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ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΣ»

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## **The Stages of Orthodox Anthropology**

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Orthodox anthropology contributes to the ontological understanding of man, with its Christological and soteriological dimension. In addition, the importance of the liturgical and sacramental dimension of the body of the Church, as experienced throughout time, is highlighted, contributing to the self-definition of man and prioritizing the value of the person regardless of technological achievements and progress.

### **Introduction**

For centuries, Orthodox theology has defined the relationship between man and God. Through this relationship, man understands and experiences himself, defining his relationship with his fellow man and the environment.

Within the framework of the Divine Economy, Orthodox anthropology is shaped by the creation of man, the Incarnation of the Son and Logos of God, His Resurrection and Ascension, and the deification of man, leading to the Resurrection of the dead. The past and the present find their fulfillment in the Church, where the eschatological reality is pre-emptively experienced, and man is perfected in Christ and is saved through the Grace of God.

On the other hand, technological evolution aims to improve and facilitate human life, provided its use serves the common good and operates under compatible rules. However, it has been observed that self-interest and a lack of moderation in the use of technology can prove detrimental and threatening to man.

AI and its applications facilitate human life, especially when operating on the basis of specific rules, legislation, and ethics. However, there are trends suggesting that technology, with the aid of AI, could intervene in human nature with unpredictable consequences. Even if the starting

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point is intended for human well-being and evolution, the question arises: how are 'the good', 'benefit', and 'progress' defined?

Within this problematic context, Orthodox anthropology possesses the spiritual capital to address and provide boundaries to questions concerning human nature, ethics, destiny, the value of the psychosomatic state, the definition of the soul, and certainly the perspective on immortality and salvation.

Initially, the stages of Orthodox anthropology will be described to elucidate a unique approach that distinguishes itself from other religious, scientific, or philosophical perceptions.

## **A. Stages of Orthodox Anthropology**

### **A1. The Narratives of Genesis**

#### **i. Man as a Psychosomatic Unity**

In the Book of Genesis, there are two almost parallel narratives concerning the creation of man. The first narrative presents the human being as a psychosomatic unity: "And then the Lord God formed man from the dust from the ground, and He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul".<sup>86</sup> The material part of man is defined by the phrase "and the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground", and the biological nature of man is completed by God's breath of life: "and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul", so that man might become a "living soul".<sup>87</sup>

According to Saint Symeon the New Theologian, man is the unique creation of God, among things visible and intelligible, who was created "double", possessing a body from the four elements, with sensation and breath, and a soul that is rational, immaterial, and incorporeal. Man constitutes the sole creation that has both a body and a rational soul. The noetic soul is "inscrutably united and mingled unmixed and unconfusedly" with the body. Man is a "mortal and

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<sup>86</sup> Gen. 2:7

<sup>87</sup> Gen. 2:7

immortal being", visible and invisible, sensible and intelligible, who surveys the visible creation and is "cognizant of the intelligible" creation, with the gift of communion with his Creator God.<sup>88</sup>

Man was created by God as a "double creature"; he is "one" and consists of two natures and two substances—that of the soul and that of the body. In man, the two natures and substances, the soul and the body, coexist "unmixed and unconfusedly", representing the visible and invisible, the material and spiritual world of Creation.<sup>89</sup> Man stands in the middle of these two worlds, being sensible among immaterial beings and immaterial among sensible ones.<sup>90</sup>

According to Symeon, the "Image" refers to the entire existence of man, insofar as the "Likeness" is participated in by the whole man, as soul and as body, since he becomes god by Grace in his totality.<sup>91</sup>

The superiority of man over other creatures is reflected by the Fathers as the crown and culmination of all creation, perfect as "more honourable than all visible things"<sup>92</sup> and "man is a double world, having the kindred of the things above, the soul, and the body of the things below, a certain bond and bridge".<sup>93</sup>

Since man is considered body and soul, a psychosomatic unity and existence, his rational nature makes his presence possible and permeates the entire body;<sup>94</sup> likewise, the soul is present in the whole human body.<sup>95</sup> As man is dual, consisting of soul and body in a single psychosomatic

<sup>88</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *Oratio Catechetica Magna* 5, ed. Srawley, 26, 30; *De anima et resurrectione*, PG 46, 101B; *De opificio hominis* 4, PG 44, 136B; *Adversus Apollinarem* 54, PG 45, 1253C–1256A. Xioni N., *Human Being and Society* (Athens: Ennoia, 2020), 196. Symeon Novus Theologus, *Capita* II.23, SC 51b, 116. Athanasius Alexandrinus, *Ad Antiochum praefectum*, PG 28, 608A. Joannes Damascenus, *Expositio Fidei*, PG 94, 921A. Athenagoras, *De resurrectione mortuorum*, PG 6, 1000B. Justin Martyr (attrib.), *De resurrectione*, PG 6, 1585B.

<sup>89</sup> Symeon Novus Theologus, *Capita* II.23, SC 51b, 116; *Orationes Ethicae* I.3, 14, SC 122, 196; I.9, 64–69, SC 122, 250; II.1, 98–99, SC 122, 318; VII, 532, SC 129, 194. Joannes Damascenus, *Expositio Fidei*, PG 94, 1064A, 853A, 1049. Methodius Olym-pius, *De resurrectione*, PG 41, 1097D. Maximus Confessor, *Epistulae* XVI, PG 91, 557D–560A. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* VI.15, PG 9, 516B. Basilius Caesariensis, *In illud: Attende tibi ipsi*, PG 31, 215.

<sup>90</sup> Joannes Chrysostomus, *In variantia loca* VT 2.5, PG 56, 182. Joannes Damascenus, *De duabus in Christo voluntatibus* 30, PG 95, 168. Symeon Novus Theologus, *Hymni* 53, 116–119, SC 196, 220. Anthimus Gazaeus, *Interpretatio in Genesim*, PG 87, 128C.

