

Daniel Munteanu

# Preface

The cover of this issue unites in an original way the trinitarian theology with the Theology of Resurrection. One could ask what is the reason that the artist paints the icon of the Holy Trinity next to the icon of the resurrection of Jesus Christ? The answer is that the life in communion with the Holy Trinity is already a participation in and an anticipation of the eternal divine life.

This is why we can affirm that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is not a speculative theory but a central doctrine of the Church that has a substantial meaning for Christian identity and Christian life.

In this issue we managed to compile unique articles of different theologians worldwide.

Prof. Dr. Mosoiu, Professor of Systematic Theology at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology „Andrei Saguna“ of „Lucian Blaga“ University of Sibiu, Romania, dedicates his article to the topic: “The Paternity of God and the Gift of Adoptive Baptismal Filiation: *πνεῦμα υἰοθεσία, spiritum adoptionis filiorum* (Romans 8, 15)”. He addresses the paternity of God as it is described in the New Testament and understands the process of adoptive baptismal filiation as a *christomorphisation* of the human being. The divine gift of *υἰοθεσία* means a new status received by Baptism and is connected with the divine dynamics of sacrificial love.

Prof. Dr. Sergey Chursanov, Professor of Systematic Theology and Patrology at St. Tikhon’s Orthodox University of Moscow, Russia, writes about: “‘That They May Be One, As We Are’: The Significance of the Cappadocian Fathers’ Trinitarian Compre-

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hension of Divine Persons for the Theological Understanding of the Constitutive Features of Human Persons.” He underlines the anthropological significance of the Trinitarian Theology of the Cappadocian Fathers. Their understanding of notions of *person* (πρόσωπον), *hypostasis* (ὑπόστασις), *individual* (ἄτομος), *distinctive feature* (ιδίωμα), *self-being* (τὸ καθ’ αὐτό), *mode of being* (τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως), *relation* (σχέσις), *nature* (φύσις), and *essence* (οὐσία), has not only a Trinitarian, Christological but also a soteriological and anthropological relevance. In his article he is focusing on the question about the relationship between the personal apophatic divine way of being and the human person as *relatedness, irreducibility to nature, freedom, openness and uniqueness*.

Prof. Dr. John McGuckin is Nielsen Professor of Ancient and Byzantine Christian History at Union Theological Seminary, New York, USA, Director of the Sophia-Institute at Union Theological Seminary, New York, and Professor of Byzantine Christian Studies, Religion Department of Columbia University, New York. In his article about: „The Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Imperative“ he shows that the Church is a mystery of life rooted in the eternal life of the Holy Trinity. The Church is a mystery of *Koinonia* and as such an *icon of the Holy Trinity*. All human beings and all creation are called to *Metousia*, i.e. to the participation in the *kenotic, liberating, unifying and transforming communion of the Holy Trinity*. The Church embodies such a communion by the power of the Holy Spirit. On account of its cosmic and divine vocation the Church has an „ecumenical imperative“ in order to bring union and reconciliation in our world.

Prof. Theodor Damian, Professor of Philosophy and Ethics at the Metropolitan College of New York, writes about: „The Divine Trinity as Paradigm for Ideal Human Relationships: An Orthodox Perspective“. He describes the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as social program of the Orthodoxy. We can learn from the Trinity as how to overcome individualism, depersonalizing collectivism by keeping the „unity in diversity“ as model of a vivid communion of life. The human love towards the Holy Trinity should be our Christian attitude facing another human beings created in the image of God. The trinitarian paradigm of perfect communion of love should become our transformative source of inspiration and life in the world.

Prof. Dr. Gunther Wenz, Professor of Systematic Theology at Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich, Germany, analyses in his article: „The One, the Spirit and the Soul. Plotin’s Doctrine of the Three Original Hypostasis according to Ennead V,1“ the structural analogy of the plotinian Trias: Hen, Nus and Psyche. His work helps us to a better understanding of the relationship between theology and philosophy and of

the western trinitarian theology as well. He underlines not only the convergences (like apophatic and absolute transcendent character of God) but also the difference between Plotin and the Christian Trinitarian Theology.

Dr. George Zavershinsky, Lecturer in Dogmatics at the Sts. Cyril and Methodius Postgraduate and Doctoral School of the Russian Orthodox Church dedicates his article to the topic: "The Trinitarian 'Trace' and the Divine Energies". Everything in creation exists in relation and this relational ontology can be understood as a "Trinitarian Trace" of divine Grace and energy. Zavershinsky shows the difference between the western Trinitarian dogma influenced by filioque and the eastern Trinitarian Theology without filioque. He reconsiders both the Aristotelian and the Orthodox understanding of relation and focuses on the difference between Western and Eastern Orthodox Trinitarian Theologies.

Prof. Dr. Philip Tachin, Senior Lecturer at Theological College of Northern Nigeria in Jos, entitles his article: „A Critique of John Hick’s Christology and Reaffirmation of the Exclusiveness of Christ“. He criticizes John Hick’s Christology because he „denies the divinity and resurrection“ and „consequently the exclusivity of Christ“. Tachin’s article should be understood as a serious question about the claim to absolute truth of the Christian faith in our interreligious context.

