

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND HIS LOGOS – THE PERFECT MODEL OF INTERSUBJECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

From eternity, The Father, the one Cause and unique ontological and ontogenetical principle of the Holy Trinity, freely and consciously utters Himself, giving birth to His countenance. In this exceptional relationship of being, the Father Himself is One and bears full paternity within Himself, and that is only in relation to His Only Son, who bears full filiation within Himself, but only in relation to the Father. But the Son, in His own turn, is born of the Father, not being passive whatsoever in regard to the course of the act of birth. Thus, freely, and from His endless love, The Father, outside of time, and giving Himself fully, hypostatizes His existence, His to be, in the Son and the Spirit.

Keywords: Holy Trinity; ontogenesis; monarchy; hypostasis; essence;

INTRODUCTION

The dialogic principle of interpersonal communication is *consummated* plerarily between the persons in the Trinity of God. From the very beginning, the confessional paradigm of divine personalism consists of the love-knowledge rapport between God the Father (underived Godhood) and His monogenetic Son. The Fathers of the Church, as authorized interpreters of the word of Scripture, have brought to light the relationship between God the Father and His hypostatic Son, interpreting it as an inexhaustible dialogue of love and self-giving, which unfurls in the boundless *chronology* of the eternity of the One who is forever being.

The German language allows for an essential component from the point of view of communication to be perceived within the notion of Logos. It is the closeness in sound and meaning between *Wort*, word, and *Antwort*, answer. True communication cannot be reduced to one way, but always alternates between giving and receiving, speaking¹ and listening. Such is communication within the Holy Trinity. The Son is the Word of Godly and Fatherly love, but also the Answer of love given back to His Progenitor.

¹ „Discourse meets the discourse of the other upon the paths that lead to its object and enter an intense, vivid interaction with it” – Tzvetan TODOROV, *Mikhail Bakhtine: Le principe dialogique (Mikhail Bakhtine: The dialogic principle)*, Seuil Publishing House, Paris, 1981, p. 99.

This study wishes to be a sensitive radiography of the Eastern body of ideas concerning the Trinity, thematically and systematically constructed upon the substantial and dialogical relationship of the Divine Logos with the *Αρχή* of Godhood. To put this study together, I have used several research methods, of which I mention: the analytical method, the hermeneutical method, the comparative method, the symbolic method, the historical method, all of this contributing to the interweaving of dogmas, concepts and symbolic imagery appropriate to such a remarkably generous, but also demanding theme such as Christian triadology.

The classical discourse of the Church rejects the modern deduction of theist meanings, to which it opposes the infallible vision of Scripture. As follows, we must remain faithful to the truths revealed in the Holy Scriptures, even though we are using a language with a philosophical resonance.

1. THE PERSONAL-DIALOGIC CHARACTER OF GOD. THE MONARCHY OF THE FATHER AND COMMUNIONAL APPANAGE²

The doctrine regarding the Tri-Unity of God (the three Persons of Godhood) cannot be fully comprehended by man, given that he dwells between limits. The concept is beyond the understanding of our limited mind. Nevertheless, through revelation, God has offered man a considerable *baggage* of information about the Trinity in the Holy Scripture, information that man can and must understand. Although the term *Trinity* is not exposed word-by-word in the pages of The Bible, the Trinity and all it encompasses is nevertheless referred to from *Genesis* to *Revelation*. Starting from the *key notes* of the Biblical corpus, Christian triadology, consecrated from a synodal-ecumenical point of view in the fourth century³, through a high *effort* and *tensions* of the soul, has undergone a fortunate doctrinal evolution, advancing in ecclesiastical *thought*, from the theme of divine substantialism to that of trinitarian personalism. As such, the unity of being, of work and of will in the Holy

² The fact that God is love represents the core of His nature or His substance. We are not merely told that God has love or that God loves, but that God is love (*I John 4:16*). God cannot be love if He cannot direct His love toward another person. And for that to be possible, there must be an eternal person toward whom He might direct this love, as God is the only One who is Eternal. Thus, God has to have loved from Eternity, not intrapersonally but interpersonally. The *God* worshipped by the ancient antitrinitarians, and later by Muslims, Jehovah's Witnesses and socinian unitarians, is one entity, and therefore, incomplete. How so? Scripture teaches that God is love and love must have an object! As such, a singular eternal being would not have had anyone to love, before His creation, human beings, that He could love. This would render such a god imperfect, needing created beings to love. As such, from Eternity, „The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand” (*John 3:35*). On Mount Tabor, at the *Transfiguration of The Lord*, God the Father made His love for the Son public: „This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” (*Matthew 17:5*).

