

BASILIAN MONASTICISM

11-13 February 2009

THE WORD OF GOD IN THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT
Very Rev. Basil Koubetch, OSBM—Protoarchimandrite Emeritus

page 3

PRAYER IN LIFE AND WORKS OF ST. BASIL
Rev. Fr. Matej Havryliv, OSBM

page 10

ON THE LIFE AND INFLUENCE OF OUR HOLY MOTHER MACRINA
Mother Valentina Hadarau, OSBM

page 17

MONASTICISM AS A MODEL OF BAPTISMAL LIFE SERVING SOCIETY
Rev. Dr. Ivan Kaszczak

page 23

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE RULE OF ST. BASIL
Rev. Fr. Porfiryj Pidruchnyj, OSBM

page 29

17-20 November 2009

IOANNIKYJ BASILOVYCH OSBM AND THE MONASTIC FORMATION OF THE BASILIAN MONKS IN THE LATE XVIIITH AND BEGINNING OF THE XIXTH CENTURY IN MUKACHEVO EPARCHY
Rev. Dr. Milan Lach, SJ

page 37

**MONASTIC LIFE IN THE XXIST CENTURY:
FINDING A BALANCE IN A LIFE OF PRAYER, WORK AND LEISURE**
Dr. Michelina Tenace

page 55

**THE WORD OF GOD IN THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT:
GOD'S COMMANDMENTS**
Very Rev. Basil Koubetch, OSBM—Protoarchimandrite Emeritus

page 68

THE MODEL MONK/NUN IN THE XXIST CENTURY THROUGH THE EYES OF ST. BASIL
Rev. Dr. Stefan Batruch

page 78

21-25 June 2010

NEW LIFE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT
Rev. Dr. Renzo Lavatori, SJ

page 90

**METROPOLITAN VELAMYN RUTSKYJ'S COMPILATION
OF THE RULE OF ST. BASIL DURING THE BASILIAN REFORM**
Rev. Dr. Augustine Babiak

page 95

**THE WORD OF GOD IN THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT:
THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS**

Very Rev. Basil Koubetch, OSBM—Protoarchimandrite Emeritus

page 105

PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL TRANSFIGURATION IN THE ANAPHORA OF ST. BASIL
Rev. Dr. Steven Hawkes-Teeples, SJ

page 110

4-6 May 2011

NATURAL CONTEMPLATION IN ST. BASIL OF CAESAREA
Rev. Dr. Enrico Cattaneo, SJ

page 117

**THE WORD OF GOD IN THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT:
POVERTY**

Very Rev. Basil Koubetch, OSBM—Protoarchimandrite Emeritus

page 129

THE ECCLESIASTICAL DIMENSION OF MONASTIC LIFE IN ST. BASIL THE GREAT
Very Rev. Archimandrite Manel Nin, OSB

page 137

INTRODUCTION TO EVAGRIUS FOR MONASTIC FORMATION TODAY
Rev. Dr. Jeremy Driscoll, OSB

page 144

April 2012

EAST AND WEST: A PASSING MOMENT
Rev. Dr. Ivan Kaszczak

page 150

**THE WORD OF GOD IN THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT:
CHASTITY**

Very Rev. Basil Koubetch, OSBM—Protoarchimandrite Emeritus

page 159

CONTRIBUTORS

page 166

THE WORD OF GOD IN THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT

*Very Rev. Basil Koubetch, OSBM
Protoarchimandrite Emeritus*

Introduction

The St. Basil the Great's literary achievements strongly influenced the development of theological thought and spirituality in both East and West. Without a doubt, the faithful have quenched their spiritual thirst in his teaching as from living stream, which flows from a familiar source and which calls them back to that very same fount—Sacred Scripture. Christians—from the earliest times to the present—recognize the perennial value of Eastern Monasticism's Patriarch. His works still attract the attention of academics, theologians, patristic scholars, as well as monks, nuns and the laity.

Scholarly studies on St. Basil's literary works are many and they can —for the most part— be characterised as historical; that is, they primarily shed light upon his activity within his particular historical context, while themes concerning his ascetical life are for the most part treated only in a general manner (*).¹ *The historical works*—especially the patristic manuals and histories of spirituality—systematically present St. Basil's work as a key contribution from an important Church Father (*). Other researchers focus their attention on his *shaping of the development of monastic life in the East and West* (*). Other studies raise the *question of the authenticity* of his works. The composition of the Basilian ascetical works is of a great interest to some (*). Other authors try to elaborate the historical context around the development of his asceticism (*), helping the reader to better grasp the originality of St. Basil's ascetical approach (*). The theme of the love of God and neighbour are key and particularly accented within his works. There are many publications dedicated to this latter topic (*). Some authors concentrate on the *call to holiness and perfection* (*), while others dedicate their academic energies to that of *contemplation* (*), of which there is no separate work written by St. Basil, although it permeates all of his works. Other thematic studies include the activity of the Holy Spirit in the desire for perfection (*); St. Basil's apologetics in the defence of orthodoxy (*); and various other works, which encompass the entire literary inheritance of St. Basil.

The weight or rather centrality of Holy Scripture, if not stressed, is at least touched upon in all these studies on St. Basil. This emphasis on the weight of the God's Word in St. Basil's literary works is treated by many authors in their research, however, there is no one study dedicated to this topic.² Those studies which underline

¹ This symbol (*) represents various studies on a given theme. This present work will give only the main works on St. Basil, which develop the theme of the Word of God in his teaching and works. For a more complete bibliography see: F. TRISOGLIO, *Basilio il grande si presenta; la vita, l'azione, le opere* (Todo, Perugia: Litograf Srl, 2004), 279-295; A. HOLMES, OSB, *A Life Pleasing to God: The Spirituality of the Rules of St. Basil*, (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 2000), 263-270; L. CREMASCHI, *Basilio di Cesarea — Le regole*, (Torino: Ed. Qiqijon, Comunità di Bose, 1993), 429-436.

St. Basil's teaching on the inspiration of Sacred Scripture by the Holy Spirit,³ give the reason behind his veneration of God's Word. On the basis of these various studies, it is easy to see that he had an excellent knowledge of and complete fidelity to the Word of God. In the light of Vatican II, this attribute of St. Basil becomes even more accented by many authors. As for example, Paul J. Fediuk⁴ and Umberto Neri⁵ show that in St. Basil's work "On Baptism" biblical citations make up over fifty percent of the text.⁶

Obviously, this theme is essential in any study on St. Basil; however, it is also extremely broad in its scope. In fact, it is inexhaustible. Moreover, the aim of our present work is to limit ourselves to the goal of the Commission; i.e., to highlight the importance of God's Word in the life and works of St. Basil, so that with greater fidelity to our founder, we could share the treasure of his doctrine throughout our Order and Christ's Church.

On the basis of the works and studies on St. Basil, it is not necessary to ask 'if' and 'how much' Sacred Scripture weighs in his works, nor to demonstrate 'that' he lived, worked and wrote in accordance with the Word of God. Anyone who has ever read St. Basil's teachings or rule, or even those academics, who accent this attribute of his works, know this very well. In this present work, however, I intend to show 'how' St. Basil does this in a few chosen texts, with the goal of discovering some

² M. GIRARDI, *Basilio di Cesarea — interprete della Scrittura, lessico, principi ermeneutici, prassi*, (Bari: Edipuglia 1998), 11. Here, the author refers to this lack and cites the only doctorate found on this theme (P. SCIARMA, *L'esegesi di Basilio di Cesarea nelle Omelie sui Salmi /tesi dattil./*, (Roma: Università di Roma "La Sapienza, 1983). He states that: "Basilio raramente introduce una determinata interpretazione connotandone la natura dal punto di vista esegetico; di regola si limita semplicemente a proporla, da sola o in alternativa ad altre.

See also: B. WAWRYK, OSBM, *De exegesi S. Basili Magni: De canone, textu et inspiratione S. Scripturae* (Dissertatio ad lauream), (Romae: 1940); A. Hawkaluk, *Nominum divinorum quae apud S. Basili Magnum reperiuntur; Catalogus et ratio* (Dissertatio ad lauream), (Romae: 1966), 493-507 (this is a valuable work, where the author lists the Scripture texts St. Basil cites and their frequency); S. BATRUCH, *Модель християнського життя у творах св. Василія Великого*, (Львів: Вид. Свічадо, 2007), 121-135; P. SCAZZOSO, *Introduzione alla ecclesiology*, in *Studia Patristica Mediolanensis*, edd. G. LAZZATI and R. CANTALAMESSA, vo. 4, (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1975), 125-144 ; F. TRISOGLIO, *Basilio il grande si presenta; la vita, l'azione, le opere* (Todo, Perugia: Litograf Srl, 2004), 204-224; *Basilio tra oriente e occidente*, (Torino: Ed. Qiqijon, Comunità di Bose, 2001), 67-92.

³ B. WAWRYK, OSBM, *Doctrina S. Basili Magni de canone inspiratione S. Scripturae*, (Romae: Apud Curiam Ordinis Basiliani S. Josaphat, 1943).

D. AMAND, *L'ascèse monastique de Sainte Basile*, (Braine-le-Comte, 1949), 82-85.

⁴ P. FEDIUK, *Святий Василій Великий і християнське аскетичне життя*, in *Analecta OSBM*, (Roma-Toronto: 1978), 146.

⁵ BASILIO DI CESAREA, *Il Battesimo*, ed. U. NERI, (Brescia: Paideia Editrice), 54-97.

⁶ Ibid., 54. The author remarks that in such frequent use of Scripture, Basil establishes himself as a theologian ("ciò gli consente di rivelare appieno la sua personalità di teologo") and he also affirms: "E i *Moralia*, appunto, non sono che una semplice elezione di testi biblici, intercalata da brevissime enunciazioni interpretive — le cosiddette «regole»: a questa ben fornita antologia, Basilio attingerà poi continuamente, nel seguito della sua vita, volta a volta adattandola e intergrandola in ordine alle situazioni nuove che veranno creandosi, o al diverso configurarsi dei problemi sui quali occorrerà prendere posizione."

answers to the question: “How can we —Basilian monks and nuns— do the same, today?”

1. General Introductory Themes

1.1. Sacred Scripture in the life of St. Basil the Great

There are four separate periods in St. Basil’s life that relate to the Inspired Text:

1) During his infancy and youth at home, of which he speaks in his discourse “On God’s Judgement” about how he learnt Sacred Scripture from his parents, who endowed him with a knowledge of truth.⁷

2) His separation from Sacred Scripture while studying in Athens. Although it is true that during this period he and his friend, Gregory of Nanzianzus, knew only ‘two paths’: one to church and the other to school; nevertheless, he never had enough time, nor the appropriate surroundings and circumstances for reading Sacred Scripture. Moreover, his studies were almost exclusively lead by pagan teachers, concentrating on the works of Plato, Aristotle and other Greek classical authors and philosophers. Upon returning home, he remained distant from God’s light, although the divine light still penetrated the depths of his heart. In Caesarea, he taught rhetoric, which consisted in an analysis of and commentary on various Greek pagan orators. This period did not last long. Within the context of his entire life and activity, it is hard to believe that Basil was wholly content in this period. Nonetheless, the education and experience he acquired at this time played an important role throughout his entire life.

3) The period of his conversion, which begins around 357. Basil himself writes in “Letter 223” about the moment when the light of the Gospel truth penetrated his ‘deep sleep’ in pagan wisdom and worldly knowledge and customs. The seed of God’s Word —sown long ago in his youthful heart— now put out roots in the good soil and grew into the ‘knowledge of truth.’⁸

4) The period of intense study and immersion in the Spirit of Sacred Scripture. Here St. Basil acquired a profound understanding of God’s truth, together with human and Christian maturity. He grasped that every word, which comes from the mouth of God needs to be fulfilled. Educated, intelligent and observant, St. Basil also understood that it is necessary to communicate this truth to the people of God. This period lasted until his death — 1 January 379.

1.2. The Witness and Resolution of St. Basil

The knowledge of God’s will through Sacred Scripture guided and enlightened our father, St. Basil, throughout all his teaching and discourses from 357

⁷ ST. BASIL THE GREAT, *On God’s Judgement*, n. 1.

⁸ Ibid.

until his death. He was deeply taken with the God-inspired books and in them he saw the ‘one rule,’ by which to direct one’s life no matter the circumstance. Basilian theology and spirituality developed as a result of his profound knowledge and perfect obedience to Sacred Scripture.

To better understand his deportment and works, it is necessary to listen to what he himself professes concerning his experience of Sacred Scripture.

“From God’s goodness and love for mankind, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the action of the Holy Spirit, I refrained from the errors of paganism, since from my birth I was raised by Christian parents. In my youth, I learnt Holy Writ from them, which embued me with the knowledge of truth.”⁹

“All of Sacred Scripture is inspired and beneficial. It is handed down by the Holy Spirit so that we, the people, individually and collectively, as in a general hospital for the soul, are able to find the right medicine for every need.”¹⁰

“It is necessary to observe everything without exception that is handed down through the Gospel and the Apostles.”¹¹

“According to God’s will, it is my duty to hand down to you that which I learnt from the inspired text for the common good. I must adhere to Sacred Scripture.”¹²

“It is necessary to affirm through the witness of Sacred Scripture every statement for the perfect confirmation of the good and for the shame of the wicked.”¹³

Similar quotations can be found throughout all the works of our saintly father. His *Moral Rules* alone “are made up of 1500 citations from Holy Writ, taken from the New Testament.”¹⁴

1.2. How St. Basil uses Sacred Scripture (a Basilian hermeneutic)

First of all, the theme of this work requires us to define St. Basil’s point of departure; that is, what held primacy of place in his life and teachings. Did Sacred Scripture ground his thoughts or did he adapt his convictions to Sacred Scripture? Did he search Sacred Scripture for answers to various questions or did he endeavor to think in accord with God’s will, as revealed in the Sacred Text? Without a clear reply

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ ST. BASIL THE GREAT, *Homily on Psalm 1*.

¹¹ Ibid., *The Moral Rules*, Chapter 3, n. 1.

¹² Ibid., *On Faith*, n. 1.

¹³ Ibid., *The Moral Rules*, Chapter 1, n. 26.

¹⁴ P. FEDIUK, *Святий Василій Великий і християнське аскетичне життя*, in *Analecta OSBM*, (Roma-Toronto: 1978), 146.

to these and similar queries, it is not possible to correctly understand what Sacred Scripture represents in the life and work of St. Basil the Great.

To respond to these questions, what is truly fundamental in life and work of our saint must be highlighted. He had a profound and unshakeable faith in Holy Writ. As a consequence, he speaks of the Holy Scripture in these terms: ‘the sacred texts,’ ‘divine writing,’ ‘word of God,’ ‘God’s voice’ and other similar names and expressions. For him the name ‘Holy Scripture’ contains the very name of God and our Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁵

One well-known scholar on St. Basil, Paul J. Fediuk, demonstrates the place Sacred Scripture occupies in the construction of the Basilian community by comparing St. Basil to other authors, thus giving us a valuable answer to the above-mentioned questions: “For the most part, Pachomius **employs** Sacred Scripture, that is he cites it as an approval of his own thoughts, as do the majority of monastic founders and spiritual writers. For Basil, however, Sacred Scripture is not a proof of his own thoughts, but rather it possesses a normative and legislative function. In his works, St. Basil strives to his utmost to be ‘obsequious’ to Sacred Scripture, in the full etymological sense of the term —“to follow, comply with;” i.e., he became a ‘listener’ to Sacred Scripture as it dictated to him the norms of behaviour.”¹⁶

In order to correctly grasp the teaching of our saintly father, it is necessary to keep in mind this principle: there is no distinction between God’s will and the written word of God.¹⁷ For St. Basil, the Commandments are the highest rule. To do God’s will and to please Him in all things, therefore, is Basil’s constant effort in both his life and doctrine. Consequently, when responding to various questions from his disciples and the faithful, he answers directly from Sacred Scripture. He doesn’t begin with his own knowledge and thoughts, in order to prove his response with citations from Sacred Scripture. On the contrary, he constantly strives to cull his response or doctrine from God’s Word. He “bohomyslyt”, that is he thinks in accordance with God.

Metropolitan Andrej Sheptyckyj highlights that “St. Basil was able to apply Sacred Scripture to life in such a manner that the one fed the other. He transmitted his doctrine to his audience as if nothing was his own, but rather it was solely Sacred Scripture. He only ordered and presented his doctrine as a reminder of Sacred Scripture, all the while removing himself. His task: to bring us closer to Sacred Scripture, to teach us to drink from it and to be enlightened by it.”¹⁸

¹⁵ Cf. B. WAWRYK, OSBM, *Doctrina S. Basili Magni de canone inspiratione S. Scripturae*, (Romae: Apud Curiam Ordinis Basiliani S. Josaphat, 1943), 19, 21 and 25 and P. SCAZZOSO, *Introduzione alla eccesiologia*, in *Studia Patristica Mediolanensis*, edd. G. LAZZATI and R. CANTALAMESSA, vo. 4, (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1975), 128-129.

¹⁶ P. FEDIUK, *Святий Василій Великий і християнське аскетичне життя*, in *Analecta OSBM*, (Roma-Toronto: 1978), 145-146.

¹⁷ U. NERI, 58 (“Non c’è distinzione fra la «volontà di Dio» e «le cose che sono scritte»” “There is no distinction between “the will of God” and “what is written”).

¹⁸ *Аскетичні твори св. Василія Великого*, trans. Metr. Andrej Sheptyckyj, OSBM, (Rome 1989), vii.

In referring to a certain ‘biblicism’ in St. Basil, one cannot neglect an important characteristic of his hermeneutic; namely, he was a highly educated man, whose studies in Athens were not wasted. He united a scientific-philosophical methodology, terminology and even the content of pagan literature with the necessary pedagogy for the transmission of the Gospel to his contemporary society. Following the example of Christ, the Holy Apostles and Evangelists, and St. Paul, he was well aware of his doctrine’s audience. He employed his rhetorical skills and education in the transmission of the sense of God’s Word. His texts, especially his *Moral Rules*, are seeped in quotes from Sacred Scripture, not because a certain text pleased him, but rather because he understood every text well and accepted it as both as a ‘perfect Christian’ and a ‘true intellectual.’ St. Basil wrote what he lived. He received the Sacred Text neither literally, nor according to his own understanding; rather he tried to grasp the unfathomable Word of Sacred Scripture by searching for its true sense under the proper guidance. Thus, it is difficult to assign to Basil a ‘biblicism’ in the full—and negative—sense of the term. For we see in him a ‘superior’ ($\pi\!\rho\!\varepsilon\!\sigma\!\tau\omega\!$), who feared commanding anything that was contrary to God’s will as expressed in Scripture. He was radical, but not ‘a radical.’ He was as radical as is the very Word of God. All these observations form part of a methodological approach to the proper understanding of St. Basil’s works.

1.3. Some Conclusions: Attributes of Those That Live According to the Rules and Doctrine of St. Basil (without exhausting the theme)

1.3.1) Attributes of any Christian (monks and nuns included), who live according to the rule and doctrine of St. Basil:

- They have a love of God’s word, in which —under the proper guidance— they can know the truth about God and themselves.
- They constantly and carefully listen and try to radically fulfill the Word of God. They strive to fulfill God’s will in every circumstance in life. They are constantly striving for perfection, to be transfigured into our Lord, to be divinized. They do this because they are convinced that there is no better humanism and means at attain perfection than to become like Jesus Christ.
- They make a special effort to **transmit** the Word of God to others, helping others come to the truth. Not ‘privatizing,’ nor ‘monopolizing’ the knowledge of truth.
- They strive to please God in all things.
- They are joyful, happy and free, because they are united to God and are detached from material things and other persons, especially themselves. They are forever grateful to God and neighbour.
- They have an unshakable faith in God.
- They love God above all and out of their love of God, they strive to be charitable to their neighbour according to the example of Jesus Christ.

- They are constantly mindful of God — their supreme Benefactor.
- They are forever progressing in all the virtues.
- They are capable of common life and work. They strive to live with everyone in peace, harmony and charity.
- They are ready for any sacrifice for the common good.
- They are ready to not only courageously face their own trials and troubles, but also their neighbour's difficulties.
- They foster proper values and fulfill the duties of their state in life.

1.3.2) Attributes of any lay person, who live according to the rules and doctrine of St. Basil:

- They transmit to their children God's Word and give them a Christian education.
- Parents are the first educators of their children, not the school or church.¹⁹

1.3.3) Special Attributes of monks and nuns, who live according to the rules and doctrine of St. Basil:

- They strive at their best to live the evangelical counsels (vows).
- With resolution they fulfill the 'practical'²⁰ duties of the monastic typikon, including obedience to one's superior, with the certainty that **God's commands are even more demanding.**²¹
- In their work and mission, especially in teaching, they fulfill everything according to God's Word, and their religious/spiritual teachings are imbued with Sacred Scripture in the spirit of the Church's magisterium.

¹⁹ In a certain sense, the parents of Sts. Basil and Macrina's were very modern. In many countries today, we observe the tendency to take children from their natural-familial context of formation and place them in a schools of formation. Frequently, "highly educated state and private pedagogues," with convincing expressions, state that —according to them— "education – is formation, and formation is education," thus confusing two very separate concepts. Can they truly form children? We find many parents, who do not feel up to the task of forming their children and they quickly abdicate this responsibility to the Church or State. This subject —in my opinion— is of great importance.

²⁰ Here 'practical' is not to be understood that the evangelical counsels given by St. Basil are not practical, but rather these evangelical counsels for the ordering of monastic common life in the contemporary circumstances of the Church and society.

²¹ For the 'perfect Christian' there is no more demanding commands than "be merciful or perfect as your Heavenly Father" (Lk 6, 36; Matt. 5, 48), or love you neighbour as Christ loves us (Jn 15, 12), and other such passages.

PRAYER IN THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ST. BASIL

Rev. Fr. Matej Havryliv, OSBM

Jean Gribomont, OSB, the Belgian Benedictine (1920-1986), in his essay on “Prayer according to St. Basil,”¹ claimed that Cappadocian Hierarch had no real doctrine on this subject as such, with the one exception found in n. 37 of the *Wider Rules* (*WR*).² Nonetheless, Gribomont still makes a brilliant synthesis of St. Basil’s definition of prayer in its broader sense, that is:

“a spontaneous effect of love, manifesting itself by joyous delight, wonder and constant gratitude, rising above the world and ordering itself to the will of God.”³

This way of prayer is perhaps best manifested in the Anaphora, in which St. Basil addresses the Creator by His own proper name – Yahweh (“Ο Θεός, εκάιος”):⁴

O Existing One, Master, Lord, God, Father Almighty, Worshipped One: it is truly worthy and right to the majesty of Your holiness that we should praise You, hymn You, bless You, worship You, give thanks to You and glorify You, the only (οντως) truly existing (οντας) God; and to offer You this our rational (λογικην) worship with a contrite heart and humble spirit, for You are He Who has graciously granted to us the knowledge of Your truth. Who is able to praise Your mighty acts? Or to make all Your praises known? Or to tell, at all times, of all your wonderful deeds?

First of all, it must be stated that St. Basil had in mind the various types of prayer as enumerated by St. Paul in his letters: “in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody... always and for everything giving thanks” (Eph 5,19; Col 3,16; 1 Tim 2,1) and also the commandment of “continuous prayer” (1 Thess. 5, 17), trying to unite the variety of human activities within a constant mindfulness of God, Who sanctifies life in all its manifestations and inhabits the human person as temple.⁵ In his homily “On the Martyr Julitta” and in the spirit of his previous “Dialogue on Gratitude,” St. Basil rhetorically asks and explains:

¹ J. GRIBOMONT, “La preghiera secondo S. Basilio,” in *La preghiera* (Roma: 1964), 371-397. This same thought is held by M.VAN PARYS in “Memoria di Dio in Basilio di Cesarea,” 119 in *Basilio tra oriente e occidente* (Ed. Qiiajon, 2001), 111-125.

² *WR* = the *Wider Rules*.

³ J. GRIBOMONT, “La preghiera secondo S. Basilio,” 374.

⁴ For the Greek edition, *Eucologio Barberini gr. 336*, edited by S. PARENTI and E. VELKOVSKA, (Roma 1995), 12; for the Church-Slavonic edition, Літургіко́нъ сіє́льсьтво СЛУЖЕБНИЦЬ (Римъ, 1952), 354; for the Ukrainian edition, *Свяченна і Божественна Літургія*, (Львів: Місіонер, 2003), 121.

⁵ “Лист Григорія Назіанзького,” 2, 4 in *Вибрані листи св. Василія Великого*, 23.

Ought we to pray without ceasing? Is it possible to obey such a command? These are questions which I see you are ready to ask. I will endeavour, to the best of my ability, to defend the charge.

Prayer is a petition for what is good, addressed by the pious to God. But we do not rigidly confine our petition to words; nor do we imagine that God requires to be reminded by speech. He knows our needs even though we ask Him not. What do I say then? I say that we must not think to make our prayer complete by syllables. The strength of prayer lies rather in the purpose of our soul and in deeds of virtue that extend **to every part and moment of our lives**. ‘Whether you eat,’ it is said, ‘or drink, or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God.’ As you take your seat at table, pray. As you lift the loaf, offer thanks to the Giver. When you sustain your bodily weakness with wine, remember Him, Who supplies you with this gift, to make your heart glad and to comfort your infirmity. Has your hunger been satiated? Then let not the thought of your Benefactor pass away too.

As you are putting on your tunic, thank the Giver of it. As you wrap your cloak about yourself, feel yet greater love to God, Who alike in summer and in winter has given us coverings convenient for us, at once to preserve our life and to cover what is unseemly. Is the day done? Give thanks to Him Who has given us the sun for our daily work, and has provided for us a fire to light up the night, and to serve the rest of the needs of life. Let night give another occasion for prayer. When you look up to heavens and gaze at the beauty of the stars, pray to the Lord of the visible world; pray to God the Arch-artificer of the universe, Who in wisdom has made them all. When you see all nature sunk in sleep, then again worship Him Who gives us even against our wills release from the continuous strain of toil, and by a short refreshment restores us once again to the vigour of our strength.

Let not half your life be useless through the senselessness of slumber. Divide the time of night between sleep and prayer. Let your sleep be an experience in piety; for it is only natural that our sleeping dreams should be for the most part echoes of the anxieties of the day. As have been our conduct and pursuits, so will inevitably be our dreams. Thus you will pray without ceasing; if you pray not only in words, but unite yourself to God through all the course of life and so your life is made one ceaseless and uninterrupted prayer.⁶

Thus, the Cappadocian’s understanding of prayer coincides with the explanation of Origen (185-254) as found in his work (*Περὶ εὐχῆς - De oratione*):

Now, since the performance of actions enjoined by virtue or by the commandments is also a constituent part of prayer, he prays without ceasing who combines prayer with right actions, and virtuous actions with prayer. For the Apostolic command to “pray

⁶ Migne, PG 31, 244; ST. BASIL, “Homily in Honour of St. Julitta,” nn. 3-4 in *Наки св. Василія Великого для народу*, (Glen Cove: 1954), 58-59.

