that God in his wisdom chose to accomplish this [energizing of our fallen human nature and to make it godlike] by assuming our human nature and transforming it from within—not from without. Our human nature will be perfected by more than the Holy Spirit working on it. The perfection takes place from within, as God shares with us a common human nature. Because His humanity is perfect, ours can be also as we are united to Him.⁹⁸

As Metropolitan Jonah comments: “I know of no other book that deals so thoroughly with the intellectual and spiritual process of conversion from Judaism to Orthodox Christianity.”⁹⁹

To summarise, the Judaic dimension of modern Orthodox theology can be viewed in a variety of contexts: (1) both the Hebrew and Greek canons of the Old Testament were preserved by the Jewish community; and **the unity of the Old and New Testaments** is a bedrock of modern Orthodox theology; (2) **Jesus is a Jewish Messiah** who comes to all people; (3) **the Jewish emphasis that God is one** was steadfastly affirmed by the first four ecumenical councils; (4) Judaism can still make an important contribution to modern Orthodox Christianity, but **Orthodox Christians need to respect Jewish aspirations and values**; (5) Martin Buber’s focus on the importance of each human being having a **personal I-Thou relationship with God** is important, but a belief in the Trinity moves beyond Buber’s focus on relationships; (6) **understanding the Eucharist requires an appreciation of the importance of the Jewish Passover**; (7) **the iconostasis is modelled on the pattern of worship for the Tabernacle and the First and Second Temples**; (8) **modern Orthodox theology needs to move beyond the idea that Christians have replaced**

⁹⁷ *Surprised by Christ*, p. 11.

⁹⁸ *Surprised by Christ*, p. 278.

⁹⁹ *Surprised by Christ*, p.10.

Jews as God's people; (9) Anti-Semitism and ignorance of the Jewish roots of the Orthodox faith still need to be overcome; (10) certain contemporary Jews (such as Men, Winogradsky and Bernstein) have become Orthodox Christians and contributed significantly to modern Orthodox theology.

Although this Judaic dimension has made some impact on modern Orthodox theology, it is important to acknowledge that each of the six other major themes pursued in this lecture has exerted greater influence than the Judaic dimension.

5. The Three Metropolitans:

Anthony [Bloom], Kallistos [Ware] and John [Zizioulas]

Unlike the three tenors, these three metropolitans have never “performed” together, sought extensive publicity or become wealthy in worldly terms. Metropolitan Anthony [Bloom] (1916-2003) is best known for his writings on prayer¹⁰⁰ and his attempt to mould the Russian Orthodox Church in Britain in what he viewed as a democratic perspective. His work and life have been rather brutally dissected by Gillian Crow, one of “his spiritual children”, in *This Holy Man: Impressions of Metropolitan Anthony* in which she sets out the “paradoxical contrast between the greatness of the man and the smallness of his character,” concluding that “on his own admittance [he was] a lone wolf by nature,” but “vibrant, open and burning with the truth of the Gospel.... He had the burning passion of a meteor, which was breath-taking so long as one was not the victim of his fire, as people and circumstances were from time to time.”¹⁰¹

His central message was “learn to pray;” and he stressed that:

...the Gospel must reach not only the intellect but the whole being. English people often say, ‘That’s interesting, let’s talk about it, let’s explore it as an idea,’ but actually do nothing about it. To meet God means to enter into the ‘cave of a tiger’—it is not a pussy cat you meet—it’s a tiger. The realm of God is dangerous. You must enter

¹⁰⁰ See *Living Prayer* (1965), *School for Prayer* (1970), *God and Man* (197) and *Courage to Pray* (1974), all published in London by Darton, Longman and Todd.