<sup>91</sup> Symeon Novus Theologus, *Hymnus* 44, SC 196, verses 151–164, pp. 80–82.

<sup>92</sup> Joannes Chrysostomus, *In Genesim*, Homilia 8.2, PG 53, 71.

<sup>93</sup> Joannes Chrysostomus, *In illud: Sufficit tibi gratia mea* 2, PG 59, 509.

<sup>94</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *De opificio hominis*, PG 44, 161C. Skaltsas G., 'The Human Being as a Mirror of the Eschaton according to Saint Gregory of Nyssa', *Synaxi* 59 (1996), 45–49.

<sup>95</sup> Matsoukas N., *The Problem of Evil* (Thessaloniki: Kyriakidis, 2009), 84, 86.

whole and entity,<sup>96</sup> the "inner" man comprises the mind or the soul, while the "outer" man comprises the human body.<sup>97</sup>

In light of the above, the creative energy of God fashioned the body and infused it with His breath, so that the soul of man, and the whole man, came into being out of non-being, a fact that grants human nature an ontological relatedness towards God, or, in other words, its existence has a theocentric character and direction.<sup>98</sup>

The "breath of life" is the unique gift that God gave to man, as God breathed into his face this gift: the breath, the life, the living soul in the Holy Spirit, the mind and the logos.<sup>99</sup>

Consequently, man is identically defined by the organic unity of soul and body, but his existence from the very first moment of his creation, and the perpetuation of his life, is determined and depends on his relationship with God, as a relationship of communion between the Creator and the created.

## ii. The human being as “according to the Image” and “according to the Likeness”

In the second narrative, the theocentric character of man is presented on the basis of the "Image" and "Likeness" of God: "And God said, 'Let us make man in our Image, after our Likeness.'"<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Plexidas I., *The Anthropology of Evil: Gregory of Nyssa* (PhD Diss., Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2010), 195. Gregorius Nyssenus, *De anima et resurrectione*, PG 46, 12–166; *Oratio Catechetica Magna*, PG 45, 93A. Irenaeus Lugdunensis, *Adversus Haereses* IV, Praef. 4, SC 100, 391; *Demonstratio Apostolicae Praedicationis* 2, SC 406, 84. Behr J., *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), 98. Justin Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 6, PG 6, 489B. Lawson J., *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus* (London: Epworth Press, 1948), 206. Steenberg M., *Of God and Man* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2009), 39.

<sup>97</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *De anima et resurrectione*, PG 44, 232A.

<sup>98</sup> Archimandrite Aristarchos Grekas, *Artificial Intelligence and the Human Being*, Apostoliki Diakonia Publ., Athens 2022, p. 149.

<sup>99</sup> Symeon Novus Theologus, *Ethica* 13, 131–133, SC 129, p. 410; *Theologica* 1, 184–185, SC 122, p. 110. 'Since he was meant to be not only rational and capable of goodness and justice, but also a partaker of the Holy Spirit, so that he might have the features of the divine nature more brightly within him, He breathed into him the breath of life. This is the Spirit granted through the Son to the rational creation, forming it into the highest Likeness, that is, the divine', Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *Adversus Anthropomorphitas* 2, PG 76, 1080D–1081A.

<sup>100</sup> Gen. 1:26.

The relationality of the human being, who is endowed with the "Image", grants him the potential to strive toward the "Likeness" of God, looking toward the Archetype.<sup>101</sup>

Regarding the Image, two traditions coexist: the Alexandrian and the Antiochene. The Alexandrian tradition holds that the "Image" refers only to the soul, with its primary characteristics being reason (logos) and free will (autexousion).<sup>102</sup> The existence of self-determination in man is closely linked to his very existence.<sup>103</sup> The Antiochene tradition understands the Image as encompassing the whole man—soul and body.<sup>104</sup> This dual interpretation essentially functions complementarily for a more comprehensive understanding of the Image and the Likeness, given the psychosomatic unity from the very first moment of man's creation. This hermeneutic fact is further substantiated by the ontological reference of man, who consists of soul and body from the beginning of his creation, and subsequently through his fall, the Incarnation of the Son and Logos of God, His Resurrection, His Ascension, including the deification and salvation of the whole man.

Irenaeus of Lyons understands the Image and Likeness of God with reference to both the soul and the body. Man consists of the union of the soul with the body and was created by God according to His own Image. This approach has a direct soteriological reference, as the body posed no obstacle during the Resurrection and Ascension. Therefore, the whole man will be saved as a unity of soul and body, within the framework of a renewed "Image" through deification (theosis) by Grace.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *De opificio hominis* VIII, PG 44, 144B. Xioni N., *Man and Society*, p. 225. 'For we have been sealed with the Holy Spirit into the Likeness and resemblance of the face of the Father, that is, the Son', Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *De Sancta Trinitate* 1, 5, PG 75, 945A. 'For we have been formed, as I said, according to the Son, as the Spirit imprints upon us the god-like and exceptional beauty through sanctification, clearly in a conceptual and spiritual way', *Contra Julianum* 9, PG 76, 948D; *In Isaiam* 1, 5, PG 70, 236B.

<sup>102</sup> Martzelos G., 'Reason and Free Will according to St. John of Damascus', in *Orthodox Dogma and Theological Reflection II*, Proceedings of the 20th Theological Conference (Thessaloniki: Holy Metropolis of Thessaloniki, 2000), 159–163; *Orthodox Dogma and Theological Reflection (Studies in Dogmatic Theology II)* (Thessaloniki: Pournaras, 2000), 113–117.

<sup>103</sup> Ephraem Syrus, *Sermo in Abraham et Isaac*, vol. VII, trans. and comm. K.G. Frantzas (Thessaloniki: To Perivoli tis Panagias, 1st edn, 1994), p. 244.