“without ceasing” can only be accepted by us as a possibility if we speak of the whole life of a Christian as one great continuous prayer.⁷

St. Basil strongly insists that Christian life is to become prayer, and prayer is to enliven life. He emphasizes that the act of praying to God should involve all the human faculties:

The prayer of each is manifest to God; one seeks heavenly things affectionately and one seeks them learnedly; one utters his words perfunctorily with the tips of his lips, but his heart is far from God... Thus, let the tongue sing, let the mind interpret the meaning of what has been said, that you may sing with your spirit, that you may sing likewise with your mind. Not at all is God in need of glory, but He wishes us to be worthy of glory.⁸

Moreover, a person becomes prayer not merely when he continuously prays,⁹ but when he performs God’s will with love and trusting submission to his Creator.⁹ Obviously, this state of prayer requires some effort and even battle against dissipation, in order “to acquire the spirit of recollection.”¹⁰

There is yet another dimension of prayer in St. Basil the Great, which the world renowned researcher and expert on Eastern spirituality, Cardinal Tomas Spidlík, SJ, drew the attention to, namely, the prayer of contemplation – *contemplatio naturalis*.¹¹ He writes:

As the legislator of cenobitic life, one would think that St Basil (+379) would speak first of common psalmody. However, since he was a profound contemplative, his *Homily on the Hexameron*¹² is an excellent guide to “natural contemplation.”¹³

Card. Spidlík does not leave out St. Basil’s thought on “prayer of the body.”¹⁴ Indeed, the Cappadocian teacher, in his homily on Deut.15, 9, states:

Know your soul and believe in the invisible God, for just as your soul cannot be seen with physical eyes, so also God has no color, nor shape, nor bodily frame, but is perceived only through His actions. So, meditating on God, do not try to see Him with your

⁷ ORIGEN, *On Prayer*, (СПБ 1897), 43.

⁸ ST. BASIL, “Homily on Psalm 28,” n. 7, in *Науки св. Василія Великого для народу*, (Glen Cove: 1954), 79-80.

⁹ “Homily on the Hexameron” 2,7; 5,1 in SC 26 (1950), col. 45bc, 173ff.

¹⁰ WR 3; cf. *Аскетичні твори св. Василія Великого*, trans. Metr. Andrej Sheptytsky, OSBM, (Rome 1989), 132.

¹¹ T. ŠPIDLIK, *La preghiera secondo la tradizione dell’Oriente cristiano*, (Rome: Lipa, 2002), 26.

¹² SC 26bis (1968); Italian text col. 45bc, 173ff.

¹³ MIGNE, PG 31,237-262.

¹⁴ T. ŠPIDLIK, *La preghiera secondo la tradizione dell’Oriente cristiano*, 108.

eyes, but trust your mind and discover Him through reason. Be filled with wonder at the Artist, Who joined together with such force the soul and body; the soul extends to the remotest parts of the body, tightly binding by them together in harmony. Be amazed at the power the soul gives to the body, how the body senses the emotions of the soul, how the soul gives life to the body, and how the suffering of the body causes the soul to suffer.¹⁵

How does St. Basil regard prayer based on the Word of God, in particular, on psalmody? Obviously, as an expert on Scripture, he could not but pay attention to it. That is what he says about the vital importance of the Psalms in the life of any man:

A psalm gives profound serenity to the soul, dispensing peace, calming the tumultuous waves of thought. For, it softens anger in the soul and bridles intemperance. A psalm solidifies friendships, reconciles the separated, conciliates those at enmity. Who, indeed, can consider as an enemy him with whom he has uttered the same prayer to God? So that psalmody in choral singing is a bond, as it were, of unity, joining harmoniously the people into a symphony of one choir, producing the greatest of all blessings, charity. A psalm is a city of refuge from the demons; cry for help to the angels, a shield against the fears of the night, a rest from toils of the day, a safeguard for infants, an adornment for vigorous youth, a consolation for the elderly, a most fitting ornament for women. It makes the desert a home; it moderates the excesses of the market place; it is the foundation for beginners, the improvement of those advancing, the solid support of the perfect. It is the voice of the Church, brightening feast days; it creates a sorrow which is in accordance with God. For, a psalm calls forth a tear even from a heart of stone. A psalm is the occupation of the angels, heavenly life, spiritual incense.¹⁶

This union of salvation history and prayer in Scripture, which St. Basil so clearly underscored, the well-known liturgist, Fr. Robert Taft, SJ, called a “dialectic,” which is poured forth into the liturgy: “God acts and His people respond. Hence, the Bible is the first liturgical book of the Church.”¹⁷

We, Basilians, are especially thankful to the Holy Hierarch from Cappadocia and owe to him the precious explanation of how the Church prays seven times a day. We can see in this explanation the future structure of the Liturgy of the Hours, which subsequently evolved under the influence of various traditions.¹⁸

St. Basil is creative in relation to ecclesiastical rubrics, stating:

¹⁵ ST. BASIL, “Know Thyself!”, n.8; “Hom. In illud, Attende tibi ipsi, n. 7, PG 31, 216b.

¹⁶ Ibid., “Homily on Psalm 1,” n. 2, in *Гомілії на Псалми*, trans. FEDYNIAK (New York: 1979), 20.

¹⁷ R. TAFT, *Oltre l’Oriente e l’Occidente*, (Rome: Lipa, 1999), 256.

¹⁸ There are many studies on this subject; see the excellent work of M. ARRANZ, SJ, *Как молились Богу древние византийцы*, (ЛДА, 1979).

I think it is useful to pray at designated times, introducing into the fixed prayers and psalmody some change, because when the same things are repeated, our souls somehow grow cold, indifferent and dissipated. In contrast, through change and variation in psalmody and singing, at various [liturgical] times, desire and attention is renewed.

Thus, basing himself on Psalm 118 (119), 164, Basil states: “Seven times a day I praise You, because of Your righteous judgments.” He numbers seven as the times “designed for prayer in the monastery” and adds: “We chose them not without reason, for each one of those times reminds us, in a special way, of some divine salvific act.”¹⁹

Matins	Prayers are recited early in the morning so that the first movements of the soul and the mind may be consecrated to God and that we may take up no other consideration before we have been cheered and heartened by the thought of God, as it is written: “I remembered God and was delighted” (Ps 76 (77): 4), and that the body may not busy itself with tasks before we have fulfilled the words: “To thee will I pray, O Lord; in the morning thou shalt hear my voice. In the morning I will stand before thee and will see” (Ps 5: 4-5).
3 rd Hour	Again at the third hour the brethren must assemble and betake themselves to prayer, even if they may have dispersed to their various employments. Recalling to mind the gift of the Spirit bestowed upon the Apostles at this third hour, all should worship together, so that they also may become worthy to receive the gift of sanctity, and they should implore the guidance of the Holy Spirit and His instruction in what is good and useful, according to the words: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit” (Ps 50 (51): 10-12). Again, it is said elsewhere, “Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness” (Ps 142 (143): 10); and having prayed thus, we should again apply ourselves to our tasks.
6 th Hour (midday)	It is also our judgment that prayer is necessary at the sixth hour, in imitation of the saints who say: “Evening and morning and at noon I will speak and declare; and he shall hear my voice” (Ps 54 (55): 18) And so that we may be saved from invasion and the noonday Devil (Ps 90 (91): 6), at this time, also, the ninetieth Psalm will be recited.
9 th Hour	The ninth hour, however, was appointed as a compulsory time for prayer by the Apostles themselves in the Acts where it is related that “Peter and John went up to the temple at the ninth hour of prayer” (Acts 3: 1).
Vespers	When the day’s work is ended, thanksgiving should be offered for what has been granted us or for what we have done rightly therein and confession made of our omissions whether voluntary or involuntary, or of a secret fault, if we chance to have committed any in words or deeds, or in the heart itself; for by prayer we propitiate God for all our misdemeanors.
Complines	The examination of our past actions is a great help toward not falling into like faults again; wherefore the Psalmist says: “the things you say in your hearts, be sorry for them upon your beds” (Ps 4: 5).

¹⁹ WR 37; cf. *Аскетичні твори св. Василія Великого*, trans. Metr. Andrej Sheptytsky, OSBM, (Rome 1989), 199-202.

Vigil	Again, at nightfall, we must ask that our rest be sinless and untroubled by dreams. At this hour, also, the ninetieth Psalm should be recited. Paul and Silas, furthermore, have handed down to us the practice of compulsory prayer at midnight, as the history of the Acts declares: “And at midnight Paul and Silas praised God” (Acts 16: 25). The Psalmist also says: “I rose at midnight to give praise to thee for the judgments of thy justifications” (Ps 118 (119): 62).
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“Then, too, we must anticipate the dawn by prayer, – encourages St. Basil – so that the day may not find us in slumber and in bed, according to the words: “My eyes have prevented the morning; that I might meditate on thy words” (Ps 118 (119): 148).

St. Basil does not see any reason whatsoever to neglect common psalmody; rather, he is categorical in saying: “Those, who consecrated their lives for the glory of God and the glory of Christ, must never neglect any one of those set times.”

In the case of unforeseen obstacles, St. Basil takes into account the words of Christ concerning His presence and suggests:

But, if some, perhaps, are not in attendance because the nature or place of their work keeps them at too great a distance, they are strictly obliged to carry out wherever they are, with promptitude, all that is prescribed for common observance, for “where there are two or three gathered together in my name,” says the Lord, “there am I in the midst of them” (Matt 18:20).²⁰

Besides the above-listed elements of the Divine Hours, St. Basil mentions in his treatise, *De Spiritu Sancto*, the hymn “O Joyful Light” (Φώς ἡλαρόν), remarking that this hymn is so ancient that no one recalls its author.²¹ It is possible that Basil was also familiar with the ektenia “Angel of Peace,” citing it in his *Letter 11*.²²

In our liturgical books, there are prayers attributed to St.. Basil: two during the Midnight Office and in the “O Thou, Who in all times and places” of the First Hour and one in each “O Thou, Who in all times and places” of the other Hours and Complines.²³ There are also two prayers before Holy Communion and one after Holy Communion attributed to him.²⁴

One should also mention two prayers in the Order of Exorcism attributed to St. Basil.²⁵

²⁰ WR 37; cf. *Аскетичні твори св. Василія Великого*, trans. Metr. Andrej Sheptytsky, OSBM, (Rome 1989), 201.

²¹ *De Spiritu Sancto* 29,73, SC 17bis, 508-510 = PG 32, 205.

²² ST. BASIL, *Letters*, vol. I, (Paris: Y. Courtone, 1957), 41.

²³ M. ARRANZ, SJ, *Как молились Богу древние византийцы*, (ЛДА, 1979), 162.

²⁴ Ukrainian translation of these prayers in *Молитовник*, (Kyiv: 2001), 349-351, 356-357, 365.

²⁵ *Требникъ Петра Могили*, (Kyiv: 1646), 340-341, 343 (Kyiv: УПЦ 1996).

As for the prayer life of St. Basil, of course, as the Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, he taught by example. We believe that even now, he continues his prayer for us, his sons and daughters, before the Throne of the Lamb. Therefore, annually honoring his memory on January 1, sing of our Founder:

Having consecrated yourself totally to God and from childhood having sacrificed yourself fully for Him, like the stars you shone of God's wisdom and explained the nature of things, clearly teaching and wisely ordering them for a better understanding of God. So we praise you as the theological and divine teacher, and a shining beacon of the Church, for you pray to Christ that He would grant great mercy to the world.²⁶

²⁶ Молитвослов, (Рим Вид-во ОО. Василіян, 1990), 795.

THE LIFE AND INFLUENCE OF OUR HOLY MOTHER MACRINA

Mother Valentina Hadarau, OSBM

The Historical Context

Speaking today about St. Macrina is like searching through the expanses of history in order to discover the beauty of a vocation, the holiness of a woman and the wisdom of a virgin.

In general, women carry within themselves a measure of eternity, the capacity to be with God and to be like God through their being and actions. They always carry within themselves—in their souls and bodies—the principle of love, i.e., an openness to others.

During St. Macrina's era women constituted for Christianity a great problem in need of resolution, since many women—especially many of the great female figures within paganism—were examples of corrupt behavior in the eyes of the faithful.¹ In the worldviews of the Jews, Romans and Greeks, women were considered to be less than men. Thus, at this particular point in history, it was necessary to redefine a woman's dignity and determine her role in society and the Church. It is at this moment, the great personage of St. Macrina appears, a woman of excellence, who stood above the rest.²

The historical period in which St. Macrina lived was simultaneously marked by various controversies and by the spread of monasticism, which was a visible sign of the Christian religion and a witness to God.

Therefore, it is interesting to penetrate her world, its culture and daily life, searching for its deeper meaning and nuances in order to draw closer to the great spirituality of her time.

Biography

The Life of St. Macrina was the first ever biography written about a woman. Her brother, St. Gregory of Nyssa, narrated his sister's life and gave important testimony to the existence of female monasticism.³

Macrina (the Younger) was the eldest child of Emmelia and Basil (the Elder). She was born c. 329 and died in 380.

Her mother chose the name Macrina, despite the fact that “when the due time came for her pangs to be ended by delivery, she fell asleep and seemed to be carrying

¹ Cf. ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Vita di s. Macrina* (*Life of St. Macrina*), ed. Paolina Milano, 1988, 14.

² Ibid., 31.

³ Ibid., 26.

in her hands that which was still in her womb. And someone in form and raiment more splendid than a human being appeared and addressed the child she was carrying by the name of Thecla, that Thecla, I mean, who is so famous among the virgins.”⁴ St. Thecla was a model of virginity and was held in high repute among female monastics.

Little Macrina grew up in her mother’s protective embrace. As she grew, her natural talents became ever more evident. She developed them according to the will of her parents, clearly demonstrating a close relationship between mother and daughter, which carried into their shared view of religious life.

Her mother’s effort to educate her was not according to the secular curriculum of the then pagan culture, but rather based upon Scripture passages easily comprehensible to a young girl. Many times a day she prayed the psalms.

As the eldest daughter, Macrina helped her mother raise her younger brothers and sisters, spin wool and bake bread. By the time Macrina reached the age of twelve —the age of maturity in the East— she was so beautiful that even a painter’s hands could not do justice to her comeliness.⁵

The fame of her beauty spread throughout the land and a great number of suitors seeking her hand in marriage crowded round her parents. Macrina’s father chose for her a young man of good birth and remarkable steadiness, and decided to betroth his daughter to him.⁶

The man, however, suddenly died. This reinforced Macrina’s decision to remain a virgin for the rest of her life. Her parents sought to convince her to marry, but she remained steadfast in her conviction. She continued to care for her soul. Her main occupations were religious duties and prayer.

When St. Basil and his brother St. Gregory began their ascetic experience near the river Iris, they often spoke on the theological themes. St. Macrina also took part in these discussions.

Macrina converted her house into a place of prayer and asceticism. She gathered round herself other devout woman and even servants, treating them as sisters, who belonged to the same rank. Later, her mother joined them. It was the first community. In their communal life, they held all things in common: the conditions of life, food, clothing and dignity.

During the famine, which effected Cappadocia during this period, Macrina fed the poor with extraordinary generosity and love.

An incurable disease affected Macrina’s fragile body. Not wanting to see a doctor, Macrina came to the church and spent the night in prayer and tears, imploring

⁴ Ibid., 84-85.

⁵ Ibid., 88.

⁶ Ibid., 89.

the Lord for healing. After praying with great faith, she took clay, formed by a mixture of dust and tears, and smearing the sore spot on her chest — she was healed.

The community formed by St. Macrina in Anessi consisted mainly of virgins and widows. They had no specific rule to guide them in their chosen life. So Macrina, who was a wise woman, followed the inspiration of the Rules of St. Pachomius and St. Basil. The sisters of the community loved Macrina very much and held her to be an example of perfection.

The basic rule of life was prayer and communal labour. The nuns meditated on Scripture, from which they drew immense joy.

The life of these pious virgins was incessant prayer. Prayer accompanied every labour. It was a community that understood its identity and lived coherently the life to which they were consecrated. These women took pride in their temperance; their glory was a hidden life; and their wealth—poverty.

The life of St. Macrina was conducted in silence and prayer, in work and charity, constantly growing in the way of perfection.

Her illness and death was made known to her brother Gregory in a dream. He decided to visit his sister and during the long journey, she appeared to him in a vision, which repeated itself three times that night. Gregory dreamed that he was carrying relics of the martyrs. Arriving at the monastery, Gregory found his sister very ill. She was lying on the floor, a sack had been spread on a board, and another board propped up her head, acting as a pillow.

Macrina asked her brother to rest after the toil of his journey, but he said that for him great and genuine rest was to see her and hear her noble words.⁷

Thus Gregory received the interpretation of his vision: “For the image I had seen was indeed true --the relics of a holy martyr which had been dead in sin, but now were resplendent with the indwelling power of the Spirit.”⁸

When they, in a dejected state, were expecting sad tidings, Macrina encouraged them to be of good cheer and to cherish better hopes, for she was already looking “to the prize of her heavenly calling.”

The Influence of St. Macrina on Her Brother Basil and Mother Emmelia

After Basil the Great returned from his long period of university studies, Macrina saw that he had become puffed up beyond measure in his capacity as a rhetorician.

⁷ Ibid., 117.

⁸ Ibid.

Macrina—with much wisdom—soon drew Basil to the ideal of a Christian life. He renounced the glories of this world and despised all fame gained through rhetoric. He chose a life of labouring with one's own hands, in a spirit of poverty.⁹

Macrina acted as a spiritual guide to Basil, aiding in his conversion.

Macrina persuaded her mother also to leave her familiar life and the services of domestics, to which she had been accustomed, and embrace a life in conformity with that of the virgins.¹⁰

After Emmelia renounced her old ways, Macrina lead her mother to share in a life of humility, treating all her slave girls and menials as sisters, belonging to the same order of virgins.

In her hour of death, Emmelia blessed her children, touching them with her hands and uttering prayers.¹¹ She ended her life in prayer together with them.

The Virtues of St. Macrina

Saint Macrina was a companion in life, work, communion, charity and responsibility.

In her likeness to God, Macrina became a sign of God's love for man, a sign of the wholeness found in the mystery of communion. Her natural disposition to be open and give herself to others helped in her walk towards the perfection of Christian charity and the total donation of herself to God.

Her moral and spiritual powers were united to a keen awareness that God gives Himself to man in a special way. She became strong in the knowledge of her mission—to become an indispensable support and a source of spiritual strength for others, who drew from her great energies of spirit.

In God's eternal dispensation, St. Macrina is the one in whom the order of love of neighbour, in the created world, found ground from which to send forth its rays so that the love of God could reach the hearts of others.

On account of Macrina's strength of character, wisdom and love, she was able to re-evaluate and stabilize the identity, capacities and virtues of the feminine world.

Macrina acquired virtues deemed masculine [by Greek culture], such as patience and courage under the guidance of reason, which prevailed in her. She was compared to the angels, because she exceeded "common human nature."

⁹ Ibid., 94.

¹⁰ Ibid., 95.

¹¹ Ibid., 126.

Macrina was called an athlete of Christ. At the death of her brother Basil, she was invincible. This was the test of her mettle. Through various accessions of suffering, her magnanimous soul was put to the test, proving her sincerity and endurance.¹²

“And just as we learn in the story of Job that the saint did not allow the pain of learning about the death of his children to affect his reasoning power; likewise, the dying Macrina was a model of patience, suffering great physical pain.”¹³

Another example given by her brother Gregory is truly worthy of attention. At the death of her brother Naucratius, Macrina remained strong and was her mother’s greatest support, encouraging Emmelia towards heroic virtue. It is here the virtue of the great Macrina was displayed, for she too felt deeply the pain of her brother’s death.

In all three trials —the death of her mother and her two brothers, Naucratius and Basil—Macrina did not break and she overcame her human weaknesses.

When it came to the inheritance, Macrina kept nothing for herself. After the equal division between brothers and sisters, her share was given over to a priest to be administered.

When Gregory spoke of his own troubles to Macrina — his exile at the hands of the Emperor Valens on account of the faith, she exhorted him to stop behaving in a way incongruent to the divine mysteries.

Approaching her end, with a fever consuming her forces and pushing her ever closer to death, Macrina maintained her freedom of spirit, contemplating higher truths.

On her deathbed, she spoke to those present —among whom was her brother Gregory— on the Christian perspective of why man is born mortal, and from whence comes death and liberation from death.

Gregory marvelled that even in the final moments of her life, Macrina did not show any emotion in anticipation of her death, nor was she afraid of the imminent separation from this life, but philosophized to her last breath about every decision taken from the beginning of her earthly life.

Gregory described her behaviour as that of an angel, a human form penetrated by divine dispositions.

Conclusions

With such great wealth of testimony on the life of St. Macrina, I would like to

¹² Ibid., 109.

¹³ Ibid., 46.

focus on today's reality. We live in a paradoxical situation. Millions of people are looking for the deeper meaning of life and human existence, while —at the same time— the dominant culture rejects faith as a source. The tendencies that place our communities at risk are:

- secularization
- professionalism
- living the consecrated life in a superficial manner

In order to resist these temptations, we must deepen our vocation by going back to our sources – the virtuous and holy lives of our father Basil and our mother St. Macrina, who in their wisdom and open heartedness, and consciousness of their identity, knew how to face the problems of the Church and contemporary society.

Following the example of our mother Macrina, we are called to live in a community grounded in the Fatherhood of God (Jn 20, 17). We are brothers and sisters, in as much as we are children of the same Father, in the Son, through the Holy Spirit. We are a community, where all members share an equal dignity (Matthew 23, 8) and where authority is a ministry of service. We are a community of those who do the will of the Father (Mk 3, 33-35) and where the words spoken by Mary are constantly repeated, “Whatever he tells you - do!” (John 2, 5). We are an universal community, open to God’s poor and small people, the *anawim*, following the example of St. Macrina, since they are icons of Christ (Matt. 25, 40).

The life of the Church, in general, and consecrated life, in particular, always faced major challenges, which had no analogues in history. The post-Christian, post-modern world does not understand the language we are speaking. A new generation is looking for spiritual comfort. There is a need for a radical rethinking of our lives. We must return to the profound traditions of our spiritual and moral lives. We must return to the vertical dimension of the consecrated life, both contemplative and eschatological, which is founded upon the Gospel. We must recover a true monasticism within our communities and in the heart of our local churches. Monasticism is an example of the true Church and Eucharistic life. A return to monasticism will be possible only when we return to the authentic sources of our theology and spirituality — as found in in God’s Word and the Eucharist.

MONASTICISM AS A MODEL OF BAPTISMAL LIFE SERVING SOCIETY

Rev. Dr. Ivan Kaszczak

St Basil the Great formulated his thoughts based on both pagan literature and Sacred Scripture. Within Greek literature he finds the following practical directive regarding service: everyone is called to serve and ought to look to others for leadership if initiative and perception are lacking in oneself. This is Hesiod's thought as quoted by Basil: "Best is the man who sees at once what must be done, and excellent is he who follows what is well indicated by others, but he who is suited for neither is useless in all respects."¹

In Sacred Scripture, St. Basil, like many before him, would find nourishment in those noble thoughts first planted in Greek literature: "Since, in the divinely inspired Scriptures many directions are set forth which must be strictly observed by all who earnestly wish to please God, I desire to say, necessarily in the form of a brief reminder, a few words based upon the knowledge which I have derived from the divinely inspired Scriptures themselves."²

Sacred Scripture reinforced this vigilance of hand and heart necessary for one who is called to care for the vineyard—the field of the Master. There is but one Bridegroom whom all await with vigilance and enough oil to keep the light burning. Happy the one whom the Master finds at work.

From the first book of Sacred Scripture, we are instructed by both statement and question: "It is not good for man to be alone. And, Am I my brother's keeper?" Basil would reflect these inspired thoughts in his own paradigms: "If you live alone whose feet will you wash? AND The bread you possess in excess does not belong to you but to the hungry; the clothes you keep in your closets belong only to the naked; the shoes that rot in your cupboards belong to the barefoot; the money you have stored in your cellars belongs to your brother who is in need. Know that you have wronged all those you could have helped."³

From the first few chapters of Genesis, Basil sees that creation itself is an act of charity: "God so loved the world... that he not only created it once but made all things new in Christ (*en Christo*)," whereby we are a new creation. This primary paradigm of charity reminds us of the love necessary for true charity and that the underlying gift of charity is "the one who gives and is given" (Anaphora of St. John Chrysostom). The Eucharist calls us to be poured out and to be broken for the salvation of the world. We are to be poured out to refresh and broken to be shared. True charity restores the unity of creation. Orphans are reminded they are family.

¹ R. J. DEFARRI, (Editor) *Saint Basil: The Letters Vol IV—Address to Young Men on Reading Greek Literature*, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 381.

² Ibid, vol 1, *Letter XXII*, 129.

³ I. KARAYANNOPOULOS, *St Basil's Social Activity: Principles and Praxis*, 386.

Our salvation and life are dependent upon our mutual relationships. Charity is the guide for our relationships with one another: “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive...” Charity makes me my brother’s keeper. My ability to help is a grace I have received and the help I give is simply the transfer of what was loaned to me as a caretaker or steward: “It is a marvelous thing to love one’s neighbor, to nourish the poor, to aid human misery.”⁴ In the deepest sense when I give I simply return what the Master has given to the person who needs it.

The monastic life is a reflection of what the Christian life should be. For Basil, one can say that monastic life and Christian life are synonymous. The monastic is involved in society and is called to be even more vigilant than others “in the world.” “He also emphasizes that all men are equal and that their concern should be to limit the inequality that prevails in the world. As he writes, we must recognize natural equality and consider as our equals even those who seem to be somehow inferior.”⁵

Monastic life in the East has retained the unity between monastic and Christian living. In the East, monasticism has retained a great unity. It did not experience the development of different kinds of apostolic life as in the West. The various expressions of monastic life, from the strictly **cenobitic**, as conceived by Pachomius or Basil, to the **rigorously eremitic**, as with Anthony or Macarius of Egypt, correspond more to different stages of the spiritual journey than to the choice between different states of life. In any event, whatever form they take, they are all based on monasticism.

Moreover, in the East, monasticism was not seen merely as a separate condition, proper to a precise category of Christians, but rather as a reference point for all the baptized, according to the gifts offered to each by the Lord. It was presented as a symbolic synthesis of Christianity.