¹⁰¹ (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2005), pp. xi-xii, xv.

into it and not just seek information about it.”¹⁰²

His attitude to prayer was that “what matters is not the number of prayers we recite ... but that we sincerely turn to God and tell him something that is true—about him, about us, about what we long for. And that is all.”¹⁰³

Metropolitan Kallistos [Ware] (1934-) is known not only for his academic teaching in Oxford and many seminars and retreats, but for his preaching and spiritual leadership throughout the world. His two best known books, *The Orthodox Church* and *The Orthodox Way* remain outstanding introductions in English to the Orthodox faith, especially for prospective converts to Orthodoxy, puzzled by the baggage of spiritual nationalism.¹⁰⁴ His translation (with G. E. H. Palmer & Philip Sherrard) of the first four volumes of *The Philokalia*, offers “the classical expression of hesychasm.”¹⁰⁵ The first (and thus far only) volume of his *Collected Works* titled *The Inner Kingdom* has been joined by a Festschrift to him, *Abba: The Tradition of Orthodoxy in West*¹⁰⁶ Patriarch Bartholomew has appropriately called him “a shepherd and teacher.”¹⁰⁷

Of perhaps equal or even greater significance than his writings is the manner in which he has quietly assisted academically and advised pastorally untold people. For example, when Frank Cross wanted “to fill the gaps in the coverage of Eastern Orthodoxy” in the Second Edition of *Dictionary of the Christian Church*, it was to the then Bishop Kallistos that he turned.¹⁰⁸ Many others have benefited in a similar way from Metropolitan Kallistos’s ability to “fill the gaps” in their academic

¹⁰² *School for Prayer*, p.17.

¹⁰³ *School for Prayer*, p. 207.

¹⁰⁴ *The Orthodox Church* (London: Penguin Books, Revised Second Edition, 1993); and *The Orthodox Way* (SVSP, 1982). A further edition of *The Orthodox Church* was published in 2015, but was unchanged except for an updated bibliography.

¹⁰⁵ (London: Faber & Faber, 1983-1998). Ware in Hastings, *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, p.186.

¹⁰⁶ *The Inner Kingdom* (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 2000). *Abba: The Tradition of Orthodoxy in West* (Eds. John Behr, Andrew Louth and Dimitri Conomos, (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 2003 [hereafter *TOIW*]) lists 238 of his writings from 1961 to 2002. For later writings see the bibliography in the third revised edition of *The Orthodox Church* (London: Penguin, 2015).

¹⁰⁷ *TOIW*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁸ Cross & Livingstone, p. v.

knowledge and their lives as Christians. A central theme of his theology and his own life is expressed on the opening page of *The Orthodox Way*:

To be a Christian is to be a traveller. Our situation, say the Greek fathers, is like that of the Israelite people in the desert of Sinai: we live in tents, not houses, for spiritually we are always on the move. We are on a journey through the inward space of the heart, a journey not measured by the hours of our watch or the days of the calendar, for it is a journey out of time into eternity.¹⁰⁹

On this journey, there is no “substitute for direct, personal experience,” because we are each “called to verify for himself [or herself] what [we] have been taught, each is required to re-live the Tradition he [or she] has received.... No one can be a Christian at second hand. God has children, but he has no grandchildren.”¹¹⁰

On this journey, for him and for us, there is an important theology of worship:

‘The principal thing,’ states St Theophan the Recluse, ‘is to stand before God with the mind in the heart, and to go on standing before Him unceasingly day and night, until the end of life.’

In this concise yet far-seeing definition of worship, St Theophan underlines three things: first, the basic essence of worship is to **stand before God**; second, the faculties with which the human person offers worship: **with the mind in the heart**; third, the time when worship is appropriate: **unceasingly day and night, until the end of life.**¹¹¹

Even at the end of life on earth, our journey does not end, for as the closing sentences of *The Orthodox Way* suggest:

Never, in all eternity, shall we reach a point where we have accomplished all that there is to do, or discovered all that there is to know. ‘Not only in this present age but also in the Age to come,’ says St Irenaeus [in *Against the Heresies* II, xxviii.3], ‘God will always have something more to teach man, and man will always have something more to learn from God.’¹¹²

In a sense, we are always on a journey, as even in eternity, we continue to grow, because, as St Gregory of Nyssa believed, “the essence of perfection consists

¹⁰⁹ *The Orthodox Way*, p. 7.

¹¹⁰ *The Orthodox Way*, p. 8.

