

THE CONTRIBUTION OF SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS TO HESYCHASM. THEOLOGICAL PRESSUPOSITIONS OF THE LIFE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

INTRODUCTION

Saint Gregory Palamas with his written works has boosted theologically the deeper content of the hesychastic life, and with his toilsome and persistent ecclesiastical struggles, contributed decisively to the unanimous and conciliar acceptance of the teaching of Hesychasm.

In his attempt to safeguard the lofty theological character of *hesychia*, he developed a most profound dogmatic theology around the identity and soteriological function of Divine Grace.

In the process he simultaneously revealed the theological presuppositions necessary for the hesychasts to share and abide in the life of the Holy Spirit. These presuppositions are found in the steadfast and delusion-free parameters of *theophany* and *theoptia* (vision of God). The invincible ultra-defender of Hesychasm expressed the mind of the Church infallibly, asserting that the existential living experience of the deifying energy of the Holy Spirit, especially endows with theological meaning the hesychastic way of life. This life culminates in the complete union of man with God and in the charismatic *theosis* of man, which consists of the higher form of the spiritual life of the faithful.

1. THE CHARACTER OF THE HESYCHASTIC LIFE

Saint Gregory Palamas studied the Ascetic Literature near holy hesychasts, who were taught Hesychasm not only through Divine Grace, but through their personal experience as well. From these distinguished teachers¹ he was taught the sacred *nipsis* (guarding of the *nous*) and the noetic prayer. His teacher par excellence, however, was his personal toil and the empirical knowledge² procured through this toil. Thus, he received empirical knowledge of the hesychastic way of life, and when he received the calling to defend Hesychasm, he had already assimilated fruitfully and productively the entire Patristic Tradition. Consequently, he displayed an unrivaled combative spirit, theological eruditeness, along with holy-spiritual experience especially reflected in his written works *In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts* and in the *Hagiorite Tome*, synoptically. But what is the specific meaning of *hesychia* and Hesychasm? The ascetical term *hesychia* is primarily existential and experiential in character. *Hesychia* means the peace established in the inner man, when he sees, becomes disgusted with, and proceeds to expel his *eidechthes prosopeion* (his ugly mask) which had developed from the wandering of the *nous*.³ *Hesychia* is indispensably connected with the *nipsis* (guarding) of the *nous*, the spiritual

¹ See Saint Gregory Palamas, *In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts*, Homily 1,2,12, and 2.2.2. Gregory Palamas, *Apanta ta Erga*, EPE, Vol. 1, Introduction-Translation-Comments by P. Christou, Thes/niki 1981, pg. 10.

² See *In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts*, Homily 1,2,8.

³ See. In the life of Saint Peter of Athos, 18, in Saint Gregory Palamas, *Apanta erga*, EPE Vol. 8, Thessaloniki 1994, pg. 298

vigilance, and the experiential knowledge of all those states which actualize in the practice of *nipsis* in a spiritual and inexpressible manner.⁴ Consequently, the main task of the hesychast is the “guarding of the heart” with the congenial Keeping of the Commandments, spiritual purity, and sacramental life. With the Keeping of the Commandments, the hesychast expels the law of sin and introduces to himself the guarding of the *nous*. His senses are kept in check with the virtue of temperance (*egkrateia*), while the (*pathetiko*) impassive part of the soul is governed by love and the (*logistiko*) noetic by *nipsis*⁵ (sobriety). The hesychastic way of life affords the functional ability to Divine Grace to “remodel” the inner man and to conform him according to his prototype, granting him “blossomed”, his ancient and indescribable beauty.⁶ The hesychast lives without cares, absolved, as much as possible, from all matters of distraction. With the use of incessant prayer he unites his *nous* (essence of the soul) with God, and thus totally concentrated in his inner self, finds a new and mysterious ascent towards heaven. There having fixed his *nous*, he tastes ineffable pleasure, experiences perfect and sweetest peace—true *hesychia* and quietude. And thus, after having surrendered himself to God, sees the glory of God and visualizes the Divine Light.⁷ The ultimate purpose of the hesychastic life is for man to become one with the Trihypostatic Monad (according to the archieratical prayer of Christ and with his synergy) just as He entered into communion and unity with the human nature, without distancing Himself from His own Triadic Monad.⁸

For the aforementioned reasons, the hesychastic life is esteemed by the theologian of *hesychia* and of the Light of Grace, as the ultimate form of the ascetical life⁹, and Hesychasm as the most precious segment of the Church,¹⁰ being that in its parameters by and large the paramount spiritual experience of the uncreated Light is lived as the vision of God (*Theoptia*).

