

GLOSSARY

Essence (οὐσία-ousia)

God's essence and His energies are pre-eternal and uncreated. God's essence, that is His essential nature, is inaccessible and unknowable to us, and therefore will always remain a *mystery*.

The distinction between God's essence and His energies guarantees God's ultimate unknowability whilst simultaneously giving us the possibility to achieve intimate and personal communion with Him through His energies, for these are accessible to us.

Heart (καρδιά-kardia)

The heart is a biblical word little understood these days, yet it has a truly profound dimension. The heart is where union with God may be consummated; as such it has a spiritual dimension. More than an emotional centre or a physical organ, the heart is a receptacle for all good and evil. The heart is our psychosomatic centre, the deepest and most profound part of our being; it is our "inner *man*;" out of which the energies of the *psyche* issue forth.

There is a close connection between the *nous*, the *psyche*, the heart, and the “inner man.”

Holy Oblation

The Holy Oblation occurs on the Holy Altar, it is the part of the Divine Liturgy during which the Eucharistic elements are offered to God, and so become His Blood and Body.

Holy Paten

The Holy Paten is a metal plate set on a solid base. It is on this plate that the pieces of bread, which later will become Christ’s Body, are carefully placed; so that they can be safely transferred to the Holy Table.

Kingdom of God (Βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ– Basileia tou Theou)

The Kingdom of God means, the “Rule of God,” and also the “Ruling power of God;” although all pervading and ever-present, it is spiritual and beyond all sensible and intelligible categories. The Kingdom of God also refers to our participation in the divine life of the Holy Trinity, making the chosen person through Grace what God is by nature. The Kingdom of

God and the Kingdom of Heaven are synonymous.

St. Symeon the New Theologian describes it in the following way, “for those who become children of light and sons of the day to come, for those who always walk in the light, the Day of the Lord will never come, for they are already with God and in God.”

Logos (Λόγος-Logos)

The Greek word *logos* already had a long history before it was used by St. John. Its three principle meanings are: “think,” “reckon,” and “speak.” Like all things rational, *logos* at its most profound level conveys: “the meaning,” “the ordering,” and “reasonable content.” In time, this also came to be identified with “Universal Reason,” and “Creative Reason.”

St. John completes the philosophical truths of the Ancient Greeks, by connecting them to the Jewish Tradition of his day. So when St. John’s Gospel tells us, “In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was

made. In Him exists life, and the life was the light of men ... And the Logos became flesh and dwelt among us..." St. John clearly states that Jesus Christ is the Logos. The Logos, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, is also known as the Wisdom, Intellect and Providence of God. It is in the Logos that creation finds its reason, cause, and purpose.

Man (ἄνθρωπος-anthropos)

Along with the Holy Bible, theology frequently uses the word man in a generic sense for both man and woman, in other words ecclesiastical language is inclusive. Man is the only creature to be made in the "image and likeness" (Genesis 1:26) of God, and as such was God's crowning achievement. God's vision of humanity far exceeds our limited understanding, this can partly be seen in Christ's saying, "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven" (Matthew 22:30).

Mystery (μυστήριον-mysterion)

The Greek word, mystery, originally meant "initiation," "secret," or "revelation of a secret."

Christianity inherited this meaning, and by extension it came to mean "revelation from God."

The Mysteries are both a symbol and a mystery. As long as the mystery remains "veiled," the rituals remain on the symbolic and iconographic level; but when one is receptive and Grace acts, then the Mysteries reveal that which is behind the "veil" (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:16; 4:3). Mystery carries the dual connotation of something both hidden and revealed, both a riddle and a revelation together.

There are seven main mysteries established by Christ himself, including Confession, Baptism and Holy Eucharist; but their number is potentially limitless, because in the Church all things work in a mysterious way to reveal the *Kingdom of God*.

Nous (νοῦς-nous)

The nous is our highest faculty. It has been called: the "eye of the *psyche*," the "eye of the *heart*," and also the "energy of the *psyche*." When cleansed, the nous resides and operates from within the *heart*; it can perceive God and the spiritual principals that underlie creation; it is cognitive, visionary, and intuitive. The Met-

ropolitan of Nafpaktos, Hierotheos said, “The nous is in the image of God. And in as much as God is light, the nous too has light mirrored in it by the Grace of God.”

