

## Summary of July 22

Last week at ECBS we studied chapter 14 of St. John the Theologian's Gospel. We discussed a little more about Trinitarian Theology. The word "theology" means the study or knowledge (ology) of Theos (God). Theology in our Eastern tradition is not so much an academic pursuit as it is a direct mystical encounter with the living God. That is why our Holy Monks are our greatest theologians. They knew God, and they came to this knowledge primarily through prayer. In the day's Scriptures we also discussed Christology (the study/knowledge of Christ) and Pneumatology (the study/knowledge of the Holy Spirit -from Mt. 28:19 where He is called: ἁγίου πνεύματος - hagios pneumatos). We talked about how, in our Eastern tradition, Theology is a direct mystical encounter with the living God.

Chapter 14 continues to cover our Lord's powerful discourse at the Last Supper. This discourse were among our Lord's last words before His passion and crucifixion. In addition to this, we considered how Jesus predicted His betrayal and death, told of the eternal and wonderful mansions in Paradise, and affirmed His role as "mediator between God and man" (1 Tm 2:15). Jesus teaches us that He is not just another religious teacher or prophet. He says that He is exclusively "the way," He is definitively "the truth," and He is most abundantly "the life." As St. Paul teaches, Jesus is "the one mediator between God and man" (1 Tm 2:15). No one comes to the Father except through Him. As Christians, we believe this because our Lord said it during His discourse at the Last Supper.

The Lord's word's in this passage saying, "He who has seen me Has seen the Father," corresopnd to St. Paul statement that Christ "is the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15). In Greek "image" is εἰκών eikōn, i-kone'; from [G1503](#); a likeness, representation, resemblance or image. Thus Jesus is the icon of the Father. He perfectly reflects God and makes Him know to us. The book of Hebrews calls Christ "the brightness of [the Father's] glory" and "the express image of his person..." (1:3). The word for "express image" in Greek is: χαρακτήρ charaktēr, khar-ak-tare' [G5482](#) which means an "exact copy or representation." We confess in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith that Christ is "Light from Light," He is "True God from True God," He is "one in essence with the Father." Jesus is able to perfectly show us the love of the Father because He is His only-begotten Son. We are children of God by adoption. Through faith and Baptism we become His beloved children. But Jesus is eternally the only-begotten Son and Word of God. He shares the exact nature of God.

The Greek word "parakletos" which is used by our Lord for the Holy Spirit is understood by modern scholars to derive from Greek legal terminology for an advocate or attorney defending the accused. It can mean spokesman, mediator, intercessor, comforter, consoler, although no one of these terms encompasses the meaning in John. St. John calls the Holy Spirit "another advocate" b/c John tells us Jesus is the first advocate or paraclete (1 Jn 2:1) in the sense that He is our

**intercessor in heaven (i.e., our Heavenly High Priest, see Hebrews 7:23-24). St. John states the Holy Spirit as Paraclete is a teacher, a witness to Jesus, and a prosecutor of the world, who represents the continued presence on earth of Jesus who has returned to the Father.**

**So while Jesus is our High Priest living to make intercession for us in heaven, the Holy Spirit is our Helper and Advocate here on earth. The Holy Spirit is called Paraclete here because He is a "comforter" sent to strengthen the disciples in Jesus' absence (Jn 14:15), He is a "counselor" sent to instruct them in the truth (Jn 14:26, 15:26) and He is an "advocate" to defend them against the prosecutions of the devil (16:7-11) who, according to St. John's Revelation, is accuser against all Christians (12:10).**

**Christians actually have the Holy Trinity dwelling in them! This dwelling of God within us begins in Baptism. We concluded with a discussion on the Monarchy of the Father. This refers to the Father as being the mone-arche or "sole source" and fountainhead of the Holy Trinity. It underlines the the importance of why we as Eastern Christians recite the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Symbol Faith in its original form ('who proceeds from the Father' without the filioque. This is very different from "monarchianism" which was a heresy the early Church had to condemn with b/c it taught that the Son and the Spirit were inferior to the Father.**

**According to Lossky, "the innascibility [incapability of being born, hence self-existence] of the Father without beginning is the basic idea of the monarchy of the Father, the generation of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit, describes the relationships which allows us to distinguish the persons of the Holy Trinity" (*Orthodox Theology*, 43). The term is used in reference to the Father who, as *mone-arche*, is the sole principle and source of Divinity within the Holy Trinity. Thus the two other Persons (i.e., the Son and the Spirit) have their origin from the Father who is the "single-principal" and "divinity-source" (according to Dionysius the Areopagite). "The notion of monarchy therefore denotes in a single word the unity and the difference in God, starting from a personal principle" (*ibid*, 46). Orthodox Monarchism [through apophatism] does not denigrate into a doctrine of subordinationism (that the Son and Spirit are less than or inferior to the Father). Whereas "in our [human] experience, the cause is superior to the effect, in God, on the contrary, the cause as fulfillment of personal love cannot produce inferior effects: it wishes them to be equal in dignity, and is therefore also the cause of their equality" (*ibid*, 47, cf. *Mystical Theology*, 62).**

**Your brother,  
Sub-Deacon Lazarus**