¹¹¹ “The Theology of Worship” in *The Inner Kingdom*, p. 59.

¹¹² *The Orthodox Way*, p. 138.

precisely in never becoming perfect, but in always reaching forward to some higher perfection that lies beyond.”¹¹³

The final of the three Metropolitans, **John Zizioulas, Metropolitan of Pergamon** (1945-), has set out a bold understanding of the role of the Orthodox Church and of individual Orthodox Christians in the modern world, yet his perspective is also quite traditional.¹¹⁴ Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, has commented that *Communion and Otherness* is “a comprehensive model for the whole of Christian theology:”

... God is irreducibly a living complex of relation, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But this ‘complex’ is not just a given plurality, it is the work of freedom—the Father’s personal liberty and love generate the inseparable Other, the eternal Son, and ‘breathe out’ the eternal Spirit. The Father is never alone, nor is the Father simply one among three divine being alongside each other; it is his absolute freedom to be completely for and in the Other that is the root and rationale of Trinitarian life. And this utter freedom for the Other becomes the insight that allows us to make sense of the freedom of creation, with all that implies.¹¹⁵

In addition to his writings, Metropolitan John serves as President of the Commission of Orthodox in Dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, a member of the Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue, and the Chair of the 4th Pre-Council Pan-Orthodox Conference, linked to the work of the past 15 years to convene a Pan-Orthodox Council, which at the time of the revision of this lecture (July 2016) had taken place on the island of Crete; but not without controversy, since all did not attend.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ See also Louth, concluding chap. 21, p. 332f.

¹¹⁴ See *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (SVSP, 1997) *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, Ed. Paul McPartlan (London: T & T Clark, 2006), *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop during the First Three Centuries*, trans. Elizabeth Theokritoff (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press), Paul McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (London: T & T Clark, 1993) and *Receiving One Another: Being in Otherness—Studies on God, Man, the Church and the World Today* (Alhambra, CA: Sebastian Press of the Western American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America, 2010).

¹¹⁵ Rowan Williams, “Foreword,” *Communion and Otherness*, p. xi. See Louth, chap.14, p. 214f.

¹¹⁶ For an American perspective on holding a Council, Ecumenical or otherwise, see: www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/resources/sermons/michael_greatest_need.htm. For a 79-

It should be noted that Metropolitan John has his critics in Orthodoxy, some of them quite severe. Lucian Turcescu has challenged his notion that the fathers (particularly St. Gregory of Nyssa) distinguished between “person” and “individual.” Panagopoulos and Agouridis accuse him of importing into Orthodoxy alien western concepts of existentialism and personalism. More conservative theologians dislike his collaboration with non-Orthodox writers. Others, however, are more persuaded; particularly noteworthy amongst these being Christos Yannaras who compares him to St. Gregory Palamas! This perhaps indicates the stature of the man ... that he can provoke such divergent views within the Orthodox Church ... and, also, incidentally, beyond.

6. Other notable theologians in the Greek tradition

Philip Sherrard (1922-1995), was born in Oxford and died in London, but spent much of the last two decades of his life on his estate at Kaounia, on the island of Euboea; and “increasingly he felt himself rooted in Greece.”¹¹⁷ A theologian, a philosopher, a poet and a translator—he sought to integrate modern Greek poetry and the Orthodox tradition.¹¹⁸ Metropolitan Kallistos has suggested that his dominant idea was expressed at the beginning of his book, *The Sacred in Life and Art*: “The sacred is something in which the Divine is present or which is charged with divine energies.”¹¹⁹ At the centre of Sherrard’s vision was the conviction that “we human beings ... are called to reveal anew the holiness of nature, raising up the

minute video lecture delivered by Metropolitan John in May 2010, see: www.ustream.tv/recorded/7247469.

¹¹⁷ Metropolitan Kallistos, *Philip Sherrard: A Prophet for Our Time* (Oxford: Friends of Mount Athos, 2008).

