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# Preface

It is a great pleasure for me to introduce to our readers the third issue of the *International Journal of Orthodox Theology* (IJOT), as well as our new website and the new design of this promising open-access journal.

The new logo, sketched by a famous designer in New York, points to the central meaning of the *theologia crucis* in Orthodoxy.



**INTERNATIONAL  
JOURNAL  
OF ORTHODOX  
THEOLOGY**

The logo includes the initials of the *International Journal of Orthodox Theology* (IJOT). The circle stands for the O of Orthodoxy, the cross for T of Theology as well as for I of International. The body of the crucified Christ forms a stylized representation or organic unity of I, T and J. The circle also represents the “Sun of Justice,” the creative irradiation and the ecclesiastical optimism of the *theology of the cross* that is inseparably connected with the *theology of resurrection*. May this logo become a model for an ecumenical Orthodox theology that lives from the strength of the crucified and risen Christ and radiates into the world the transformative light of the resurrection, the new creation, and the everlasting love of the Holy Trinity.

## AUTOR



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In this issue, we gathered once more theological contributions of rank that reflect multiple perspectives on the Orthodox Trinitarian theology.

Stoyan Tanev, professor at the University of Denmark, opens the issue with an impressive article on *“Energeia versus Sophia: Fr. Georges Florovsky’s Contribution to the Rediscovery of the Orthodox Teaching on the Distinction between the Divine Essence and Energies”*. Through a discussion of the Sophiological controversy during the first half of the 20th century, Tanev analyses the theological differentiation between the divine being and divine energy within Orthodox theology. He moreover focuses on the theology of Fr. Georges Florovsky and Fr. Sergei Bulgakov. Tanev connects Bulgakov’s theology with the theology of Saint Gregory Palamas. He understands Florovsky’s doctrine about the divine being and the uncreated energy as a trend-setting contribution to 20<sup>th</sup>-century theology.

The article of Bernd Oberdorfer, professor of systematic theology at the University of Augsburg and recognised scholar in the area of Trinitarian theology, is entitled, *“Principaliter – Aequaliter – Mutualiter? Modalities of Inner-Trinitarian Relations”*. In the spirit of a hermeneutics of trust, this article presents an interpretation of Eastern and Western traditions of Trinitarian theology. According to Oberdorfer’s understanding, both traditions develop the same Trinitarian basic constellation. Thus, Oberdorfer interprets both traditions as complementary rather than as contradictory. For Oberdorfer, Saint Augustine did not emphasize the fatherly “monarchy,” but rather the mutuality of the Father and Son. “Just as much as the Father has an elementary meaning for the hypostatic being of the Son and the Spirit and Father and Son stamp the hypostatic being of the Spirit, so the Spirit determines the hypostatic being of the Son – and the Father! Just as the Father cannot be thought of without the Son, so he cannot be thought of without the Spirit” (see 77). Oberdorfer distinguishes between different forms of everlasting relations in the Holy Trinity, namely, those “decisive for being” and those “foundational for being.” He interprets the inner-divine relations as a “rich net of differentiated relations” and as a “complex mutuality” between Father, Son, and Spirit, which preserves “the fatherly monarchy and at the same time expresses the essential and mutual dependency of each Trinitarian Hypostasis on the other Hypostases” (see 78). Oberdorfer not only makes a contribution to the core of Christian theology about the immanent Trinity, but he opens up new perspectives on the mysterious person of the Holy Spirit and his relations to the Father and to the Son.

Sorin Șelaru’s article entitled, *“Eternal Inner-Trinitarian Relations and their Economic Consequences: An Approach Following Father Dumitru Stăniloae’s Theological Perspective”*, pays special attention to the everlasting inner-trinitarian relations. Among other things, Șelaru analyses the convergence

between Karl Rahner's axiom about the unity of the immanent and the economic Trinity and Dumitru Stăniloae's theology. Şelaru shows that the common divine being does not form the "heart" of the Holy Trinity. Rather, it is the person of the Father who also preserves the personal character of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Cristinel Ioja dedicates his article entitled, "*The Mystery of the Holy Trinity and the Experience of God in the Liturgy: Dogma, Spirituality and Liturgy in Orthodoxy*", to the social-ethical consequences of Trinitarian theology. He shows that the doctrine of the Trinity can neither be separated from the liturgy nor from spirituality. The doctrine of the Trinity is embedded in the liturgy and has transformative effects, because it leads to responsibility in contemporary society. The liturgical practice of Trinitarian love transforms not only the human person, but society and the whole world as well. One recognizes here attempts of an Orthodox Public Theology, which is founded on the doctrine of the Trinity and forms an organic unity with the liturgy and spirituality.

All in all, we can say that Trinitarian theology in its liturgical dimension promotes a culture of communication and an ecumenical spirituality of reconciliation. Both the culture of communication and the ecumenical spirituality of reconciliation constitute basic signs, that is, essential and programmatic components of the *International Journal of Orthodox Theology*.

In conclusion, I would like to welcome warmly three new members of our editorial board. H.E. Archbishop Anastasios Yannoulatos of Tirana, Dürres, and Albania is Primate and Head of the Holy Synod of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania, Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. of the National University of Athens, Honorary Member of the Academy of Athens, President of the Central Committee of the World Council of the Churches, Honorary President of the World Conference of Religions for Peace.

Prof. Dr John McGuckin is Nielsen Professor of Ancient and Byzantine Christian History at Union Theological Seminary in New York, Director of the Sophia-Institute at Union Theological Seminary and Professor of Byzantine Christian Studies at the Religion Department of Columbia University, New York, USA.

Last but not least, Prof. Dr. Athanasios Vletsis is Professor of Systematic Theology, Ethics and Ecumenical Theology at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University of Munich, Germany.

It is a great honor for us that all three distinguished scholars will contribute to the international and ecumenical success of the *International Journal of Orthodox Theology*!

May this increasing profiling of inner-Orthodox ecumenism lead to an ecumenical culture of dialogue and mutual recognition, so that we celebrate together in our liturgy the inviting love of the Holy Trinity and make it in our world a concrete anticipatory reality of the Heavenly Kingdom!

This third IJOT issue couldn't have been published without the financial support of Prof. Dr. Bedford-Strohm and Ms. Claudia Miftodi. In the name of the editorial team and the readers, I would like to express my cordially thanks to both.

One final note: On April 4, 2011, Prof. Dr. Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, co-founder and member of the IJOT editorial board, was elected Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Bavaria. In the name of the editorial board, I want to congratulate him warmly to this honorable and responsible mission. May God give him creative strength, inspiration, and enthusiasm for his future ecumenical work for the unity of the church of Jesus Christ! Without his friendly support this journal would never have been established. I also would like to thank him personally for his invaluable contribution to an ecumenically open and international Orthodox theology.