³ During the first three century of the history of the Church, as they were explained the teachings on the Holy Trinity, Christians found themselves exposed to the same accusations they brought pagans: that of believing in several divinities, that is, being polytheists. And this is why their symbols of faith, which, in all their different forms, for three centuries, began with the words *Πιστεύομεν ἕνα θεόν* – *Credimus in Deum*, meaning *We believe in God*, and beginning with the fourth century, there is an addition, perhaps unnoticeable, but one which is never omitted afterwards: *Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα θεόν* – *Credimus in unum Deum*, which means *We believe in the One God*.

Trinity is concentrated and accentuated upon the hypostasis of God and the Father, not upon Divine nature⁴.

In the personalist *climate* of the Trinity, a primacy of the Father⁵, called *monarchy*, which is based upon the idea that the unity of the Trinity originates from eternity, from the Father. We are referring to an already personalized unity, because „unity is from the Father, to and toward whom the other persons are counted”⁶. The first article of the Niceo-Constantinopolitan Symbol underlines the following faith truth: „I believe in one God the Father Almighty, but „Father Almighty” is not separated from „one God”, but one with it. The comma is not placed after „God”, but after the word „almighty.” The unity of the three persons of the Godhead is given by the fact that the Father is perfectly united with the Son (substantially), as is the Holy Spirit with the Son”⁷. The father is a person-and-eternal-love-relationship and does not exist as a person outside of that relationship. That is why, before anything, the Father cannot be conceived as an *Αρχή* of Godhood, and only after that can a relationship of eternal love be recognized in Him. The Father must be spoken of as the eternal act-of-love-person. Thus, the unity and infinity of God eternally come from unique act that stands under the *crown* of a *relentless* mystery. „The Father, in order to be a Father, cannot be separated from the Son, because the name of the Father means their communion, for neither the One who sends Him, nor the One who brings Him can be separated from one another or lack from one another. Thus, we expand the Monad into a Triad, which cannot be lessened”⁸.

But the situation changes once we refer to trinitarian ontology, because each of Them is found in Their Co-Equals, being One in the Others, as it can be deduced from the intratrinitarian concept of perichoresis. „We do not calculate by composition, starting from one to multiple, by adding, saying one, two, three, or first, second, third (*Isaiah* 44:6). We have not heard of a Second God even today. For, worshipping God of God, we confess the remarkable property of the hypostases and monarchy, without breaking God into a divided multitude”⁹, noted Saint Basil, the Archbishop of Cappadocian Caesarea. Without considering the monarchy of the Father a shallow or obsolete concept, Orthodox theology sees in it an unsuspected spiritual depth, probed through a cataphatic-apophatic synthesis, like that of Father Dumitru Stăniloae, meant to express the antinomy between the One

⁴ There is a difference between the two manners of expressing the mystery of the Trinity of God. As follows, Eastern Fathers begin from the Divine Persons, meaning, from plurality, to reach the unity of nature, whereas Latin fathers begin from the unity of divine nature to reach the three hypostases. In other words, „Latin consider personality as a mode of nature; Greeks consider nature as a content of person” (Theodore de Régnon, *Études de théologie positive sur la Sainte Trinité*, I, Paris, 1892, p. 433).

⁵ Eastern theology confesses that the intimacy of the Godly persons is one without mixture. As follows, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one in all regards, with the exception of unbirth, birth and origination. The principle of unity in Godhood is the person of the Father, who eternally gives birth to the Son and originates the Holy Spirit, which is the Source of Godhood – *πηγία θεότης*.

⁶ Saint Gregory of NAZIANZUS, *Oratio* 42, 16, in Jaques-Paul Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* (abbreviated PG) 36, 477.

⁷ Saint Gregory of NYSSA, *Contra Eunomium*, 1, 42, Migne, PG 45, 464.

⁸ Saint Athanasius of ALEXANDRIA, *De sententia Dionysii*, 16-17, Migne, PG 25, 504 CD-505A.