When God’s call is total, as it is in the monastic life, then the person can reach the highest point that culture and spirituality are able to express. This is even more true for the Eastern churches, for which monasticism was an essential experience and still today flourishes within them. Once the persecution was over, hearts could be freely raised to heaven. The monastery is the prophetic place where creation becomes praise of God and the precept of concretely lived charity becomes the ideal of human coexistence. It is where the human being seeks God without limitation or impediment, becoming a reference point for all people, bearing them in his heart and helping them to seek God.

Pope John Paul continues to speak of the feminine influence in the formulation of Christian service. He emphasizes how necessary it is for women to rejoice in what they have to offer the church and the uniqueness of their gift. Their vigilance and concern for Christian charity provide the world with a joyful witness to the unity of the Christian family. Indeed, the entire church should rejoice in the gift that women are and continue to be for the sake of the kingdom.

⁴ Sr. M. J. ROMAN, OSBM *The Flaming Pillar of Cappadocian Caesarea*, (Rome: 1963), 45.

⁵ KARAYANNOPoulos, 384.

I would also like to mention the splendid witness of nuns in the Christian East. This witness has offered an example of giving full value in the Church to what is specifically feminine, even breaking through the mentality of the time. During recent persecutions, especially in Eastern European countries, when many male monasteries were forcibly closed, female monasticism kept the torch of the monastic life burning. The nuns' charism, with its own specific characteristics, is a visible sign of that motherhood of God to which Sacred Scripture often refers.

Therefore, I will look to monasticism in order to identify those values which I feel are very important today for expressing the contribution of the Christian East to the journey of Christ's Church towards the Kingdom.⁶

The biblical precept, "Help carry one another's burdens. In this way you will fulfill the law of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 6.2) reminds us of the link between charity and worship. This also serves to remind us that asceticism/monasticism and the Christian life have charity as its method and its goal. One cannot attain what was called in the past "personal" holiness if charity towards others has grown cold. The ascetic, whether monastic or not, must serve others in order to be Christian. Sometimes even work must be viewed as an impediment if it distracts us from service. "He should not busy himself with excessive work, and thus overstep the bounds of sufficiency, as the apostle says, 'Having food and wherewith to be covered, with this we are content' (I Tim. 6:8); because an abundance which goes beyond necessity gives an appearance of avarice, and avarice has the condemnation of idolatry."⁷

These simple reminders are given by Basil to stave off egotistical manifestations of Christianity that tend to appear as solitary victories rather than communal achievements. The danger can lie in focusing on ourselves and forgetting that our commission is not simply to be saved: "what a man can give in exchange for his soul." We must focus on others. My brother and sister are not impediments but the road to salvation. "No one goes to heaven by himself" is an ancient Christian maxim that reminds us of the role of Christian charity in salvation.

This care for brothers and sisters is essential for Basilian monasticism. The monastery that is insulated is lost. There is an old song that concludes "I am a rock, I am an island, and a rock feels no pain and an island never cries." The monastic who flees from tears and pain abandons one of the most fertile fields for salvation and the purpose of monastic existence: "Despite the opposition from civil authorities, St Basil continued steadfastly in his charitable projects, keeping as his ideal that Christian hospitality is an essential duty of the religious life. His monks were instructed to care not only for their own personal perfection, but to embrace the needs of all suffering humanity, thus leading them by the preservation of the body to the salvation of their immortal souls."⁸

⁶ *Orientale Lumen*, n. 9.

⁷ *Letter XXII*, 139.

⁸ ROMAN, 48.

By way of illustration allow me talk about a picture on display in many Christian churches, and in fact in the parish where I now serve. It is a beautiful depiction of Christ the Good Shepherd. It portrays Christ as the shepherd who cares for the lost sheep. The young lamb is often depicted as lost and weak among the thickets of temptation and then cradled in the loving arms of the Lord.

I think there should be by contrast a companion depiction of the lost and angry sheep. It could possibly show Our Lord lovingly attempting to help a lamb that wants to be left alone. Biting and fighting the Lord it only wants to be left alone in its misery. This type of depiction, along with *The Good Shepherd* would more accurately reflect what is often found in the world of charitable actions. There are some who want our help and others who want to be left alone.

The reason I mention this is because Basil had much to overcome in his charitable works. His help was not always desired nor did the government always cooperate with him. “St Basil’s charitable institution developed so rapidly and on such a vast scale that it became the target of much slander, as well as concern with the civil authorities, obliging him to defend himself in a letter to the governor of Cappadocia.”⁹

The difficulties associated with charitable works are meant to be incentives to overcome what damage has been caused by lack of charity. In this manner, although we are hurt, we also walk in the way of the Lord, Who liturgically asks the following question in Matins on Good Friday: “O my people, what have I done to you? Says the Lord, In what way have I grieved you? I have given light to those who were blind; I have cleansed the people with leprosy; and I have made the paralyzed man rise from his pallet. O my people, what have I done to you? And what do you give me in return? For manna you give me gall, and vinegar for water from the rock; for my love you nail me to the Cross.”

When we encounter these and other difficulties we know that we are on the correct path. Our goal is to transform the world and our only enemy is sin. “Love the sinner, hate the sin” is a difficult maxim to accept when the sinner is causing you pain. It appears easier to afflict the sinner than to realize that they suffer from an affliction called sin. This ability to transform individuals and society in the midst of opposition gives vitality to Christian life: “Asceticism and monasticism were one way to transform a wasteland into a civilized urban environment. Charity was another. It is in this sense that Gregory of Nazianzus praised Basil for his foundation of a charitable institution, comprising a multitude of buildings for different purposes, as a ‘new city’, named after its founder, ‘Basileias’. Other family members did the same: during a famine, Peter, the youngest brother of Basil and Gregory, provided food to the needy who had flocked to the region of the family’s ascetic retreat, with the effect that ‘because of the crowds of visitors, the desert seemed to have become a city.’”¹⁰

One of the gifts for he who performs charitable works is a cultural relevance. They become relevant because they are involved in life. For a monastic community,

⁹ Ibid., 47.

¹⁰ C. RAPP, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*, (University of California Press: Berkeley 2005), 113.

this is like a new infusion of energy and resolve. St Basil also had this ability to become relevant because of his good deeds: “As a protector of the poor and disenfranchised, the bishop became the advocate of a large segment of the population.”¹¹

Charity, in spite of many obstacles, must care about the physical, spiritual and social aspects of humanity. The monastic can never be satisfied, like the rich man who ignored Lazarus. Nor can the example and injunction of the Lord to “wash one another’s feet” be ignored. Basil attempted to do all this yet he was also mistaken about certain social issues. We are all victims of our times and are tied to many assumptions and suppositions. For this reason, a prophetic voice is always necessary to stir reason and warm the heart to action.

As an example of Basil’s inability to look beyond the times and place himself in the shoes, or lack of shoes, of the suffering, let us look at his assessment of slavery. He realizes it is wrong, yet does little to change it. “Basil’s position is, therefore, clear: he is not for slavery, but does not think it is worth the trouble to do anything about abolishing it. He has more important things to worry about.”¹² This may appear harsh but we should be vigilant to the fact that it is not always easy to see expediency as a way to bypass Christian charity. That is where the prophetic voice can speak to us and say “Let he who has ears hear, let he who has eyes see.”

In this brief analysis of Christian charity we have observed Basil’s reliance on scripture as a light—as a programme of Christian work. We have also seen the symbiotic relationship between the Christian and Monastic life. Finally, in spite of the many practical difficulties encountered in the works of Christian charity, it is indispensable for salvation and transformation.

St Basil the Great gives abundant witness to the necessity to both think and act as a Christian: “The Christian ought to think thoughts worthy of his heavenly vocation, and conduct himself worthily of the Gospel of Christ.”¹³ By necessity this means thinking of others and how society functions both on an individual and a communal level. We need to focus on both individuals and the structures within which individuals live.

Keeping all this in mind we come to the conclusion that the process of divinization happens within the Liturgy and within society. Taking this into account, the monastic reinvigorates the concept that we are all “People of God” bound together by a common Father and a common destiny. We are called to be light, leaven, and yeast. All these elements permeate what they affect and have a positive and sometimes dramatic effect. We are called to abandon evil—to be dead to it. We are also called to be a transformative element in this world and to reclaim it for Christ. This happens most effectively when we love the world as Christ loves us.

¹¹ Ibid., 225.

¹² KARAYANNOPOULOS, 386.

¹³ *Letter XXII*, 131.

“Participation in Trinitarian life takes place through the liturgy and in a special way through the Eucharist, the mystery of communion with the glorified body of Christ, the seed of immortality. In divinization, and particularly in the sacraments, Eastern theology attributes a very special role to the Holy Spirit: through the power of the Spirit who dwells in man deification already begins on earth; the creature is transfigured and God’s kingdom inaugurated.

The teaching of the Cappadocian fathers on divinization passed into the tradition of all the Eastern Churches and is part of their common heritage. This can be summarized in the thought already expressed by St Irenaeus at the end of the Second Century: God passed into man so that man might pass over to God. This theology of divinization remains one of the achievements particularly dear to Eastern Christian thought. This sense of the inexpressible divine reality is reflected in liturgical celebration, where the sense of mystery is so strongly felt by all the faithful of the Christian East.”¹⁴

¹⁴ *Orientale Lumen*, n. 4.

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE RULE OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT

Rev. Porfiryj Pidruchnyj, OSBM

Introductory remarks

1. Knowing St. Basil the Great as a man and creator of great works is an obligation – first and foremost for us Basilians, who draw our spirituality from his ascetical writings. A large span of time, however, separates us from him and his era. Fortunately, the numerous letters that he wrote or that were addressed to him by both friend and foe, of which 366 can be found in Migne's Greek Patrology volume 32, speak volumes about Basil's life, and his ecclesial and literal activities. Recently, researchers exploring the question of authenticity have determined that many of these letters are not authentic. Among the experts in this field is the well-known Paul Fedyuk, a professor at the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies in Toronto, who acquired his theological and patristic education in Rome while living in this very monastery [the Basilian Generalate on the Aventine]. He published a monumental work, consisting of a few volumes, which describes manuscripts of Basil's works, indicating the various editions and translations. He has also written other books about Saint Basil. Sergei Fedyniak, who also lived and worked in Rome, translated some of St. Basil's letters into Ukrainian.

2. On the life and work of St. Basil, we know more from two other important sources. The first, is the funerary eulogy in honor of Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea, Cappadocia, by St. Gregory of Nazianzus, also called the Theologian. This work was translated into Ukrainian by Fr. Serhyj Fedyniak. The second valuable source, from which we learn many things about Basil, is in *The Life of St. Macrina*, written by St. Gregory of Nissa, her brother (published in Ukrainian by S. Fedyniak, New York, 1969). As brief digression, I personally knew the late Fr. Fedynyak, who not only translated many of St. Basil's works (eg. *The Homily on the Psalms*), but also encouraged many Basilians to write their theses on St. Basil the Great.

3. When it comes to translations, we should mention another famous Basilian, who toiled so that ascetical works of St. Basil the Great would be made known in Ukrainian, the Servant of God Metropolitan Andrej Sheptytsky. Beginning in 1910, Sheptytsky translated the works of St. Basil and completed "The Ascetical Works" (Lviv, 1929), which includes the Moral, the Longer and the Shorter Rules.

St. Basil the Great and His Ascetical Works

St. Basil was born into a very pious Christian family of Basil [the Elder] and Emmelia in Caesarea, Cappadocia, around 329 or 330. His father was a teacher of rhetoric, and his family had considerable political influence in Caesarea. In the family were ten children, five of whom are venerated for their saintly lives and works. Basil and his two brothers were bishops –Gregory (Bishop of Nyssa) and Peter (Bishop of Sebaste)–, brother Naucratius was an ascetic, and his sister Macrina the Younger also

practiced asceticism (at that time the term “asceticism” was understood to be “monastic life”).

Basil attended school in Neo-Caesarea, where his father was his teacher; then, at Caesarea in Cappadocia, Constantinople and Athens, where he studied for five years and where he found a true friend in Gregory, the future bishop of Nazianzus.

In Athens, Basil started looking for the ‘true philosophy;’ i.e., the knowledge of Christ. He completed his studies and returned to Caesarea. According to the then custom, Basil was baptized in 356, at the age of 27. He then took a long trip to personally experience the lifestyle of the various religious groups in Syria, Mesopotamia, Kelesyria, Palestine and Egypt (*Letter 223, 2 - To Eustathius of Sebaste*).

After a year of travel, Basil settled in Anessi, near the river Iris, and began to lead an ascetical life. His sister Macrina had chosen to lead this state of life much earlier, along with his mother Emmelia and some servants.

The Influence of Eustathius of Sebaste.

There is no doubt that Basil and his family were under the influence of Eustathius of Sebaste, who founded many monastic communities. (Remember Naucratius, Basil’s brother, who became ascetic. And four of Basil’s family members remained celibate). Eustathius was known for his strict ascetic life and works of mercy. (When Basil became a bishop, he opened a house for the poor and sick, run by Eustathius’s disciples). Basil communicated with Eustathius “from childhood” (*Letter 1 - To Eustathius of Sebaste*) and this indicates that Basil’s family was indeed influenced by his asceticism. Eustathius, along with his disciples, repeatedly visited Basil and spent “whole nights in prayer, speaking and listening to talks of God” (*Letter 223, 5*). One can safely say that Eustathius was Basil’s spiritual father.

In Anessi, no doubt, Basil had friends, who shared his ideal. His friend from student days, Gregory, lived with him and they studied that ‘true philosophy,’ the science of Christ. Some scholars attribute to them the collection based on the writings of Origen called the “Philokalia”, but others deny it (Harl, see Morescini, 18). All the same, Basil had already had a common project of monastic life: the renunciation of the world, a life of poverty and prayer, and the frequent reading of Sacred Scripture (*Letter 2 - To Gregory (Bose), 21*). Then, of course, he wrote the first edition of *Moral Rules* (Cremaschi Lisa, 29).

The *Moral Rules (MR)* were intended for a wide Christian audience. When Gregory Nazianzus referred to the *rules and regulations of life* under which they endeavored to live (*Oratio 43,34*), it was probably an extract from a first edition of the *MR*. In this work, Basil shows what a Christian should avoid and what he/she should do to initiate eternal life already here on earth. Thus, he speaks in detail about the responsibilities of each and everyone. *MR* is a mere collection of texts, arranged thematically. The themes were not invented by Basil, rather, they were based on 1500 citations taken from the New Testament and divided by a title and an introductory

summary. According to his own words, Basil did this in order to better understand Scripture. In brief, the *MR* is an anthology of biblical texts.

At first glance, the *MR* seems to be a formless piece (without a clear outline), but upon it Basil builds all his other writings, revealing its originality and the continuity of his thought. The *MR* is at the heart of his ascetical works. It is the core (the most important part) of his ascetical thinking. Basil grants to the *MR* the highest value, because it is the only true “rule.” From these selected biblical texts arises his own order of thoughts. First of all, the service of God and, then the authority and exegesis of Sacred Scripture, the spirit of obedience to the Commandments, the Christian sacraments, the virtues and main sins... Basil says that superiors should know and understand the whole of Sacred Scripture, and those subject to him should know their responsibilities and fulfill them. Later, perhaps on initiating his ascetical life, Basil included at the beginning of the *MR* two homilies: *On God's Judgment* and *On Faith*.

Although Basil endeavored to lead an ascetical life in seclusion he nonetheless took part in the life of the Church. He was ordained a lector and assisted in the pastoral service in Pontus. In 359, he accompanied Bishop Basil of Ankyra to the Synod of Seleucia, and, in January 360, he attended the Synod in Constantinople. In 362, the Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, searching for a fellow-labourer and advisor, called Basil to himself and ordained him a priest. But that same year, owing to some misunderstanding with the bishop, Basil left Caesarea and returned to Pontus, and there became the leader of Christian monastic communities (Gregory Naz., *Or. 43,29* - Cremaschi Lisa, 29).

The Small Asketikon

In that time, Basil visited the communities of Eustathius, who lived chaotically in various places in Pontus, without any guidance. It was then he published his first edition of the *Small Asketikon*, extant only in the Latin translation of Rufinus Aquitaine from 397. It survived only in the Syrian language. It consists in 200 questions and answers. The answers are short and one can see that the questions were formed by Eustathius’s disciples. Basil expanded this *Small Asketikon* and, subsequently, published the *Great Asketikon*.

In 365, Bishop Eusebius once again called Basil to Cappadocia and gave him freedom for action. In 369, when the great drought caused unprecedented famine in all Cappadocia, Basil called upon the rich to help the poor and he himself organized assistance for the starving. At this time, he composed his homilies: *God is Not the Cause of Evil, Against the Rich* (two sermons) and *During times of Starvation and Drought*.

In 370, when Bishop Eusebius died, Basil, not without difficulty, became bishop of Caesarea. In less than ten years, although not in good health, he carried out extensive activity. However, we will focus primarily on his ascetical communities, which he often visited, talked with and instructed to strictly observe all things that the Scriptures require of a Christian; then, we will examine the *Wider Rules (WR)* and the *Shorter Rules (SR)*. During Basil’s life, they were called the *Asketikon*; only after his

death, an unknown compiler renamed them the *Greater Rules* and the *Smaller Rules*. Basil stated that he was very happy to reply to any question, touching on matters of faith and morals in accordance with the Gospel (Introduction to *SR*). He had never called them rules, since the Christian has only one rule – Scripture. He never composed any rules for monastic communities, or formed an Order in today's understanding, but merely explained the Scriptures to those who wish to live a truly ascetical life. He did not even want to be considered a teacher, but an instrument given by God to explain the Scriptures.

The Wider Rules (55 rules)

This work is an expansion of the *Small Asketikon*. The rules are so systematically structured that some authors even call the *WR* “a systematic catechism.” First, they explain the Commandments of God and their order; then they speak of love of God and neighbor, and the fear of God; further, they warn against the illusions and affairs of this world that are a major obstacle to the Christian and ascetical life; finally, they speak of renunciation, and the various categories of people who wish to consecrate themselves to the Lord, the virtues and the diverse problems associated with the cenobitic-communal life.

The Shorter Rules (313 rules)

Although we call them “shorter,” they are in fact longer. They are not in a systematic order though there is an association between them. St. Basil’s disciples were quite familiar with Scripture and desired to deepen their knowledge of it, and to clarify some queries, even exegetical ones. Many questions are of a practical nature.

In addition to the *MR*, *WR* and *SR*, which are all related to the ascetic-monastic life, Basil wrote several letters that outlined the principles of monastic life, such as *Letter 22* (we even included it in the Rule of our Constitutions) and *Letter 173* (to the nuns) that talks of monastic profession and gives a brief list of responsibilities for those who desire to unconditionally obey the Gospel (eg. *Letter 374*).

What Lasting Service Did St. Basil the Great Do for Monastic Life?

As we know, St. Basil was not the ‘creator’ nor the ‘proto-patriarch’ of Eastern monasticism. Before him there were various attempts and examples of monastic life. His genius and merit, however, is that he wisely perfected what already existed.

From the 5th century Eastern monasticism generally modelled itself almost exclusively on the Rules of St. Basil the Great, although neither he nor other monastic legislators established in the East a religious Order in the present sense of the term, nor did they leave a summary of disciplinary rules, as St. Benedict of Norcia, St. Dominic and St. Francis of Assisi did in the West. However, without a doubt, the

Rules of St. Basil strongly influenced cenobitic life, that is the communal system of monastic life, though Byzantine typikons rarely quote Basil's Rules.

The great merit of St. Basil's ascetical works are their incontestability—they are grounded in Scripture. But even more to his credit is his conception of monastic life.

St. Basil was a creator of a particular monastic ideal, which can be represented in several areas:

1) Communal life is better than the anchoritic-hermitical life. It corresponds better to human nature, for love of neighbor is best lived out in communal life, allowing one to more easily fulfill the commandment of Christ, since each individual gift is employed in service of the common good, and, thus, in service to Christ Himself... The ascetical ideals of the community should be the same as the first Christian community, where all were of one heart and one soul. Everything was held in common: prayer, work, meals...

2) The superior (*proestos*) is to be a spiritual father, a leader of the community. He shall be responsible for the monks' souls and for their progress in perfection. He must know everyone; hence, the monastery shouldn't not be too large. He should have control over everything that ascetics do, including fasting and other penitential practices...

3) The purpose of the monastic life is to be like God in love. And not only to practice love on one's own in prayer and work, but towards others by word and deed. St. Basil exhorts his monks to have spiritual fervor, gained by living in the presence of God and dedicating his knowledge and work to the service of his neighbor - the Church. Basil exemplified and proved this in his own life. The program of his ascetics included social and educational work.

How did the East receive Basil's Ideal of Monastic Life?

We know that the cenobitic form of monastic life was poorly received in the East. Eremitical life was considered the highest form of monastic life. In the following centuries great lavras of hermits were established under one or more founders (Sts. Euthymius + 473, Theodosius the Great + 519 and Sabas the Sanctified + 532).

The program of cenobitic-monastic life as proposed by Basil, did not eliminate the tendency in the East towards extreme forms of the eremitical-solidary life. In *The Lives of the Saints*, we read about monks who never slept or who never spoke, reclusives, stylites, forest-dwellers, wanderers, beggars, hesychasts (lovers of peace) and other forms of independent life... Complete subordination of oneself under obedience to a superior was always difficult for the delicate, pensive and freedom-loving souls of the East.

Although the Ecumenical Councils (eg. VII Nicene) and even the Emperor Justinian (+ 565), in his *Corpus iuris civilis*, cite the Rule of cenobitic-monastic life,

Basil was not nearly “Eastern” enough to be popular and exciting. Even in the *Dobrotolubije (Philocalia)*, there was no place for a mere quotation from Basil, while texts of little-known Eastern writers, some even apocryphal, are given.

One of the most faithful followers of the Basilian ideal of the superiority of the cenobitic (communal) life over the eremitical was Theodore Studite (760-826). For him, the monk is not only a servant of the Church, but the slave of the entire human race, because his goal is to serve all people (Fediuk, 176). Studite monasteries were centres of spiritual education, culture and bastions against heresies (iconoclasm and caesaropapism). However, without knowing it, Theodore Studite ordered his spirituality not only from the authentic works of Basil, but also on the *Ascetical Constitutions*, which appeared later and whose terminology, content and style were quite alien to Basil, praising and recommending the eremitical (solitary) life (Metrop. Sheptytsky printed them in *The Ascetical Works*, under the title: “*Ascetical Knowledge*,” 378-429).

In the mid-ninth century, monastic life began on Athos. The main legislator of Mount Athos was St. Athanasius of Athos (+ 1000). He composed the Rule of the Holy Mountain, modelled on the typicon of St. Theodore Studite. On Athos, there co-existed three types of monasticism: the cenobitic (communal), the eremetic (solitary) and the idiorythmitic (where the monks retain private property and are not subject to any Superior).

Monasticism in Rus' (the Rus'-Ukrainian Lands)

Monks brought with them to Rus' the two most common typikons in Byzantium and Bulgaria: the Studite and the Athonite. This does not mean, however, they were established constitutions, which could not be altered. In fact, we know that Studite typicons often differed among themselves.

When St. Theodosius of the Caves († 1074) received from St. Anthony of the Caves († 1073) direction over the Caves, near the princely city of Kyiv, he tried to implement the Constantinople version of the “Studite Typicon.” In time, he reworked it in a way that the first part, that is the liturgical, was unchanged, while the second, that is the internal and external points of monastic life, changed according to the circumstance, the place, the time and the spirit of the people.

The Rule of St. Theodosius spread to the whole of Rus' and many monasteries were founded according to its form of monastic life. But after the Tartar invasion (1240), each monastery produced its own statutes or borrowed from other typicons. Then, the initial zeal, which burned in the holy founders of monasticism in Rus', began to cool in subsequent generations.

The most prevalent cause of neglect in monastic discipline was the excessive intervention of the princes, benefactors and bishops into the internal life of the monasteries. We know that in the very early history of monasticism in Rus', princes of their own will changed the rule and discipline of monasteries. When establishing monasteries, they laid out their statutes and kept certain privileges for themselves,

such as appointing the superiors, controlling the monastery's finances, accepting monks into the monastery, etc.

Founding of the Basilian Order

After the Union of Brest, in 1607, St. Josaphat Kuntsevych and Joseph Veljamyn Ruts'kyj gathered a small number of young men in the monastery of the Blessed Trinity in Vilnius, and began to live a strict monastic life. Later, in 1617, when the monastic community grew to about sixty monks and five monasteries, Ruts'kyj, who in 1613 had become the Metropolitan, called the first Basilian Chapter and during the first session said to his monks: "Over a long period of time, I gathered (the rule of life) from the various writings of our saintly Father (Basil), and divided them into several main sections for easy understanding and memorization." And then, in the same report, he explained to the monks that he had adapted the Rule of St. Basil "to our present life... which requires that we not only save our own souls, but also the souls of the laity of our rite, who are perishing... So we had to write some rules, which those past times did not require, but are necessary at present. But in this we did not depart from the holy doctrine of our saintly Father."

These rules Ruts'kyj entitled: *The Common Rules of Our Holy Father Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia.*

These *Common Rules* were in the form of a short statute, in which the goal of monastic life was stated to be: becoming similar to God through love. And not only is it necessary to grow in love of God through prayer and labour, but also by word and example, drawing one's neighbor towards God. To attain this goal, it is necessary to renounce the devil, the world and oneself, take up one's cross and follow Christ through poverty, chastity and obedience, while living a life in common. All this is laid out in four short chapters.

Introducing the *Common Rules*, Metr. Rutskyj' said: "Over a long period of time, I gathered (the rule of life) from the various writings of our saintly Father (Basil) and divided them into several main sections for easier understanding and memorization." Some of the rules, he composed himself, not finding in St. Basil what was necessary for his day and age.

It is interesting to note that in the title of these *Common Rules*, Metr. Ruts'kyj hid behind the authority of St. Basil. He ascribes his *Common Rules* to St. Basil, because he was totally convinced everything was according to the Eastern monastic tradition. He ascribes the constitutions to St. Basil and calls him "our saintly Father," "patriarch and founder of the Order." Together with his monks, he celebrated the feast of St. Basil the Great in a special manner and desired to return to the zeal that prevailed at the time of St. Basil.

Until now, it was believed that these Rules had no Western influence. But when I compared them with the Jesuit constitutions (of 1606, which he employed), it proved that of the 68 rules Rutskyj had borrowed 10 from the Jesuits. In some other rules, there are some similarities, but it should be remembered that St. Ignatius Loyola

also modelled his work on St. Basil's, and Jesuit novice masters were directly ordered to read the Rule of St. Basil the Great.