2. EFFULGENCE OF THE DEIFYING GRACE – THEOPHANY AND VISION OF GOD.

Christ during his historical presence on earth revealed His uncreated Divinity to the elect of His Apostles with His Transfiguration on Mount Tabor. According to the theological evaluation of Saint Gregory Palamas, the disciples saw upon the mount “the essential majesty of God... the ultra-luminous brightness of the archetypal beauty, the formless kind of Divine comeliness... they saw the inconceivable and ineffable Light... they saw the Grace of the Holy Spirit, which they subsequently received, and it abided in them.”¹¹

The Grace of God is the betrothal of the inheritance of the saints, the Spirit of sonship¹², the promise of the Spirit, which the Son received from the Father and granted to his faithful. It is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit.¹³

⁴ In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 1,3,12.

⁵ Ibid. Homily 1, 2, 2.

⁶ See, the life of Saint Peter of Athos, Ibid pg. 302.

⁷ In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 1, 3, 46.

⁸ Homily 2, 1, 34 with reference to John 17, 21-24.

⁹ Homily 1, 2, 6.

¹⁰ Homily 2, 1, 14.

¹¹ Homily 3, 3, 9.

¹² Romans 8, 15: “you received a spirit of sonship.”

¹³ See. “Peri theias kai theopious methekseos 4.

The faithful receives the Divine Grace during Holy Baptism, and more specifically, during the mystery of Holy Chrism, whereby he becomes Her charismatic offspring since he was born from Her during the Divine washing, and thus he procured the ancient beauty.

¹⁴ Afterwards, the uncreated Grace exists incessantly in the faithful and assists him soteriologically (in matters of salvation) and multifariously, while Her Divine Light illumines him accordingly—at times, more, and at times, less.¹⁵ This Light becomes visible spiritually with the noetic sense, and it consists of the inseparable glory and brightness of Divine nature.¹⁶ Futhermore, it also constitutes the garment of the soul of the faithful, since it will bring back to her the ancient and most excellent beauty, but it simultaneously consists of the true nourishment of the angels as much as the righteous.¹⁷ It does not have its own substance,¹⁸ and for this it is called *enhypostatic* and not *auto-hypostatic*.¹⁹ Thus, it is reasonable to speak about the effulgence of hypostatic Light in the souls of the faithful,²⁰ which acts in them without being separated from the Holy Spirit.²¹ Being an uncreated glory of God, pre-eternal and infinite, the Divine Light is not sensual,²² but noetic²³ and spiritual, which is approximated and envisioned spiritually.²⁴ It is incorporeal divine illumination and Grace, which becomes “envisioned in an invisible manner, and it is conceived in an inconceivable manner.”²⁵ It is a “natural ray of Divinity”²⁶, and “the very Divinity which manifested to the disciples on the mount,” according to Saint Gregory the Theologian.²⁷

Divine illumination to be beheld presupposes the purification of the heart, and it is found evaluatively higher than homiletics about God, and certainly above reason. Of course, Divine illumination provides knowledge of God, but this knowledge and understanding is granted to the *nous* by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, when occasionally this Divine illumination is called “knowledge and understanding,” it must be understood in a different light because what is meant here is another kind of understanding—a spiritual one.²⁸ Barlaam, the anti-hesychast philosopher, thought that anyone who has knowledge of beings (*onton*) brings God inside him, or, can see (achieve vision of God) through this knowledge. In reality though, Palamas says, this man has within him the knowledge of the created things and through this knowledge he contemplates God, raises his mind to God abstractly, and expresses Him conjecturably. This perception of God does not consist of knowledge of God in and by itself. However he, who has energized the Divine Light inside himself, sees in an inexpressible way, and his expressions about God are not conjectures, but are based on having true vision and practical experience of

