

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| FOREWORD | 7 |
| THE PERSON OF THE MONK IN THE MONASTIC COMMUNITY AND IN THE EUCHARIST | 9 |
| THE IDENTITY OF THE MONK | 21 |
| OTHERNESS AND THE ASCETIC ETHOS | 32 |
| MONASTICISM AND THE <i>ESCHATA</i> | 41 |
| 1. Monasticism as a Foretaste and Testimony of the Eschata | 46 |
| 2. The Dangers of Secularization of Monasticism | 49 |
| Conclusion | 51 |
| THE THEOLOGY OF ST SILOUAN THE ATHONITE | 52 |
| 1. The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity or God in General | 54 |
| 2. Christology | 56 |
| 3. Ecclesiology | 58 |
| Conclusion | 61 |
| ASCETIC OR MONASTIC MYSTICISM | 63 |
| ILLNESS AND HEALING ACCORDING TO ST MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR | 69 |
| Introduction | 69 |
| 1. The Concept of Disease | 72 |
| 2. St Maximus' Therapeutic Axioms | 78 |
| 3. Love as Freedom and Freedom as Love | 81 |
| 4. The Church as Hospital | 82 |
| Conclusion | 86 |
| A DISCOURSE ON THEOLOGY AS LOVE | 88 |
| THE BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE AND THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT | 93 |
| THE DEMONIC, FASTING, AND PRAYER | 97 |
| ILLNESS, FORGIVENESS OF SINS, REPENTANCE, CONFESSION | 101 |
| ST ANTHONY THE GREAT: LESSONS FROM THE DESERT | 105 |
| ST EFTHIMIOS THE GREAT: CONCERNING DEATH AND CUTTING OFF THE PASSIONS | 109 |
| EVIL IS DEFEATED BY LOVE | 113 |
| CONCERNING THE GRACE OF GOD | 118 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| THEOLOGY OF KENOSIS | 124 |
| LOVE, TEARS OF REPENTANCE, CONTINUAL REPENTANCE | 128 |
| THE KENOSIS OF THE SELF AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD | 132 |
| JOYFUL SORROW AS THE EXPERIENCE OF THE SAINTS | 138 |
| “IN MUCH PATIENCE” | 143 |
| ABOUT THE REPULSIVE BEHAVIOR OF SELF-LOVE | 148 |
| IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST | 151 |
| THEOLOGICAL CHAPTERS (RELATING TO MONASTICISM) | 156 |
| a. Knowledge of God and Personal Relationship | 156 |
| b. The Biological Existence of Man, the Person and the Eschatological Character of the Church | 161 |
| c. Ways to avoid the Secularization of the Church | 165 |
| d. The Eschatological Ethos of the Church | 166 |
| e. Repentance and the Penitents | 170 |
| f. The Mystery of Penance and the Confession of Monks | 172 |
| g. Confession, Forgiveness of Sins and Confession of Thoughts | 174 |
| h. Monks and Animals | 175 |
| ECOLOGICAL ASCETICISM: A CULTURAL REVOLUTION | 177 |
| 1. Emphasis on the Sacredness of Creation | 178 |
| 2. A Drastic Revision of the Concept of Sin | 179 |
| 3. Adopting a Spirit of Asceticism | 180 |
| DEIFICATION OF THE SAINTS AS A PORTRAYAL OF THE KINGDOM..... | 182 |
| Introduction | 182 |
| 1. Misapprehended Holiness | 183 |
| 2. Holiness as an Ecclesial Experience | 185 |
| 3. Holiness as a Portrayal of the Kingdom of God | 191 |
| Conclusion | 195 |
| INSTEAD OF CONCLUSION | 198 |
| THE ESCHATOLOGICAL INTERPLAY OF EUCHARIST AND MONASTICISM (AFTERWORD) by Bishop Maxim | 200 |
| <i>List of Sources</i> | 211 |
| <i>Index of of Scriptural References</i> | 215 |
| <i>Index of Names</i> | 217 |
| <i>Bibliographical Note</i> | 219 |

FOREWORD

Hieromonk Vasilije Gavrilović

Asceticism must cease to be a notion referring to a class of religious eccentrics or extremists and instead become synonymous with qualitative progress in human societies and cultures.

Metropolitan of Pergamon John (Zizioulas)

Metropolitan John of Pergamon always considered monasticism an important charisma in the Body of the Church. Some assessments made by certain critics tried to deny this fact, implying that John Zizioulas was not considering the ascetic ethos within his theology as much as one should. The present book demystifies these claims and exemplifies the views of this great theologian, who accentuated the importance of asceticism and monasticism within the Orthodox tradition.

Elder Metropolitan John perceives and describes asceticism and monasticism, as he does with all his theological reasoning, through a vivid encounter, ontologically rather than theoretically and speculatively, thus bringing his readers closer to the truth found in the Kingdom of God to which all Christians are called to. The eschatological perception and the Kingdom of God serve as an inspiration, the truth that invites those who live by it to consider everything through the lens of the future Kingdom. Hence, asceticism and monasticism, as one will find in this exceptional collection of the Elder John's opus, are assessed through the truth coming from the eschaton, Christ's coming Kingdom. Monasticism, as John Zizioulas testifies through many of his letters, sermons, and presentations found in this book, serves to steer the Church towards the Kingdom, making sure that she does not fall into the claws of secularism and reclaiming the fact that Christians do not belong to this world (cf. Jn 15:19), but to the future truth.

The Metropolitan of Pergamon draws his inspiration from Patristic tradition, especially Sts Anthony the Great, Efthimios the Great, and Maximus the Confessor, but also from Elders who have witnessed the truth through their mode of existence that testifies a life according to the Gospel, such as Sts Silouan the Athonite and his student, whom John Zizioulas respected and personally knew, Elder Sophrony of Essex. Their testimonies are a foundation and witness to Zizioulas' approach and credibility. The collection of chapters in this valuable book invites these and other examples into Metropolitan's discussions and critical consideration that will testify to the truth that identifies monasticism and asceticism in the Orthodox Church.