⁹ Saint Basil of CAESAREA, *Liber de Spiritu Sancto*, 18, Migne, PG 32, 149.

person creating Godhood and the three eternal hypostases, together-beginningless, together-creating and filled with Godhood, but also together-ruling in the Kingdom of Eternal Love. Taking advantage of the monarchy of the Father when it comes to the ruling of human society or the Church is wrong, because it is incongruous with divine revelation. It *erodes* Christian spirituality and impedes the rapports of genuine brotherhood within the Church that must be extended at the level of the entire society. The personalist-communal direction and the spiritual one, which result from the balance-knowledge *mechanism*, are eliminated through some rapports of a legal nature, of the force-determination type. For this very reason, due to perichoresis, in the *ontic geography* of the Trinity, one cannot speak of the priority of one person to another, not even a priority of the Father. At this level, the Trinity is a communion of equals without a hierarchy, for the unity of the Trinity is neither accomplished through the monarchy of the Father, as a *matrix* of Godly ontogenesis, nor through the link of personal unity in the Holy Spirit (the filioquist manner), but through the perichoresis of eternal love. „The pure character of the divine Subjects entails Their full inter-subjectivity, a term that highlights the positive communion that takes place between the Persons of the Holy Trinity. That is why One God and three Egos are spoken of. The three Subjects do not separate from One Another, One from the conscience of The Others, to reveal Godhood subsisting separately. Through this, the subjectivity of any divine Ego is not narrowed, but widened, encompassing the Others as well in a certain manner. Each lives through the manners of living of the Others, but not as His, but as Theirs.”¹⁰

In the thought of the Cappadocian Fathers, the priority of the Divine Persons to their relationships is not admitted, because in the trinitarian effective, the persons and their properties are similar. However, one must take two essential aspects into consideration. On one hand, we must remember the fact that the divine being is not a glacial single term, but has a strongly relational character, which allows the person to abound in its interior structure. On the other hand, the union between being and person is so profound that Eastern patristic theology states that, in regard to God, when we look for the Person, we see the Being, and when we look for the Being, we see Godliness in all of its three-person *expansion*.

„This understanding of the Trinity, although not denying the unity of being between the Persons, is profoundly personalist and one does not see the inclination to deduce the Persons from being within it. The divine being is only in the Persons, because it is communicated from the Person of the Father. At the origin of everything is a Person Father, not an essence. In the Holy Trinity, the Father is in an eternal act of Self-giving, the Son is in an eternal act of receiving The Father and the Holy Spirit is in an eternal participation in the joy of the Father who gives Himself and the Son who receives Him”¹¹.

The existence of *cleavage* between persons and unity explains the alternance that exists between the Father, as a constitutive factor of Godly existential reality, superior to

¹⁰ Dumitru STĂNILAOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (The Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. I, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1978, p. 207.

¹¹ Idem, *Sfânta Treime creatoarea, mântuitoarea și ținta veșnică a tuturor credincioșilor (Holy Trinity, the creator, savior and eternal aim of all believers)*, in *Ortodoxia* nr. 2/1986, pp. 16-17.

unity, and divine life, where the Trinity becomes dependent on the immovable unity of its Hypostases. Thus, the Divine Persons do not remain still after the pattern of the divine being, but move, out of love for mankind, through uncreated energies.

On the other hand, Orthodox theology is, in its entirety, a *feast* apart, that evokes the authenticity of the texts of Holy Scriptures, referring to the unmediated presence of the three-personed Godhead in the area of mundane iconomy. Theology, as a *pulse* of church life, conjugates the way of being of Divinity on all its levels (the biblical-exegetical, the patristic, the liturgical, the spiritual-moral): the perfect and eternal Love between Me, You, Him or that *We* that simultaneously encompasses the Unborn, the Born and the Originated.¹² We worship the Father as the Factor of the personal-unitarian life of God, as a Reason for the birth of his Son and as an Originator of the Holy Spirit; as the ultimate, Self-reflecting Subject, but also as a Subject that reflects on other Subjects; Subject of other Subjects, equal to Him in infinity and boundlessness; as eternal Love¹³ which hypostatizes His existence, His *to be* in the Trinity of Persons. The Son as the Whole of the Whole, an utterance of the Father, an utterance of His *thought*.

In Him, the Boundless is united with the bound, and through him, the expression of the beauty of the primordial Countenance comes to His own, to each of our own countenances. And the Holy Spirit, the One who ineffably comes from the Father, as an expression of the Power and Wisdom of God; the same in Himself forever, but unseparated from the Father and the Son. We can define the Trinity as the movement of One who is no longer confined within loneliness, as the love-filled movement of the Father toward the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Trinity is the movement of the Three Persons, who do not separate one from another, one from the existence of the other, but converge in the oneness of Their perfect nature. Concretely, we are part of a *feast* which opens the Mystery of our existence to our profound intuition, but also its ultimate Meaning. Theology is, thus, the celebration of the *leap* from singular to plural, from I to We.