¹⁴ See. *Toward John and Theodoros the philosophers 21, Gregory Palamas, Apanta ta erga, EPE, Vol. 8, pg. 456.*

¹⁵ See. *In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 3, 2, 1.*

¹⁶ *Homily 2, 3, 37.*

¹⁷ *Homily 1, 3, 29.*

¹⁸ *Homily 2, 3, 6.*

¹⁹ *Homily 3, 1, 8.*

²⁰ See *Homily 1, 3, 7, with reference to Saint Makarios, Homilies 5, 10, Pg. 34, 516A*

²¹ *Homily 3, 2, 17.*

²² *Homily 1, 3, 2, 7.*

²³ *Homily 2, 3, 6.*

²⁴ *Homily 1, 3, 10.*

²⁵ *Homily 2, 3, 8.*

²⁶ See, *Saint John Damascene, Homily about Transfiguration 12, Pg. 96, 564B, in Saint Gregory Palamas, about Divine energies 11.*

²⁷ See *Saint Gregory Palamas, Homily 406, Pg. 36, 365A: ‘phos El paradeihtheisa theotis epi tou orous tois mathites, in Saint Gregory Palamas, In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 3, 1, 12.*

²⁸ See *Saint Gregory Palamas, In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts.*

Him. He truly ascertains that he has God inside him, because God is never separated from His eternal glory. The most trustworthy person who can inform us about the presuppositions necessary to acquire and to see the Divine Light happens to be that Divine person, who received our nature and imparted to it the glory of His nature. These presuppositions are the keeping of the Divine commandment, because Christ promised His appearance to whoever keeps them. This appearance Christ called “the abidance of Himself and of His Father in Him” saying, “if a man loves me he will keep my words²⁹ and my Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.”³⁰ In this verse, Palamas sees the Grace and energy of the Holy Spirit through which God manifests and abides in those deemed worthy.³¹ The abidance of the Son with the Father is interpreted as participation (*methexis*) of the deifying Grace and energy,³² while in a similar context Palamas identifies the coming of Christ, the abidance and His manifestation together with the Father with our ascent toward Him through revelation, as super-celestial ascent and rapture.³³ The knowledge of God procured by the vision of Light is above all other knowledge, since there is nothing greater in existence than the abidance and manifestation of God inside of us, neither anything equal nor approximate. Thus, we know that the keeping of the commandment provides true knowledge, because with only this the health of the soul is secured. Health of the soul cannot exist when the intelligent power (*gnostiko*) of the soul is ill. The Keeping of the Commandments, however, offers not only knowledge of God, but even charismatic *theosis*, to which we are guided as long as we see inside of us God’s glory in the Spirit. This materializes when it is God’s good pleasure to elevate us towards the spiritual mysteries.³⁴ If the knowledge of the Divine Scriptures, according to the Apostle Peter is sure and secure, in the words of the same Apostle, this knowledge is equated with the “Light of an oil lamp that shineth in a dark place until the day dawns, as it dawned brilliantly on Tabor, and Christ, the Day Star, arises in your hearts.” This so indicative of the great difference between the knowledge of the holy Scriptures compared to the Light of knowledge emanating from the mystical vision of God. It is the light of the sun shining in the middle of the sky at noon time.³⁵

3. PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THEOPTIA (VISION OF GOD)

One thing is meant by “illumination of Divine Grace,” something else by “constant vision of Light,” and another, entirely different thing by “vision of things in the Light, when the distant things appear in front of the eyes and the future events appear as present. Even here, however, a graduating scale also exists, which is connected to spiritual progress. This progress will continue *ad infinitum*,³⁶ being incoherent with the capacity of the Divine illumination in the faithful. The vision of Divine glory is always analogous to the receptivity of the seer.³⁷ In novices for example, the illumination of this Light is dimmer and not constant, whereas in the perfect, in addition to the superabundance of Light, an endowment of humility takes place—one of a

²⁹ John 14, 23. It is quite obvious that with his “words” he means His commandments, because previously in the same context, instead of his “words” which he uses here in this verse he used the commandments, because he says “he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me? (John 14, 21) See In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 2,3, 16.