<sup>104</sup> Van Roey A., 'School of Alexandria', in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. I (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 1967), 304–305. Spanneut M., 'Clement of Alexandria', in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. III, 943. El-Khoury N., 'Anthropological Concepts of the School of Antioch', *Studia Patristica* 17, no. 3 (1982), 1359–1365. Ciobanu C.I., *The Anthropology of St. Ephrem the Syrian and the Prior Patristic Tradition* (PhD Diss., Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2013), 64–65.

<sup>105</sup> Irenaeus Lugdunensis, *Adversus Haereses* V, 6, PG 7, 1136D–1137B; *Adversus Haereses* 5, 6.11, PG 7b, 1139AB. Ciobanu C.I., *The Anthropology of St. Ephrem the Syrian and the Prior Patristic Tradition*, p. 83.

Chrysostom, transcending any anthropomorphic view of God, does not exclude the body from the Image, due to the fact that man consists of a single psychosomatic unity.<sup>106</sup> The ontological constitution of man according to the Image refers to the whole man according to the "conjoined nature" of the soul and the body.<sup>107</sup>

Cyril of Alexandria, to denote the unity of soul and body, uses the terms "having come through both, I mean soul and body..."<sup>108</sup>, "The soul is indeed heterogeneous toward blood and flesh, but we are compounded into one man through both..."<sup>109</sup>, "For just as the body is heterogeneous towards the soul, yet one man is composed and called from both".<sup>110</sup>

According to the Patristic Tradition, it was held that the Image and the Likeness were given to the whole man when God breathed the Breath of Life, so that it constitutes the precondition for the deification of the whole man.<sup>111</sup>

Furthermore, the Creator imprinted His seal upon man through the breath of life and the Holy Spirit, so that he might exist "according to the Image and Likeness" of the Archetypal Beauty and receptive to the Grace of His Spirit. Through the divine breath, man received a soul with the attributes, "of both soul and body, as a certain seal of His nature, the Creator fixed the Holy Spirit, that is, the breath of life, by which man was being fashioned toward the Archetypal Beauty, and was completed in the Image of the Creator, being upheld toward every idea of virtue by the power of the indwelling Spirit".<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Zisis T., *Man and the World in the Divine Economy according to Saint Chrysostom* (Thessaloniki: Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies, 1971), pp. 77–78. Joannes Chrysostomus, *In Psalmum 48*, 7, PG 55, 233; *In Epistulam ad Ephesios*, Homilia 21.4, PG 62, 154; *In Epistulam I ad Thessalonicenses*, Homilia 10.3, PG 62, 458.

<sup>107</sup> Savvatos Chrysostomos (Metr. of Messenia), 'Man and the Development of Modern Technology: A Challenge for Orthodox Theology', *Theologia* 90, no. 3 (2019), 24. Irenaeus Lugdunensis, *Adversus Haereses* 5, 6, 1, PG 7, 1158A–C.

<sup>108</sup> Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *In Joannem* 9, PG 74, 277B–D.

<sup>109</sup> Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *In Epistulam ad Hebraeos*, PG 74, 964D–965A.

<sup>110</sup> Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *In Epistulam ad Hebraeos*, PG 74, 964D–965A.

<sup>111</sup> Ciobanu C.I., *The Anthropology of St. Ephrem the Syrian and the Prior Patristic Tradition*, p. 64. Irenaeus Lugdunensis, *Adversus Haereses* 5, 6, 1, PG 7, 1137. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* 2, 22, 131, SC 38, p. 126. Ps. 81:6; Jo. 10:34.

<sup>112</sup> Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *In Joannem* 9, 1, PG 74, 277C–D, 756D–757A; *De Sancta Trinitate* 1, 4, PG 75, 904A–B, 905A; *Thesaurus* 34, PG 75, 584D–585A; *De Sancta Trinitate* 1, 3, PG 75, 800A; *Adversus Anthropomorphitas* 2, PG 76, 1081B–C; *In Epistulam ad Hebraeos*, PG 74, 964D–965A. 'Since the living being had been completed according to the laws of its own nature by God the Craftsman, it was immediately enriched with the Likeness to Him. For the Image of the divine nature was imprinted upon it, through the breathing of the Holy Spirit. For He is the breath of life, since God is life by nature', *De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate* 1, PG 68, 145D–148A.

This divine breath, moreover, endowed man with reason (logos) along with the commandment in Paradise, so that he might preserve the "Image" and proceed toward the "Likeness" through participation in the Holy Spirit.<sup>113</sup>

According to Symeon the New Theologian, man was created in the Image of the Holy Trinity, possessing mind.<sup>114</sup> The human soul is the "rational Image of the Logos", referring to the Archetype, with the existence of soul, mind, logos, and spirit with the "three unified in one" of the Father, the Son and Logos, and the Holy Spirit.<sup>115</sup>

The tripartite nature of the soul, as image and type, bears the characteristics of the divine attributes, just like the Tri-Hypostatic God.<sup>116</sup> Man received his "being" from the Father, the Son—Logos, and the Holy Spirit, out of the "one Godhead, unconfused and undivided Trinity".<sup>117</sup> The soul, the mind, and the logos share a common nature and essence of distinct activities, just like the prototype of the Image, the Triune God.<sup>118</sup>

Gregory of Nyssa parallels the Image of the soul with the three Hypostases of the Holy Trinity as being according to the Image of the Triune God.<sup>119</sup> He divides the Image of the soul into three parts, according to the pattern of the three Hypostases of the Holy Trinity: namely, the ingenerateness (unbegottenness) of the soul-mind, the generation of the logos, and the procession of