Later Basilians, who published the *Common Rules*, cited the writings of St. Basil beneath each rule. The peculiar attachment to St. Basil and the citing of his works remains with the Basilians to this day.

Some boldly assert that “no Eastern monks have even the right to call themselves Basilians” (so wrote the famous scholar, Jean Gribomont, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, p. 48), but many orders and congregations, who today call themselves Basilian, draw their spirituality from the writings of St. Basil and consider him as their spiritual Father. There are five Basilian Orders in the Eastern Church (plus one Latin).

Metropolitan Ruts'kyj in some way adapted these *Common Rules* for Basilian nuns in the Kyivan Metropolia. Those Rules were first published in 1771 in Polish, under the title: *The Statutes of our Father St. Basil the Great and the Spiritual Lessons of the Blessed Memory Joseph Veljamyn Ruts'kyj, Metropolitan of all Rus'*, printed in the Basilian Fathers' Press in Minsk for the greater benefits of the Nuns of the same Order. The second edition of the Statutes, under the same title, appeared in Polotsk in 1807, and the third edition in 1854 in Rome, under the same title, for the monastery Macrina Myecheslavskaya, in Italian.

In 1897, when Metropolitan Sylvester Sembratovych appointed Hieromonk Andrew Sheptytsky as visitator for the nun's convents, a kind of reform began. The number of Basilian nuns began to grow when Basilians monks were appointed as their masters of novices, confessors, and spiritual directors. There were various proposals to give them other Rules, such as those from different Eastern Orders or adapted from Latin Orders. In 1909, Metropolitan Sheptytsky translated our Statutes into Ukrainian, dividing them into sections, adding quotations from St. Basil to those rules of Metropolitan Ruts'kyj and printing it under the title: “Extract from the Rules of St. Basil the Great Father compiled by Veljamyn Rutsk'ij, Metropolitan of Rus’. Constitutions of the female OSBM monasteries of the Galician Province” (Zhovkva: Basilian Fathers’ Edition, 1909).

Metropolitan Andrew wrote about these rules:

At each step, I marveled at his (Ruts'kyj's) great spirit and extraordinary talent. He knows St. Basil so well that certainly every day for many years he must have taken into his hands the works of this Great Patriarch... Of all the monastic writers I would say that perhaps only our Saintly Father Theodore Studite is greater than him... In a word the “Extract” (Ruts'kyj's Rules) are a true gem... of Basilian literature from the 16th century to this day...

IOANNIKYJ BASILOVYCH OSBM AND THE MONASTIC FORMATION OF THE BASILIAN MONKS IN THE LATE XVIIITH AND BEGINNING OF THE XIXTH CENTURY IN MUKACHEVO EPARCHY

Rev. Fr. Milan Lach, SJ

Ioannikyj Basilovych is one of the most illustrious Basilians in the history of Mukachevo Eparchy. In addition to his ministry as protoihumen of seven monasteries, which spanned a course of thirty-two years, those of his works that have come down to us are considered to be jewels of the so-called “golden age” of the Mukachevo Eparchy.

1. *Basilian Order in Transcarpathia*

The monastic life in Transcarpathia, within the kingdom of Hungary – as in other parts of the Greek-Catholic Church of Ruthenian tradition – flourished under the Rule of St. Basil the Great. During the life of Ioannikyj Basilovych (1742-1821), the Basilians were the only monks in Mukachevo Eparchy. The Order was at its flourishing peak and constituted a significant part of the ecclesial life of the Mukachevo Eparchy and, later on, of the Prešov Eparchy.

The reform and unification of all the monasteries in Ukraine and Belarus under the name of the Basilian Order and under the direction of Metropolitan Velyjamon Rutskyj (+1637) and Bishop Josaphat Kuncevych (+1623) manifested itself – in a certain sense – even within the Transcarpathian monastic communities. The most prominent monks of the Mukachevo monastery – engaged in the movement towards Union – maintained close relations with the Kyivan Metropolitanate and probably accepted Rutskyj’s monastic rule. During the same period, the Transcarpathian monks also assumed the name ‘Basilians,’ since until the mid-XVII century they were simply called ‘monks.’ During the period of reform under Emperor Joseph II, Bishop Andryj Bachynskyj recommended Protoihumen Ioannikyj Basilovych to revise the monastic rule, which was promulgated in 1777 by the Bishop of Mukachevo.¹

The so-called “golden age” of the monastic life in Mukachevo Eparchy would last more or less until the death of Basilovych² – protoihumen for 32 years, from 1789 to 21 October 1821. He was one of the last great figures during the period of Bishop Bachynskyj, i.e., between the XVIII and XIX centuries.³

Under the guidance of Basilovych, there were seven monasteries in the

¹ Cfr. A. PEKAR, «Василіянська провінція» [The Basilian Province], 132.

² Ibid., 135.

³ Ibid., 160.

Mukachevo eparchy: Mukachevo, Velykyj Bereznyj, Imsticchevo in Transcarpathia (Ukraine), Maria-Póč in today's Hungary, Krásny Brod and Buková Hôrka in today's Slovakia, and in Bihad in today's Romania. In total, seventy-eight monks lived in these monasteries during the period of its greatest splendor.⁴ The level of monastic life in this period is known to us through the rules, monastic norms⁵ and diaries, dating back to the years 1809 to 1812 – a period of time, in which seven monasteries and seventy-five monks existed in the territory.⁶

2. *The Life of Ioannikyj Basilovych*

To a family of poor peasants, George Basilovych was born on 6 July 1742 in Hlivišťia,⁷ a village in the Uzhorod district of East Slovakia. His parents made every effort to ensure that he was educated in the Jesuit schools of Uzhorod and Košice. After finishing high school and graduating with great success, the young man entered the Basilian monastery in 1761. After the novitiate held in the monastery of Krásny Brod and directed by the prominent hieromonk Innocent Kasper, Basilovych professed his monastic vows, taking the name of Ioannikyj. Basilovych was among those Basilian students, who completed their philosophical studies at the monastery in Krásny Brod. These studies were inaugurated in 1762 by Protoihumen Macario Šuhajda OSBM (+1778), who invited the Franciscan friar, Primus Papp, to teach at the monastery.⁸

When Basilovych finished the theological curriculum, he received priestly ordination and soon after was appointed as a professor of theology at the Maria-Póč monastery school. Having demonstrated his pedagogical skills, he was later assigned by his superiors to teach the Basilian students of the same monastery. Initially, he taught philosophy and later also theology.⁹

He did not remain long as a professor. After the death of Protoihumen Sylvester Kovejčák on 1 March 1789, he was elected, at age of forty seven, Basilian Protoihumen within the Mukachevo Eparchy. He held this position for thirty two years.

During that period, Protoihumen Basilovych was a close collaborator with the Bishop of Mukachevo, Andryj Bachinskyj (1773-1809). This was a “golden age” for the Mukachevo Eparchy and, likewise, for the Transcarpathian Basilians, who were flourishing under Basilovych’s governance. It is necessary to place within this context his works concerning ascetical and monastic discipline. As we will see, in his

⁴ Cfr. J. BAZILOVIČ, *Brevis Notitia*, 15.

⁵ ŠAZO, F 64, op. 1, 1192, F 64, op. 2, 10, F 64, op. 2, 75, F 64, op. 2, 1106, F 64, op. 2, 1107, F 64, op. 2, 1108, F 64, op. 5, 256.

⁶ Cfr. O. BARAN, *Єпископ Андрей Бачинський [Bishop Andryj Bachinskyj]*, 61.

⁷ This village is located in the Sobrance district of Eastern Slovakia.

⁸ Cfr. K. ZAKLYNS’KYJ, «Нарис історії» [Essay of the History], 53.

⁹ Cfr. J. BAZILOVIČ, *Brevis Notitia*, 96.

ascetical works, Basilovych was very exigent concerning his monks, and not only them, but also himself, as he was an exemplary monk and rigorous superior.¹⁰ To lead others to the perfection of monastic asceticism, Basilovych built St. Nicholas's Church near the monastery on Chernecha Hora in Mukachevo, during the years of 1798-1804. Shortly before – in the years 1766-1772 –, the noble Demetrius Rác donated the necessary funds for the constructing of a monastery on Chernecha Hora. George Ioannikyj Basilovych, OSBM, died at the age of 79, on 21 October 1821,¹¹ and his body was buried in St. Nicholas's Church on Chernecha Hora at Mukachevo.

The death of Ioannikyj Basilovych inchoated the decadence of monastic discipline. At the beginning of the XIXth century, not only a large part of the secular clergy, but also some of the monks, adopted the thoughts and ideals of the Enlightenment, resulting in a consequent decadence of Church life and attenuation of the spiritual life.¹²

3. Historical and Liturgical Works of Basilovych

Ioannikyj Basilovych was prolific writer in the fields of history, liturgy and ascetics.

Basilovych demonstrated himself as a historian of the first rang with his work, *Brevis notitia fundationis Theodori Koriathovits*, published in two volumes, in Košice, between the years 1799-1804. It is the most important work that Ioannikyj Basilovych left in the field of Transcarpathian history. In this work, he accurately gathered all the documents of the family of the Lithuanian Duke, Theodore Koriatovych, who led the Ruthenian settlers in Transcarpathia in the early XVth century and who in 1398 was nominated Duke of Mukachevo by King Ludwig.¹³

The work of Basilovych can be considered a foundation not only for ecclesiastical history, but also for the history of Transcarpathia. For these reasons Basilovych can be considered the father of the ecclesial history of the Greek-Catholic Church in Transcarpathia¹⁴ and Slovakia.

He was in concordance with the idea of Bishop Bachinskyj regarding the need to maintain the Byzantine rite in the Mukachevo Eparchy. With these assumptions, Basilovych decided to write a substantial explanation of the Divine Liturgy in

¹⁰ Cfr. «Поминайте наставники ваша» [Remember your superiors], 74

¹¹ The body of Ioannikyj Bazylovych was buried in the cript of the Church of St. Nicholas. In our research, we have discovered that due to a land shift the church was sliding towards the Latorica River. The part of the cript, where the remains of Bazylovych and Anatolio Kralicky rested, was covered in cement in order to stabalize the church's foundation. Thus, there is no access to their tombs.

¹² Cfr. A. PEKAR, «Василіянська провінція» [The Basilian Province], 136.

¹³ Cfr. F. TYCHY, «Іоанникій Базилович» [Ioannikyj Bazylovych], 48.

¹⁴ Cfr. A. PEKAR, «Протоігумен Йоанникій Ю. Базилович» [Protoihumen Ioannikyj Bazylovych], 116.

Church-Slavonic and Latin under the title: *The Exposition of the Divine Liturgy*.¹⁵ Unfortunately, the work is available only in the original manuscript,¹⁶ located at the Mukachevo monastery. In 1963, it was transferred to the Uzhhorod University library. The first 32 pages are missing.¹⁷ This is the first, best known and most extensive commentary on the liturgy in the Transcarpathian context, which expresses the extensive theological and liturgical knowledge of our author and, simultaneously, is also a testimony to the liturgical practices of this period.

4. *The Ascetical Works of Basilovych*

Ioannikyj Basilovych was also a productive writer in the field of monastic spirituality. As a protoihumen of monasteries, he was particularly attentive to the spiritual life of the monks, which he wanted to elevate to illustrious models of monastic life. Basilovych was not only a theorist of monastic life: his life, the rules and concrete norms demonstrate what should be the life of a monk.

His first work, which eighty years ago still existed in manuscript form¹⁸ and of which we have no more news, is *The Discourse or Teaching to the Brethren on the Monks' Dignity, on Their Own Objectives and on the Monastic State in General*,¹⁹ written in the Church-Slavonic of that period and in the local vernacular. The work is divided into four parts: sheets 1a-8b, containing the 'Introduction' and the 'Treatise on Obedience;' sheets 8b-11b, the 'Treatise on Monastic Poverty;' sheets 12a-15b, the 'Treatise on Chastity;' sheets 16a - 18a, 'Conclusions.' From the comparison of the texts of this work with the texts of the work *Imago vitae monasticae*, to which will be dedicated the fourth section, appears that they have a similar content; for this reason, we support the thesis that this work, unknown until now, could have been used by Basilovych as the basis for the chapters on obedience, poverty, chastity, in the publication of his Latin work *Imago vitae monasticae*. We do not know when the

¹⁵ The complete title of the work reads: *Tolkovanije Svjaščennyja Liturgii, Novaho Zakona istinnija Bezkrovnija Žerty, vo slavu Presvjataja i Nerazdil'nyja Trojci, Otca i Syna, i Svjatoho Ducha, zdatelem Čestnym Otcem Joannikijem Bazilovičom, ČSVV, Protoihumenom, vo lito 1815 sočinennoje, vo Monastire Mukačevskom.*

¹⁶ This work of Bazylovych —upon which several authors have laboured— will be published on 11 November 2009 in a critical edition for the Slovak Academy of the Sciences at the John Stanislav Institute of Slavic Studies in Bratislava. It will be a significant contribution in the knowledge of the life and works of Ioannikyj Bazylovych.

¹⁷ Cfr. A. PEKAR, «Протоігумен Йоаннікій Ю. Базилович» [Protoihumen Ioannikyj Bazylovych], 116.

¹⁸ We have not been able to find this work of Bazylovych. It is possible that it is in a private collection of ancient manuscripts in Transcaraphia. After the destruction of the Chernecha Hora monastery in Mukachevo in 1945 —according to the testimony of the Orthodox Protoihumen Pronin— state officials were not diligent in taking inventory of all the books and documents. As a consequence, some disappeared, probably sold at a high price.

¹⁹ *Besyda ili slovw ko brat'i Wtceimq Dwanikiemq Bazilovièemq glagolqnoe, w dostoinsvh Dnokovq w sopstvennomq konci thxóde i wbòw w èinh Monašeskomq.* The work was bound in leather, entitled in stenographic type and contains 18 folios. The intial folio is missing. Cfr. F. ТУЧІЙ, «Іоаннікій Базилович» [Ioannikyj Bazylovych], 43.

work [*The Discourse*] was published;²⁰ from the first page we know that it was composed by Basilovych and was intended for publication.

Of this work there is conserved only two brief passages, in which Basilovych encourages the monks on to the spiritual battle and monastic asceticism and to not trust in themselves, but in the help of God. Above all, he advises them to give up the pleasures of earthly life, because they are the cause of the every monk's failure. He recommends to have patience in temptations that will come and to be always ready to learn from the others.

Our interest is in three particular ascetical works. Two are manuscripts: *Pravila i ustanovlenija monašeskaja*, *Ot pravil i ustanovlenii monašeskych*; and one, a printed book, *Imago vitae monasticae*.

4.1 The Monastic Rules and Constitutions - Pravila i ustanovlenija monašeskaja

In the 'Introduction' to Rutskyj's *Common Rules*, Kinach,²¹ who had published them, affirms the need for their modification due to the reform of Emperor Joseph II.²² Among the monasteries suppressed on account of their monastic nature, i.e., those which do not included an apostolic activity, were some Basilian monasteries in the Mukachevo Eparchy. Only seven monasteries remained untouched, because of their educational activity. This is why it was necessary to change the religious rules of the monasteries in the Mukachevo Eparchy.

Basilovych, as Protoihumen, tried to renew the monastic discipline in the aforementioned seven monasteries. Bishop Bachinskyj asked Basilovych's predecessor, Protoihumen Sylvester Kovejchák (1769-1778), to augment and actualize Rutsky's *Common Rules*. According to Pekar, the first Basilian *Monastic Rules and Constitutions*²³ were born in the Mukachevo Eparchy and were approved in 1777 by Bishop Bachinskyj.²⁴ It is our opinion that the *Monastic Rules and*

²⁰ Tychy compares the first paragraph of the second part of *The Discourse* with the text of *Imago vitae monasticae*, 58. Cfr. F. TYCHY, «Іоанникій Базилович» [Ioannikyj Bazylovych], 43.

²¹ Cfr. H. KINACH, «В. Рутського правила», [The Rules of V. Ruts'kyj] 57.

²² Concerning this event see paragraph 1.2.3. *Le riforme ecclesiastiche*, in the first chapter.

²³ *Pravila i Ustanovlenđä monašeskaä*. Cfr. A. PEKAR, «Протоігумен Йоанникій Ю. Базилович» [Protoihumen Ioannikyj Bazylovych], 108.

²⁴ Pekar appeals to Mikitas, who introduces them under number 463 D *Правила монашеские* from the XVIII century, printed in Church Slavonic and Latin, in two columns, without an initial page. If Pekar holds that these are indeed the monastic rules approved by Bishop Bachinsky in 1777 solely because the first page is autographed 'Andreas Eppus Munkaciensis 1778,' we think that he is mistaken. It is possible that Bachinsky had approved the monastic rules in 1778, but they are not preserved. The exemplar of Mikitas referred to by Pekar are not the monastic rules approved by Bachinsky. In fact, on the title page of the monastic rules under that number [463 D] in the archives are explicitly introduced the monastic rules of the non-uniate Greeks from Illyrica, approved by the Orthodox Archbishop Vincent, Metropolitan of Karovac and all Hungary. Pekar could not have known this, since he never consulted them, inasmuch as he himself admits that he never had the opportunity. A second proof is that these monastic rules were already in print, while *The Monastic Rules and Constitutions* of Bazylovych —of which we are speaking and which Pekar speaks of as secondary additions to the

Constitutions, edited by Ioannikyj Basilovych, were approved by Bishop Bachinskyj for the first time on 2 July 1796.²⁵ Afterwards, a variant of the *Monastic Rules and Constitutions* were confirmed after one year, on 30 July 1797 and this is the manuscript in our possession.²⁶

The manuscript is currently found in the Transcarpathian Ethnographical Museum library in Uzhorod,²⁷ while the place of origin is the Basilian monastery library in Chernecha Hora at Mukachevo, Ukraine. Until the Second World War this was one of the largest libraries in Transcarpathia.²⁸ After the expulsion of the monks by the Communists in 1945, the manuscripts and old prints of the Mukachevo monastery were gradually transferred to the Transcarpathian Ethnographical Museum in Uzhorod.²⁹ In 1963, other precious manuscripts and old prints were transferred to the Uzhorod State University's library.³⁰ The archive documents of the Mukachevo's Basilian monastery were transferred to the Transcarpathian State Regional Archive of in Berehovo.³¹ Our manuscript, *Monastic Rules and Constitutions*, was transferred from the Mukachevo monastery to the Transcarpathian Ethnographic Museum in Uzhorod in 1961.³²

The manuscript is in book form, whose measurements are 225 x 190 mm. The book is bound in a leather cover, which has already been repaired. The text is written in calligraphy, with the red and black ink. The manuscript has 17 pages, 2 of which are white. In the beginning of this book there is filigree. In the coat of arms is a lion sitting on its hind legs, with a crown on his head and with the trumpet held in the

first— were written by hand, as we were able to establish in our research in Ukraine. The library of the Uzhorod State University presents these monastic rules of the non-uniates in Hungary under number 1583. Cfr. Правила монашеские, n 1583, УШУК, 10+113 pp. Cfr. V. L. MIKITAS, *Давні рукописи i стародруки* [Ancient manuscripts and typescripts], II, 66.

²⁵ In his article, Tichy presents in Church Slavonic the date of approval as v0. ꙗul'a aöèù. 2 July 1796. Immediately after, however, in parenthesis, with Roman numerals is written 1797. We do not know if this is intentional or simply an error. We have not had the opportunity to personally consult the manuscript. Thus, we are not able to confirm or negate Tichy's thesis. F. TYCHY, «Іоанникій Базилович» [Ioannikyj Bazylovych], 45.

²⁶ D. BAZILOVIÈQ, *Pravila i Ustanovlenðä monašeskaä*, Ms. 39. (Arch. 796), ZEM, Užgorod.

²⁷ The manuscript is catalogued under number: Ms. 39. (Arch. 796), according the cataloguing of the Transcarpathian Ethnographical Museum. Under the same munber is a list and catalogue of manuscripts and old typescripts published in Lviv in 1946 by V. L. Mikitas. Cfr. V. L. MIKITAS, *Давні книги закарпатського музею* (Ancient books of the Transcarpathian Museum), 40.

²⁸ Cfr. V. L. MIKITAS, *Давні рукописи i стародруки* [Ancient manuscripts and typescripts], II, 8.

²⁹ Cfr. V. L. MIKITAS, *Давні книги закарпатського музею* (Ancient books of the Transcarpathian Museum), 40.

³⁰ Cfr. V. L. MIKITAS, *Давні рукописи i стародруки* [Ancient manuscripts and typescripts], II, 3.

³¹ The archival documents of the Mukachevo monastery are deposited in fund 64, which contains 5 catalogue-lists of archival material. There are couple of thousand documents.

³² Cfr. V. L. MIKITAS, *Давні книги закарпатського музею* (Ancient books of the Transcarpathian Museum), 40.

front paws. There is written the word: *Auschenbach*.³³ The pagination is done in pencil, perhaps recently. The initial letters of the first words of paragraphs are written in calligraphy with the red ink. The text is written in Cyrillic and is easily legible.

There is no doubt that the author of the *Monastic Rules and Constitutions* is Ioannikyj Basilovych, who managed summarize very well the rules of St. Basil the Great. He was inspired by Rutskyj's *Common Rules*. This is clear in a few sentences from the manuscript, which are almost a parallel. From the 'Introduction' of the manuscript, we know that the author is none other than Basilovych.

The rules are intended for monks³⁴ of the Order of St. Basil the Great, which lived on the territory of the Mukachevo Eparchy, that is, in the seven monasteries that existed there in this period. The monks were obliged, in conscience, to observe the rules, both from the canonical and spiritual points of view. In the Mukachevo Eparchy, the highest authority for them was the local bishop.

In a more detailed manner, the author specifies that this is an edited and abbreviated anthology of St. Basil the Great's *Monastic Rules and Constitutions*. The rules and constitutions are not presented in full because they are far too long.³⁵ The author presents only those aspects of them necessary for the daily life of the monks, so they could better remember them.

The work was born – as is noted in the manuscript — “in the house of the Holy Hierarch of Christ–Nicholas on Chernecha Hora,”³⁶ which means in the main Basilian monastery at Mukachevo, dedicated to the holy bishop St. Nicholas, the Miracle-Worker.

Basilovych does not write explicitly about the precise date of the *Monastic Rules and Constitutions*. In the 'Introduction' to the manuscript is written only the phrase “in the month” and nothing else. But we can say with certainty that the rules were written before 30 July 1797, because on this date was composed the approval of rules by the canonist John Kutka, indicating the date and place. This approval is signed and sealed by Bishop Bachinskyj “30 July 1797 at Uzhorod.”³⁷ That means that Basilovych began to compose the rules well before that date and finished them within the *terminus* of that date.

³³ It could be the name of the paper-maker or book-binder. Cfr. V. L. MIKITAS, *Давні книги закарпатського державного краснавчого музею* (Ancient books of the Transcarpathian State Folklore Museum), 40.

³⁴ The word Inokq, ‘other’ or ‘different’ is a synonym in Church Slavonic for the term monk. The meaning of the name is derived from the fact the monk ought to live in a manner diverse from the laity. Inoèestvuúòij is he, who lives a monastic life. Cfr. P. ALEKS'YJ, *Церковный словарь* (Church Slavonic Dictionary), II, 102.

³⁵ Cfr. BASILIUS MAGNUS, *Asceticon magnum sive Questiones* [Regulae fusius tractatae et Regulae breuius tractate = recensio Vulgata compilata s. VI], PG 31, 901-1305, *Asceticon paruum*, PL 103,483-554, *Constitutiones monasticae*, PG 31, 1321-1428 a *Regulae morales*, PG 31, 691-869.

³⁶ Vo St0o wđiteli çerarxa Xrt4ova Nikolaä, na Gorh Èernekq Mc4ä. Cfr. Đ. BAZILOVIÈQ, *Pravila i Ustanovlenđä monašeskaä*.

³⁷ V ¹ngvarq l0. çulđa aöèz0. Cfr. Đ. BAZILOVIÈQ, *Pravila i Ustanovlenđä monašeskaä*, 33.

The work has remained only in manuscript form and in Church-Slavonic, written in Cyrillic letters. This period in Hungary is considered the so-called “Latin period.” Basilovich decided to not translate his work, leaving it in the original language, since the novices and brothers did not know Latin. During our research, we also found transcripts in Latin, but without any approval. The monks by themselves transcribed these *Monastic Rules and Constitutions* for their own private use.³⁸

On the basis of more detailed analysis of this work, we can see that Basilovich was inspired mainly by Rutskyj’s already-existing *Common Rules*, but not limited to them. The second – and more important – source for Basilovich’s *Monastic Rules and Constitutions* were the *Monastic Rules*³⁹ published in two columns – Latin and Church-Slavonic – by the Serbian Orthodox Archbishop, Vincent Ioannikyj Vidak⁴⁰ from the city of Karlovci.⁴¹ Even if the year of publication is not recorded on the copy⁴² the *Monastic Rules*, in the list of the Metropolitans of Karlovci, Vidak’s term is dated 1774-1780.⁴³ The *Monastic Rules* were written according to the precepts of Scripture, as it is indicated in its ‘Introduction,’ for vigilance over the entrusted flock⁴⁴ and for regular monastic life according to the rules, which were approved by the Metropolitan Vincent along with the other local archbishops and bishops at a local Synod held from 21 September to 30 December 1776.⁴⁵

³⁸ A copy of this rule of 1796 is found in the library of the University of Debrecen in Hungary under the catalogue number Ms. 106-1, transferred from the monastery of Maria-Póč. Cfr. A. PEKAR, «Протоигумен Йоанникій Ю. Базилович» [Protoihumen Ioannikyj Bazylovych], 108.

³⁹ Cfr. V. J. VIDÁK, *Правила монашеские*, n.1583, UŠUK, 10+113 pp., V. L. MIKITAS, *Давни рукописи i стародруки* [Ancient manuscripts and typescripts], II, 66. Also Mansi mentions this monastic rule in two languages. Cfr. V. J. VIDÁK, «Regulae monasticae a duabus Synodis annorum 1773 et 1776 perscriptae et editae 1776», 575-666.

⁴⁰ Born in Karlovci, on 10 March 1730. He was ordained a deacon on 23 May 1745. He was nominated an archdeacon 12 April 1753. He became —after his priestly ordination— vicar general and archimandrite. He received his monastic tonsure from Paul Nenadovic. He was nominated administrator of the Pakrac Eparchy on 26 December 1757. On the feast of St. Saba in 1759, he was consecrated Bishop of Temešvár. On 30 May 1774, he was unanimously elected by the Synod Metropolitan of Karlovci. Metropolitan Vincent died at Dalu on 18 February 1780 and was buried in the Church of St. Demetrius. Cfr. S. VUKOVYCH, *Српски јерархија* (Serbian Hierarchy), 73–74.