¹¹⁸ His major works include *The Marble Threshing Floor: Studies in Modern Greek Poetry* (London: Valentine, Mitchell, 1956); *The Greek East and the Latin West: A Study in Christian Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959 and with revisions and additions in 1995 (Limni, Evia, Greece: Denise Harvey); *Christianity and Eros: Essays on the Theme of Sexual Love* (London: SPCK, 1976 and Limni, Evia, Greece: Denise Harvey, 2002); *The Rape of Man and Nature: An Enquiry into the Origins and Consequences of Modern Science* (Ipswich: Golgonooza Press, 1987); and *Human Image: World Image. The Death and Resurrection of Sacred Cosmology* (Ipswich: Golgonooza press, 1992).

¹¹⁹ (Ipswich: Golgonooza Press, 1990), p. 11.

world from its fallen state and rendering it once more transparent to the divine glory.”¹²⁰ Sherrard was keenly aware of the different mind-sets of the Latin West and the Greek East. However, his attitude to secular learning and knowledge was possibly a little ungenerous; and this perhaps reflects this sharp division in his thought between the secular and the spiritual.

Christos Yannaras (1935-) was born in Athens and is one of the foremost religious philosopher in the Greek tradition today. He studied theology at the University of Athens and philosophy at the Universities of Bonn, Germany and Paris in France, as well as earning PhDs from both the Faculty of Theology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece and from the Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines of the University of Sorbonne in Paris. His ecumenical standing is high; however, he never shrinks from a rigorous analysis of what both separates and binds Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christian traditions, while avoiding polemic. He admires aspects of Heidegger’s philosophy and sees similarities in the ways this philosopher characterises “No-thing” and the Orthodox emphasis on apophaticism in relation to God.¹²¹ However, his thoroughgoing Orthodox relational personalism and ontology makes him strongly critical of elements of Western Christian thought and praxis.

¹²⁰ Kallistos, *Philip Sherrard*, pp. 12-13. When Metropolitan Kallistos, Gerald Palmer and Philip Sherrard gathered in the evenings at the Serbian monastery of Chilandar on Mount Athos, having worked hard during the day translating *The Philakalia*, the nights “were full of sounds and movement,” especially from the frogs below. Metropolitan Kallistos recalls that the beautiful singing of the frogs brought to his mind “an Athonite story about an elder who was praying one night at his chapel with his disciples. They were much disturbed by the frogs in a nearby cistern, and so he went out to remonstrate with them. ‘Frogs,’ he said, ‘we’ve just completed the Midnight Office and are now beginning Matins; will you please keep quiet until we’ve finished.’ And the frogs replied, ‘We’ve just completed Matins and are beginning the First Hour; will **you** please keep quiet until **we’ve** finished.’” (Kallistos, *Philip Sherrard*, p. 14; emphases in original). See also Louth, chap.15, p. 230 f.

¹²¹ Yannaras, *Person and Eros*, trans. Norman Russell, originally published in Athens in 1987 as *To prosopo kai o eros* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2007). See also Louth, chap. 16, p. 247 f.

Most controversially, he sees the western adherence to the notion of human rights as “inhuman.” For Yannaras, human dignity, respect and the protection of the law come from the ancient Greco-Roman concept of citizenship—that is, our place in the “polis” or city. Human rights on the other hand are predicated on the idea of the individual set against the group or the State—a kind of atomised antagonism. In political theory he quotes Heraclitus as being much more in tune with Christian ontological personalism as the basis for just communal relations: “Everything that we share, we know to be true; what we have that is peculiar to us, we know to be false.”¹²² Truth and falsity are not for him observable in contemporary western Christian social theory but rather legally sanctioned utilitarianism. He sees this as the legacy in part at least of Christian pietism in the west with its individualistic piety and social alienation.