³⁰ John 14, 21.

³¹ See, Saint Gregory Palamas, about Divine energies 49.

³² Ibid. 48.

³³ See. In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 2, 1, 44.

³⁴ Ibid Homily 2, 3, 17

³⁵ Ibid Homily 2, 3, 18 with reference to 2nd Peter 1, 19.

³⁶ Ibid Homily 2, 3, 35

³⁷ Ibid Homily 1, 3, 17.

different kind than that of the novices.³⁸ Humility leads to *penthos* (mourning), and mourning increases the purification of the heart—a necessary perquisite toward receptivity for more illumination.³⁹ Secure advice about the method of gaining vision of the Light of Grace can be given by those who see it *para ton oronton*⁴⁰ from all those who experienced its knowledge empirically. In other words; those who received sanctification through the harshness of *askesis* and humble prayer, without which (sanctification) no one will see the Lord, according to Saint Paul.⁴¹ Sanctification presupposes the cleansing of the heart by the keeping of the commandments and the continuous preoccupation of the *nous* with the genuine and immaterial prayer, and especially through the commandment of love. Thus, God is seen by those who have been purified through love⁴² via purification,⁴³ namely, all those who have been cleansed from passions and ignorance. Their *nous*, having been purified and illumined and clearly sharing in the Grace of God, affords them to become partakers of mystical, supernatural spectacles. Simultaneously, they see the brightness by which the *nous* has been enriched from the Grace of God, which furthers strengthens the power of the *nous* to transcend itself and to complete its union with the things beyond reason. With this illumination, the *nous* sees God in the Spirit. With the power of the Holy Spirit,⁴⁴ it acquires the spiritual experience and hears things unheard and sees things unseen.⁴⁵ Not only the envisioned Divine Light, but even the seeing power by which the *nous* sees, is a spiritual power found incomparably higher than the created rational powers. And this power is provided by Divine Grace.⁴⁶ The vision of Divine Light takes place in those who have spiritual eyes and the mind of Christ, with which they behold the invisible and comprehend the incomprehensible.⁴⁷ The *nous* of the faithful sees the spiritual realities with clarity when it becomes one Spirit with the Lord.⁴⁸ Then he knows the things of God, since only the Spirit knows the things of God.⁴⁹ Thus, the Divine Light becomes visible with the transformation of the senses, which is precisely why it remains invisible to other people during its charismatic manifestation.⁵⁰ Besides this, Divine Grace is acquired by the saints as supernatural and Divine participation, according to the same parameters that scientific knowledge is acquired by scientists, which while being always present in them, its action manifests itself only when necessary.⁵¹ As energy of the Holy Spirit in a pure soul, it appears as the power of sight in the healthy eye⁵² and becomes one with the entire man, much like the unity of the members of the body and the unity of the soul to the body.⁵³

³⁸ See Saint John Sinaitis, Klimax 26 Pg. 1033 AB, in Saint Gregory Palamas, In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 1, 3, 49.

³⁹ See In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 1, 3, 52.

⁴⁰ See Homily 1, 3, 44.

⁴¹ See. Saint Gregory Palamas “To the most reverend nun Xenia.”, About passions and virtue, 43 with reference to Hebrews 12, 14.

⁴² In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 1, 3, 10

⁴³ Ibid. Homily 2, 3, 10.

⁴⁴ See, Homily 2, 3, 11.

⁴⁵ See, Saint Gregory Palamas towards John and Theodoros the philosophers 18, in Saint Gregory Palamas, Apanta ta Erga, EPE vol. 8 Thessaloniki 1994, pg. 452.

⁴⁶ See, In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 3, 2, 14.

⁴⁷ See Homily 1, 3, 16, with reference to 1st Cor. 2, 16.

⁴⁸ Ibid Homily 1, 3, 17, with reference to 1st Cor. 6, 17.