⁴¹ Another name for the city is Sremsky Karlovci. It was in Hungary, today it is found in Serbia, since the First World War. From 1713 to 1920, Karlovci was the metropolitan see of the Serbian Orthodox Church, since its inception. The title of Metropolitan of Karlovci is still used by the Patriarch of Serbia. Z. GAVRILOVIĆ, «Serbian Christianity», 442-446.

⁴² Written in the margins is only the words: «Andreas Eppus Munkacsensis 1778». Cfr. V. J. VIDÁK, *Pravila monašeskaä*, (1).

⁴³ Cfr. S. VUKOVYCH, *Српски јерархија* (Serbian Hierarchy), 73.

⁴⁴ Cfr. V. J. VIDÁK, *Pravila monašeskaä*, (9).

⁴⁵ Cfr. J. D. MANSI, *Sacrorum conciliorum*, XXXIX, 575.

The structure of the Basilovych's *Monastic Rules and Constitutions*⁴⁶ is almost identical to the structure of the *Monastic Rules* approved in Karlovci. From beginning to end, they were Basilovych's main source of material. He had chosen only the parts considered to be most relevant to the Greek-Catholic Church's condition. For example, some chapters of the "Karlovci Rules" were combined into a single chapter.

Basilovych's *Monastic Rules and Constitutions* consist of the following chapters: Introduction, 1. Obedience, 2. Poverty, 3. Chastity, 4. Prayer and Ecclesial Rule, 5. Reading Books and Study, 6. Refectory, 7. Monastic Garb, 8. The Superior's Obligations, 9. The Vicar's Obligations, 10. The Spiritual Father, 11. The Novices, 12. Obligations in Ministry,⁴⁷ 13. (12) The Protoihumen's Obligations.

At the end of the manuscript, there is a letter approving the *Monastic Rules and Constitutions*, signed and sealed by Mukachevo's Bishop, Andrij Bachinskyj.

Our primary interest is on the central thought of the Basilovych's rules, which is found in Chapter 11, "On Novices:"

Finally, the eighth of the *Wide Rules* on renunciation must be repeated often to them in order that they appropriate Christ's words: *Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me* (Matthew 16: 24) and, once again, *In the same way, therefore, everyone of you who does not forsake all his possessions cannot be My disciple* (Luke 14: 33). In addition to this: *The Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls and finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it* (Matthew 13: 45-46). The Kingdom of Heaven is clearly symbolized by the most precious pearl, which we cannot find unless we give everything we possess for her: wealth, fame, family, etc.⁴⁸

Basilovych particularly emphasized the eighth of *Wide Rules*⁴⁹ for the novices, since it contains all that should be considered a priority in the monastic life, referring to self-denial and, especially, to the renunciation of the demon of corporeal lust, love of the world, etc., and the superior should often repeat this to them. He chose the most important Scripture quotes from among those employed by Basil in the eighth rule, and, referring to it, he indicated what should be accentuated in the formation of the Basilian monks and novices. Besides being able to say that this is the essence of the eleventh chapter, "On Novices," we can also advance the thesis that, while Basilovych was Protoihumen, this eighth rule was his main thought in the

⁴⁶ It is the copy with the title *Pravila i Ustanovlenđa monašeskaä*, deposited in the Transcarpathian Ethnographical Museum at Uzhhorod, catalogued under the number Ms. 39 (Arch. 796).

⁴⁷ We do not know why in Chapter 12 of the rules, although only in the assignment of the chapter number, Bazilovych indicates in these, one after the other, a different content: obligations of ministry and obligations of the Protoihumen. Perhaps this is an oversight.

⁴⁸ D. BAZILOVIÈQ, *Pravila i Ustanovlenđa monašeskaä*, 28-29.

⁴⁹ Cfr. BASILIUS MAGNUS, *Regulae fusius tractatae* 8, PG 31, 934-942.

training of monks. According to our observations, this thought was not taken from the *Monastic Rules* of Karlovci.

4.1.1 The Eighth Rule in St. Basil the Great's "Wide Rules"

For the better understanding of the essence of the Basilovich's aim, we will take a look, in more detailed manner, at the eighth rule in St. Basil the Great's "Wide Rules."

Responding to the question as to whether it is necessary – upon entering into that kind of life, which is according to God – to renounce everything, Basil affirms that our Lord Jesus Christ says to all: "If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me."⁵⁰ And later: "In the same way, therefore, everyone of you who does not forsake all his own possessions cannot be My disciple."⁵¹ Basil introduces the words of Jesus as the most valid reason and as the first and most important argument for self-denial and self-abnegation.

Being Christ's disciple, says Basil, means above all to renounce the devil, the passions of the flesh, blood relations, human friendships, a way of life that is opposed to the integrity of the Gospel of salvation. And, what is even more necessary, is to deny oneself and unclothe oneself of the old man with his deeds.⁵²

Later in the eighth rule, Basil asks: How can anyone, for whom the whole world is crucified in Christ and he to the world,⁵³ be a partaker of worldly cares? Jesus Christ brings, in fact, to the extreme limit a hatred for one's own life and self-denial, saying: "If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me."⁵⁴ And still later: "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and moreover, even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Mt 16,24.

⁵¹ Lk 14,33.

⁵² Cfr. BASILIUS MAGNUS, *Regulae fusius tractatae* 8, PG 31, 935 A. The renunciation of oneself is the most important and, simultaneously, the most difficult of all things. As St. Basil wrote to Gregory of Nanzianzus: "I left the city and all its activities as the cause of many miseries, but I have not been able to renounce myself." Cfr. BASILIUS MAGNUS, *Epistolarum classis* I 2, PG 32, 223. Thus, 'hatred of oneself' is proposed as the last step of self-denial. Basil, in this particular council, together with the observation of the commandments, suggests a certain order, which can not be observed without the condition of renouncing certain things. The basic stages in this path of renunciation is: above all, the devil; attachment to this world; and, ultimately, ourselves; at the end, the victory is over the attachment to life itself. Cfr. U. NERI, *Opere ascetiche di Basilio di Cesarea*, 247.

⁵³ Cfr. Gal 6,14.

⁵⁴ Mt 16,24.

⁵⁵ Lk 14,26. Lc 14,26. Here Basil makes an important step. It would not make sense to leave all, if not because of following Christ: renouncing oneself is the means of removing obstacles to one's apostolate and acquiring the freedom which makes one able to proceed along the path towards God. Cfr. U. NERI, *Opere ascetiche di Basilio di Cesarea*, 248.

Perfect renunciation, as Basil says, consists in detachment from life itself and reception of a death sentence, by not trusting anymore in oneself. All this begins to happen, when we become strangers to external things—such as ownership of property, vainglory, human customs, attachment to useless things—as the apostles themselves have shown us, including James and John, who have left their father, Zebedee, and the boat that gave them sustenance.⁵⁶ The Apostle Paul says: In the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.⁵⁷

4.1.2 Indifference Regarding Earthly Life

In the eighth rule, Basil considers the monk to be one, who has in himself a strong desire to follow Christ. There is nothing here on earth that binds him to this life, neither parents, nor relatives, as if this was against the commandments of the Lord; neither the fear of men, since it is not derived from a true good, nor the mockery of unbelievers, who debase what is good. The monk does not let himself be conquered by their contempt.⁵⁸

If anyone wants to know with the greater precision, Basil continues, the monk's effort to fervently follow the Lord should be in accord with what the Apostle Paul says of himself for our edification:

But, moreover, I count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ.⁵⁹

From this detailed description of the eighth rule, we can better understand Basilovych's strong motivations to vigorously emphasize this particular aspect to the novices. But not only to them, we can safely say that he did the same to his monks. The eighth rule, according to Basilovych, creates the foundation of the monastic life and gives it its sense and its completion in an integral manner.

4.2 From the Rules and Monastic Constitutions

⁵⁶ Cfr. BASILIUS MAGNUS, *Regulae fusius tractatae* 8, PG 31, 935 C. Here begins the effort as an easier exercise, from the lowest stage, which is perfected only when we are obedient to Christ. This is achieved in practice and in truth through daily living, until death; taking up our cross means being ready to die for Christ, without any attachment to this life. Cfr. U. NERI, *Opere ascetiche di Basilio di Cesarea*, 248

⁵⁷ Cfr. Gal 6,14.

⁵⁸ Cfr. BASILIUS MAGNUS, *Regulae fusius tractatae* 8, PG 31, 938 A. The spiritual teaching of Basil is felt so intensely. It often focuses on the momentum necessary for zealous, perfect obedience and discipleship in the likeness of Christ. For to love God means to force one's soul beyond its strength to do the will of God in the search and fervor of His glory. Cfr. U. NERI, *Opere ascetiche di Basilio di Cesarea*, 249.

⁵⁹ Phil 3,4-8.

In our opinion, the manuscript, *From the Monastic Rules and Constitutions*,⁶⁰ was conceived as a more detailed and additional explanation of some parts of the work of Ioannikyj Basilovych's *Monastic Rules and Constitutions*. Our thesis confirmed even by the title of the manuscript.

We are convinced that the manuscript contains one part that is attributable to Basilovych, and another, containing a collection of lectures by Arsenio Kocak. It is not a systematic work, nor is it organic. The individual chapters are not logically linked one to another. Some subjects are repeated several times, such as the explanation of the Ten Commandments and the Creed. We suppose that Basilovych, as protoihumen, had visited diverse monasteries, holding conferences for the monks. In this way, he could have also visited the monastery in Krasny Brod, where he delivered some lectures to the novices. Arsenio Kocak, as master of novices, would have been able to copy them out.⁶¹ We do not have to look long and far as to why the written work had such a content. The answer is found in the eighth chapter of the *Monastic Rules and Constitutions*, intended for the superiors of monasteries, where the author, Protoihumen Ioannikyj Basilovych, writes:

The superior is obligated to discuss often with the brethren: the monastic vows, the vanity of this world, future life, the narrow and toilsome road that leads to eternal life, the beatitudes, death, judgment, hell, the Kingdom of Heaven, etc. He must always watch their souls as a father. Would a father, who has seen his son fall or has fallen into a pit, leave him there? Such a superior would be worse than a beast, if he neglected a child, who is in such trouble. He would deserve death, if he let a soul fall into the abyss of Hell. The superior, for the salvation of his brethren, must be guided by the words: We desire to share with you not only the Gospel of God, but also our own selves.⁶² Thus, do not overlook and do not hesitate to proclaim God's will, because you will be judged as a murderer (as has been said above); and, in another point, it is written: Large and great is the disaster approaching the superior, when he buries the talent for teaching the Word and does not proclaim it, which is the weapon that should be employed against sin, in other words, how evil could be avoided.⁶³

Basilovych attached great importance to regular conferences held by the superior for the brethren. For the superior, it is his primary means to form a monastic or religious spirit. In general, we can opine that the conception of our manuscript, *From the Monastic Rules and Constitutions*, was a concrete implementation of the

⁶⁰ Đ. BAZILOVIÈQ - A. KOCAKQ, *Į pravilq i Ustanovlenđ monašeskixq*, Krasnyj Brod 1796. Ms. n. 1, UŠUK

⁶¹ In the years 1789 and 1795, Arsenij Kocak is named as a spiritual assistant in the chronicles of the monastery of Krásny Brod. In 1798, he does not appear again. It is most probable that he was also the master of novices. For more information, see footnote 159 of Chapter I. Cfr. V. TIMKOVIČ, *Letopis Krásnobrodského monastiera*, 119.

⁶² 1Thess. 2,8.

⁶³ Đ. BAZILOVIÈQ, *Pravila i Ustanovlenđ monašeskaä*, 20-22

Monastic Rules and Constitutions by the superior. We also are able to note that the themes of the work were not chosen randomly. If, the content of the previous chapter on *Monastic Rules and Constitutions* is observed with greater attention—which the monks were obliged in conscience to follow—we discover that it is almost the same as *From the Monastic Rules and Constitutions*.⁶⁴

The second answer – as to the reasoning behind the conception of this manuscript – lies in the eleventh chapter of the *Monastic Rules and Constitutions*. In our opinion, the manuscript is the master of novices' response to the *Rules and Monastic Constitutions* and is his own manner of adapting better to the requirements of the task entrusted to him. Let us recall, what the master of the novices was required to explain and clarify them:

Even after passing all examinations sufficiently, he will persevere in his vocation, only if he has been inserted into the choir of novices and clothed in monastic garb. The novice will be guided in a spiritual asceticism by an experienced superior, who has the obligation to teach carefully the monastic rules of St. Basil the Great and explain the significance of poverty, obedience, chastity and other such matters. Teaching him with zeal and through spiritual discourses as to how these things are to be observed; demonstrating to him the narrow road that leads to eternal life, the radical nature of monastic life;⁶⁵ teach him all the virtues and encouraging him in any difficulty or asceticism; guiding him in reading, in singing the divine office and in prayer; teaching him writing, arithmetic and other basic subjects. He must also be taught etiquette, how to serve at the table, eating, sitting, speaking, knowing to whom and how to express respect, etc.⁶⁶

We see here a direct link between the *From the Monastic Rules and Constitutions* and the *Monastic Rules and Constitutions*.

The author quite familiar with Western contemporary literature of a theological and ascetical nature. In the manuscript, various authors are cited, but often we do not know who they are, because only the pages of the works are given, without indicating the books from which they are taken. Since author has not specified his sources, the work loses its value and we consider this fact in a negative light. The author also knew well the works of the Greek Church Fathers, such as Basil the Great, John Chrysostom and even John Climacus.

He explicitly mentions some works, while others we can only make assumptions. For example, on the page 54,⁶⁷ he refers to the rules of Basil the Great.

⁶⁴ Đ. BAZILOVIÈQ, *Pravila i Ustanovlenđä monašeskaä*, 33.

⁶⁵ The word *inoëeski* is translated as monastic. There is does not exist in most modern languages an exact translation. It means he, who lives in a manner diverse from the laity in the world.

⁶⁶ Đ. BAZILOVIÈQ, *Pravila i Ustanovlenđä monašeskaä*, 27-28. Cfr. V. J. VIDÁK, *Pravila monašeskaä*, 3

⁶⁷ Cfr. Đ. BAZILOVIÈQ - A. KOCAKQ, *İpravilq i Ustanovlenđä monašeskixq*, 54

In another moment, the author draws inspiration from Arsenio Kocak's *Ascetical Prologue*,⁶⁸ without citing the book. This is the part from page 24 to page 27 of our manuscript, which inserts pages 205 to 393 of the work cited above.

At that time, one of the most famous ascetical works was Alfonso Rodriguez's *The Exercise of Perfection*. Although, in our manuscript there are no direct quotations from this work; nevertheless, we have found indirect ones.⁶⁹ In our opinion, at that time, Rodriguez was one of the most read ascetical authors. His influence is present in author of the manuscript.

The author repeatedly does a detailed analysis of the *Ten Commandments*. This could be due to the importance the author gave to the *Commandments* for the training of novices or that these discourses flow from diverse authors.

According to our opinion, in the manuscript, Basilovych's conferences – as recorded by Arsenio Kocak – are found, dating back to the period when he resided in the monastery of Krásny Brod. Basilovych placed significant emphasis on the spiritual life and the observance of Divine Commandments, as well as on the link between the Christian and monastic vocation. He demands that the monk, before becoming a true monk, should first become a good Christian. And this is properly why, in our opinion, he had analyzed in such detailed for the Basilian novices or seminarians the Ten Commandments and the articles of the Creed.

The author offers the Basilian novices a rich theological and spiritual content, which they are acquainted with in the early years of their monastic life. If we assume that the master of novices has communicated the entire work, we may safely say that the Basilian candidates, at that time, were very well prepared in terms of theoretical knowledge for the monastic life.

In the manuscript, we see concretely how the author simultaneously employed two languages: Latin, written in Latin letters, and Church-Slavonic, written in Cyrillic. In our opinion, this is particular to the territory of the Mukachevo Eparchy. Basilovych does the same in his work *Explicatio*. Based on this fact, we can say that the territory of the Mukachevo Eparchy was historically a cultural and linguistic border, as well as a border between the Eastern and Western Christianity.

On the basis of the examples given, it is interesting to note another theological frontier; i.e., the author, in his theological formulations, moves along the border between Eastern and Western Christianity. It is clear, in fact, that the author is Catholic, as is witnessed in his Thomistic theological expressions, but he also draws from the most authentic sources of Eastern monasticism such as the rules of S. Basil the Great. He develops monastic spirituality from the sacrament of Baptism and considers the monastic life as a more radical type of Christianity. The author,

⁶⁸ It is a well-conserved manuscript found in the Uzhhorod State University library. A., KOCAKQ, *Prolog duxovnyi asketièesk'i*, Bukovce 1797, Ms 351 Д, УШУК, Ужгород.

⁶⁹ We give as an example the attainment of Christian. A theme treated by the author of the manuscript. Cfr. Đ. BAZILOVIÈQ - A. KOCAKQ, *Î pravilq i Ustanovlenôj monašeskixq*, 44. A. RODRIGUEZ, *Esercizio di perfezione*, 13-24.

therefore, is grounded in the Eastern monastic tradition, which he researches, as a Catholic, through a link with the contact and influence of Western Christianity. In this fact, we see the originality of the author.

4.3 *Imago vitae monasticae*

The last ascetical work of Ioannikyj Basilovych, to which we turn our attention, is his *Imago vitae monasticae – An Icon of the Monastic Life*. We can say that this is Basilovych's masterpiece in the field of ascetical works. This is clear by the simple fact that it was his only published work. It has 182 pages and was printed in Košice in 1802. The author, realizing that it would be very difficult to print in Ruthenian language, decided to write a systematic work on the ascetical life for the monks in Latin.

Printed in Latin, the work did not have much success among the monks themselves, who were unequipped to translate it and, for this reason, it remained unknown.⁷⁰ It was edited as a scientific work, based on a bibliography pertinent for the spiritual life of the monks and founded on texts from the Church Fathers and the masters of the spiritual life.

From a reading of the text, it is obvious that the author did not intend to invent a new science of the monastic life, but rather he wanted to remain faithful to Church tradition, Scripture, the Fathers of the Church and the Ecumenical Councils. There are few original thoughts from the author. The work is a selection or synthesis of the Fathers' thoughts. Basilovych often mentions them, using the typical methodology of the Eastern Fathers.

The main sources for its composition are:

- a) The Greek and Latin Church Fathers and the lives of the saints
- b) The ecumenical councils and local synods
- c) Non-Christian and late Christian authors

The author demonstrates his familiarity with the Latin and Greek Fathers of the Church. The majority of citations, especially of the Greek Fathers, are mentioned almost in every chapter. This is done in two ways: by direct quotation of entire passages of patristic texts or by allusions to their works.

Author cites over forty Church Fathers and eleven lives of the saints, probably referring to some source or collection.

The author, a Basilian monk, usually begins each chapter of the work with a thought from Basil, subsequently developing the theme of this sought from the other Fathers. There are references to Basil's *Asceticon*, to the *Monastic Institutions*, the *Epistles*, the *Brief Rule*, the *Wide Rule*, but also to his work *On the Holy Spirit* and the end of the book contains the entire *Homily on Fasting*.

⁷⁰ I maintain that Bazylovych wanted to explain to the Latin world that the Basilian monks represented a single entity within the Greek-Catholic Church.

In the same quantity the author cites: Cassian's *Institutions of Coenobites and Remedies Against the Eight Deadly Sins*; Gregory of Nazianzen's *Orations and Letters*; Efrem of Syria's *Paraenesis*; Jerome's *Epistles*. A little less frequently, he refers to Augustine and to Gregory of Nyssa, Benedict's *Rule*, John Climacus's *Ladder of Paradise* and to Ruffinus.

The work, containing no introduction or conclusion, is composed of four parts: a brief history of Eastern monasticism, the practice of the monastic vows and purity of conscience, the practical basis of daily monastic life and the life of Saint Basil, the founder of coenobitic life. The appendix contains Basil the Great's homily on fasting.

What is particular in Basilovych's *Imago vitae monasticae* is his methodology. It is the typical methodology of the Eastern Fathers, consisting of constant references to Sacred Scripture and the Church Fathers, who are cited 49 times in *Imago vitae monasticae*. This methodology stresses humility and, at the same time, the writer's preparation. In fact, there are numerous references to the works of the Greek and Latin Fathers and to the canons of various local and ecumenical councils. We can only vaguely imagine the effort made by the author over two hundred years ago, when there still did not exist a complete edition of the Church Fathers such as is available today. From the context and notes, we can assume with a good reason his use of the Latin edition of Baronius, even though there are frequent quotations from the Greek Fathers.

Basilovych's main point of interest is made evident in the frequency of his citations from the Fathers. He quotes, first of all, Basil the Great,⁷¹ because Basilovych himself belonged to the Basilian Order and intended to stress the importance of Basil's person and work. The fact that almost every topic begins with citation from Basil is a clear indication, in my view, that to understand the essence of coenobitic monastic life, it is necessary to return to Basil the Great's original idea of monasticism. It must be admitted that Basilovych's personal thoughts are rarely found in his work.

After evaluating Basilovych's work, one cannot say with certainty that it was addressed to the Basilian monks of the Transcarpathian monasteries. Few of them actually knew enough Latin. Moreover, printing a book for a few monks would have been an extremely expensive undertaking at the time. It was their custom to transcribe manuscripts in Old Slavonic with Cyrillic script for private use. Basilovych was sure that his work *Imago vitae monasticae*, written according to Eastern tradition, would have been preserved only if compiled and printed in Latin.

In our opinion, this work was addressed to the secular Greek-Catholic clergy, who already knew Latin, and Latin clergy and religious as a defense of Eastern monasticism. It could have also been meant for the emperor's court to explain that in addition to monks of the Latin tradition there are also those of the Eastern tradition. Basilovych perhaps felt the need to explain the different nature and spirituality of the Eastern monks. We should not forget that in this period collections of the Greek

⁷¹ Bazylovych cites St Basil the Great in *Imago vitae monasticae* 112 times.

Fathers were already published in Latin. Basilovych used not only the Greek Fathers as a source, but also the Latin Fathers and the Catholic councils that occurred after the schism, to show that the Church's patrimony, represented by monasticism, was held in common.

In the last chapter, the necessity of monasticism is described by Basilovych in relation to the biography of St. Basil the Great. There are many examples, taken from history and demonstrated by the author, in which the monks had supported the Orthodox faith.

The Fathers of the Church, along with Scripture, belong to the tradition of the Church. The very term 'Church Father' stresses the importance of the paternal figure: the bishop as an authentic witness and guarantor of true faith. He is the reliable teacher of the faith, to which we can appeal in cases of doubt.⁷² As writes Joseph of Volokolamsk, the works of the Church Fathers often are compared to the value of Sacred Scripture.⁷³

Finally we can say that Basilovych had followed the Basilian tradition according to the spirit of Theodor Studite; namely, a return to the Church Fathers for the renewal of the spiritual life. Indeed, Basilovych's work does not differentiate between the spiritual father and the superior. In his mind, they are one and the same person. When he speaks only of the superior, it is clearly understood in accord with the doctrine of Theodore Studite.

5. Conclusion

Basilovych hoped that the Byzantine monks would become true Christians through the realization of inner content of Basil the Great's eighth of the *Wide Rules*. In this rule, Basilovych sees everything that a monk should do. The course of the eighth rule is present in all Basilovych's works, even when he explains in detail the monastic vows as the monk's practical response to the invitation for self-renunciation in poverty, chastity and obedience. In all of Basilovych's works, it is evident how he urged the superiors to hold regular catechesis for their monks, through which they could constantly be trained in the zeal of monastic life.

We agree with Tichý,⁷⁴ when he states that even if we do not have a precise date for the composition of *The Discourse to the Brethren*, knowing that *The Monastic Rules and Constitutions* date back to 1797 and *Imago vitae monasticae* to 1802 – these three writings all have a common timeline. After examining the manuscript, *From Monastic Rules and Constitutions* of 12 June 1796, he adds that this text also clearly falls within the chronological timeline of the Basilovych's ascetical works.

The main purpose was to show the great influence that Ioannikyj Basilovych

⁷² H. DROBNER, *Patrologia*, 48.

⁷³ T. ŠPIDLÍK, *Manuel sistematique*, 6.

⁷⁴ Cfr. F. TYCHY, «Іоанникій Базилович» [Ioannikyj Bazylovych], 45.

had on Basilian monks in their striving to become true Eastern monks. It is necessary to remember that during the period of his mandate as Protoihumen, the number of monks was at its highest in the Mukachevo Eparchy.

For this reason, we perceive his work as special and original. We take this opportunity to confirm that Ioannikyj Basilovych, besides his collaborator Arsenio Kocak, was the only author in that period on the territory of Mukachevo Eparchy, who had such interest in the works of the Greek Fathers, with the *Imago vitae monasticae* as its fruit.

At the beginning of this book, Basilovych placed an image of the perfect Basilian novice on the cross. With this he wanted to summarize visually, as an icon, the entire message of the eighth of the *Wide Rules*. In Dionysius of Phurna's manual of iconography,⁷⁵ there is a description of a similar image. It is logical, therefore, that Basilovych put this image at the beginning of his only published ascetical work. In our opinion, it is as he wanted it to be related to his *Monastic Rules and Constitutions*, which repeats that novices have to know well and accurately the eighth rule, which states that the world is crucified to the Christian and the Christian to the world. In all three works, in different ways, he emphasizes the same aspect of the renunciation of the devil and the pleasures of the flesh, while expressing one's personal willingness follow Jesus Christ totally.

We believe that the Basilovych's ascetical works are of great importance today for the Greek-Catholic Churches. It is appropriate to continue the study of works hitherto unknown, local ascetical sources, such as the works of Arsenio Kocak, for the proper restoration of the Greek-Catholics' identity in Slovakia and in Transcarpathian Ukraine. In this way, it is possible to become familiar with the most genuine and authentic roots of the Eastern Church in their theological, liturgical and spiritual richness. Even today, the Greek-Catholic Church, after years under Communism, is still re-establishing its ecclesial life. Today, we talk of returning one's roots. Among the clergy queries relative to the past persist. Thus, these historical 'common roots' better represent the real unity of all Eastern Christians.

⁷⁵ T. ŠPIDLÍK – M. TENACE – R. ČEMUS, *Questions monastiques en Orient*, 156.