On the other hand, pietism has itself been accentuated and shaped by the West’s technocratic, social and political trajectory which leaves little or no room for the Church as the Trinitarian community where we achieve personhood in genuine freedom and love. In *The Freedom of Morality* Yannaras reflects that:

If the technocratic consumer society throughout the world presupposes and develops the primacy of intellectual ability in the subject, the autonomy of his will, the rationalistic regulation of individual rights and duties, “objective” backing for individual choices and for the economic safeguards assured for the individual by trade unions, and a rationalistic linkage of the individual with the group then the individualistic religion of pietism is the inevitable consequence. Indeed, it is the only possibility for religious expression in western culture—the necessary and sufficient condition for religious life. There seems little or no scope for experience and historical realization of the Church’s truth, the trinitarian mode of existence: no room to live our salvation through a practical subjection of the individual to the experience of communion which belongs to the Church as a body, and to realize the ethos or morality of the Gospel through self-transcendence on the part of the individual and through the freedom and distinctiveness of persons within the communion of saints.¹²³

¹²² Heraclitus Frag. Diels-Kranz I, p.148, 29-30.

¹²³ Ch. 8 (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY: 1984), pp. 119-136.

From an Orthodox point of view Yannaras' thought resonates with the Tradition of the Church; and he admirably attempts to integrate Orthodox *theoria* and *praxis* with philosophy. On the other hand, his apologetic, although Trinitarian, is rarely explicitly Christological; and his grasp of the redemptive significance of the cross and Resurrection sometimes seems slight. That could arise, however, from his academic interest in philosophy with a theological background rather than theology with a philosophical background, but his work is none the worse for that.

Fr. John Romanides (1927-2001) - In the same stable as it were as Christos Yannaras, but with his own distinctive approach, Fr John has been a highly influential theologian in the Orthodox world particularly amongst those who are most keenly aware of the divergence of Augustinian theologies from Orthodox norms. Yannaras has written of him: "Romanides succeeded in summarizing the whole of Orthodox dogma, emphasizing the deep gulf separating it from the intellectualist and juridical expressions of Western dogma."¹²⁴ Historically Fr John saw the Orthodox as East Romans, in unity with the west until the latter was subverted from Orthodoxy politically by the Franks and the Goths and theologically by elements of Augustinian theology. His theological works emphasise the empirical basis of theology called *theoria* or "vision of God," (as opposed to intellectual-contemplative) as the essence of Orthodox theology. He identified Hesychasm as the core of Christian practice and studied extensively the works of the 14th century hesychast and theologian, St. Gregory Palamas. His understanding of authority stands in the tradition of St. Symeon, the New Theologian, prioritising the charism of the eldership above any merely institutional characteristic.

¹²⁴ *Orthodoxy and the West: Hellenic Self-Identity in the Modern Age*, trans. Peter Chambers & Norman Russell from *Orthodoxia kai Dysi sti neoteric Ellada* published in Athens in 1992 (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2007), p. 276. See Metropolitan of Nafpaktos, *Empirical Dogmatics according to the Spoken Teachings of Father John Romanides, Vol. 1: Dogma, Ethics, Revelation; Vol. 2: Holy Trinity, Creation, Fall, Incarnation, Church, Life after Death* (Levadia, Greece; and Seattle, WA: St Nectarios Press, 2011). See also Louth, chap. 14, p. 214 f.

7. Spiritual Guidance

To understand spiritual guidance in the context of the human experience of the presence of God a good starting point is the life and teachings of **Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica**, Serbia. Elder Thaddeus (1914-2003) first came to monastic life at the age of 18, was tonsured as a monk, ordained as a hierodeacon at the age of 21, and then served as a monk and abbot for more than 60 years. He consistently sought what he described as “gratuitous grace”—the “priceless gift from God, through which God guides us in our spiritual life, in the beginning showing us the goal of our life—deification in Christ within the Church—and at times of sorrow and suffering giving us strength and comfort.”¹²⁵ This definition of “gratuitous grace” is a helpful reflection on the goal of human life, although it leaves open the means by which such a goal can be achieved.