⁴⁹ Ibid Homily 1, 3, 16, with reference to 1st Cor. 2, 11.

⁵⁰ Ibid Homily 2,3, 22.

⁵¹ See Saint Gregory Palamas, Peri theias kai theopoiouis metheseos 15, with reference to Basil the great, on the Holy Spirit pg. 26, 32, 180 C.

⁵² Ibid 181 A.

⁵³ See. Maximos the Confessor, About questions, pg. 91, 1088 BC.

The Divine Light is envisioned by its own Light,⁵⁴ with a vision energized by the Holy Spirit.⁵⁵ How does this take place exactly? In reality, the method by which the invisible God is seen is inexpressible. Saint Paul, to whom Palamas refers, will tell us that this happens “in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Holy Spirit.”⁵⁶ The champion of Hesychasm proceeds towards very profound clarifications. The immaterial *nous*, he says, gazing toward the first, the supreme and true Light—God, without turning back, with the immaterial, incessant and pure prayer, and having already transformed to the angelic office, after being enveloped by the same first Light, he also appears the same by participation with the One Who is the archetype according to cause. Then he radiates, having the comeliness of the mystical beauty, the brilliance and the ineffable radiance.⁵⁷ In this manner, this Light, which is God, illumines its participants charismatically with their union with it in an inexpressible way.⁵⁸ The deified, beholding in themselves the uncreated Light, see the garment of their deification (*theosis*) which Christ promised to them in His archieratical prayer, and according to that prayer He wanted them to be with him and to behold His glory.⁵⁹

4. CHARISMATIC THEOSIS – THE LIFE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

It is significant that Palamas never wanted to write anything about man’s *theosis*. When he was challenged by his opponents, however, he was compelled to refer to it with a few words of piety—insufficient according to his statement⁶⁰—underlining in these, that the experience of *theosis* is lived as betrothal during the historical presence of the saints on earth.⁶¹

The Light of the Transfiguration on Tabor along with the one that the saints behold here on earth is evaluatively placed on the same level with the Light of the future Second Presence of Christ. It is the same Light which will continuously envelop the worthy ones during the future life. It is the prelude of God’s glory.⁶² This is the Light of the future age, which will be visible with the eyes of the heart.⁶³ It is the Light which the Saints behold inside them, the glory of Divine nature,⁶⁴ the very immaterial Divinity of the Father and the Spirit, which effulges in the face of the Only Begotten Son during His Transfiguration.⁶⁵ Accordingly, it is overt that *photophany* consists of the manifestation of God to his saints, while participation in this *theophany* corresponds with vision of God (*theoptia*). *Theophany* and *theoptia* consist of the delusion free theological presuppositions of the life in the Holy Spirit, which is equated with the charismatic *theosis* of man. Those who are deemed worthy to behold this Photophany share in this god-working Light,⁶⁶ which being Divinity, deifies them charismatically.⁶⁷ This Divine Light, the

⁵⁴ See Psalm 35, 10: ‘In your light we shall see light.’

⁵⁵ See In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 3, 3, 5.

⁵⁶ 1st Cor. 2, 13, In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts.

⁵⁷ See. In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 1, 3, 24.

⁵⁸ Ibid Homily 1, 3, 24.

⁵⁹ Ibid Homily 1, 3, 5 with reference to John 17, 24.

⁶⁰ Ibid Homily 3, 1, 32.

⁶¹ Ibid Homily 1, 3, 43 and 2, 3, 66.

⁶² See. Saint Dionisios the Areopagite, On Divine names 1, 4 Pg 3, 592C. And Basil the great commentary on the Psalms 44, pg 29, 400 D, Of St. Gregory Palamas, In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 1,3, 26-27.

⁶³ See. Saint Dionisios the Areopagite, on Divine Names 1, 4, Pf 3, 592 BC, Saint Gregory Palamas., In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 3, 1, 23.

⁶⁴ See. In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts Homily 3, 1, 23.

⁶⁵ See. Canon of Saint John Damascene on 6th of August hymn of 9th ode. In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 3, 1, 16.

⁶⁶ See. In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 1, 3, 5.