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<sup>113</sup> Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *In Joannem* 2, 1, PG 73, 204D–205A; *De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate* 8, PG 68, 545D–548A; *In Isaiam* 4, 5, PG 70, 1121D–1124A; *In Lucam*, PG 72, 597D; *Thesaurus* 13, PG 75, 232A; *Thesaurus* 34, PG 75, 609A; *De Sancta Trinitate* 1, 3, PG 75, 837A; *Thesaurus* 34, PG 75, 584D–585A. Papadopoulos S., *Saint Cyril of Alexandria: Life, Theology, Christology, Hermeneutics* (Athens: Apostoliki Diakonia, 2004), p. 78. Galtier P., 'Le Saint Esprit en nous d'après les Pères Grecs', *Analecta Gregoriana* 35 (1946), 236–237. Charlier N., 'La doctrine de Saint-Esprit dans le Thesaurus de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *StP* 2 (1957), 187–193. Boulnois M.O., *Le paradoxe trinitaire chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie: herméneutique, analyses philosophiques et argumentation théologique* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1994), pp. 148–150. Boulnois M.O., 'Le souffle et l'esprit: exégèses patristiques de l'insufflation originelle de Gn. 2, 7 en lien with that of Jn. 20, 22', *RCA* 24 (1989), 3–37. Leahy L., 'L'inhabitation d'après saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *SE* 11 (1959), 201–212. Mahé J., 'La sanctification d'après s. Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique (RHE)* 10 (1909), 30–40.

<sup>114</sup> Symeon Novus Theologus, *Theologica* II, SC 122, pp. 134–136. Joannes Damascenus, *Adversus eos qui sacras imagines abiciunt* 4–9, PG 94, 1340B: 'For just as Mind (the Father) and Word (the Son) and Holy Spirit are one God, so also mind and word and spirit are one man, both in terms of free will and sovereignty; for God says: Let us make man in our Image and Likeness.'

<sup>115</sup> Symeon Novus Theologus, *Hymnus* 44, 30–54, SC 196, p. 2; *Ethica* 3, 358–362, SC 122, pp. 72–74, 416.

<sup>116</sup> Symeon Novus Theologus, *Theologica* 2, 89, SC 122, pp. 136–146.

<sup>117</sup> Symeon Novus Theologus, *Theologica* 1, 444, SC 122, p. 128.

<sup>118</sup> Maximus Confessor, *Epistulae* XVI, *To the same on slander and deliverance through divine help*, PG 91, 557D–560A. Joannes Damascenus, *Dialectica*, PG 94, 616A–B. Symeon Novus Theologus, *Theologica* 2, 89, SC 122, pp. 118–122, 138..

<sup>119</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *De eo, quid sit ad imaginem Dei et similitudinem*, PG 44, 1336A–B.

the spirit<sup>120</sup>, thereby signifying the Mystery of the Holy Trinity.<sup>121</sup> From the union of the three hypostases of the soul flows the unified energy, as an image of the common and undivided divine energy.<sup>122</sup> Thus, the Image and the Likeness of man constitute the precondition for participation in the divine energies.

According to Gregory Palamas, the rational and noetic nature of the soul has mind, logos, and life-giving spirit, in the Image of the Triune God as Father (Mind), Logos, and Spirit.<sup>123</sup> The soul is united with the body and is present in all members of the body, so that man finds this ontological completion and his soteriological perspective as a unified psychosomatic unity.

Man was created in the Image of God with the potential for the Likeness through the virtuous use of his attributes and potentials, namely the hegemonic and royal dignity—expressed as a ruling faculty—the rational faculty, and self-determination as an expression of free choice.<sup>124</sup>

The precondition of the Image is complemented by the Likeness, so that man may be able to be made like God through the Grace of the Holy Spirit toward the Archetype, which, in the framework of the Divine Economy after the fall, refers to and is defined by the Person of Jesus Christ.

## A2. The “New Man” through Jesus Christ

After the Fall, the healing of the human being and the transcendence of fallen nature were accomplished through the Incarnation of the Son and Word of God, and through the synergy of the Trinitarian God within the body of the Church.<sup>125</sup>

The Divine Economy, following the preceding Fall, provided for the re-creation (anaplasia) of the human being through the Incarnation of the Son and Word of God in the person of Jesus Christ. The whole human race partakes of divinity and, consequently, is healed and renewed

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<sup>120</sup> Matsoukas N., *Dogmatic and Symbolic Theology III: Recapitulation and Agathotopia. Exposition of the Ecumenical Character of Christian Teaching* (Thessaloniki: Pournaras, 1997), p. 60. Gregorius Nyssenus, *De eo, quid sit ad imaginem Dei et similitudinem*, PG 44, 1336A.

<sup>121</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *De eo, quid sit ad imaginem Dei et similitudinem*, PG 44, 1344C.

<sup>122</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *De eo, quid sit ad imaginem Dei et similitudinem*, PG 44, 1344A–B.

<sup>123</sup> Gregorius Palamas, *Capita centum quinquaginta*, in *Works of Gregory Palamas*, ed. P. Christou, vol. V (Thessaloniki: Kyromanos, 1992), p. 118.

<sup>124</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *De opificio hominis* 8–9, PG 44, 144–155. Karmiris I., *Christian Ethics*, Part A (Athens: [n.pub.], 1967), p. 41.

<sup>125</sup> Symeon Novus Theologus, *Theologica* 1, 360, SC 122, p. 122; *Hymnus* 23, 26–38, SC 174, p. 190.

through Jesus Christ.<sup>126</sup> Through the Incarnation of God the Word, a "new creation" (*kaine ktisis*) is established.<sup>127</sup> The pre-eternal Word of God assumes human nature, and the human being enters into a second communion with God, which is higher than the first.<sup>128</sup>

Through the economy in Christ, the fallen "old man" is put off and the human person is clothed with "the new man, who is renewed in knowledge according to the Image of the Creator".<sup>129</sup> The Word of God, through His Incarnation, "mystically renewed our entire nature".<sup>130</sup> In the person of Christ there is revealed the new Adam, the perfect human being, who is united with God and recapitulates creation.<sup>131</sup>

The purpose of the Incarnation of God the Word is salvation, the re-creation of the human race, the contemplation (*theoria*) of divine glory, and the deification (*theosis*) of the human being by grace, "that He might make the human being god".<sup>132</sup> The renewal of the human being as the "new man", originally fashioned "according to the Image" of God, is accomplished by Christ and **takes form** within the believer through the Holy Spirit.<sup>133</sup>

In the renewal in Christ, the grace of God sanctifies human beings "wholly"<sup>134</sup> as a unified psychosomatic entity. The energy of renewing grace sanctifies both soul and body, so that the human person becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit.<sup>135</sup> The "new man" is directly related to the moral and spiritual life of the believer, who is called to abandon "the former way of life, the old man,"<sup>136</sup> and to put off the old man of the passions.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *De opificio hominis*, PG 44, 185, line 32.