Surprisingly, Elder Thaddeus during his long life of nearly 89 years found only one monk, who in his life had this gift of “gratuitous grace,” yet he found many lay people “who live with their families” and “have received this gift of Grace.”¹²⁶ In his view, the central issue, both for monks and lay people is that: “Our starting point is always wrong. Instead of beginning with ourselves, we always want to change others first and ourselves last.”¹²⁷ Both in seeking to understand and improve our own lives, as well as in counselling others, we must recognise that:

The Lord is present everywhere, and nothing happens without His will or His permission, either in this life or in eternity. When we accept this idea, everything is made easier. If God would allow us to do everything the way we desire and when we desire, this would certainly result in catastrophe.... God reminds us in different ways of His presence. We,

¹²⁵ St Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, *Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives: The Life and Teachings of Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica*, originally published in Serbian as *Mir i raost u Duhu Svetom* [Peace and Joy in the Holy Spirit] (Belgrade: Obraz, 2004), trans. by Ana Smiljanic (Platina, CA: St Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2015), “The Life of Elder Thaddeus,” pp. 24, 31.

¹²⁶ *Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives*, p. 24.

¹²⁷ *Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives*, “The Teachings of Elder Thaddeus,” chap. 1 “On Thoughts,” p. 64.

however, quickly forget about it, especially when things are going well for us. We forget that we are here for a short time only, and we think we will be around forever ... This is why we should try hard to change our character for the better.¹²⁸

What Elder Thaddeus is proposing to us is a powerful combination of seeking to “change our character for the better” while at the same time recognising the omnipotence of the Lord. Within this framework, “The role of Christians on earth is to filter the atmosphere on earth and expand the atmosphere of the Kingdom of God ... [while recognising that] the Kingdom of God will not make its abode in the heart of a person who has no obedience, for such a person always wants his will—rather than God’s will to be done.”¹²⁹

In a psychological context, Elder Thaddeus rightly insists that “the mind is a great wanderer. It is always traveling. It cannot rest until the only One who can lay it to rest appears.”¹³⁰ Spiritual guidance for Orthodox Christians arises out of the awareness, in Martha’s words to Mary, that “The Teacher [Christ] is here and is calling for you” (John 11:28). In Father Lev Gillet’s words, “It is not we who first love and choose Jesus [Christ]; it is He who has loved and chosen us.”¹³¹ Yet even as the Lord initiates His will and His image within us, each of us needs to recognise with Stephen Muse that “spiritual growth is a function of the grace of God and the effort of human beings in response to that grace over a lifetime.”¹³² Thus, “asceticism rightly understood is the struggle to become free of lesser forces in

¹²⁸ *Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives*, “*The Teachings of Elder Thaddeus*,” chap. 1 “On Thoughts,” p. 65.

¹²⁹ *Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives*, “*The Teachings of Elder Thaddeus*,” chap. 1 “On Thoughts,” p. 64 “*The Teachings of Elder Thaddeus*,” Chap. 1 “On Thoughts,” p. 65. The foundation of this understanding of human life and the cosmos is that “all of creation, everything that exists on the earth and in the cosmos, is nothing but Divine thought made material in time and space. We humans were created in the image of God. Mankind was given a great gift, but we hardly understand that. God’s energy and life is in us, but we do not realise it. Neither do we understand that we greatly influence others with our thoughts.” p. 63.

¹³⁰ *Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives*, pp. 67-68.

¹³¹ A Monk of the Eastern Church [Lev Gillet], *Serve the Lord with Gladness: Basic Reflections on the Eucharist and the Priesthood* (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 1990), p. 78.

¹³² Stephen Muse, *When Hearts Become Flame: An Eastern Orthodox Approach to the $\delta\iota\alpha\text{-}\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ of Pastoral Counseling* (Rollinsford, NH: Orthodox Research Institute, 2011), p. 7.

order to be responsive to the greater force of grace.”¹³³ Our responsiveness of this grace can occur within the Sacrament of Confession, with a professional therapist (or counsellor) or in offering care to others whom we encounter. In each of these situations, “freedom arises to the degree that we are obedient to the Holy Spirit.”¹³⁴

It is essential to see that “‘struggle’ in the Orthodox Christian Way of life [is] the struggle of seeking freedom from all oppression in order to respond fully to God’s love for us.”¹³⁵ There is no one way to achieve this freedom, but it is always offered by the Lord and sought or accepted by each person.¹³⁶ What each of us seek is not an emotional calmness, but rather an inner peace. As Elder Thaddeus reminds us, “Peace starts with each one of us. When we have peace in us, we spread it around to others.”¹³⁷ The life and work of **Father Matta El-Meskeen (Matthew the Poor)** (1919-2006) offers many insights on how prayer and Biblical study can empower a person to move from an ego-driven life into the life of Christ.¹³⁸