⁶⁷ Ibid Homily 1, 3, 23.

radiance of God, consists of *theosis* according to Palamas. There is nothing more sublime from this *theoria* (vision) for the worthy. Through this Light, God unites with the saints. This Divine Light is the deifying gift.⁶⁸ Because of this, it is said that *theosis* is essential energy of God.⁶⁹ Alternatively, if *theosis* proceeds from the activation of some natural power of man, then the deified saints do not transcend their nature, nor are they born of God,⁷⁰ nor are they Spirit, born of the Spirit.⁷¹ While God is unknowledgeable, invisible, and immaterial, He becomes knowledgeable in a supernatural way, contained, translucent, and during *theoptia*, becomes one Spirit⁷² with those who accompany Him with a pure heart, according to the prayer of our common Father to His own Father. For He says, “grant them, even as Thou, Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.”⁷³ Thus the Apostles, due to their unity in Christ, through the Holy Spirit of Pentecost, are united with Christ, and between them to such a degree, that Palamas is more than content to refer to one of them (John), and to say that through him all saints are represented.⁷⁴ This union with God is perfect, because the faithful becomes one Spirit with God.⁷⁵ This very Holy Spirit was preaching through the Apostles after Pentecost.⁷⁶ *Theosis*, as Grace of the Holy Spirit, coincides with the Kingdom of God. Thus, for someone to become god by Grace is identical with achieving the Kingdom of God. And since the Kingdom of God is without beginning and uncreated, likewise *theosis* is without beginning and uncreated.⁷⁷ Uncreated, and without beginning is also the holiness of the saints.⁷⁸ Those deified are full of the pre-eternal Light which grants them god-like knowledge and life.⁷⁹ They are not governed by the created temporal life, having beginning and end, but by the Divine and pre-eternal life of God the Word residing in them,⁸⁰ as Apostle Paul wrote about himself, “It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me.”⁸¹ In reality, Christ lives in the heart of the faithful through the Holy Spirit,⁸² and the criterion for this is the Holy Spirit He gave to them.⁸³ This explains why the energy of God and those deified are one and the same.⁸⁴ In reality, *theosis* is clearly superior to the simple vision of Divine Light, because *theosis* presupposes the full union of man with God.⁸⁵ But for man to become suitable for this union, his likeness with God is indispensable, which is achieved with the energy emanating from the Keeping of the Commandments, an energy which does not result from the mere natural imitation, but results from the power of the Spirit, which ineffably co-exists with those baptized.⁸⁶ The virtue that follows from the Keeping of the Commandments simply makes the faithful suitable for the

⁶⁸ See. See Saint Maximos the confessor, About Questions, Pg. 91, 1088C, In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 3, 3, 13.

⁶⁹ See. In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 3, 1, 31.

⁷⁰ See. John 1, 13, In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 3, 1, 30.

⁷¹ See. John 3, 6 In defense of holy hesychasts, Homily 3, 1, 30.

⁷² See. 1st Cor. 6, 17.

⁷³ John 17, 21.

⁷⁴ See. In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 2, 3, 66.

⁷⁵ Ibid Homily 3, 3, 14.

⁷⁶ Ibid Homily 2, 2, 14.

⁷⁷ See. About Divine energies 30.

⁷⁸ Ibid . 18

⁷⁹ See. Basil the great, Against Evnomios 5, Pg. 29, 772B of Saint Gregory Palamas, Peri theias kai theopoious methekseos.

⁸⁰ See. Saint Maximos the Confessor, Pg. 91, 1144C.

⁸¹ Gal. 2, 20.

⁸² See Eph. 3, 16-17.

⁸³ See. 1st John 4, 13, in Peri theias kai theopoious methekseos 3.

⁸⁴ See. Saint Maximos the Confessor, About Questions Pg. 91, 1076 C.

⁸⁵ See. Saint Gregory Palamas, In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts Homily 1, 3, 23.