MONASTIC LIFE IN THE XXIST CENTURY: FINDING AN EQUILIBRIUM BETWEEN A LIFE OF PRAYER, WORK AND LEISURE

Dr. Michelina Tenace

1. *The Monastic Life is Reanimated by Tradition and Suffocated by ‘traditions’!*

In the history of the Church, and every society, there is a constant tension: an over-attachment to ‘traditions’ suffocates, while knowledge and love of ‘Tradition’ inspires creativity. We tend to justify our forgetfulness of the great Tradition, whose content is life-giving, on account of the fact that “traditions can be distracting.”¹

It sometimes happens that a religious Order’s General Chapter strives more to maintain its ‘traditions,’ than rediscover the Tradition. First of all, authority — without too many questions asked—ought to guarantee an indefectible fidelity to an immutable tradition. Thus, superiors are convinced “that authority—in the first place—ought to safeguard the values of the past by maintaining them without alteration and adaptation to the times.”²

Today the Church is asking us to respond to the signs of the times and to propose new ways of living the Christian faith. Faith is alive and makes us alive. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, faith is creative.

“Sometimes we think that fidelity and tradition are opposed to creativity. The Church’s great Tradition, however, tells us the opposite: faith makes us think; faith makes us speak;” in brief, one cannot be faithful without creativity, since faith makes us creative.³

Therefore, the first point is: in order to respond to the question about how to maintain an equilibrium between the many antinomies within the monastic life, we do not have to create formulae, but simply rediscover the one source! Rather, the many sources. The force of revitalization of a spiritual reality —which is the religious community—is sustained by many founts: fidelity, creativity, profoundity, concreteness.

The charism requires a creative fidelity.

Profoundity is necessary today, because the actual problem of the consecrated life is not merely a question of exterior forms, but is something that regards the very identity of the religious community and thus its purpose and mission.

¹ A. MOREIRA, *La memoria pericolosa di Gesù Cristo in una società post-tradizionale*, Concilium 35 (1999), 4.

² R. HOSTIE, *Autorità*, in Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione, vol. I, ed. Paoline, Roma 1974, 1002.

³ B. SESBOÜE, *Saint Basile et la Trinité. Un acte théologique au IV^e siècle*, ed. Desclée, Paris 1998, 252.

The call that we hear in community does not correspond to the fashionableness of being ‘original.’ In the monastic life, what does it mean to be original? It means to be faithful to the origin of my life, to the origin of my Christian existence, to the origin of my fundamental vocation, to the origin of my very person. When I am faithful to my vocation, I’m original, in the way every saint is original and distinct!

Often one thinks that to be original means to invent something new, something which never existed before in history. From this point of view, there is the temptation to arrogance and pride. Only Jesus Christ is absolutely new upon the earth and this newness is defined by its eternal duration. We are new only inasmuch as we become more and more Christ-like.

An original newness does not negate the creativity that everyone must possess in order to respond to holiness. Originality is the foundation of diversity.

Instead when we want to change our course of action in merely an external manner, we are not doing anything ‘original,’ but merely a ‘trick’ (*maquillage* - makeup). It is a deceitful or false way of being and acting, which creates only division and contrasting opinions.

Creativity, fidelity, profoundity go together. They ought to appear together in our discourses on the concrete structure and style of our life, on its forms of government. “This new life comes to us from the Resurrection. It is a gift of the Spirit, a gift of our baptism and the task of our consecration, for which the rebirth of any reality is impossible without a Paschal life, which is spiritual and authentic.”⁴

2. *The Monastic Life of XXIst Century Overcomes the Opposition between Active and Contemplative Life*

In the history of the consecrated, religious and monastic life, the active life and contemplative life were spoken of too easily as if it were possible to separate the love of prayer and works of charity or to separate the ascesis of solitude and the ascesis of community.

It is still commonly regarded as such. Some orders are held to be contemplative, others active. Those, who refer to Mary at the feet of Jesus, are admired for having the courage to choose the “better part.” Those, who refer themselves to Martha—with a sense of inferiority under certain aspects and with a sense of superiority under certain other aspects—are drawn to the better part, which – according to Saint Paul— is charity!

Thus, as regards an understanding of the Gospel, one vocation privileges prayer (contemplation) and the other—service (action). The contemplatives have time

⁴ Cfr. J. ARNAIZ, *Crisi di obbedienza o crisi di autorità? Problematiche e compiti attuali del governo religioso*, in Aa. Vv., *Guidare la comunità religiosa. L'autorità in tempo di rifondazione*, ed. Ancora, Milano, 2001, 23ss..

for long liturgies and the divine office; the active ones have time for pastoral organizations that include vocations, young people, families, the sick—in a word, for all categories of those in need of charity as indicated by their charism.

But this situation does not correspond to the truth of the Gospel and communities that have lived this distortion are dying, both the contemplative and the active. In active communities, the nuns are leaving and saying that there is too much work and too little time for prayer, and not enough space for the formation of an interior life. Their demands are interpreted by the “active” as laziness, as if prayer could be an act of sloth. One can recall the words of a Jewish poet on prayer: prayer is a species of “labour,” the work of a saint is done “with a certain heaviness of head.” To pray is “to listen in front of the doors of silence.”⁵ To give glory to God is “heavy” (the etymology of the word “glory” in Hebrew is “weight”).

Rather, it must be said that every fruitful Christian, who is active in contemplation is contemplative in action, since he/she puts the very same love of God into action, which has been first contemplated and experimented.

From this point of view, there is no diversity between the religious orders. There is a unique vocation—baptism; a unique faith that works in charity; a unique hope that sees and contemplates the face of God.

The distinction of the states of life (a typical expression of the Latin Church) refers to the profoundity of means used in order to live the universal Christian vocation. The distinction of the charisms refers to the richness of the one living organism in its various manifestations of charity.

The separation of action and contemplation leads to something worse: there can be an atheistic contemplation (symbolically—the scribes) and an atheistic action (the Pharisees). The source joins prayer and action together; grace that comes only from God, the truth of the relation and authenticity found in listening to the word.

There is true opposition rather between those who live and enjoy the presence of the Lord and those who do not notice His presence. The latter do not frequent it when alone, nor taste any nostalgia or expectation of it. In this way, one can even arrive at crucifying it in false prayer or false action, or a false pharisaical religiosity.

An Acquired Harmony: Solitude–Community

It is important to find space and time for prayer; to find silence from words, from concepts or images; to retreat in solitude. The need to withdraw is connected with the demands of a contemplative life. There is need felt among nuns to experience the eremitic life and solitude in order “to pray.” This demand must be understood and appraised. At times, however, we need to discern the true reason for this request. Sometimes, it is simply the need for peace, rest and distance. The authentic sense of the desert should not arise from the burden of labour, nor from the

⁵ C. VIGEE, *Le sens de la prière en Israël*, in N. NABERT (sous la direction de), *Le chant des profondeurs*, ed. Salvator, Paris 2007, 121 and 137.

weight of community life with our brothers and sisters. The time and space of the desert is offered as an occasion to face the true questions of life and faith. It is an occasion for spiritual warfare, a test of faith, so that Christ can conquer the passions and illusions of an unauthentic life. One goes into the desert to be exposed to the light that God throws in the heart. This test can be faced only with serious discernment made together with one's superior and spiritual director.

In the normal course of things, it is important to remember how Christ acts. Those who encounter Him are always sent back to the community as a requirement for living out all the commandments: to give testimony, to announce, to love, to pardon, to give life; in brief, to have communion with the Holy Spirit, Who renders us children. The presupposition is that to live as siblings means to have touched the essence of being a child—the re-vivification of the “interior man.” This is the summit! Perhaps St. Basil considered life in the desert to be an easier mode of life than in community, since the vocation of every human person is to communion, which is the greater calling, demanding more effort and greater holiness.

Conclusion

The opposition between action and contemplation is not Christian. It is not from the Gospel. It reflects a wrong way of seeing **action** by confusing it with an ecclesial species of busyness and **contemplation** as a *dolce far niente* (sweet idleness). Missionary action is born from contemplation, from “seeing God in all things” (an expression of St. Ignatius Loyola, the founder of an active order—the Jesuits). The contemplation of the mystic is the ability to see the action of God and to participate in it. “Contemplative in action” could be the motto of a religious, who spends his/her life in works of charity and “active in contemplation” the motto of a monk or nun.

3 – Finding an Equilibrium between Zeal for Labour and Care of the Person

We tend to read Chapter 11 of Genesis very superficially. It’s about the tower of Babel. The people, all speaking the same language, are joined in one grand plan—to reach the dwelling of God. God, however, doesn’t like the plan. So God punishes the people by destroying their work and dispersing them throughout the earth. He prevents them from communicating with one another through the confusion of languages. But what is the sense of the story?

We listen to the words of Jesus: “Do you believe that those of the tower of Babel were worse sinners than all others? No, I tell you; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (cfr. Lc 13, 5).

How can we understand this message from Scripture? Chronologically, the flood and Noah’s ark precede the tower. Noah’s sons had focused on an edifice “of fire-bricks and cement,” on the construction of a city with a tower whose top would reach into heaven (Gn. 11, 1-4). The goal was one of “making a name for ourselves; lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth” (Gn 11, 4). From their common labour they awaited glory and unity—an apparent good.

But some indications lead us to understand that all this took place in a sinful context: “make a name for ourselves” expresses the will to give themselves an identity and not to receive it from God, but to construct it with hard work and consent of the multitude. Labour was of supreme value.

In some Jewish narratives,⁶ we find that the tower of Babel required very much human energy. It became so high that “to reach the top, one needed an entire year.” This edifice was pleasing to all, but in particular to those responsible: “in the eyes of the constructors a fire-brick became more precious than a human being. If a man fell and died, nobody paid any attention, but if a fire-brick fell everyone cried out because it took one year to replace it.”⁷

For whom was all this labour? The anonymous community consisting of everyone and no one; namely, all those humans, whose will contrasts that of God’s. In this segment of humanity, the power to construct a grand edifice is delusional—the glorification of work. “If it is not understood as serving the Omnipotent, then people are nothing more than an extension of that delusion, which pushes them into the sad herd—the masses.”⁸

In the collection of Ginzberg (“legends” drawn from midrash literature), one can read that the constructors of the edifice of Babylon “were so occupied with the completion of their work that they did not allow the women to cause any interruption in the manufacturing of fire-bricks even if they went into labour. They gave birth while making the fire-bricks.”⁹

Once again, the same idea is repeated: the fire-bricks are more important than the mystery of life and birth; the continuation of work appears more important than growing in personal relationships. The cost of the plan is known in the amount of hours, days and years of labour, but value of human life, a gesture of kindness, an act of charity are not recognised anymore. There is no more time for relationships. It takes a year to replace a fallen fire-brick. To replace a man fallen in the void of love, one needs years of therapy, centuries of expectation and, finally, one needs the passion of the Son of God abandoned on the cross.

Zeal for work, however, had replaced zeal for the human person and hatred of God had made space for the religion of death. It is told that at the top of the tower of

⁶ These narratives derived from Sacred Scripture have: “il compito di dare alimento all’ingegno così come all’anima, all’intelletto così come alla fantasia.” L. GINZBERG, Prefazione, in *Le leggende degli Ebrei*, vol.I, ed. Adelphi, Milano 1995, p. 17-18. Ginzberg writes that of the Hebrew legends contained in his books, the rabbinical writings constitute the starting point. They are, therefore, particularly important in understanding the pages of the Old Testament, which the canonical text of the Christian Bible gives little indication.

⁷ L. GINZBERG, *Le leggende degli Ebrei*, vol. I, *Dalla creazione al diluvio*, ed. Adelphi, Milano 1995, 170.

⁸ C. SGORLON, *Racconti della terra di Canaan*, Mondadori, Milano 1989, 171.

⁹ L. GINZBERG, *Le leggende degli Ebrei*, vol. I, *Dalla creazione al diluvio*, ed. Adelphi, Milano 1995, 170.

Babel, the rebellious wanted to erect idols constructed by them, to introduce weapons of combat in the sky and to usurp the place of God. “The constructors had never relented the pace of labour and, from that vertiginous height, they ceaselessly shot arrows towards heaven, which—when falling back down—seemed covered in blood. Thus, they were more and more obstinate in their illusion and exclaimed: “We have killed all the inhabitants of the heaven.”¹⁰

Work, by which humanity glorifies itself, demands human sacrifices and, thus, also sacrifices their Creator—God. These arrows, launched from the top to strike God, were falling down covered in blood, evoking to the Christian mind the death of the crucified Son of God, Who poured out His “divine” blood, because of the political and religious zeal of the men in power, supported by the crowd.

The warning for religious life is not in vain. In community, one can lose faith in God, faith in the resurrection and can pierce the heart of God in many ways. One can also “kill” God from the top of those very works that were meant to glorify Him.

Frequently, the documents of the Magisterium on consecrated life invite us to reflect on work and activism in religious communities.

The “great work,” while uniting forces, risks the division between persons. The “great work” carries the real and “not merely the hypothetical danger of polarization within common life.”¹¹

Even authorized work can threaten relations within a community. Members of the same community consider each other as if they were “merely collaborators” not companions¹² and similarly the religious house becomes “a place of residency, an agglomerate of subjects, each with their own individual story, but no fraternal community in Christ.”¹³ The congregation is managed like a multinational and assumes the social models of management and administration. “Those who are called to govern become “administrators” and brothers and sisters become “staff”. I have met general superiors whose offices reminded me of multinational corporations. The General Superior becomes CEO (Chief Executive Officer). General Chapters are for establishing objectives and estimating results. Everything must be measurable, and the measure is—above all else—money [...], superiors, however, should show our communities how to take a risk, not always choosing the sure option; how to have confidence in younger members, accepting frailty and vulnerability. Open the windows to the unforeseeable grace of God. In this culture of control, the religious life should be an ecological niche of freedom. Not a freedom for those who impose their will, but rather to give oneself over to the ever-present innovation of God. Leadership (the superiors) ought to hold the doors and windows of our dwellings

¹⁰ L. GINZBERG, *Le leggende degli Ebrei*, vol. I, *Dalla creazione al diluvio*, ed. Adelphi, Milano 1995, 170.

¹¹ *Vita fraterna in comunità*, n. 48.

¹² E. N. DEGREZ, *Ignace, Xavier et Pierre Favre: amis dans le Seigneur*, in *Vies Consacrées*, 78 (2006), p. 99.

¹³ *Vita fraterna in comunità*, n. 50.

open to the Spirit, for “you do not know from whence it comes or whither it goes; so is it with every one who is born of the Spirit” (Jn 3, 8).”¹⁴

As in the Tower of Babel, a project can camouflage evil beneath the idea of the common good that unites, but can blind as well. On that occasion, God saved us by dispersing us. He gave us an another opportunity to find ourselves in Him anew by rediscovering in Him an another form of unity between us. The rabbinic commentaries say that as soon as God confused the languages, the builders became angry and the workers ceased to communicate. The project was in danger and many people perished through lack of communication. Those who survived were dispersed throughout the earth. In the future, however, they would speak the language of God and find a unity by communicating “with the language that God used to create the world.”¹⁵

The true response to the Babel parable is Pentecost, which revealed that the language of God is the Holy Spirit, Who descended in the form of “tongues of fire” (Acts 2,3) and what glorifies Him is fraternal communion. “The church entrusts to the consecrated community the special task of nurturing the spirituality of fellowship.”¹⁶ Religious communities should be “experts in fellowship (...) in the fellowship project at the summit of human history, in accordance to the will of God”.¹⁷

4 – *The Wisdom of the Beatitudes: Being Creative in Today’s Monastic Life*

The Wisdom of the Beatitudes

If Moses with the ten commandments taught humanity how to live and behave on earth, Jesus with the beatitudes has shown us “the way which leads to eternal life, to the heavenly Fatherland.”¹⁸

Poverty, the peace of a pure heart, the joy of accomplishing Love’s will, isn’t this the face of Christian life? Love is a gift that comes down from on high and is consecrated when it asks for the grace to offer itself. It is above all the grace of an inner knowledge of God’s gifts, since “one fully realizes that in all things one can love and serve,” as Ignatius of Loyola often said (E 233).

¹⁴ T. RADCLIFFE, *Congresso Internazionale sulla Vita Consacrata*, Centro Internazionale ‘Ergife Palace’, Roma, 23 – 27 novembre 2004.

¹⁵ L. GINZBERG, *Le leggende degli Ebrei*, vol. I, *Dalla creazione al diluvio*, ed. Adelphi, Milano 1995,p. 171. Vi è “un’opinione diffusa in alcune cerchie ebraiche e cristiane, secondo cui la lingua primigenia sarebbe stato l’aramaico”. L. Ginzberg, Note, in Ibid., 386.

¹⁶ *Vita consecrata*, n. 51.

¹⁷ Ibid., n. 46.

¹⁸ CROMAZIO DI AQUILEA, *Sermon*, 39 (fragmenti) in *Sermons, Sources Chrétiennes* 164, Paris 1971, 217.

The Epistle of the Apostle James presents an exhortation apt for religious life: an invitation to joy, perseverance and an integral perfection. It describes a life experienced as “blessed.” It is a prophecy on the law of freedom that confers happiness on all who practice it (James 1, 2-3). In this epistle, we also find warnings that closely concern “anyone thinks himself to be religious” (James 1, 26). These indications include the discernment between secular wisdom and the wisdom which comes down from on high. The former is compared to the beatitudes: “Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good life let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This “wisdom” is not such as comes down from heaven, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity. And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace” (James 3, 13-18).

The Wisdom of the Pure of Heart

The wisdom that comes down from on high is pure; indeed, it is the beatific pureness of a heart that sees God. “If God is life, then one who does not see Him does not see life.”¹⁹ A purified heart sees God in every person and in all things. The superior—if he believes—is there to merely aid the light that each person carries within. If he accepts the mystery of the light that shines in the darkness, he will support the person, who is maturing in the knowledge of God through conversion and penance, “which casts out the darkness of ignorance and bestows upon man divine wisdom.”²⁰

Inasmuch as the reign of God is in the heart (cfr. Lk 17, 21), thus, he who possesses a pure heart, possesses wisdom and the kingdom of God, and is able “to see his own inner beauty, the image of the divine nature.”²¹ The beatitude of the pure of heart bears the two marks of Wisdom: to see God signifies a knowledge of His transcendent nature and the fact of seeing through the heart signifies that this transcendence is accessible to those whose lives are lived according to divine nature.

“Do not deprive me ever, O my God, of the joy of contemplating your face, neither now, nor in eternal life. For you are not only my God, but also all goodness that you grant to all who contemplate You. All of your goodness fills them with light, and in this way you are communicated to all, who communicate with you. This is not only in the future, but also now in this earthly life. And to those who are worthy, you grant the possibility to see you, not through the imagination nor simply by thought, but in the truth of Your divine existence, for the perfect fulfillment of the divine economy.”²²

¹⁹ GREGOIRE DE NYSSE, *Les Béatitudes*, ed. Migne, coll. *Les Pères dans la foi*, Paris 1995, 82.

²⁰ SYMEON LE NOUVEAU THEOLOGIEN, *Traité théologiques et éthiques*, SC 122 (1966), 119.

²¹ Cfr. GREGOIRE DE NYSSE, *Les Béatitudes*, ed. Migne, coll. *Les Pères dans la foi*, Paris 1995, 82.

The Wisdom to Live as the Children of God

The wisdom which comes from on high brings peace, since peace is a title of the Son of God.²³ “He is our peace... through Him we have access to the Father through the One Spirit (Ef 2, 14.18). Peace is a good that comes from God and as His gift, it is to be respected, nourished and defended by renouncing all thoughts that create hostility, war, violence and injustice. Peace—as a gift of Wisdom—begins when the passions are defeated at their roots, especially the passion for power. Patriarch Atenagoras writes that once “I’m disarmed of the tendency to justify myself at the expense of others, I’m not on guard, jealously clinging to my riches. I’m able to receive and share. I’m not particularly bound to my ideas and plans. When something better is presented to me, I eagerly accept it. Thus I am not afraid anymore. When there is no possession, there is no fear.”²⁴ When there is no fear, peace becomes possible.

The Wisdom of Knowing How to Abide in Love

The wisdom which comes from on high is meek and amenable. Meekness is the opposite of anger. St. Gregory of Nyssa describes it as “stability in faith.” “Meekness withstands violence and rash behaviour... blessed are the stable.”²⁵ Stability is the trait of those who abide in love. Stability of faith is shown in judgments, gestures and especially words: “When the soul, through the perception of truth, feels drunk and ecstatic on account of this chalice of grace, this most excellent chalice, obviously then it is time to remain silent.”²⁶ The lack of stability in faith generates anger and spite, even homicidal judgments within the community. The word that should bless, condemns; rather than giving one’s life, one’s brother is killed; rather than revealing the powers of the soul, one exposes his wounds. In our communities, the word has become an instrument of aggression. Freedom of speech justifies violence and arrogance. In communities, the word has become an instrument to empty the most holy things of their content. Even dialogue has become a weapon in aid of the powerful. Thus, the value of silence in the monastic tradition regards the wisdom of inner peace: “he who preserves his tongue from speaking evil, keeps his heart safe from the passions. And he who purifies his heart from the passions, contemplates the Lord at all times.”²⁷

²² The prayer of St. Symeon the Theologian, in SYMEON LE NOUVEAU THEOLOGIEN, *Hymnes* 55, SC 196, Paris 1973, 255.

²³ “Beati gli operatori di pace perché saranno chiamati figli di Dio” Mt 5,9. Gregorio di Nissa commenta: “Se vedere Dio è un bene che non ha paragone, il diventare figli di Dio è assolutamente al di sopra di ogni felicità”. GREGOIRE DE NYSSE, *Les Béatitudes*, ed. Migne, coll. *Les Pères dans la foi*, Paris 1995, 92.

²⁴ AA., Vv., *La pace, dono e profezia*, ed. Qiqajon, Magnano 1991, p.100.

²⁵ GREGOIRE DE NYSSE, *Les Béatitudes*, ed. Migne, coll. *Les Pères dans la foi*, Paris 1995, p. 43 e 46.

²⁶ CALLISTO CATAPHYGIOTA, *L'unione divina*, 65, in Filocalia IV, p. 445.

Thus Blessed are Those Who Strive to be in the Image of the Merciful God

The wisdom that comes from on high is rich in mercy. “Merciful is the name that should be given to God alone” and the one who is merciful “resembles God,” becomes like unto God.²⁸ Forgiveness is pleasing to the wise. Forgiveness is part of the community’s spiritual progress and witnesses to the new life of its members; a life bestowed over and over again, for everytime the Lord forgives, He heals and recreates communion. He who has been forgiven and forgives without looking for consolation and understanding for himself, but communicates a new wisdom of life — mercy. The consolation comes from participation in the Comforter, which is a gift of the Spirit and not a moral virtue.

Blessed are the Rich... in Faith and Humility

Wisdom—which comes from on high—is fruitful. It is a fecundity in sanctity, since there is no other aspiration, nor other proof of divine wisdom.

Wisdom is fruitful according to its spiritual paternity-maternity²⁹ and its knowledge of the heart (*cardiognosia*), which is its most charismatic aspect.³⁰ It forms a vision of the person, coinciding with God’s vision of that person at the moment of his/her creation.

Wisdom is fruitful in love and is the root of sonship. It is fecund in significance, because it holds the root of knowledge for interpreting events, trials and crosses. It is fruitful in “common sense,” intended for the common life, where different cultures and experiences of God are woven together, where various charisms flow into one charism. It is fruitful in beauty and goodness. The superior is a steward of life, not death; just as a gardener takes care of plants and not worms, or as the mother enjoys the progress and growth of her children and does not give up in the face of diseases that may afflict her family.

Wisdom is fruitful, since it helps one see that every human person is a child called to salvation and gazes upon him/her in the beautiful light of redemption.

²⁷ ISACCO IL SIRO citato in CALLISTO E IGNATZIO XANTHOPOULI, *Metodo e canone rigoroso*, paragrafo F., in Filocalia IV, p. 175.

²⁸ GREGOIRE DE NYSSE, *Les Béatitudes*, ed. Migne, coll. Les Pères dans la foi, Paris 1995, p. 70.

²⁹ Cfr. M. RUPNIK, *Paternità spirituale: un cammino regale per l'integrazione personale*, in *Nel fuoco del roveto ardente*, ed. Lipa, Roma 2003, 74-111.

³⁰ T. ŠPIDLIK, *La "kardiognosia" nell'insegnamento di Serafim*, in Aa. V.v., *San Serafin da Sarov a Diveevo*, Atti del IV convegno ecumenico internazionale di spiritualità russa, *Da Sarov a Diveevo. San Serafim e il rifiorire del monachesimo in Russia nel XIX secolo*, Bose 18-21 settembre 1996, pubblicato, ed. Qiqajon, Bose, 1998, 194.

Wisdom is fruitful in everlasting life, since “keeping the Lord’s Commandments and faith in Jesus Christ are everlasting riches.”³¹ The truly rich is he, who “preserves humility of spirit together with faith.”³² He is full of wisdom, who lives according to charity: “how much wisdom there is in acting charitably!”³³

5 – Monastic Life in the XXIst Century: The Creative Places of a Living Community

The Refectory: A Symbol of Creativity in Common Meals and Conviviality

Creativity has food as a symbol: the way of remaining together at table, eating and speaking. This also reflects our relation to the body, caring for our health without any fears or superficiality. A sobriety at every external manifestation; a beauty, which is God’s splendor; and the joy to live.

The Cloister: A Symbol of Creativity Based on the Gratuity of Relations

Creativity has for a symbol the relation to leisure and to a space, which serves no function. Walks within this space ensure the gratuity of meeting the other and the benefit that comes from contact with nature. Special attention should be given to the gratuity of relations and not all of them need be in service of something. Time spent together is not time lost. To stay creative one needs an hour a day alone and inactive!

The Library: A Symbol of Recognizing the Testimony of Others

Creativity comes from study, from interest in what others have lived, wrote and said. It teaches us to consider the thoughts and syntheses of others. In studying, we have a concrete topic upon which to meet, a precise occasion for exploration, to share not only what we think and feel subjectively, but what we have understood and are looking for as a response to faith.

The Chapel: A Symbol of Our Being Liturgical Persons in Everything

The mode of celebration reveals the vitality and health of a community. But also churches, chapels, images, flowers and behavior... Beauty is the heart of revelation. Thus, the liturgy is the heart of the manifestation of our being new creatures.

³¹ CROMAZIO DI AQUILEA, *Sermone*, V,5 in *Sermons*, Sources Chrétiennes 154, Paris 1969, 173.

³² Ibid.

³³ Quarto racconto, in *Racconti di un Pellegrino russo*, ed. Qiqajon, Magnano 2005, 115.

The Road: A Symbol of Space and Time for Recollection

One place and time for increased creativity, available often to religious, is travel. What one does, what one reads, time on the train, in the car, on a plane, in airports... How much time to read, to write, to reflect (not sinking into nothingness), to take a moment for deep prayer of the heart, for spiritual exercises in the heart.... A trip should not be taken unprepared, it should be approached as a spiritual exercise...