In the context of spiritual guidance, the writings of the Bishop of Nafpaktos, **Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos** are worthy of careful reflection. Like all of the theologians cited in this lecture, Metropolitan Hierotheos sees deification as the goal of each human being. In *The Mind of the Orthodox Church*, he writes that everyone has

... the possibility of being defied. There are no privileged categories that can travel towards deification [faster than others]. The cure and deification of man is achieved, on the one hand, by the sacramental life,

¹³³ Muse, p. 16n.

¹³⁴ Muse, p. 203.

¹³⁵ Muse, p. 243.

¹³⁶ See Archdeacon John Chryssavgis, *Soul Mending: The Art of Spiritual Direction* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2000); Jean-Claude Larchet, *The Theology of Illness*, trans. John & Michael Breck, originally published in Paris in 1991 as *La Théologie de la Maladie* by Les Éditions du Cerf (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 2002); and Thomas C Oden, *Care of Souls in the Classic Tradition* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), with a focus on St Gregory the Great, *The Book of Pastoral Rule* (SVSP, 2007).

¹³⁷ *Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives*, p. 153.

¹³⁸ *Words for Our Time: The Spiritual Words of Matthew the Poor* (Chesterton, IN: Conciliar Press [now Ancient Faith Press], p. 100; *Orthodox Prayer Life: The Interior Way* (SVSP, 2003); *The Titles of Christ* (Rollinsford, NH: Orthodox Research Institute, 2008).

and on the other hand, by the ascetic life which we live in the Church.... All the holy Fathers teach that man's salvation is a combination of sacraments and asceticism. We cannot understand the sacraments without asceticism in Christ, and we cannot live a real ascetic life without the sacraments of the Church.¹³⁹

Metropolitan Hierotheos reminds us that all of the epistles of St Paul with their stress upon “cleansing of the heart, illumination of the soul [and] the unceasing prayer of the heart ... and life in the Holy Spirit” that were “sent to the various churches, were addressed to Christians who were married and had families.”¹⁴⁰ Whatever our situation in life—lay or cleric, single or married, living in the world or in a monastery—we can know and serve Christ and His Church.

Whatever the personal illness, “the hospital of the Church” offers a cure.¹⁴¹ The Metropolitan has coined the term “Orthodox Psychotherapy” not to refer to facing specific problems of neurosis or psychosis, but rather to refer to how the Fall has disrupted our communion with God; therefore, the Church seeks to enable every person “to attain to the likeness of God, that is to re-establish communion with God.”¹⁴²

Conclusion: Seeking the Synthesis—What Is Tradition?

In seeking a synthesis of Eastern Orthodox theology, Metropolitan Kallistos reflected in 2000 that we Orthodox have given “relatively little attention ... to Biblical studies;” however, that is now changing with the publication of the

¹³⁹ *The Mind of the Orthodox Church*, trans. Esther Williams (Levadia-Hellas, Greece: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 1998), p. 147.

¹⁴⁰ *Orthodox Spirituality: A Brief Introduction*, trans. Effie Mavromichali (Levadia, Greece: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 1992/1994), p. 92. Available from Mount Thabor Publishing at: www.mountthabor.com with an extensive free online summary.

¹⁴¹ Metropolitan Hierotheos, *The Illness and Cure of the Soul in the Orthodox Tradition*. trans. Effie Mavromichali (Levadia, Greece: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 2005). Available from Mount Thabor Publishing at: www.mountthabor.com with an extensive free online summary.