We need nowadays in our pluralist world more and more an attitude of respect and consideration for the spirituality and identity of the other. The most exclusive claim of Christianity is in my opinion the *claim of kenotic love*. Absolute is only God’s creative, redemptive, sacrificial and healing Love. This divine love is crucified in Christ and resurrected for the sake of the entire world and humanity. Bearing in mind the divine love in Jesus Christ, to be Christian means to accept and to embrace the others no matter whether Christians or not.

Orthodox Theology is not only able but also responsible to contribute to a *world ethos*, i.e. to a *culture of peace, freedom and reconciliation*. Vivid dialogue and durable peace shouldn’t be based on relativism of faith but on keeping our trinitarian identity alive. The Holy Trinity is both „our social program“ and our cultural and ecumenical program.

Prof. Dr. Matthias Haudel is Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Muenster, Germany. His article deals with the: „Trinitarian-theological perspectives for the Filioque-Problem and for the ecclesiological approaches“. Here he analyses the connexion between the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the understanding of the Church. He sees the cappadocian trinitarian doctrine as ecumenical basis of dialogue and as a fundamental way for overcoming the schism between East and West. He appreciate the

Orthodox Trinitarian Theology and shows the role that the doctrine of divine energies played in the cappadocian and palamite theology. His idea about an eternal, consubstantial and perichoretic procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son not on the level of *relations of origin* but on the level of *relations of life* is confusing because procession (Ausgehen) refers actually to the eternal origin of the Spirit. This would imply that the Holy Spirit, as consubstantial with the Father and the Son, would be a source of his own existence. How can we speak on the one hand about simultaneity of existence and on the other hand about a procession of the Holy Spirit from the *Father of the Son*, i.e. to place the relation Father – Son before the relation Father – Spirit? This would also lead to a subordination of the Spirit under the Father and the Son.<sup>1</sup>

Anyway Haudel's article is a significant step of an ecumenical approach towards an Orthodox social doctrine of the Holy Trinity. His pertinent criticism of the western subordinatianism and reduction of the Holy Spirit to a „gift“ of the Father and the Son and his proposal to overcome our theological disputes by rediscovering our common treasure in the trinitarian Theology of the Church Fathers are very encouraging and welcome.

Prof. Dr. Ioan Tulcan, Professor of Systematic Theology at the Theological Faculty of the University of Alba-Iulia, Romania, focuses on: “The Place and the Theological Significance of God the Father in the Communion of the Holy Trinity according to Dumitru Staniloae and Jürgen Moltmann”. He speaks about the meaning of the Trinitarian Theology for Church, human being, culture and the world. He takes into consideration the eternal perichoretic life of the Holy Trinity and the distinction between the immanent and the economical Trinity in the mystery of salvation. He understands J. Moltmann's and D. Staniloae's Theologies as a promising theological dialogue about the way as how to approach the Mystery of the Holy Trinity in East and West.

In this issue we publish also the last results of the international conference on „God the Father and the life of the Holy Trinity“ that took place in 2009 in Bucharest, Romania. Beneath you will find some pictures of this fruitful theological conference founded by His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

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<sup>1</sup> See Daniel Munteanu, *Der tröstende Geist der Liebe. Zu einer ökumenischen Lehre vom Heiligen Geist über die trinitarischen Theologien J. Moltmanns und D. Staniloaes*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2003, 131f.



From right to left: Prof. Dr. Adrian Lemeni, Prof. Dr. Ioan Tulcan, Diac. Cosmin Pricop, Prof. Dr. Stefan Buchiu, H. E. Metropolitan Bishop Dr. Irineu, Prof. Dr. Nikolaos Loudovikos, His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel, Prof. Dr. Sterea Tache, Prof. Dr. Daniel Munteanu, Prof. Dr. Ioan Stoica, Prof. Dr. Theresia Hainthaler



From right to left: Prof. Dr. Valer Bel, Prof. Dr. Dumitru Meghesan, Prof. Dr. Theresia Hainthaler, Prof. Dr. Bernd Oberdorfer, Prof. Dr. Adrian Niculcea, Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Johnson, Prof. Dr. Sterea Tache, Prof. Dr. Stefan Buchiu, Prof. Dr. Daniel Benga, Prof. Dr. Jürgen Moltmann, Prof. Dr. Nicolae Mosoiu, Prof. Dr. Cristinel Ioja, Prof. Dr. Daniel Munteanu, Prof. Dr. Sorin Selaru, Diac. Cosmin Pricop, Prof. Dr. Nikolaos Loudovikos, Prof. Dr. Ioan Stoica

If we keep in mind that our Christian identity is trinitarian also because of the Baptism in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, than we can easily affirm that our common love for the Holy Trinity can help us to rediscover our common divine roots and vocation for unity in diversity. May the love for the Holy Trinity help us to more and more unity with each other and of all Christian Churches as mystical Body of the one Jesus Christ and of the one Holy Spirit towards the glory of the Father.

May the Holy Trinity transform our lives, our Church, our society and our world with the divine wisdom, kindness and sensibility. May the light of the Holy Trinity fulfil our lives with the hope and the healing power of the eternal life so that we might become ourselves a created source of the uncreated beauty in the world.