Conclusion

The Monastic Life as Life in Christ

If the religious life is justified only from the benefit of a moral lifestyle, from the benefit of virtues put in service for good works, it would express a merely human wisdom that could be questioned and replaced by other forms of wisdom.

In the spirit of wisdom, the deeds of a believer participate in God's work, which is salvation history, in the spirit of Christ, since all the treasures of wisdom are attributed to Christ: "For in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or dominations or authorities — all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col. 1, 16-17).

Christ reveals the unity of creation and of humanity with God. In Him, two kinds of wisdom were united: divine wisdom and human wisdom.

"And what is even more pathetic is that the vain, natural wisdom of this world compels one to judge the Divine according to human standards. Many people treat prayer in an inverted way, thinking that it is one's efforts and the preparatory steps that give rise to prayer that count, rather than the prayer itself giving birth to good works and all the virtues... Many good works are required of a Christian, but it is prayer that must come first and foremost, for without prayer no other good work can be performed and one cannot find the way to the Lord. Truth cannot be acquired, the flesh with its passions and lusts cannot be crucified, the heart cannot be filled with the light of Christ and united with Him unless these are preceded by frequent prayer."³⁴

Wisdom that expresses the Christian life arises from liturgical action. The word and human action have an efficiency in relation to God because it puts anew the original harmony. It brings about an efficiency of the relation between God and man and not a magic action from the human side; the believer makes a commitment with a word, blesses with a word, dominates creation by the Creator's will, who gives man the authority over all existing things.

Everyone's vocation consists in making shine the divine life that God has given to each person. "Those who haven't seen this light haven't seen God — for

³⁴ Primo racconto, in *Racconti di un Pellegrino russo*, ed. Qiqajon, Magnano 2005, p. 37.

God is light!”³⁵ But how does God “change darkness into light,” asks the holy monk of the light, Simeon the New Theologian. “Who can explain to me in what way darkness (man) is able to receive in himself the shining light (God) without eliminating this darkness (man)? This is one of God’s mysteries revealed to us. The mystery of God that has taken on himself my body and has granted to me his spirit, making me god by adoption and his true son.”³⁶

Prayer has thus a primary role in the monastic life: it is “exercise of the faith” that “always reminds us of the primacy of Christ and, in relation to him, the primacy of the inner life and sanctity. When this principle is not respected, one should not be surprised when the pastoral (or community) projects fall down and leave in the soul a humiliated sense of frustration?”³⁷

³⁵ “Non parliamo di cose che ignoriamo, ma rendiamo testimonianza di ciò che ci è conosciuto. Perché, la luce di Dio splende già nelle tenebre, di notte e di giorno, nel nostro cuore e nel nostro spirito. Ci illumina questa luce senza tramonto … essa parla, agisce, viva e vivifica, trasforma in luce coloro che illumina. Dio è luce e coloro che l’hanno ricevuto, l’hanno ricevuto come luce. Coloro che non hanno visto questa luce, non hanno visto Dio, perché Dio è luce”. Syméon le Nouveau Théologien, *Catéchèses* 28, SC 113 (1965), p. 137.

³⁶ Syméon le Nouveau Théologien, *Hymnes* 25, SC 174 (1971), p. 261.

³⁷ *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, n. 38.

THE WORD OF GOD IN THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ST BASIL: GOD'S COMMANDMENTS

*Very Rev. Fr. Basil Koubetch, OSBM
Protoarchimadrite Emeritus*

1. God's Commandments in the Teachings of St. Basil the Great

In the first seven of the *Wider Rules*, we find key themes in the teachings of St Basil, especially as regards his spirituality's close relation to the Word of God. The commandments are succinct, but wide-reaching laws that treat our interactions with God and other human beings. For example, love of God is seen in our concrete actions, that is in our keeping of the commandments through our common life with our neighbour —in our community (*WR* 7). Because of the limited amount of time, I will highlight only the main points of these seven *Wider Rules*.

1.1. The Greatest Commandment

As to the question of how God's commandments relate to each other, i.e., their hierarchy and importance, St Basil immediately responds by showing Jesus's response to the teachers of the law: *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind: this is the first and greatest commandment. The second is similar to it: love your neighbour as yourself.*¹ At the end of *WR* 1, St Basil gives a kind of introduction to the other responses that follow as regards God's commandments: *From what was said, and from other similar places given in Sacred Scripture, we can see that there is order and unity among all of the Lord's commandments.*²

1.2. How to Love God?³

When those who were speaking with Basil asked *how* to put into practice the commandment of love of God, St Basil's answer was *loving God does not require a teacher*. In this response, he also provides the following reasons for his belief:⁴

- 1) Without anyone's teaching, we rejoice in the light and desire life.
- 2) Nature itself teaches us to love our parents and those who have taught and cared for us.
- 3) We receive from God the power required to fulfill his commandment...we receive this ability to love from nature itself.

¹ Cf. *WR*, 1; Mt. 22, 36-39.

² *WR*, 1.

³ *WR*, 2, as are all other citations in this section.

⁴ Listed are quotations from *WR*, 2.

- 4) From our very nature we desire goodness, though each person grasps goodness in different forms; just as from nature —and without teaching— we have an inclination to that which is ours, to that which is dear to us and in our dealings with those who are kind to us, we naturally extend our kindness.
- 5) People naturally desire things that are beautiful and good... and God is good; thus, when someone desires goodness, they desire God.
- 6) From nature, we are given a love for our parents, as is seen also in animals and in smallest infant that turns to its mother with the greatest of love. Let us not be less intelligent than small, uneducated children, nor more savage than beasts; let us neither be strangers, nor hold ourselves equal to our Creator.

In the light of such natural gifts, St Basil guarantees that *when we act justly and properly with these God-given powers of the soul, we live pious lives of virtue*.⁵ And he gives an understanding of moral good and evil: *evil—this is the wrong use of what God has given us; it goes against His commandments; while on the other hand, virtue, which God requires of us, is the good use of the gifts He has given us, according to His commandments*.⁶

In his response, Basil also puts forth various biblical reasons for our love of God. In particular: God created humans in His image and likeness, blessed them with an intellect and various gifts, gave them the possibility of knowing God, placed mankind as master over all creation, and —after man's fall into sin— He sent His prophets and, in the fullness of time, Christ —who redeemed mankind from the curse of the law.⁷

1.3. The ‘Second Commandment:’ Love of Neighbour⁸

For as much as St Basil is always aware of human nature, which is called to the fulfillment of God's commandments, he expresses this especially in his responses to the questions concerning the commandment of love of neighbour. We can, without much difficulty, observe his anthropological, pedagogical and rhetorical method of teaching this principle. He begins from natural reason as to why we should love our neighbour,⁹ then presents it as a commandment of God,¹⁰

⁵ WR, 2.

⁶ WR, 2.

⁷ Cfr. WR, 2. The supernatural reasons to love God are beautifully explicated in the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great.

⁸ WR, 3.

⁹ “And who does not know that a person is a creation that is both friendly and social, and not wild and isolated? There is no one thing that more greatly corresponds to our nature as does the common life and mutual help and love of other persons” WR, 3.

¹⁰ “When God first gave us the seed, he justly awaited its fruit, saying: *A new commandment I give to you that you love one another*” WR, 3.

in the fulfilling of which we receive our identity¹¹ and, ultimately, on the basis of Christ's teachings,¹² revealing the most sublime of reasons: God *accepts this love as love of Him.*

1.3.1. Love of Neighbour Fulfils the Commandment of Love of God

Inasmuch as good works, motivated by love of neighbor, God accepts for himself, St Basil puts forth his conviction that the commands of love of God and neighbour are fully entwined. In this answer (*WR* 3), we can feel his exhortation of the validity of St John's first Epistle,¹³ which he does not cite in the text, but is strongly felt in other texts.

The originality of St Basil is especially seen in the fact that he —on the basis of biblical texts that have been introduced— interprets the commandment of love of neighbor as a fulfillment of the commandment of the love of God.¹⁴ Both commandments are fulfilled differently, but they are still tied together in such a way that fulfilling one without the other is impossible. We do not have two commandments, but a single two-fold commandment.¹⁵

Love of God and union with Him is revealed in our daily, common life with our neighbour: *In agreement with the teaching of this Church Doctor, the heart and mind of the Christian, who lives in grace, is free from hatred and sin. He — who has love for others and a desire for their good— is united to God.*¹⁶

1.3.2 Love of Neighbour is the Identity of Christ's Disciple

St Basil is convinced that we perfect ourselves as Christ's disciples in no other way than when we have love for one another. He clearly adds other possible elements to this identity: *as a sign of being his disciples, do not desire miracles or extraordinary signs (though the Holy Spirit would give us the strength for this),*

¹¹ Citing the words of Jesus: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (Jn. 13, 35).

¹² Cfr. Mt. 25, 40.

¹³ Cfr. 1 Jn. 4, 7-21.

¹⁴ "So through the first commandment, the second can be fulfilled; and the second returns again to the first." For to love the Lord is to love one's neighbour, because "If a man loves me, he will keep my word" (Jn. 14, 23) — says the Lord, and again: "This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you" (Jn. 15, 12). Thus, he who loves his neighbour, fulfills the love of God, for God accepts this love as for Himself' (*WR*, 3).

¹⁵ Cfr. A. HOLMES, OSB, *A Life Pleasing to God: The Spirituality of the Rules of St. Basil*, (Cistercian Publications: Kalamazoo, Michigan, 2000), 54-65.

¹⁶ S. BATRUCH, *Models of Christian Life in the Works of St. Basil the Great*, (Lviv: Svichado, 2007), 96.

for what is written? ‘From this all will understand that you are my followers, when you have love for one another.’¹⁷

At the conclusion of this response, St Basil puts forth the example of the prophet Moses, when it comes to love of neighbour, and St Paul the apostle, who showed a complete desire to follow Christ and pay the price for the salvation of all.

All these thoughts are exemplified in *WR* 7, regarding community life.

1.4. The Fear of God¹⁸

Certain scholars feel that this answer is not really in its proper place and have difficulties understanding the connection between love of God and neighbour within the context of the ‘fear of God.’¹⁹ I believe that the key to understanding this answer —in the context of these seven *Wider Rules*— is the radical obedience of St Basil to God’s word. In this, he is convinced and desires to see this same obedience in those whom he is addressing. We must take into consideration *whom* he is addressing: he is not addressing ‘beginners,’ but rather those who *need greater commandments, in which are found the entire truth of Christ’s love, because you are no longer children in Christ, you no longer need milk...*

Fear might be used to quickly hasten someone’s actions even when this is not their primary motivation. We may deduce that the method of St. Basil’s teaching is to place in some of his listeners a ‘beginning of wisdom,’ which is a fruit of the fear of God.²⁰ He does not exclude that for older people this fear of God might be a positive thing to discourage ungratefulness towards God.

Without a doubt, St Basil means wisdom in a biblical sense and gives various passages from Scripture.²¹ As well, the overriding thought of his teaching is the listening to and accomplishing of God’s desires through the fulfillment of God’s commandments.

1.5. Recollection of Spirit and Thought²²

Recollection of spirit and thought has this distinct goal: a likeness to God by doing His will. *The heart of Basilian spirituality: a disposition and mindfulness of*

¹⁷ *WR*, 3.

¹⁸ *WR*, 4.

¹⁹ For example A. HOLMES, OSB, *A Life Pleasing to God: The Spirituality of the Rules of St. Basil*, (Cistercian Publications: Kalamazoo, Michigan, 2000), 96.

²⁰ Cfr. Prov. 1, 7.

²¹ For example, Mt. 7, 24-27; 25,1-13.

²² *WR*, 5.

*God.*²³ To accomplish any goal a person needs to be recollected and requires the appropriate means and strength. St. Basil understood this well, especially when trying to attain the goal of holiness. For those who earnestly wish to serve God and to do His will, St Basil proposes: remove yourself from worldly activities, get away from having random thoughts, free yourself from all attachments in life and keep a constant and pure recollection of God. For this, he shows us the one goal and rule for our lives: *fulfill God's commandments as God would desire of us.*

1.6 For Recollection We Need Solitude²⁴

What can the idea of ‘solitude’ add to the teachings of the founder of coenobitic monasticism? St Basil’s responds that the need for solitude does not go against, but rather enhances his earlier teachings about fulfilling God’s commandments, as well as prepares us for the responses about communal life.

In short, here are some citations and paraphrases from WR 6:

1.6.1. Things We Must Avoid:

1. A common life with people who do not fear God and do not take seriously the need to fulfill God’s commandments.
2. Living with sinners and identifying ourselves with those who are worse than us, not taking their faults seriously.
3. Living with too many worldly affairs that occupy the soul.
4. Habitually neglecting or forgetting God’s judgment.

1.6.2. Our Goal:

1. Attaining an ascetical and recollected soul.
2. Distancing from ourselves all that —by sight or sound— leads to sin.
3. Renouncing ourselves so as to follow Christ by taking up our cross.²⁵
4. Forgetting everything that was in the past and turning away from our own will and desires.
5. Being ready to die for Christ by mortifying our flesh and passions.
6. Bearing all hardships in the name of Christ and not having any attachment to this present life.
7. Removing all stains of sin through fervent prayer and ceaseless meditation on the will of God.
8. Constant remembrance of God.

²³ A. HOLMES, OSB, *A Life Pleasing to God: The Spirituality of the Rules of St. Basil*, (Cistercian Publications: Kalamazoo, Michigan, 2000), 107.

²⁴ WR, 6.

²⁵ Cfr. Lk. 14, 17.

1.7. Community: The Best Place to Fulfill God's Commandments

The main theme of number 7 of the *Wider Rules* is the coenobitical life, but the overriding thought is the fulfillment of God's commandments. One is so closely related to the other that one without the other cannot stand in the life of a Christian. This is a credit to the pedagogical and rhetorical style of our saintly father. He begins his reply by basing himself on the 'many reasons' why there should be a life in common. First of all, there is the physical necessity of mutual assistance,²⁶ which is the will of the Creator. He also gives various biblical reasons as to why there should be community life—such as the law of Christian love; ultimately, he shows that we can indeed live according to this divine law. In fact, the first Christian community gives an example of this.

1.7.1. Natural Reasons for the Commandment of Love of Neighbour

In the first part of number 7 of the *Wider Rules* —although he doesn't cite it— St Basil paraphrases the biblical pericope: *for as in one body there are many members and these members do not have the same function, so are we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*²⁷ No one is autonomous; we all need each other's aid. Based on the foundation of St Basil's teaching, we need one another, to save one another, as healthy members of the body save the wounded ones. We also need help from other members so that we make better use of our own strengths. On the other hand, in the solitary life, our gifts remain unused and our woundedness knows no succor. In community, the weaknesses of one are overcome by the strengths of another. The gifts of one are joined to those of another, forming one strong body. A person needs this and can only realize this in community life.

However, because of our fallen nature a person will seek that which benefits himself. Therefore, the Basilian community is not led by the law of fallen nature, but by God's commandments.

1.7.2. The Law of Christian Love

St Basil foresees in community life a better possibility of accomplishing the law of Christian love. In St Paul's writings, namely, *love does not seek its own*,²⁸ and, *I also seek to please everyone in everything, not seeking that which is beneficial to me, but for many so that they may be saved.*²⁹ St Basil puts forth a general norm regarding true Christian love. This love is unselfish, this is life in the spirit of self-giving for the good of all. Therefore, he gives a warning about

²⁶ WR, 7: "no one is self-sufficient" (literally, no one of us is sufficient unto himself).

²⁷ Rm. 12, 4-5.

²⁸ 1 Cor. 13, 5.

²⁹ 1 Cor. 10, 33.

people who are on their own: *solitary life often has only one goal—to meet your own needs, which clearly goes against the law of love.*³⁰

Instead of the eremitical life, Basil proposes certain biblical reasons for having a life in common, in which we can better live the law of Christian love.

1.7.2.1. Fraternal Correction

As a good anthropologist, St Basil takes into account the difficulty one might have regarding an examination of one's life and objectively valuing one's own particular gifts. The natural mechanism for self-protection and self-affirmation does not allow a person to readily see in themselves that which needs correction. Subjective reason blinds a person, and they do not see their own faults. St. Basil understood this well and therefore teaches that *when we are alone it is not easy to recognize our faults, since there is no one there to gently and lovingly correct us.*³¹

The person, who corrects his mistakes, St Basil refers to as ‘wise,’ notwithstanding that they have fallen.³² Therefore, to accept correction and to amend our faults is necessary, but only possible in community.

St Basil states that fraternal correction is an act of love: *the more someone truly loves, he heals imperfections by his knowledge.*³³ Therefore, to remain silent or to not do anything to correct the faults of our brother is a lack of true love towards him and to the community. He has in mind Christ's words regarding fraternal correction (text cited earlier).³⁴

1.7.2.2. The Community is able to Fully Carry out Christ's Teaching

St Basil has in mind various acts of mercy towards our neighbor—the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked and those in prison.³⁵ On one's own, one can only serve one other needy person at any given time or place, and has to ignore others in need, *especially when those works take a long time to accomplish.*³⁶ Our saintly father feels that, on one's own, *it is possible to overlook the most important general commandment that is absolutely necessary for salvation, in*

³⁰ WR, 7.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Cfr. Mt. 18, 15-18.

³⁵ Cfr. Mt. 25, 31-46.

³⁶ WR, 7.

*other words to not feed the hungry or clothe the naked.*³⁷ It is clear that community can accomplish much more than merely one person. By working together in community, we are better able to carry out all of Christ's requirements at the same time. It is not the service of an individual person, but rather of the one great body of the community.

1.7.2.3. Community Life is Laid Out According to God's Commandments³⁸

To create a community means to become one body, whose head is Christ. If the community becomes one body, then all the members become one body. Therefore, when it is Christ—the most important and commanding member—as head, then the life of this community is laid out according to God's commandments. I believe that this is the crux of the Basilian concept of community life. Christ is the head of many members, who are joined in the love and fellowship of the Holy Spirit, constantly attentive to the Word of God and labouring in a communion of gifts.

Continuing his response, St Basil mentions other dangers of solitary life: *firstly and most importantly that of satisfying oneself.*³⁹ This, in his opinion, happens when there is no fraternal correction and the person will see themselves are being perfect (as has been mentioned earlier).

St Basil sees in the solitary life a dangerous lack of fulfilling God's commandments and growth in the virtues: *besides in this life there is a lack of growth in the virtues. A person does not recognize any weakness, nor progress. There is really no chance of fulfilling the commandments.*⁴⁰ He bases this thought on the teaching of St Paul: *for it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.*⁴¹

Regarding growth in the virtues, St Basil highlights especially the virtue of humility as the basis of the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, who washed his disciples' feet. In the solitary life, *whose feet will we wash? Whom will we serve? When you live on your own, how can you be last?*⁴²

1.7.3. Commandment of Love of Neighbor as the Basis of the First Christian Community

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

At the conclusion of this response, St Basil shows community life to be *a spiritual battlefield, a good road to progress, an unceasing betterment of self and meditation on God's commandments.*⁴³ In mentioning the goal of this life —*the glory of God according to the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ*— he lays down a foundation upon which it is possible to live out this commandment of God. The first Christian community showed us this by example: many faithful, but with only one heart and one soul, for them everything was done in community.⁴⁴

Conclusion

The characteristics of Basilian monks and nuns that live according to the teachings of St Basil the Great. (*Characteristics of every Christian).

1. They love God above all else and follow his commandments.*
2. They love their neighbour as themselves, striving to love as Christ loved us.*
3. They are constantly aware that without love of neighbour, love of God is *not fulfilled*.*
4. In a common life with others, they try to maintain the identity of a disciple of Christ by fulfilling the laws of love towards God and neighbor.*
5. *They are wise through their efforts to keep the important commandments, in which are contained the entire truth of God's love.* They do this by virtue of the fear of God.*
6. They are recollected and strive to constantly remember God.*
7. They keep moments of solitude for prayer, turning away from all that — through sight or sound— would lead to sin.*
8. They keep away from all that —through sight or sound— would lead to sin, especially through the help of those means offered by the monastery, monastic clothing and the keeping of monastic rules.*
9. They accept fraternal correction in order to remove all vice from themselves. They do not equate themselves with those who are worse, nor do they justify themselves by the faults of others.*
10. They strive by working in the monastic community to fulfill all acts of mercy towards their neighbour.*
11. They live for the glory of God according to the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., citing *Acts* 2, 44 and 4, 32.

12. In monastic community, as in family and church life, they strive to realize the ideal of the first Christian community: one heart and one soul, having everything in common.*

THE MODEL MONK/NUN IN THE XXIST CENTURY THROUGH THE EYES OF ST. BASIL

Rev. Dr. Stefan Batruch

One of the fundamental directives of Vatican II, regarding the revival of monastic life, is the encouragement to return to the founders of the monastic life and to biblical and patristic sources.¹ Written sources from the early Christian period have an exceptional significance due to their historical proximity to the apostolic period; the doctrine preached by the Fathers is in living continuation with the Gospel events. The Church continually looks to the patristic corpus, inasmuch as She is convinced that —on account of it— She is better able to fulfill her mission. The works of the Fathers, especially St. Basil the Great, are a treasury of wisdom, which inspired whole generations of Christians to theological reflection and, after a certain period, became a treasury for the Universal Church.² The works of the ancient Christian writers are characterized by a special concern for fidelity to evangelical ideals. The study of St. Basil's works in our day can aid us in finding new ways to renew monasticism and to truly become a school of a fully-developed spiritual life.³

St. Basil ranks among the most illustrious Christian writers of the IVth century. His articulate style, broad intellectual horizons and sound knowledge of philosophy and classical literature make him worthy of interest.⁴ His works played an important role in the life of his contemporary Church. The decrees of the first Constantinopolitan Council in 381 witness to this in as much as it was based on Basil's theological doctrine. Basil's activity also had a pivotal influence on the establishment and development of monastic life – first in the East and over time in the West. Thus, it is not surprising that on the occasion of the 1600th anniversary of the death of Basil, Blessed Pope John Paul II published an Apostolic Letter.⁵

The extraordinary character of the Bishop of Caesarea becomes still more evident when we take into account the situation the Church found Herself in in the fourth century.⁶ After three centuries of bloody persecution, Christianity obtained

¹ *Unitatis redintegratio*, 17.

² *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, 5.

³ *Unitatis redintegratio*, 15.

⁴ An interesting and detailed study of St. Basil's character was given by St. Gregory Nazianzus in his 43rd sermon – “In Honor of Basil, Bishop of Caesarea Cappadocia.”

⁵ JOHN PAUL II, *VoxPatrum* 3 (1982), p. 247-272; S. GIET, “Saint Basile et le concile de Constantinople de 360,” *JThS* 6 (1955), pp. 94-99; И. МЕЙЕНДОРФ (J. MEYENDORF), *Введение в святоотеческое ю богословие*, Вильнюс – Москва, 1992, p. 143-147.

⁶ An excellent comment on this topic comes from one of the popes at the end of the 2nd and beginning of the 3rd centuries, who with unusual criticism approached the theological patrimony of the Eastern Fathers of the Church: “Among the Greek Fathers of the Church, Basil is called ‘Great;’ in Byzantine liturgical books; he is spoken of as “the light of piety” and “light of the Church.” He was indeed a light for the Church and is so today due to his unblemished life and wonderful teaching. The first and

many rights and privileges, along with its freedom. This fact was responsible for a great influx of people into the Church, who sadly did not have the requisite preparation. As a result, many of them kept Christian customs less strictly. The level of morality fell. In this critical time, Basil worked to ameliorate the situation. He did so by calling Christians to repentance and to live a exemplary evangelical lives.

His energies were directed toward presenting the faithful with the fundamental truths of the spiritual life in a new light and to assist them in recognizing the necessity of a radical change in their way of life towards a new model. A paradigm for the exemplary relationships between persons and a criteria for a true spiritual renewal was the first community in Jerusalem, filled with love, as mentioned by St. Paul in the Acts of the Apostles. According to the mind of the Bishop of Caesarea, the essence of an universal Christian movement, which was to encompass as many Christians as possible, was to be a return to the radicalism of the Gospel.⁷

As a priest and then as a bishop, he cared for all the faithful, but especially for the sick, travellers, the poor and the outcast. In his concern for them, he created in the suburb of Caesarea a large charitable center called the “Basiliad” –composed of a monastery, guesthouse, hospital, hospice for the poor and buildings for various trades. It was an attempt to “incarnate” the Basilian model of a Christian life.⁸

Aside from the great authority and influence that St. Basil had over his monks, one cannot consider him the founder of monasticism in the East, nor can the spread of monastic life into other regions of the East even be ascribed to him. The eremitical and coenobitic life had already spread through, not only Egypt, Palestine and Mesopotamia, but also Asia Minor.⁹

Then in what lies the contribution of this Bishop of Caesarea to monastic spirituality, if, at that time, there already flourished the eremitical life and there already existed an organized coenobitic community? Why did they acknowledge Basil as the lawgiver and patriarch of monasticism in the East? There are several reasons.

First of all, he avoided the mistakes which were made by numerous eremitic and monastic communities, who considered themselves separate from both the clergy and laity as a category of Christians. In his teaching, Basil underscored that all groups of Christians are equally obligated to fulfill the divine Commandments and all without exception are called to perfection. The difference, in the mind of this Church Father, lies only in the choice of means. This position of St. Basil helped to dispel the

greatest lesson which is taught by the saints is the example of their life” (JOHN PAUL II, “On the Occasion of the 1600 Anniversary of the Death of St. Basil (Apostolic Letter),” *Vox Patrum* 3 (1982), p. 248).

⁷ Ibid, pp. 251-252.

⁸ J. NAUMOWICZ, “Instytucje charytatywne sw. Bazylego ‘Bazyliada,’” *VoxPatrum* 30-31 (1996), p. 125-139; F. BRACHA, Sw. Bazyli tworca zakladow dobroczyynykh// "Caritas" 3 (1947), nr. 16, p. 5-9; A. JANECKO, *Bazyli Wielki z Czarei Kapadockiej i jego dzialalnosc w dziedzinie szpitalnictwa i opieki spolecznej*, “Zdrowie Publiczne” 93 (1982), p. 595-600.

⁹ D. AMAND, *L'ascese monastique de saint Basile*. Essai historique (Maredsous: 1948).

negative reaction of the majority of the hierarchy to the monastic movement and demonstrated the possibility of integrating it into church structures.