¹⁴² *Orthodox Psychotherapy* (Levadia, Greece: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 1992/1994),

Orthodox Study Bible.¹⁴³ In his view, the three “major topics” of modern Orthodox theologians have been “the nature of theology, the doctrine of creation¹⁴⁴, and the essence of the church.”¹⁴⁵ Perhaps a key unifying theme for modern Orthodox theology is the distinction first developed by St Gregory Palamas (1296-1359) (already noted in Lecture 58) between God’s essence (which denotes His transcendence) and His energies (which denotes His immanence).¹⁴⁶ As Metropolitan Kallistos reminds us:

God’s essence remains for ever radically unknowable to all created beings, not only in the present age but in the age to come. The energies, on the other hand—which are not an intermediary or a created gift but God himself in his direct, unmediated action—permeate the universe, filling all things with uncreated grace and glory.¹⁴⁷

Thus we Orthodox can affirm in our ideas and in our lives “both God’s otherness and his nearness. The apophatic mystery of God is safeguarded, but the Creator is also seen as everywhere present: not pantheism, but panentheism.”¹⁴⁸ In other words, as Orthodox Christians we do not equate all the matter and forces in the universe with God or believe in many gods, but we affirm the ubiquity of God—the omnipresence of Christ in our lives, in the world and in the world to come.

To conclude then, what is this “Tradition” that we have been studying these past few months? Lossky’s definition of Tradition is inspiring:

Personal experience and the common experience of the Church are identical by virtue of the catholicity of Christian tradition. Now **tradition** is not merely the aggregate of dogmas, of sacred institutions, and of rites which the Church preserves. It is, above all, that which expresses in its outward determinations a **living tradition**, the unceasing revelation of the Holy Spirit in the Church; a **life in which each one of her members can share according to his [or her] capacity. To be in the tradition is to share the experience of the mysteries revealed to**

¹⁴³ (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008). Available from Mount Thabor Publishing at: www.mountthabor.com with an extensive free online summary.

¹⁴⁴ See Chap. Four, “God’s Creation in Orthodox Worship,” pp. 135-180 of Elizabeth Theokritoff, *Living in God’s Creation: Orthodox Perspectives on Ecology* (SVSP, 2009).

¹⁴⁵ Hastings, p. 185.

¹⁴⁶ Metropolitan Kallistos notes that this distinction between God’s essence and His energies has been developed by Florovsky, Lossky, Meyendorff, Romanides, Yannaras and Staniloae (Hastings, p. 186).

¹⁴⁷ Hastings, p. 186.

¹⁴⁸ Metropolitan Kallistos in Hastings, p.186.

the Church. Doctrinal tradition—beacons set up by the Church along the channel of the knowledge of God—cannot be separated from or opposed to mystical tradition: acquired experience of the mysteries of the faith. Dogma cannot be understood apart from experience; the fullness of experience cannot be had apart from true doctrine.¹⁴⁹

So we all share in the on-going Tradition and traditions of the Orthodox Church according to our own capacities.¹⁵⁰ We gather together into a unity *doctrinal* tradition and *mystical* tradition so that we each participate in our own ways in what Lossky has called “the acquired experience of the mysteries of the faith”.

An important purpose of all these E-Quip lectures is to acquire the experience of “the mysteries of the faith” and to then live that faith. The coin has two sides. On the one hand, we listen and consider lectures and read Orthodox books and pray in order to learn about the Orthodox faith, but at the same time, we live that faith, and in the existential living of our faith we learn its meanings. A final word, more a prayer, from Father Lev Gillet offers an apt conclusion to this unit on Tradition:

O strange Orthodox Church, so poor and weak, with neither the organization nor the culture of the West, staying afloat as if by a miracle in the face of so many trials, tribulations and struggles; a Church of contrasts, both so traditional and so free, so archaic and so alive, so ritualist and so personally involved, a Church where the priceless pearl of the Gospel is assiduously preserved, sometimes under a layer of dust; a Church which in shadows and silence maintains above all the eternal values of purity, poverty, asceticism, humility and forgiveness; a Church which has often not known how to act, but which can sing of the joy of Pascha like no other.¹⁵¹

So be it. Amen.

¹⁴⁹ *Mystical Theology*, p. 236. Emphasis in bold added

¹⁵⁰ See Lossky’s essay, “Tradition and Traditions” in Ouspensky & Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, pp.9ff.

¹⁵¹ From: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lev_Gillet .