<sup>127</sup> 2 Cor. 5:17.

<sup>128</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *In sanctum Pascha* (Oratio 45), PG 36, 633, line 51.

<sup>129</sup> Col. 3:9-10.

<sup>130</sup> Symeon Novus Theologus, *Ethica* 2, 218–219, SC 122, p. 382.

<sup>131</sup> Mantzaridis G., *Christian Ethics II: Man and God, Man and Fellow Man, Existential and Bioethical Positions and Perspectives* (Thessaloniki: Pournaras, 2004), p. 50.

<sup>132</sup> Symeon Novus Theologus, *Ethica* 5, 33–34, SC 129, p. 82; *Catechesis* 5, 395–397, SC 96, pp. 401–406, 410; *Hymnus* 42, 188–192, SC 196, p. 52.

<sup>133</sup> Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *De sancta Trinitate* 3, PG 75, 808C. Jo. 3:6. Gregorius Palamas, *Hyper ton hieros hesychazonton* (In Defence of the Holy Hesychasts) 1, 3, 43, in *Works of Gregory Palamas*, ed. P. Christou, vol. I (Thessaloniki: [n.pub.], 1962), p. 132.

<sup>134</sup> 1 Thess. 5:23.

<sup>135</sup> 1 Cor. 6:19.

<sup>136</sup> Eph. 4:22.

<sup>137</sup> Col. 3:5.

The "new man" is recreated and renewed through Jesus Christ within the Church, becoming a partaker of the divine nature in the Mystical Body of Christ through the Sacraments, participating in His Incarnation, Sufferings, Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension.

### **A3. Pentecost is regarded as the birthday of the Church**

After the Ascension of the Lord, His promise concerning the other Paraclete is fulfilled: “the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name.” The hypostatic presence of the Holy Spirit within the Church leads the human being to truth and salvation.<sup>138</sup>

The Church, as the Body of Christ and as the type and Image of the Holy Trinity, is a theandric (divine-human) communion of the Holy Trinity; it is a perpetual Pentecost, the witness and presence of "the Kingdom of God having come in power".<sup>139</sup> The Church, as the Body of Christ, “gathers”<sup>140</sup> all things unto Him, permeates and transforms the human being and the world.<sup>141</sup> It also possesses a Trinitarian character, as revealed in the New Testament: as the people of God the Father, as the Body of Christ, and as the temple and communion of the Holy Spirit.

All things in the Church proceed from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. In the Church stands God the Father as cause and principle of all things, the Son as He through whom all things came to be and whose Body the Church is, and the Holy Spirit as the life-giving and sanctifying power.<sup>142</sup> Wherever one Person of the Holy Trinity acts, the other Persons are also present

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<sup>138</sup> Joannes Chrysostomus, *De Pentecoste*, Homilia 1, 2, PG 50, 456. Jo. 14:16: ‘And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever’; 14:25–26: ‘But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you’; 15:26: ‘But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me’; 16:13–16: ‘Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.’

<sup>139</sup> *Official Documents of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church*, ‘Encyclical I. The Church: Body of Christ, Image of the Holy Trinity’, § 1, Crete, June 2016 <https://www.holycouncil.org/-/encyclical-holy-council> [accessed 19 October 2024]. Mc. 9:1.

<sup>140</sup> Mt. 23:37.

<sup>141</sup> *Official Documents of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church*, ‘Encyclical I. The Church: Body of Christ, Image of the Holy Trinity’, § 1.

<sup>142</sup> Karmiris I., *Orthodox Ecclesiology*, Dogmatics Part V (Athens: [n.pub.], 1973), p. 201.

and active, manifesting unity, so that “where the three are—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—there is the Church, which is the Body of the three.”<sup>143</sup>

The Church is the type and Image of the Holy Trinity, communicated as the fullness of the Trinitarian Economy,<sup>144</sup> and the energy of intra-Trinitarian love is manifested and communicated to the Church as a Likeness of perfect intra-Trinitarian love. The Church partakes of divine love, which constitutes the unifying factor; it is the place of unity and love as type and Image of God.<sup>145</sup>

The Church is the Body of the incarnate God who suffered, rose, and ascended in glory into the heavens. God and the human being were united in a real and mystical unity, in a living mystical Body, the Church, of which all Christians are members, and of which Christ is the Head of all.<sup>146</sup>

Consequently, within the Church operates the unifying power of divine energy, which gathers all sensible and intelligible beings into a single unity that depends upon communion by grace with the uncreated.

The Church embraces the whole invisible and visible creation, the intelligible and the sensible, the earthly and the heavenly: the Church militant on earth and the triumphant Church in heaven. It is type and Image of the Triune God, type and image of the human being and of the soul; it is a charismatic communion of human being and world, a unity effected through communion by grace with the Uncreated God.<sup>147</sup>

Within the Church the mystery of the salvation of the human being and of the whole creation is revealed.<sup>148</sup> The Church is the ark of salvation, in which every human being, through spiritual cultivation, may appropriate salvation by participation in the holy mysteries through divine

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<sup>143</sup> Tertullianus, *De baptismo* 6, in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (CSEL) 20, ed. by the Academy of Sciences of Vienna (Vienna, 1866), p. 206.

<sup>144</sup> Eph. 1:23.

<sup>145</sup> Staniloae D., *God, the World, and Man* (Athens: Armos, 1990), p. 119.

