

The Gospel's Voice



Orthodox Parish of the Holy Transfiguration

Number 16, March 2017

Saint Gregory Palamas

Gregory Palamas (1296 - 1359), saint of the Orthodox Church, developed in his thought the adage of the Fathers, according to which **God became man, so that man becomes God**. He summarizes a long tradition on this subject, which he wishes to be faithful to, and which touches on the most fundamental question of Christianity, that of salvation or the deification of man.

For Palamas, the experience of grace is the best proof of the existence of God and the theological intuitions he defends (Triades 2, 3, 38).

Grace is an experience

Gregory insists on this experimental aspect of grace. His theology seeks to defend those who now live from the divine energies, energies that the words do not demonstrate, but which nevertheless remain perceptible in the works of Christ, but also those of the saints following Him (Hagiologic tome). Palamas explains that despite the necessity of polemics, he finds it difficult to write about the deification of man precisely because it is above all a lived and intimate experience with God, an experience which surpasses, therefore,

all that intelligence can understand and make understood through words or reasoning alone (Triades 3, 1, 32).

The Participation of Man in Divinity

The spiritual approach of Palamas is inscribed in the history of the Judeo-Christian revelation. It shows, in fact, that God has revealed himself and reveals himself in a progressive way to humanity. Indeed, Palamas compares the journey from the Old Testament to the New Testament to the current journey from the New Testament to its fulfillment in the future life. He says in substance: *just as before, only the prophets, and those who listened to them, saw in the Spirit the mysteries of the law of Moses, the pre-existence of the Word and Spirit of God before they were manifested in the revelation of the Trinity, while the others stopped their ears; So now only the saints and those who listen to them see in the Spirit the mysteries of the gospel before they become fully evident in the future life, while some Christians do not want to hear about it.*

God transcends, surpasses, is above the deifying gift he makes to man, the divinity that he communicates to those who are worthy of it. He surpasses this deifying gift, because it is its origin, the source, the eternal cause. This deifying grace is, like God, uncreated and eternal. Unlike living beings and the world, creatures and creation, this grace has no beginning in time. It has always existed in God. By the Fathers, we learn that this deifying grace is a light, the one that radiates around God, angels, but also saints. It is manifested to men who are worthy of it, men who have often been preparing to receive it, but they receive it without being able to say that this predisposition, however meritorious, is in a way the cause of their enlightenment. The human being has no automatic means to obtain and let the light emanating from God appears in him. That is why it is always a grace, a favor which God makes to man, without the man knowing the moment of his manifestation.



The Holy Ladder

*In the Orthodox churches, two books are traditionally read each year during lent: **The Life of St. Mary the Egyptian** (which we will talk about next month) and **The Holy Ladder of John Climacus**. If this tradition is faithfully preserved in the monasteries, many parishes have abandoned this practice. It is important, however, to return to the sources of the spiritual tradition.*

John Climacus, also known as John the Sinaiticus, is a Syrian monk of the 6th and 7th centuries (born around 579). Died to Mount Sinai in about 649, Saint John, abbot, earned the nickname of Climacus because of the precious treatise entitled *The Ladder of Paradise* (in Greek, Klimax scale), which he composed for the formation of the monks. Describes the spiritual journey in the manner of an ascent to God through thirty degrees. This major work gained an extraordinary influence in the Byzantine monastic world, but also in the West.

It is considered holy by the Catholic and Orthodox Churches and is celebrated on March 30 and the fourth Sunday of Lent.

The Holy Ladder

The work, which consists of 30 chapters (or "steps", representing the 30 years of the hidden life of Jesus Christ), aims to summarize the monastic experience. It is written at the request of Abbot Jean de Raithu. It is at a period of transition, when monasticism, repelled by Arab expansion, gains Europe. Addressed to the monks, it aims to make them reach, in 30 degrees, perfection:

Degrees 1-4: renunciation of the world and obedience to a spiritual father;
Degrees 5-7: penance and affliction (πένθος / penthos) as ways of true joy;
Degrees 8-17: fight against vices and acquisition of virtues;
Degrees 18-26: escape from the traps of asceticism (laziness, pride, pusillanimity);
Degrees 27-29: attack of the hesychia (peace of the soul) and the apatheia (impassibility).

John Climacus: *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* on [Amazon.com](#)



Divine Liturgy

Every Sunday at 9.30 a.m.

Great Lent

Sunday 5th of March : Triumph of Orthodoxy

Saturday 11th : Vespers at 9.30 a.m. and commemoration of the Deads.

Sunday 12th : Saint Gregory Palamas

Sunday 19th : The Holy Cross

Saturday 25th : Matines of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Mother of God

Sunday 26th : Saint John Climacus

Matines at 9.30 a.m. every day.

The Orthodox Church of the Holy Transfiguration

Grande-Rivière N-O

Mauritius

(behind Garage BALA)

**Divine Liturgy every Sunday
at 9.30 a.m.**

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