⁸⁶ See. Peri theias kai theopoious methekseos 7.

union, which is completed only by the uncreated Grace of the baptized.⁸⁷ This union procedure with God is officiated by prayer,⁸⁸ always in the framework of Divine mysteries, since we receive and maintain the uncreated Divine Grace through the mysteries.⁸⁹ Moreover, since the deified receive and maintain actively the uncreated deifying Grace, that is the same Holy Spirit as a gift, it is apparent they do not simply have an improvement according to their nature.⁹⁰ The pursued purpose of the deified life in the Holy Spirit of the faithful is the betrothal experience of the promises of God for the future goods.⁹¹ He who shares in the living Divine Grace becomes a temple of the Divine glory and a place of spiritual bliss. He is shown forth as salt of the earth and light of the world,⁹² regardless of whether he is a monk or if he lives with a spouse in the world.⁹³

Some of the characteristics of the (Holy)-spiritual experience taking place from the vision and experience of the uncreated Light, are the cessation of the shameful (carnal) pleasures and passions of the soul; the calming of thoughts; serenity and spiritual joy; contempt for human glory; humility along with inexpressible rejoicing; hate towards the worldly spirit; Divine *eros* for the heavenly things, or better yet for the God of the heavens; all of which one can experience and live independently of the state of his health or the integrity of his senses.⁹⁴ Then, the god-like state develops with reference to virtue and the difficulty of movement or total immobilization towards evil.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the Divine Light as charismatic presence of the Holy Spirit is also experienced as apocalyptic knowledge—as knowledge of God, as righteousness, as holiness, and freedom. This makes the mouth of the deified the mouth of God with wisdom of God, “which cannot be debated or challenged by any of the enemies,” because according to the assurance of the Lord, “for it is not you who speak but the spirit of your Father speaking through you.”⁹⁶ Outside of the vision of the Divine Light, the defender of hesychia includes in the realm of the life in the Holy Spirit, the prayer of the heart, the spiritual warmth and the spiritual pleasure, but the pleasing and sweet tears of Grace.⁹⁷ Man shares in the life of the Holy Spirit in his psychosomatic entirety. Thus, the dispositions and energies of the body are also sanctified,⁹⁸ because whatever is human does not die but is transformed by the uncreated Grace.⁹⁹ The qualities of the Divine beauty are conveyed from the *nous* and the soul to the entire body.¹⁰⁰ When the body is enriched by the workings of the Divine Grace, the bodily heart reveals its communion with it by spiritual leaps, while the body becomes weightless, illumined, and warmed.¹⁰¹

On account of its uncreated character, the deified life of the faithful in the Holy Spirit remains essentially inexpressible, even when attempting to discuss it.¹⁰² Under no circumstances could

⁸⁷ See, Saint Gregory Palamas, Hagiorite Tome 2.

⁸⁸ See, of the same, On prayer and purification of the heart, Triads a, 1.

⁸⁹ See, Saint Dionisios the Areopagite, About ecclesiastical hierarchy 2. Pg. 3, 392 A.

⁹⁰ See, Saint Gregory Palamas, Peri theias kai theopoious methekseos 3.

⁹¹ See, Eph. 1, 13-4, In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 1, 3, 14.

⁹² See, Mathew 5, 13.

⁹³ See, Saint Gregory Palamas, To John and Theodoros the philosophers 22, EPE 8, pg. 456.

⁹⁴ See, In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts Homily 3, 1, 36.

⁹⁵ See, Saint Gregory Palamas, To John and Theodoros the philosophers 20, EPE 8, pg. 456.

⁹⁶ Mathew 10, 10, In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 3, 1, 36.

⁹⁷ See, In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts Homily 1, 3, 31.

⁹⁸ See, Hagiorite Tome 6.

⁹⁹ In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 3, 3, 15.

¹⁰⁰ See, To John and Theodoros the philosophers 19, EPE 8, pg. 454.

¹⁰¹ See, In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 1, 3, 32.

¹⁰² See, In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 3, 1, 32.

someone explain the quality of the spiritual pleasure that streams from the joy and Grace of God to those who have not experienced it personally. This goodness of the Paraclete to those who have not tasted it is essentially unheard of and inexpressible.¹⁰³ However, it remains known and distinctive only to those who have acquired it.