After *man’s* fall and the “fragmentation” of the *psyche*, the nous will invariably identify itself with the mind, the imagination, the senses, or even the body – losing sight of its pure unalloyed state.

Panagia (Παναγία–Panagia)

The Virgin Mary is known by many names that are both descriptive and honorific. One of the most popular of these is Panagia, which literally means the “All-Holy One.”

Prothesis (πρόθεσις–prothesis)

Prothesis describes both the place and the preparation of the bread and wine, which will become the Body and Blood of Christ. The prothesis is to the left of the Holy Altar, and in traditionally built Churches it is set in a small apse. The body of Christ means the whole Church, which includes the angelic hosts, the *Panagia*, the saints, and all the faithful both living and departed.

Psyche (ψυχή–psyche)

The most important and least understood of all Biblical words is the word psyche. The Orthodox understanding of psyche remains unified and unchanged. The psyche is a pure unalloyed essence which animates the body and gives it life; it is our immaterial nature, created yet eternal, comprising of our cognitive, conative, and affective aspects, including both the conscious and the unconscious. It naturally follows that psychic health precedes salvation.

In order to encapsulate the full meaning of the word psyche as understood by traditional Christianity, we will have to combine the meanings of five English words: “soul,” “life,” “breath,” “psyche,” and “mind.”

In the West, the soul has become a debased and ambiguous term; the psyche, its original biblical counterpart, has now constellated into two distinct conceptual fields. The words “soul,” “life” and “breath” form one field. The words “psyche” (as in modern *psychology*) and “mind” (as in the *mind*-body dichotomy) comprise the other field. As such, there is little or no connection between “psychic” health and the eternal animating principle known as “soul.”

This dislocation is indicative of a deep spiritual malady in Western *man*.

Repentance (μετάνοια–metanoia)

Repentance means: a change of *heart*, a change of mind – its literal meaning is a change of *nous* (i.e. meta-*nous*). Repentance is more than regret or contrition; it requires a fundamental change of life.

Christ tells us that the path for approaching the *Kingdom of God* is repentance. A more accurate translation of Matthew 4:17, is “Keep repenting for the *Kingdom* is at hand;” in other words, not once but continually. We must continually re-direct ourselves, until we achieve life’s objective –union with God– as such repentance is a *mystery*.

Repentance is not legalistic; i.e. if a penance is given during confession by the spiritual confessor, this will be purely for therapeutic reasons, whose aim is to clear the *nous* and the *heart* from *sin*.

Sin (ἁμαρτία–hamartia)

In Christianity, hamartia means “estrangement from God,” or more accurately “failure

to achieve one’s destiny,” correspondingly the verb harmartanein means “to fall short of ones destiny” – the original meaning was “to miss the mark.” These words were later translated as “sin,” “to sin.”

The primary objective of human life is to unite with God; so any action or even thought that estranges us from God is a sin. As St. Paul tells us, “The sting of death is sin” (1 Corinthians 16:56); sin has no legalistic dimension, it is simply estrangement from Life.

Theologian (θεολόγος–theologos)

Theology deals with God, our participation in Him, and the underlying divine reality inherent in creation. It is far more than intellectual and scholarly discourse about God, and is not acquired through academic study.

A real theologian is someone who has reached intimate communion with God and has perception of the spiritual world. To quote Evagrius, “If you are a theologian, you will pray truly; and if you truly pray, you are a theologian;” whilst St. Maximus the Confessor and St. Gregory Palamas says, “Our devotion lies not in words but in realities.”

Theosis (θέωσις-Theosis)

Theosis literally means to become gods by Grace. The Biblical words that are synonymous and descriptive of Theosis are: adoption, redemption, inheritance, glorification, holiness and perfection. Theosis is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit, whereby through Grace one becomes a participant in the *Kingdom of God*. Theosis is an act of the uncreated and infinite love of God. It begins here in time and space, but it is not static or complete, and is an open-ended progression uninterrupted through all eternity.

Theotokos (Θεοτόκος-Theotokos)

The title Theotokos given to the Virgin Mary means “Mother of God;” its literal translation is “God-birthgiver.” This title was affirmed by the third Œcumenical Synod (431 AD) to declare that Christ was truly and fully God even before His incarnation.

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