<sup>146</sup> Karmiris I., *The Ecclesiology of the Three Hierarchs* (Athens: [n.pub.], 1962), p. 82. Maximus Confessor, *Capita theologica*, PG 90, 1136.

<sup>147</sup> Maximus Confessor, *Ambigua ad Joannem*, PG 91, 1033 (cf. PG 90, 436). Clemens Alexandrinus, *Paedagogus* II, 1, PG 8, 388. Karmiris I., *Synopsis of the Dogmatic Teaching of the Orthodox Catholic Church* (Athens: [n.pub.], 1960), pp. 78–79.

<sup>148</sup> Lossky V., *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, trans. by S. Plevraki (Thessaloniki: [n.pub.], 2007), p. 118.

grace.<sup>149</sup> The saving and sanctifying work of the Church, beyond her spiritual teaching, is accomplished also through her mysteries.

The Mysteries (Sacraments) are the "gateways" (thyrides), the sensible symbols through which the uncreated grace of God enters and is bestowed upon the world. The Divine Economy in Christ is recapitulated in the Mysteries of Baptism, Chrismation, and the Divine Eucharist.<sup>150</sup> The fruitfulness of the divine mysteries unquestionably presupposes the synergy of the believer through moral and spiritual cultivation, so that divine grace may be active and the human being may be led towards perfection in the life in Christ.

Cyprian of Carthage emphasises that salvation exists only within the Church.<sup>151</sup> The Trinitarian God bestows His mercy upon human beings within the Church through her mysteries, by which transformation is affected and salvation is granted.<sup>152</sup>

Through the grace of the mysteries of the Church, the human being is able to attain Likeness to God by grace through the uncreated divine energies.<sup>153</sup> Through Baptism, Chrismation, the Divine Eucharist, and the other mysteries, the human being becomes a partaker of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and a member of the Body of Christ.

Alongside the Christological dimension of the Church, the energy and presence of the Holy Spirit within the Church are also essential, since the Paraclete sanctifies and bestows grace upon her members unceasingly, at Pentecost, when the gifts of the Holy Spirit were poured out and continue to abide in the Church.<sup>154</sup> The gifts of the Holy Spirit are distributed through the mysteries of the Church for the sanctification and salvation of the faithful, as members of the Body of Christ.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Karmiris I., *Synopsis of the Dogmatic Teaching of the Orthodox Catholic Church* (Athens: [n.pub.], 1960), p. 51. Joannes Chrysostomus, *In Genesim*, Homilia 16, 5–6, PG 53, 131.

<sup>150</sup> Nicolaus Cabasilas, *De vita in Christo* 1, PG 150, 504A–B. Symeon Novus Theologus, *Hymnus* 55, 137–141, SC 196, p. 264; *Catechesis* 5, SC 104, p. 412.

<sup>151</sup> Cyprianus Carthaginiensis, *Epistula* 73, 21, PL 3, 1169A.

<sup>152</sup> Lossky V., *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Thessaloniki: [n.pub.], 2007), p. 217. Symeon Novus Theologus, *Ethica* 13, 170–171, SC 129, p. 412. Maximus Confessor, *Mystagogia* (Athens: Apostoliki Diakonia, 1973), p. 224.

<sup>153</sup> Harrison V., 'Receptacle Imagery in St. Gregory of Nyssa's Anthropology', *Studia Patristica* (SP) 22 (1989), p. 24. Gregorius Nyssenus, *De anima et resurrectione*, PG 46, 105A; *De opificio hominis*, PG 44, 184C. Symeon Novus Theologus, *Ethica* 1, SC 122, p. 256.

<sup>154</sup> Jo. 16:4. Act. 1:8. 1 Pet. 4:8. Act. 2:1. Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 41, 9, PG 36, 441.

<sup>155</sup> Act. 2:38, 41. 1 Cor. 12:13. Lc. 3:16. 1 Cor. 10:16–17. Act. 8:14–17.

#### A4. The “Deified” Human Being

The human being was fashioned as a “mortal creature from the earth,” with reference to visible creation, and God honoured him with “immortal grace,” with reference to the invisible creation, so that he might contemplate and glorify God.<sup>156</sup> Life in Christ renews the human being and restores him from the Fall to what is “according to nature,” while offering the possibility of deification and union with God, so that he may attain what is “beyond nature.”<sup>157</sup> There exists an indissoluble relationship between the Incarnation of God and the deification of the human being, inasmuch as God granted the human being the possibility of becoming like Him and of becoming a son by grace.<sup>158</sup>

Through the Incarnation of the Son and Word of God, the deification of the human being is accomplished: God became human so that the human being might become god by position and by grace, since He assumed and deified human nature.<sup>159</sup> Christ opens to the human being the path of salvation and deification.

Through theosis, the Likeness and union of the human person with God are accomplished by grace.<sup>160</sup> The whole human being, soul and body, is sanctified and becomes god by grace. The human being is the only creature made according to the Image of the Triune God, as possessing mind, word, and spirit that gives life to the body—“since the body, too, is that which is given life”<sup>161</sup>—and is receptive to divine illumination, so that the “according to the Likeness” may be brought to completion and fulfilment.

According to Symeon the New Theologian, beyond the Trinitarian reference of the “according to the Image,” the “according to the Likeness” designates the divine attributes and the glory of God.<sup>162</sup> In this supremely radiant garment of glory, the potential of the “according to the

<sup>156</sup> Gregorius Palamas, *Homilia 11: De pretiosa et vivifica cruce*, 18, PG 151, 137B. Symeon Novus Theologus, *Hymnus 4*, 58–64, SC 156, p. 194; *Ethica 13*, 131–133, SC 129, p. 410; *Hymnus 53*, 112–132, SC 196, p. 220.

<sup>157</sup> Athanasius Magnus, *De incarnatione Verbi* 54, PG 25, 192B. Mantzaridis G., *Christian Ethics II*, p. 511.