¹⁰⁴ The causes of these spiritual experiences can only be perceived by the noetic and spiritual sense.¹⁰⁵ Finally, the life in the Holy Spirit must be definitely acquired and experienced by the faithful in this present life, because whoever does not receive it here, will not have it in the future life¹⁰⁶ after death either.

EPILOGUE

From what has been written above it should be clear that the charismatic *theosis* of the faithful is essentially equated with his (holy)-spiritual life, and furthermore that the theological pre-conditions of this life is *theophany*—through the effulgence of the deifying Grace—and *theoptia* (vision of God). Inasmuch, the gift of the vision of God and the charismatic abidance in the life of the Holy Spirit are pre-determined from specific anthropological presuppositions as well. Lucifer and our forefathers had the gift of Vision of God. In both circumstances, however, the loss of this charismatic gift took place after their known fall. The cause of their fall was the same. Lucifer and our forefathers desired and pursued their equality with God, blatantly ignoring their existential specifications as created beings. They proudly and egotistically projected their will; they dodged God and His will for them; and they ventured for the spiritual elevation of their position with their personal choices as the sole criteria. Thus, they tragically missed the mark. Consequently, if the faithful pursues *theosis* or the charismatic life of the Spirit and makes it the purpose of his life, he is in danger of succumbing to the same temptation of his forefathers with the analogous consequences. *Theosis*, as charismatic life of the Holy Spirit, cannot become man's purpose because man cannot realize a purpose found much beyond and above his created natural capabilities. As Saint Maximos says very pointedly, “we feel it as being above nature according to Grace but we don't work out our *theosis*. Nor do we have natural capability to receive the power of *theosis*.”¹⁰⁷ *Theosis* consists of God's purpose for man and the uncreated gift to him. Through this however, things change radically, along with the entire process for the realization of this propose. More specifically, the *theosis* of the faithful which was essentially expressed in the archieratical prayer of Christ—for the faithful to become one with the Triune God and to behold continually His uncreated glory¹⁰⁸ has as its basic presupposition the Keeping of the Commandments, since this leads to the manifestation of Christ and God the Father to the heart of the faithful in the Spirit.¹⁰⁹ The Keeping of the Commandments, however, pragmatically means the resignation of the faithful from his own will, regardless of how good it may appear to be. It means the subjection of his will to the will of God. But for the faithful to abandon his own will, he needs to previously come to the knowledge of his inner man by Divine Grace and to see the tragic result of the wandering of his *nous* in the dead end roads of his self-will. Then, he will feel disgust for his self-will, he will renounce it, and by this he will practically deny himself. Thus, he will enable himself from this point on to

¹⁰³ See, To the reverend Nun Xenia, About passions and virtues 68.

¹⁰⁴ See, In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Homily 3, 1, 32.

¹⁰⁵ See, Ibid 1, 3, 31.

¹⁰⁶ See, To the reverend Nun Xenia, About passions and virtues 16.

¹⁰⁷ Saint Maximos, Chapters, about love 1, 75, pg. 90, 120C and to Thalassios 22, pg. 90, 324A.

¹⁰⁸ See, John 17 – 24.

¹⁰⁹ See, John 14, 21 – 23.

become a true disciple of Christ. Only then will he steadily redirect his will to the will of God and consider the Keeping of the Commandments as the only way to please God, without another single alternative solution.

The faithful, abandoning his will in disgust, humbles himself truly and pragmatically, causing himself to be endowed richly with the Grace of God. The Grace of God gives him the ability to be responsive to the will of God for the keeping of his commandments, because according to the assurance of Christ, “without me you cannot do anything”.¹¹⁰

In this context, however, the charismatic *theosis* of the faithful, which comes forth from the keeping of the Commandments, is offered as uncreated deifying energy and a gift from God, and under no circumstances consists of an accomplishment or an achievement of the faithful. Under these anthropological presuppositions, the continuous progress of the faithful in the charismatic life of the Holy Spirit is realistically ensured, and the danger of ever falling according to the ancestral paradigm is nullified.

¹¹⁰ John 15, 5.