¹² „Imagine the Trinity as a pearl which is the same on all sides, and shines through a unique light. If someone breaks the pearl, all of its beauty fades away. It would be the same if you lowered the Son in order to reveal your worship for the Father: the Father would not receive your adoration. The Father is not worshipped through the omission of the worship of the Son, the adoration of the Son is considered to be a worship of the Father. If you lower the Holy Spirit, the Son will not receive your worship. For although the Holy Spirit does not come from the Father in the same manner as the Son does, He is still His Father Himself. We either worship the Trinity in its entirety, or we despise it in its entirety in order to be consequent” (Saint Gregory of NAZIANZUS, *Homilia* 37, 18, Migne, *PG* 36, 304 AB.)

¹³ „In full love, the persons do not only accept each other, they affirm each other. Divine love is self-efficient. The Father eternally sets the Son into existence through full Self-giving, and the Son continuously affirms the Father as Father through accepting to be set into existence, through giving Himself to the Father as the Son. And God cannot lack a perfect and eternal love. By setting each other into existence through perfect love, the acts through which this is accomplished are eternal acts, and have the character of entirely perfect acts, although they are acts in which the divine persons are active together” – Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Sfânta Treime, structura supremei iubiri (The Holy Trinity, the structure of supreme love)*, in *Studii Teologice* nr. 5-6/1970, p. 336.

2. GODLY BIRTH – THE ETERNAL EXPRESSION OF THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE FATHER AND THE SON

It is only the understanding of God as a supreme communion of love between the Persons which represent the Trinity of one being and undivided that determines the overcoming of an exclusively conceptual approach to the Mystery of Godhood¹⁴. The person is not reduced to an idea, to a concept, because it is ever *enflamed* with a living and loving relationship with others. Communication between people is not just reduced to the *level* of ideas, which only represents a partial thing. The fullness of communication is accomplished in the meeting and life communion of people. With God, the „Trinitarian community of the Godly persons is not a uniform love of the three persons for each other, but the love of a Father, of a Son, and the hypostatized communication between Them in the person of The Holy Spirit. Love is not uniform. The sensitivity of the Father to the Son takes the hypostatically comforting form of the Holy Spirit. The Father rejoices in the Son together with the Spirit. But this hypostatic comfort of the Father, directed toward the Son, also makes The Son feel an intensified feeling of the love of the Father to Him”¹⁵.

The Word is essential beginning from the uncircumscribed interior of the Holy Scripture, which means eternity: „In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God” (*John* 1:1-2). If the Father is the One who outpours Himself, eternally moving Oneness toward Trinity, or the monad toward perfection or progress, the *Logos*¹⁶ is the Seal of the being of the Father, and at the same time, externally, the One through which all is created, as an outpouring of Godhood outside of Itself: „The Father speaks unto Himself as a whole, and through this, a full-fledged alter-ego is constituted or a completely intimate and equal You of His. The self to which He speaks does not remain mere imagination, but becomes personally consistent. This You of the Father is called the Word, as the One who is the real condition of speech in God”¹⁷. We observe that the first type of dialogue ever initiated is the love of the Father for His Son and the love of the Son for His Father, the Source of His own being. „The Father knows Himself in the Son and through the Son only inasmuch as the Son as a real image projects His existence as the Son of the Father toward the Father, not as a passive image of

¹⁴ The intervention of Father Dumitru Stăniloae is worthy of appreciation, as he noted: „The Trinity is proof of the love that exists from age to age. At the foundation of existence lies not an unconscious essence, but a God of love, a God in three persons, a Father, a Son – and whomsoever loves more than a father and whomsoever responds better to the love of a father than a son? This love is eternal, and in order for this love to be perfect, the Father wants to have a third person, who can rejoice together with Him in His Son, and the Son wants to have this third person who can rejoice together with Him in His Father. Then, love is perfect: threefold love, and from the sign and power of this love, we are baptized. We receive the power to love one another as the persons of the Holy Trinity do. We receive the power to love one another not just one by one, but to love all people because each one of them could become our «you». This is Christianity: the religion of love” (*Duhovnici români în dialog cu tinerii, ediția a II-a – Romanian Fathers in dialogue with young people, second edition*, Byzantine Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006, pp. 14-15).

¹⁵ Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Spiritualitatea ortodoxă. Ascetica și mistica (Orthodox spirituality. Asceticism and mysticism)*, vol. 3, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1992, pp. 36-37.