<sup>158</sup> Symeon Novus Theologus, *Ethica 1.3*, SC 122, lines 80–88 and 107–108, pp. 282–284.

<sup>159</sup> Symeon Novus Theologus, *Ethica 1.3*, SC 122, p. 198; *Ethica 1.3*, SC 122, lines 80–88 and 107–108, pp. 282–284. Mantzaridis G., *Christian Ethics II*, p. 676. Irenaeus Lugdunensis, *Adversus Haereses 5*, 1.1, PG 7, 1120.

<sup>160</sup> Nicolaus Cabasilas, *De vita in Christo* 6, PG 150, 680A–B.

<sup>161</sup> Symeon Novus Theologus, *Ethica 6*, 161–178, SC 129, pp. 130–132.

<sup>162</sup> Symeon Novus Theologus, *Ethica 10*, 769–773, SC 129, p. 314; *Ethica 4*, 665–668, SC 129, p. 56; *Theologica 2*, 209–218, SC 122, pp. 144–146; *Ethica 4*, 673–677, SC 129, p. 56; *Theologica 1*, 217–222, SC 122, pp. 110–112. 1 Tim. 2:9. Is. 61:3.

Likeness” is fulfilled through the light of the glory of the virtues and through union with God by grace, namely deification.

The purpose of the creation of the human being is “assimilation and union with God, insofar as this is possible.”<sup>163</sup> God created the human being in order that he might become a participant “in deification by grace” and a sharer in the divine attributes, and thus become like Him.<sup>164</sup> In the “according to the Image and according to the Likeness” of the human being lie the presuppositions of deification as a gift of the Trinitarian God,<sup>165</sup> so that the human being may become “three-hypostatic,” “one God by grace,” a divine offspring “according to the Image and according to the Likeness” of God.<sup>166</sup>

The created human being, having his reference to the Uncreated Archetype, is able, as one who bears His Image, to become like God through the God-man Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, and, by participating in the uncreated energies, to be deified, becoming god by grace.

After the Resurrection, the human nature of Christ becomes a “dwelling place” of the Holy Spirit and a “channel” for the outpouring of divine grace upon the whole of creation. Thus, the incarnate Logos becomes the “first-fruits” of all humanity, the “second beginning of those upon the earth,” the “last Adam,” the “Firstborn” among many brethren, the “Firstborn from the dead,” our “Forerunner” in heaven, the “way to resurrection and life.” “Our Lord Jesus Christ tasted death on behalf of all, yet rose again on the third day, and became the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep, and the root of those who through Him are transformed unto life, and as it were the beginning of human nature casting off corruption; and we have been enriched with unshaken hopes of life eternal.”<sup>167</sup> In the purified and deified intellect, through the grace and

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<sup>163</sup> Dionysius Areopagita, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* 4, PG 3, 376A.

<sup>164</sup> Maximus Confessor, *Capita varia* 1, 41, PG 90, 1193D.

<sup>165</sup> Maximus Confessor, *Capita varia* 1, 75, PG 90, 1209C.

<sup>166</sup> Symeon Novus Theologus, *Catechesis* 15, 68–99, SC 104, p. 228.

<sup>167</sup> Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *In Isaiam* 3, 1, PG 70, 588B; *De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate* 2, PG 68, 217B–C, 244A, 245A; 9, PG 68, 613C, 617A–B; 10, PG 68, 708B; 15, PG 68, 1096A–B; *Glaphyra in Octateuchum* 2, 3, PG 69, 521A; 3, PG 69, 541A–B; 4, PG 69, 620D; *Expositio in Psalmos*, Ps. 40, 2, PG 69, 993B; *In Jeremiam*, PG 70, 1453A–B; *In Lucam*, PG 72, 485A, 500B, 524B, 564A; *In Joannem* 2, 1, PG 73, 228D; 3, 4, PG 73; *De sancta Trinitate* 1, 3, PG 75, 853B–C; 6, PG 75, 1008B–C, 1037D, 1044B.

energy of the Spirit, the intelligible visions of the age to come are revealed, as it is raised above all sensible and intelligible creation.<sup>168</sup>

## A5. The Resurrection

On the last day there will be the resurrection of the dead and the renewal of the whole of creation.<sup>169</sup> Initially, when the “last trumpet” sounds, the reunion of souls with their bodies will take place, the dead will be raised, and they will arise from their tombs.<sup>170</sup> The corruptible will put on incorruption and the mortal immortality; the dead will first rise in Christ, and the living will be caught up “in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”<sup>171</sup>

Thereafter, the Second Coming will occur. It will be preceded by the sign of the Cross, and “they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”<sup>172</sup> The Resurrection of the Lord became the first-fruits of the resurrection, and at the Second Coming human beings will be raised, souls will be united with their bodies, they will cast off corruption and be rendered incorruptible.<sup>173</sup> God, Jesus Christ, is “the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end,”<sup>174</sup> the “Firstborn from the dead”<sup>175</sup>; He is life and the Resurrection. Christ is “He who is and who was and who is to come,” the “Father of the age to come.”<sup>176</sup>

<sup>168</sup> Nicodemus Hagiorita, *New Ladder: Interpretation of the Seventy-Five Anabathmoi of the Octoechos* (Thessaloniki: Rigopoulos, 1976), pp. 110–111. Citterio E., ‘Nicodemo Agiorita’, in *La Théologie byzantine et sa tradition*, eds C. G. Conticello and V. Contoumas-Conticello, vol. II (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), pp. 961–965. Petrus Damascenus, ‘On the Seven Bodily Actions’, in *Philokalia*, vol. III (Athens: Astir, 1991), p. 25.

<sup>169</sup> Joannes Damascenus, *Adversus eos qui sacras imagines abiciunt* 1, PG 94, 1300A–B.

<sup>170</sup> 1 Thess. 4:17: ‘Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.’