The present compilation of important texts authored by the late Elder Metropolitan John of Pergamon will surely enrich monastics and non-monastics, all striving to find the truth of what monasticism and asceticism truly stand for in the Orthodox tradition. The depth to which the late Metropolitan goes in describing these important themes is profound and will, I believe, magnify one's understanding of what truly asceticism stands for in the monastic, but also non-monastic, mode of existence.

As the editor of this esteemed book, I extend my wholehearted gratitude to the John Zizioulas Foundation, St. Sebastian Press, and Bishop Maxim Vasiljević, who penned the insightful afterword. Bishop Maxim's contribution highlights the distinctive impact of Metropolitan John on our refreshed comprehension of ascetic ethos and monasticism, enriching the overall depth and significance of this work.

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to Fr Gregory Edwards for his invaluable contribution in translating key sections of the book from Greek, collaboratively revising it, and offering scrupulous cross-referencing assistance.

THE PERSON OF THE MONK IN THE MONASTIC COMMUNITY AND IN THE EUCHARIST

I am deeply honored to be asked to address this gathering.

I am moved, first of all, because I have been invited to contribute to an important event, which is part of the brilliant and valuable spiritual activity of this Holy Metropolis, under the auspices and blessing of the diocese's enlightened archpastor Bartholomew, whom I thank from the bottom of my heart for this kind invitation.

Secondly, this event takes place in the year 1998, the year of the holy Ten Martyrs, the athletes in Megara, whose holy martyrdom sanctified the place on which we stand.

And thirdly, because I am invited to speak, even though I had no taste of the monastic life, about the position of the monk in the monastic community and the Divine Eucharist!

This last point makes me tremble, and the only thing that encourages me in my boldness to speak before you is my responsibility and duty as a bishop of the Church, who is obligated to be a teacher of theology.

I beg, therefore, that my boldness be forgiven and that my humble words be heard as a fraternal contribution to our joint effort to be incorporated organically into the Body of the Church through the Liturgy, to which each one of us belongs, for our salvation and for building up the body of Christ!

The Church is the only place and way of our salvation and the world's salvation. The well-known ancient saying, *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, which goes back to Origen and is validated by the theology of St Cyprian, must always be a compass and a guide in our spiritual journey.

Nothing, but absolutely nothing, not even the most rigorous asceticism, noetic prayer, spiritual struggle, and even martyrdom—

do not be surprised by this—offers us salvation if we are not incorporated into the Church!

I said that even martyrdom still does not save outside the Church, remembering the shocking phrase of the Apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians: "... and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing" (1 Cor 13:3). We tend to interpret the well-known hymn of love of the Apostle Paul as if it were referring to some emotion or some virtue. But, if we pay attention to the context in which the Apostle speaks about love, we will see that he has the community of the Church in mind. In this letter, Paul strives to free the Christians of Corinth from individualism, which plagued them. Each boasted of some charisma (gift) and tended to project it as the most essential element of spiritual life.

In the twelfth chapter of the same epistle, the one about spiritual gifts, which is also the context of the hymn of love, which follows in the thirteenth chapter—as you know, there were no chapters in the Holy Bible, these were added later, so it is one piece, all of this—the Apostle is trying to convince the Corinthians that no gift is independent of the others. And no one can say to another: "I have no need of you" (1 Cor 12:21).

Even the most humble and insignificant ministries—the young man who rings the bell, or the older woman who lights the candle and the altar lamp—have and acquire a salvific significance when they build up the Church! On the contrary, great and impressive gifts—such as prophecy, miracles, or even martyrdom—are of no use if they do not build up the Church.

This is what Paul means by love: communion in the Body, which the Holy Spirit builds, with the gifts he distributes to each one. Love and Church are identical. And one interprets the other in the thought of the Apostle.

It is as if he is saying that only in the Church do the various gifts and functions acquire eternal meaning; that is, they lead to eternal life. Only love, i.e., the Church, ultimately survives eschatologically. At the same time, everything else will be removed. "But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are

INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

The preaching of Christ was nothing else but a preaching about the Kingdom of God. That is, the Kingdom of God is coming. And the Kingdom of God came with the Resurrection of Christ, so the ultimate enemy, as the Apostle Paul says, death, is defeated.

So, on the one hand, we have the coming of the Kingdom of God in history, and on the other hand, we know that the Resurrection of Christ is nothing but the beginning of our own Resurrection (Apostle Paul). Consequently, we have within history the *eschata* present already, but not yet. Because, since there is still death, and man expects the Resurrection, as we say in the Creed “I look for the Resurrection of the dead,” it means that the Church lives within this dichotomy. One sees the Kingdom of God present, tastes it—this happens mainly in the Eucharist—and at the same time understands that this is not a permanent state of history, and comes out of the Eucharist, and now every active Christian is called to fight against evil.

That’s where asceticism is needed. So, the Church moves between asceticism and Eucharist. These two are basic for the Church. There cannot be a Church without asceticism, because that would mean that evil has already been defeated and we do not take it seriously. The truth is that we face it daily and we fight that which is demonic, like the ascetics of the Church.

But, on the other hand, there lurks the danger of remaining in this asceticism and not tasting the Kingdom of God, where is the victory against the Devil, which is offered through the Divine Eucharist. That is why we cannot find a mixture of sadness and sorrow there. It is a festival, joy, and rejoicing! Since even the apostles, after the Resurrection, were: “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house ...praising God and having favor with all the people” (Acts 2:46-47).