¹⁶ „The Face of God, entirely identical, is the Word alone. The Word is the Face of the Father. That is why, since the Word is the Face of the Father, Christ (Incarnate) is the Face of the Father as Logos – the Word. But through the communication of His attributes, The Word Incarnate, which is the human nature of Christis also the face of the Father” (Ierotheos VLACHOS, Metropolitan of Nafpaktos, *Dogmatica empirică după învățăturile prin viu grai ale Părintelui Ioannis Romanidis – Empirical dogmatics according to the oral teachings of Father Ioannis Romanidis*, vol. II, Doxologia Publishing House, Iași, 2017, p. 99).

¹⁷ Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Studii catolice recente despre Filioque (Recent Catholic studies on Filioque)*, in *Studii Teologice*, nr. 7-8/1973, p. 504.

His, but an active image which returns, in its own turn, the knowledge of the Father unto Him, a knowledge that became possible because it started as a perfect real image of the Father. The Birth of the Son by the Father is the premise of self-knowledge of the Father, accomplished in common with the Son¹⁸. On the other hand, the illustrious Romanian theologian states that although man is made in the image and likeness of God, the Son is not hypostasized in the image of His Father, but is the very Countenance of His Eternal Birth-giver, with whom he is, simultaneously, consubstantial. Therefore, oneness, equality¹⁹, and all that is related to the Holy God-Trinity, tend to exclude any iconic relationship defined through the resemblance as well as the difference of (ontological) degree between terms. The resemblance as well as the difference of (ontological) degree between terms. In spite of this, the iconic relationship of the Prototype-Countenance sort remains remarking and irradiated from the relative register to the absolute one. As follows, the condition of resemblance between persons from the human plane, which is the resemblance between a father and a son has the distinction or difference between hypostases for a correspondent in Godhood. Also, the difference of nature from the human realm has the identity of nature and consubstantiality as a correspondent in the intratrinitarian plan. Finally, the Son is the Countenance of the Father, in an ineffable manner which ultimately also encompasses the difference (in person) and consubstantiality with the Unborn: „Il est ce qu’Il exprime, à savoir Dieu, mais Il n’est pas celui qu’Il exprime, à savoir le Père”²⁰.

It is important to observe, in the Johannine prologue – a bona fide symphony in which the Godliness of the creator Word is evoked, a Source of life and light for all that is visible and invisible (*The Gospel according to John*, chapter 1, verses 1-18), that the author of the gospel establishes a common background of understanding the creation and support of the Universe and life, as well as the Self-revelation of God through the hypostatic reality of the Logos in purely personal terms. If the beginning of the prologue mentions the divinity of the Logos and His nature as Creator and Providential of the Universe, in the second part of the scriptural document, the *beloved disciple* insists upon the act of His incarnation²¹. And because there is an infinite difference of nature and quality between man and God, man cannot know God through his natural abilities, which are limited and restricted to the level of a creature, which is why the need of discovering God, for the purpose of knowledge is felt. This is the reason why, in the end of the prologue, we find, beyond the status of Creator-Logos²², His quality of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, as the One Son²³, who lives in

¹⁸ Idem, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (The Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. 1, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1996, p. 206.

¹⁹ One of the fundamental texts is the one in the *Gospel according to John* 5:18-30. Our Lord Jesus Christ was accused by His detractors of having made Himself equal to God (in Greek, the word for *equal* is ἴσος). Thus, He does not deny that He is equal to God, but merely explains to His listeners what being equal to God means.

²⁰ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *La Gloire et la Croix (The Glory and the Cross)*, tome 1, Le Cerf Publishing House, Paris, 1993, p. 174.

²¹ *Μία φύσις τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη*. Through Jesus Christ, we understand the Word of God united with human nature through an ineffable union, not the Word of God that is separate from human nature, nor the *temple* born of the Virgin Mary, not united with the Divine Logos.

²² The Blessed Augustine affirmed the following theological truth: „in the same regard in which He calls Himself the Word, He calls Himself The Son” (in *La Trinità*, chapter 7, Opera omnia. Patrologiae Latinae, Documenta Catholica Omnia Publishing House, p. 87.)

²³ Divine filiation exists from eternity, in the manner of one hypostasis giving its nature to another hypostasis, but also in the plenary participation of the second hypostasis in that process of divine ontogenesis. Thus „maintaining the unity of being between the Father and the Son is assured by the perfect giving of the entire being, through birth, by a hypostasis, and by its complete reception, through birth, by another hypostasis. But

the genuine *bosom* of the Father and the one who made Him known to the entire world. If Jesus Christ, the Word, had not had His divine nature, He would have been incapable of revealing God to the world, and man would be without possibility of redeeming themselves.