<sup>171</sup> Is. 26:19. Ez. 37:1–14. Jo. 5:28–29; 11:23–24. Apoc. 20:13. 1 Cor. 15:12–20, 15:51, 15:35–36. 1 Thess. 4:15–17. Joannes Damascenus, *Expositio accurata fidei orthodoxae*, intro. and comm. by N. Matsoukas (Thessaloniki: Kyriakidis, 2020), pp. 442–443.

<sup>172</sup> Mt. 24:30.

<sup>173</sup> Joannes Damascenus, *Expositio accurata fidei orthodoxae*, pp. 442–443, 452–453. 1 Cor. 15:51–53. Apoc. 20:11. Dan. 7:9–10. 1 Cor. 15:24–28. Christodoulos, Archbishop of Athens, *The Second Coming*, 2nd edn (Athens: Chrysopigi, 2004), pp. 81–101. Maximus Confessor, *Capita theologica et oeconomica* 1, 68, PG 90, 1108C; *Capita varia* 4, 51–52, PG 90, 1328B–C. Jo. 11:25–26. Eph. 2:4–7.

<sup>174</sup> Apoc. 22:13.

<sup>175</sup> Rom. 8:29.

<sup>176</sup> Nicolaus Cabasilas, *De vita in Christo* 6, PG 150, 680C. Mantzaridis G., *Christian Ethics II*, p. 677. Apoc. 1:4.

Every human being will partake of and participate in eternal life, according to his or her receptivity,<sup>177</sup> within the context of eschatological glory, with “new heavens and a new earth.”<sup>178</sup> The last day of the Lord’s Coming, according to His promise, will be fulfilled when His longsuffering for the salvation of the human being is completed, in accordance with each person’s spiritual condition.<sup>179</sup>

Consequently, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the first-fruits of the resurrection of the human being, and on the last day the human soul will once again be united with the body. The human being will attain psychosomatic unity as a single, integral person “according to the Image” and “according to the Likeness” of God, and will stand before the glory of the risen Son of Man and Son of God—that is, the God-man Jesus Christ—who redeemed humanity through His Passion, in order to grant salvation within His Body, which is the Church.

## Conclusions

Orthodox anthropology, as derived from the Patristic Tradition and the Ecclesiological Experience, constitutes a cohesive and ontologically complete system for viewing human existence, organically articulated across the six stages of the Divine Economy. The internal coherence of these stages does not stem from a linear historical sequence, but originates from the event of Creation and culminates in the Resurrection and Deification offering a comprehensive Christocentric and Trinitarian perspective on human life.

In the first stage, the creation of man as a psychosomatic unity highlights that human existence is not simply the result of a natural process, but the fruit of God's creative energy, who breathes a living soul and makes man the central bond between the visible and invisible worlds. This divine Breath introduces man into a state of primary communion with God, excluding any reduction to materialistic or psychological anthropologies.

The second stage, the interpretation of the "Image" and the "Likeness", reveals a profound Trinitarian dimension of human existence. The Image does not merely denote a receptivity or a potential, but expresses the actual structure of the soul as Trinitarian in type, comprising Mind,

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<sup>177</sup> Maximus Confessor, *Capita varia* 4, 53, PG 90, 1328D.

<sup>178</sup> 2 Pet. 3:13.

<sup>179</sup> 2 Pet. 3:9. Gregorius Palamas, *Homilia* 21, PG 151, 277A–B.

Logos, and Spirit, a fact that enables the ontological possibility of deification. The Likeness, as a journey of participation in the uncreated energies of God, reveals that man is predestined from the beginning for a dynamic movement of transcendence, an ontological trajectory from "being" to "towards being", as this is foundationally established ecclesiologically and Trinitarianly.

The Fall and the Renewal in Christ constitute the third stage, where it is highlighted that human nature, though tarnished, does not lose its receptivity to Grace. The Incarnation of the Logos has a universal ontological character, as Christ assumes the whole of human nature, initiating a new anthropology: the "new man through Jesus". This event constitutes not only a soteriological breakthrough but also an ontological transformation, during which Christ becomes the new beginning of humanity, the foundation for the recapitulation of creation.

Of crucial importance is the fourth stage, where the Church is the vital space for the Theanthropic Communion. The Church, as the "Body of Christ" and the "Image of the Holy Trinity", constitutes the historical and simultaneously eschatological realization of the Divine Economy. Pentecost is not a past event but a continuous state of the Church, in which uncreated Grace is distributed to its members through the Mysteries. Orthodox anthropology, therefore, cannot be detached from Ecclesiology, as man is not saved as an individual entity, but as a person integrated into a community that is a unified and living Body.

In the fifth stage, Deification is presented beyond mere ethical perfection, also as the ontological transformation of man through participation in the uncreated energies of God. Deification completes human existence to the degree that it restores it to its true natural state, to the wholeness of the Image and the fullness of the Likeness. Union with God makes man "god by Grace", while preserving his ontological distinctiveness intact. Here, the Orthodox tradition transcends every Gnostic, monistic, or anthropocentric paradigm, promoting a theocentric anthropology in which man grounds his existence within the Divine Life.

The eschatological stage of the Resurrection constitutes the culmination and simultaneously the seal of Orthodox anthropology. Resurrection is not simply the re-establishment of the psychosomatic unity, but the full transformation of man into incorruptibility, which makes his nature receptive to eternal life. Participation in the eschatological Glory of Christ is personal and collective, depending on the spiritual state and receptivity of each individual. Here, the final destiny of creation and man is manifested most clearly, namely the eschatological perspective within the space of the Kingdom of God, where man lives the fullness of his communion with God.

Overall, Orthodox anthropology has an ontological, Christocentric, and Trinitarian character, in which man is not an autonomous being, but a "hypostasis", a person who receives his being from God and is led to fullness through Grace. Orthodox anthropology thus remains a fundamental contribution to the contemporary dialogue concerning man, proposing a model of existence that transcends not only materialistic or technocratic approaches but also one-dimensional anthropologies that disregard the theological core of the human person.

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