Any creature of this world benefits from birth, involuntarily. All that exists, exists due to being born at a certain moment from someone. Where one cannot speak of birth, one cannot speak of existence. In fact, the word *existence* has its roots in the Latin word *existentia* which means to come from someone, its opposite being self-existence, an attribute that only God has. Moreso, even God Himself attributes the title of begotten, not made, before all ages, but without the categories of time, space and quality, being One-Begotten, or more appropriately, Only-Begotten – *μονογενής υἱός* – before all ages – which reveals that Birth is a Mystery that has to do both with the Godly ontology and the existential *level* of a creature.

CONCLUSIONS

The mystery of the Holy Trinity is impossible to understand for the human mind, being impossible to encompass with the *nutshell* of our limited knowledge the unfathomable *ocean* of Godhood. The mystery of the Godly trinity is the mystery of our entire spiritual and material existence, without Which nothing can exist and nothing can be explained. The three-hypostasis Godhood is the love which has no beginning, inexhaustible and irreplaceable. Tri-personality offers complete communication, because it is only through the communion of the three persons that God is approachable in a real manner.

Trinitarian openness represents the abandonment of egotism, quantified from the *erosion* of a person. Every person only truly becomes a person by relating to others, by living for them and within them. Egotism, egocentrism, egolatry and autarchy – the *quadrangle* of the destructuralization of the mystery of a person – are basic characteristics of the vegetative state which characterizes the existence of those in hell. Hell is not others, hell is oneself, detached from others and isolated under the *shell* of extreme egotism. Herein lies a fundamental element of freedom: one cannot be free alone.

Freedom is not individual, but collective. It entails a relationship, an *I* but also a *You*. He who is egocentric, who denies any responsibility to others, owns nothing but an apparent and false freedom, however is, in truth, lamentably lacking in freedom. Liberation, completely understood, is not spiteful estrangement or aggressive self-affirmation, but partnership and solidarity. Being free entails sharing our person with others, feeling with their feelings: „If one part of our body hurts, we hurt all over. If one part of our body is honored, all parts are happy together” (*I Corinthians* 12:26). I am free only inasmuch as I become a person, that is, if I turn to sharing my identity with others. If I turn my back or I refuse to share, I lose my freedom. By focusing upon striking this nerve, the Christian dogma regarding God-the Holy Trinity is of an immediate relevancy for our understanding of freedom.

the Birth-giver, or Father, looks at the same time with the joy of full love to the One who exists through His Self-giving. So does the Receiver of existence by birth. He who exists as the fruit of the perfect act of giving through the birth in the first hypostasis, rejoices in the Giver of His existence by birth, but not in the same manner as He who is Himself the source of this joy, for all He has, He has from the Father, and nothing that He has is through Himself” (Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Ființa și ipostasurile în Sfânta Treime, după Sfântul Vasile cel Mare (The essence and hypostasis in the Holy Trinity, by Saint Basil the Great)*, in *Ortodoxia* nr. 1/1979, pp. 71-72). Being the natural and eternal Son of He who is eternal, the Lord Jesus Christ is indeed the *Face* of the Father, and not some blueprint or spiritual or physical emanation, nor a relative pictogram of His Birth-giving Father (see the meanings of the Greek term *χαράκτήρ*).

As Christians, we believe in a God who is not only One, but One-in-Three or Threefold-One. The countenance of God in us is the concrete countenance of the God of the Trinity. The Holy Trinity is absolute interiority and transparency. God, our Creator and Archetype, is not just one self-sufficient and self-loving person, but is the communion of three persons, with one dwelling within the other two through a ceaseless motion of mutual love. The Fathers of the Church use, as a specific term, perichoresis, or mutual interweaving, to describe the interiority of the hypostases of the Holy Trinity, the fact that each of them is absolutely open to the other two, as well as the fact that the three open subjects give themselves to each other. Basically, when we engage, at the level of our identity, in the manifestation of love for a person, we feel as though we have entered the depth of their life and become, to one another, very interior.

As follows, through love, we interiorize the person we love. They rest within our hearts, in such a manner that we feel their presence throughout our entire existence. Spiritually speaking, we are filled by the presence of the person whom we love, keeping in mind a real existential dialogue.

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