Secondly, Basil placed a doctrinal foundation for the monastic life of both a biblical and philosophical nature. From the Hellenistic tradition, he took all that was precious and compatible with Christ's and the Church's teachings.¹⁰ Basil grounded the substance of Christian perfection in the Gospel, borrowing many concepts from Greek philosophers (Demosthenes, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle), especially from Neo-Platonism, imbued with a Christian spirit (Origen).¹¹ On this point, some accuse him of being guided by the ethical directives of Stoicism, which placed a mark of equality between venial and mortal sin. Because of this, some considered him to be an adherent of a certain ethical rigor.

Thirdly, he gave to the monastic life, which already existed in the Eastern part of Asia Minor, a new character.¹² In particular, he proposed the integration of the contemplative life with apostolic activity, since, in substance, Basil drew from the teachings of both the Old and New Testaments, which are united in the two main Commandments: love of God and love of neighbor.¹³ Love of God is reflected in the individual's memory, emotions and will, and opens us up to the Invisible, yet truly present God, and this, as a result, aids our release from the fetters of the passions and separates us from our past life, granting us the ability to enter into a new reality. The commandment of love of neighbour is best learned and practiced within a community, which effectively helps us in the battle against the sins of egoism and pride. It also helps in the cultivation of virtue.

Fourthly, he achieved a great authority among the monks, who were his contemporaries, on account of his fundamental knowledge, especially of Sacred Scripture, and his ability to give prudent counsel.¹⁴ On account of all these personal traits, the monk-ascetics throughout Pontus and Cappadocia, in time of need, turned to him for advice and spiritual guidance.

The general principles that make up the fundamental model of the Christian life, St. Basil enumerated in his works as 'rules.' It needs to be noted, that they do not have a binding legal character, nor do they provide a normative system of monastic communal life. Their central thought is the conviction that monastic-Christian perfection is a life based on the evangelical counsels. Therefore, the central rule of

¹⁰ Th. PICHLER, *Das Fasten Basileios dem Grossen und antiken Heidentum*, Innsbruck 1955. T. SPIDLICK, I. GARGANO, *La spiritualità dei Padri greci e orientali*, Roma, 1983, p. 7-18.

¹¹ Sw. Bazylego W. homilia 15, Mowa do mlodziencow, jak mogą odniesc pozytek z czytania ksiazek poganskich, T. Sinko, pp. 213-230.

¹² J. MISIUREK, *Zarys historii duchowosci chrzescijanskiej* (Lublin: 1992), pp. 12-14; B. ALTANER, A. STUDER, *Patrologia* (Warszawa: 1990), p. 395; J. GORNY, "Wplyw sw. Bazylego na rozwoj zycia monastycznego," *VoxP* 3 (1982), p. 289-312; T. SPIDLICK, *Bizantino, monachesimo*, DIP 1973, p. 1466-1474.

¹³ Gregory of Nazianzus speaks about this in his sermon in honor of Basil on the first anniversary of his death. "The solitary life and the life among people usually were in conflict and it was difficult to reconcile them... Basil wonderfully united them...." Sw. Grzegorz z Nazjanu, Mowa 43, 62, p. 511.

¹⁴ P. SCAZZOSO, "San Basilio e la Sacra Scrittura," *Aev* 47 (1973), p. 210-224.

life is Sacred Scripture, which has to be known well and put it into practice. St. Basil's Rules were composed in a question-answer format. Reading his Rules, we notice that the thoughts of the author are both wise and prudent.

Old Answers for Current Issues

There are many questions that touch the substance of monasticism: What kind of person should become a monk/nun? What is the goal of the monastic life? What is the spiritual life and what are its stages? These questions are put forth by contemporary religious of various communities, looking for the way that leads to an authentic and profound spiritual life.

The question of monastic identity, which has been put forth in various historical periods, remains actual. Therefore, it is *apropos* to seek answers in the works of St. Basil the Great. The example of the spiritual life, which Basil proposed to his monks, is important for us today, in an age of spiritual crisis, when doubts are raised about the authenticity of the monastic vocation and a consumerist life bereft of moral principles is the model proposed.

A closer analysis allows us to see that St. Basil's Rule creates not only a complete conception of Basilian life, but it primarily creates an evangelical model of the monastic and Christian life that offers a solution to the present crisis within the Church, manifested by a decline in moral discipline. Basil does not create a new spirituality, but rather the originality and uniqueness of his teaching is –in an equally trying time for the Church– his outlined goal for the monastic and Christian life directly based upon Sacred Scripture. He drew upon the treasure of the inspired texts and the light of wisdom, which helped him to accept anew the main aspects of the spiritual life and reformulate them into fundamental practical directives. From our research, it appears that Basil discovered the deeper meaning of the Word of God in three fields: the literal — he sought the literal sense of Sacred Scripture; the moral — he uncovered the moral sense, which flows from the content of the inspired books; the allegorical, which is the typological interpretation of the Bible. All three of these senses were used to most accurately grasp the meaning of revealed truth and apply it to the circumstances and problems of his contemporaries.

Today, in an age of relativism, it is necessary to have objective criteria to recognise theological truths, which –without a doubt– is Divine Revelation. A fundamentalist approach, which is characterised by its literal character, literally reads independent fragments of Sacred Scripture often falling into an one-sided interpretation of its contents. Instead, Basil does not approach biblical texts randomly, but places separate fragments together. In this way, he places the problem in a wider context. In this manner, he resolves questions like sin, conversion, the life of virtue and knowing God, etc., from the content of many biblical texts. For him, the Bible is the objective source for his understanding of the spiritual life.

Constructing his theological reflections upon an exegesis of biblical texts, Basil attempts to actualize them in relation to concrete life situations.¹⁵ He uses OT

¹⁵ T. SPIDLICK, I. GARGANO, *La spiritualità dei Padri greci e orientali*, p. 159.

and NT texts alike, which complete one another and witness to the permanent content contained in the revealed texts.

The Monastic Life as Understood by St. Basil

Basil was a person of great intellectual and spiritual culture. His advice was profound, full of prudence and peace, without eccentricity. Basil was a just and judicious person towards the members of his monastic community, even to those who did not keep to the general rules. Regarding food and dress, for example, he considered the needs of each, but especially the sick, the weak, hard laborers and travellers. Basil's monasteries were not created as communities with a large number of monks, like those of Pachomius. His community was guided by one superior. The rules of the ascetical life were not as strict as for other cenobites. They kept them less formally and with more regard to human dignity. Basil used the principles of psychology, directing more effort to convincing and motivating. Communal life had deeper roots than those of Pachomius.

Basil not only used the Jerusalem community as an example, but also pointed to the goodness and generosity of God's love, which needs to be emulated. In this unique approach to the human person, one can see his criteria for accepting candidates, who expressed a desire to enter into the monastery, as is noted in the tenth rule.¹⁶ Pachomius told certain candidates to wait by the monastery gate and in various ways belittled them. Basil recommended taking into account the candidate's worth, listening to his story and, in the case of positive progress, the candidate began a trial period. One has to underline that Basil's counsel and directives are addressed to all faithful and not simply to monks. Everyone –no matter how he lives or what position he holds or why he accepted baptism– is obligated to desire perfection and nearness to God. The monks must keep to certain special rules, like the cloister, inasmuch as they have decided to embody the evangelical principles such as virginity, which others are not obliged to preserve. One has to admit that the Basilian community has more of an open character. Usually, it has a cloister to attain its end and achieve its goal, but its members still meet with people, take part in apostolic and charitable acts, run hospices for the poor and orphanages, and catechize. They also aid bishops. They not only speak about love of neighbor, they manifest it.

Monastic Life as Spiritual Development

The Basilian concept of the monastic life, as based upon Sacred Scripture, is: a person, free from sin, spiritually mature, integrated, virtuous, prayerful, deified and united to God. The road to such a life passes through certain stages of the spiritual development.

¹⁶ LR 10: "We should not lose hope at once, because everything can be corrected by diligence and the fear of the Lord conquers all spiritual weaknesses. These types of individuals need to be protected during the time of their trial. If we see in them some progress and stability we can admit them among us. If not, we need to send them on, so that they will not bring harm to the community."

Conversion

Basil points out that the monk who is just beginning should have experienced some sort of conversion in his life. This aspect has a prominent place in his works. The term “conversion,” as employed by him, means a positive internal experience that encompasses a mode of thinking and acting. Therefore, conversion touches the intellectual sphere, that is the mind’s orientation, as well as the volitional aspect of an individual. This understanding embraces the entire person. In Basil's mind, conversion is a process of a total internal transfiguration, that is a transformation from a condition of sin to dwelling in God's presence. As a basis for this change is the moment of awareness of one's sin and a strong desire to be freed from this condition as from the greatest of evils. Renunciation of sin, in accordance with the teaching of Basil the Great, is a change which endures and is renewed throughout our entire lifetime. According to his doctrine, sickness of the soul weakens the ability to do good and obscures the vision of God's beauty as revealed in creation.

Self-knowledge

Self-knowledge, which lies at the heart of spiritual change, plays an important role in a sincere and complete conversion, inasmuch as it helps one see the depth of cleansing and healing, and it leads to an understanding of the reasons for sin; then, it becomes easier to extricate oneself from this state. At this stage, the light of God's grace helps the person. It enables an individual to conquer difficulties. A deep self-understanding in light of the Word gives birth to the conviction that sin is a destructive reality and a ruinous force. Thus, it is necessary to decisively cast sin aside, because it is an evil that ruins internal harmony, mutual relationships and also makes it difficult to approach God. A complete separation from everything that has any connection with sin is an obvious necessity in order to begin a path towards true conversion. A full release does not take place easily and is connected to a spiritual battle and external efforts. The essential elements of this struggle are a denial of the world together with all its traps, a release from the entrapment of material goods and persons. Basil understands the spiritual battle as a constant ascetical effort so that one can separate oneself from everything that inhibits union with God.

The prime source upon which founds the teaching of Basil the Great and his model of the spiritual life was, as mentioned above, Sacred Scripture. An analysis of his works shows that Basil did not say much in his own name, but all his efforts were geared to remain faithful to the rules revealed in Sacred Scripture and also the tradition and teachings of early Christian writers. With great knowledge he showed the depth and profound wisdom of the biblical texts. On account of this, his rules do not have a dry juridical character, but are full of the fresh breath of the inspired biblical text. According to his abilities Basil encouraged others to derive their external behavior from the Word of God. According to him, only by assiduously keeping the commandments of the Gospel is one able to be united with God.

The desire for perfection shows that in the monk there is a longing for a life in God's grace. There is the witness of a consciousness change of life and the beginnings of a new life. The monk discovers the truth about God. The monk opens

himself up to the truth about God and His endless love, which is the source of life. The spiritual life is characterized by a search for perfection.

A Life of Virtue

The next stage in Basilian spirituality is the desire to live a life of virtue. Faith, hope and love – are reflections of God’s characteristics and they shine forth in the monk’s life due to the action of God’s grace. These virtues are not some new sign, but –in accordance with Basil’s teaching– are an awakening of an innate strength, which was hampered in the person by temptation. God created us with the ability to live in virtue according to His commandments. The restoration of this ability to live a virtuous life is the result of conversion. Love of God and neighbour are the most important demands and signs of the spiritual life. One who is holy is entirely dedicated to God. The virtues are the criteria for a deep renewal. A proper place for the practice of the virtue of charity is the monastic community, where one can form positive relationships that are based on mutual respect, love and goodness.

To the moral virtues which characterize the monastic life are: humility, obedience, prudence, justice, fortitude, patience, temperance, purity and industriousness.

Basil looked after the life of many monks and noticed many discrepancies in their lives. Therefore, in his work, he especially highlights the need to look at the outward signs of an interior divine grace; for these signs manifest one’s interior maturity.¹⁷ The virtuous life witnesses to a true conversion and convinces others more than words, because it becomes a visible sign of the presence of the invisible God.

A Participation in the Sacred Mysteries

Incessantly putting forth effort, particular virtues become stable elements or, because of neglect, they disappear. It is not that the development of virtue is ever completed, since it is a dynamic act that flourishes continually. The source of strength that aids us to live virtuously and strive towards union with God is prayer and the Holy Mysteries. Basil sees prayer and participation in the Mysteries as acts, by which the power of the Holy Spirit is made manifest. They keep one free from sin and give one strength to keep the commandments. Prayer and the Holy Mysteries, especially the Eucharist, are instruments that help to renew the ties with God and lead towards divinization. Yet prayer, just as the Mysteries, are meant to be united to daily life, aiding in all things, including growth of virtue. Just as food is necessary for the body, through which it is able to live and act, so does our spirit need spiritual food. Through this spiritual food, the soul can gain strength to overcome difficulties and struggle with temptations. Prayer is also a tool, which restores the internal harmony and feeling of solidarity with the Creator that was ruined through sin. Monks, who were

¹⁷ SR 287: “So you will be able to lead the kind of life which the Lord expects of you, a life acceptable to him in all its aspects; showing the results in all good actions you do and increasing your knowledge of God” (*Colossians 1:10*).

changed because of their conversion, become enthusiastic, fervent and vibrant in prayer, which fills their entire life.

Union with God

An analysis of Basil's works allows us to trace the Basilian conception of the spiritual life, whose goal is union with God. At the heart of this unification is centering prayer — a state of internal silence and peace. Basil thinks that one can attain this only having separated oneself from outward din and worry, and by freeing oneself from the cares that spring from material wealth. In brief, all ties must be rent asunder that bind us to any person or thing that would distract our minds. Only a person, free from worry and restlessness, is ready for this type of union. By keeping oneself at an appropriate distance from the world, one is freed from an unrestrained and irresponsible utilization of one's gifts. Internal freedom allows one to maintain the appropriate hierarchy of values and gives the ability to be totally dependent upon God. This leads to a renewal of communion and complete unity with Him, which is the result of conversion, prayer and the spiritual life. The desire for fellowship with God is intimately connected with the abandonment of everything that causes dissonance between this deep interior longing and our exterior affections.

The response to God's boundless love is to love Him. These two loves are intertwined, creating a unity of divine and human persons. In this manner, the individual, acknowledging God's love, appropriates for himself the capability of understanding the root of his existence – that is, to see with one's eyes the source of all beauty.

In connection with the realization of the monastic vocation to live in the constant nearness and presence of God, begins a process of understanding God's goodness and an awareness of His love. From that point onward, there develops an ever more fervent longing for goodness and love, whose external manifestations are the reflection of an interior fullness of God's love. Full union with God leads to a complete divinization.

Therefore, the goal of the monastic life is blessedness, which takes place through union with God. It, unfortunately, remains incomplete, partial, fragmented inasmuch as God, in accordance with His essence is ineffable and transcendental. Nevertheless, in spite of the limitations of understanding, this is the greatest grace one can receive in this life. Union with God does not lead to alienation, but a measure of its veracity is our deeds towards our neighbour and a life in accordance with the commandments. A constant awareness of God founds the monastic life. This is a type of contemplation in action. In his teachings, Basil unites these two issues; he does not give preeminence to one, nor stresses the other. Contemplation does not contradict action, but it is a state that allows us to see God in created things. Contemplation and action create a whole and are a reflection of the glory of the Creator. Any kind of external action that is a reflection of love flows from a mindfulness of God. A realization of the presence of God does not negate the reality of the earthly life, but creatively helps to transform this reality in accordance with the commandments. The person who experiences divinization uncovers in himself the capability of dwelling with God regardless of place and time.

Let's return to the question of the relevance of Basil the Great's teaching. After immersing ourselves in his thought, we find that throughout there are many universal and timeless ideas. His works reflect his great life experience and wisdom, which is manifest when he expresses concrete directives that relate to the principles of growth in the spiritual life. His thoughts are full of life's realism and are devoid of any peripheral or extraneous concepts. In analyzing any question, he takes into account its various aspects and treats it in its entirety. The main characteristic of his teaching is its biblical nature.

Sacred Scripture is the foundation of St. Basil's theological reflections. It is also the criteria for understanding truth revealed in his books. Presenting various passages of Sacred Scripture, Basil demonstrates the unity of thought expressed therein. His conclusions flow from a deep and comprehensive exegesis of the Bible. He does not approach biblical texts randomly or as separate fragments. In this way, he delineates the wider context of the question that he intends to address.

Views presented in the works of Basil can be classified as biblical theology. His reflections, without a doubt, remain relevant, although he worked and lived in a different historic-political-ecclesiastical context. They can aid those who seek perfection in the spiritual life and those who are called to the monastic life.

Contemplation and Action

Many Christians view contemplation and action as diametrically opposed principles. Thus, the question is: which of these approaches is more appropriate, more correct and closer to the Gospel? Many think that in the spirituality of the Western Church there is a characteristic accent on action, that is on apostolic work in the world. The Eastern Church instead gives deference to contemplation. In the midst of these churches, one can meet Christians, who fanatically defend one of the abovementioned positions, as the only one that is correct and worthy of propagating.

Contemplation is sometimes understood as a complete alienation from worldly issues which are an obstacle on the road towards union with God. At other times, this leads to the development of a negative view of the world – as something evil. This world view is characterized by a critical acceptance of all material things and a fear of worldly entanglements.

An adherent of contemplation attempts to remain unmoved by everything that could shake his interior quietude. He becomes cautious, suspicious and careful, avoiding all forms of social activity. The position associated with action and apostolic activity is opposed to that position which was just presented. The Christian should be “a person of action,” desiring to labour in various fields. He unites himself to the actions of others and initiates various apostolic initiatives. His fullness is absorbed into the external world. The need to change something or to better it becomes stronger and stronger. Above all else, he values that which is accomplished in the external forum, such as love of others. Both of these positions point to the tendencies that one can see in the Christian communities of various churches. The tension arising from these two tendencies leads to polemics and confrontation.

Basil in his works unites these two positions, not stressing or ignoring either of them. Contemplation is not in opposition to action, but simply a state that allows us to see God in created things.¹⁸ According to Basil, contemplation and action create a unified whole, reflecting the glory of the Creator. Any type of external action, which is a display of love, should be filled with an awareness and recollection of God.¹⁹ An awareness of God's presence does not separate the person from the concrete reality of earthly life. It helps to creatively transform the reality in accordance with God's commandments. Apostolic activity – is an external manifestation of the internal union with God. Love, which is given flesh in deeds, manifests the limitless love of God for man.

Created things *per se* do not separate a person from God. They reveal His beauty, greatness and wisdom. The inability to see the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, the presence of Whom is manifested through His actions, is a result of sin, which causes blindness. Basil also notes that “if this life of a sinner is not destroyed, then his sin remains not only in himself, but it touches others who did not care for him.” As a result of being united with God, which is the result of being cleansed from sin, the person can look anew at his present reality. This helps him and gives him strength to express his love. In this way, we create harmony between a life in God's presence and participation in the life of society.

According to the Bishop of Caesarea, if the apostolic measure of the monastic life is love, then it behooves us to view love as an indicator of our authenticity and conversion. Contemplation by itself, separated from action – is deprived of sense, just as authenticity that is not born of a spiritual life does not produce good fruits. Basil unites these two approaches and does so based on Sacred Scripture. Examples of which he drew from the Bible are not extracted out of context, but flow from a profound exegesis.

In Basil's works, the connection between man and God is closely intertwined with interpersonal relationships. Contemplation, torn from action, or action, bereft of the mindfulness of God's presence, are both extreme positions. Basil unites these two aspects. At the same time, in his works, he prudently writes about the rules of the spiritual life. Any kind of ascetical-spiritual practices are incomplete in themselves and only serve the process of sanctification. Therefore, we must test and see if they are tools that indeed help us achieve union with God.

In this context, the model of the spiritual life expressed in the works of St. Basil, who unites contemplation of God with apostolic activity, can protect us from falling into one-sided, extreme positions. An awareness of the meaning of spiritual practices and the goal that they serve allows us not to take them too lightly, nor to give them undue weight.

¹⁸ *LR* 49: “They know how to select a place and time and a manner of asking and learning about the substance (core). They know how to argue and without emotions to correct, to listen wisely and can succinctly for the sake of communal good decide complicated issues.”

¹⁹ *LR* 5, 3: “Diligently and conscientiously accomplishing the issue according to the will of God and always remembering the Lord, we can be united with him.” *Letter 22*, 1: “The Christian should not be distracted nor allow anything to separate him from the awareness of God and his willful judgments.”

Prudence — The Measure of the Spiritual Life

In various periods, monasteries have thought about how to prepare their monks to achieve a mature faith. In our time, this question has become ever more important. First of all, it refers to the institutions which directly deal with this question, such as the monastic novitiate. As regards this matter, we can notice some stagnation.

The previous formation models do not give us the desired results. The proof of this is the lack of vocations, crises of belief in consecrated persons and also the abandonment of monastic ideals. This situation impels us to find ways of resolving the issue. There is a shortage of well-prepared formators and spiritual leaders. There is a quest for the most appropriate model that would help us in the attainment of perfection.

From one aspect there exist communities that keep tradition, ascetical and pious practices, which are for them criteria of spiritual maturity. An inordinate attraction to pious practices without counting their effect on daily life sometimes takes on extreme forms. Spiritual exercises can then become ends in themselves or forms of gaining God's favor. Instruments which are supposed to help us attain sanctification take on a primary meaning by transposing to a secondary plan the substance of the monastic vocation – charity. There are individuals who give precedence to a liberal approach to the spiritual life. Characteristic of such a method of thinking is a relativism regarding all pious practices and thus every model of spiritual development appears relative and unconvincing.

Basil proposes to keep to the *golden middle*. He warns against extreme approaches to the spiritual life. An inordinate emphasis on an aspect of human life can produce an anomaly and miss the goal, which is sanctification. For the formulation of an exemplary spiritual life, it is imperative to avoid extremes. All spiritual exercises must be subservient to the higher goal, that is, they must help in restoring unity between God and man, and the ability to live in love.

The Bishop of Cappadocia underlines the fact that sin weakens the will and the ability of self-control, on account of which the individual submits himself to inordinate desires. A return to an internal balance is made possible by temperance. The needs of the soul, the spirit and body are all important.²⁰ Therefore, an inordinate spiritualism is as dangerous as an extreme attachment to bodily needs.

Basil places emphasis upon a prudent temperance and proper proportions.²¹ Individual practices are useful inasmuch as they attempt to cleanse us of sin and develop the virtues necessary to attain union with God.

²⁰ *LR* 55, 3: “These are they who drown in excess and trespass intelligent boundaries...”

²¹ *LR* 19, 1: “As much as our bodies use energy always needing to be filled (therefore it is natural to feel hungry), an intelligent rule makes allowances for the maintenance of life and compensating for loss, so that one can take care of needs using various food stuffs” (*BASIL THE GREAT, Homily*, 58).

Following St. Basil's directives, a realism is maintained. There is a wisdom in his approach to the formulation of a model for Christian life. His thoughts about the rules for a spiritual life can help many contemporary monks and nuns discover an appropriate hierarchy of values that are in accord with the spirit of the gospel.²²

For an exemplary monastic existence we need a proper unity between the physical and spiritual. From there, according to Basil, development must encompass all spheres of life, while maintaining appropriate proportions. Any excessive attention to secondary elements, which are simply means, and also a disregard or neglect of one of these elements, which make up the integral unity of the individual, will not bring the desired result. A holistic approach helps us to avoid excess during the use of various means, which are necessary for the attainment of perfection. He allows us to realize the goal of the monastic life, which is the sanctification of the individual.

It is worth noting, that the works of St. Basil appeared at a time when the Church in Cappadocia was experiencing difficulties associated with its internal division. Therefore, his teaching is permeated with encouragement and a call to an authentic spiritual life whose fruit is charity. Unity with others can be attained only through a personal union with God. Sin destroys harmony, deforms the vision and understanding of God and creates a barrier within the monastic community. The road to uniting the monastic community is through individual conversion – that is, through the cleansing from sin and an openness to the action of God's love.

²² *Homily*: “Suggestions to the youth about the benefit of reading mundane literature,” 2: “Therefore, everything that I now say can be of some assistance to the attainment of a true life which we must love and strive to attain with all our strength. And everything that does not lead us to this goal must be avoided as unnecessary” (BASIL THE GREAT, *Homily*, 257).

NEW LIFE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Rev. Dr. Renzo Lavatori, SJ

The Holy Spirit is the Mystery of Mysteries because He is the most concealed and the most mysterious of the three divine Persons.

Apropos of the Son of God, St. John affirms, “*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched.*” Jesus of Nazareth is close to us because he is fully man, equal to us and like us in all things but sin. He is born, he grows, speaks, works miracles, suffers, endures pain, is unjustly condemned, dies and resurfaces.

In the Son, the Word Incarnate, we are able to contemplate the stupendous features of the Father whom no one has ever seen. The Father is inaccessible because he is the principle of the vertiginous heights of the divine Being. Only the only begotten Son of God who abides in the Father’s bosom reveals him to us by becoming man. Therefore in the Word Incarnate, the only begotten one, we are able to behold the sweetest figure of the Father.

But how are we able to behold the Holy Spirit? We know that Scripture, Tradition, the early-church Fathers and the Magisterium have employed symbols to describe him, but these are far from describing his personality, his identity, which is fire, water, wind, breath, a dove and a kiss. Indeed, the word ‘Spirit’ itself- in Hebrew *ruah* - is conceptually impalpable. Jesus accentuates this addressing the winds movement. We can feel the wind, but we cannot tell from where it comes and where it goes. Such is the Holy Spirit. It is quite difficult to describe him. This truth is further illustrated in the writings of the church Fathers, in particular in those of St. Basil whose masterpiece, *De Spiritu Sancto*, I had the privilege of studying. In this work Basil affirms that one does not so much see the Holy Spirit as feel and perceive him, just as one feels the and perceives the wind. From this arises the question of how do we know and perceive what the Holy Spirit does, that is, what is his function, or his particular mission to each Christian?

1 - Familiarity with God in conformity to Christ

Our consideration specifically regards the work the Holy Spirit accomplishes in the life of the Christian. Scriptures, Tradition, the Magisterium and the liturgy testify to his work. The Holy Spirit impresses in man the image of Jesus, that is, he makes of man a son of God, similar to the only begotten Son. Within all Christians that partake of the same divine sonship as the only begotten One, the Holy Spirit impresses his seal of splendidous transformation, which reproduces in us the Son. This work begins in the Sacrament of Baptism, which is the first great effusion of the Holy Spirit that we received. In Baptism the Holy Spirit conforms us to Christ, making us like the Son of God. This is an extraordinary work. Nevertheless, at the moment the Spirit impresses in us the image of Jesus, whereby we become another Christ, he respects our diversities. Here one can admire the Holy Spirit's masterpiece of accomplishing respectively in each and every one of us his work.

I here wish to consider the teaching of *Lumen gentium* concerning the call of all the baptized to holiness. Holiness does not consist simply in the imitation of the lives of the saints of the past, or of those with whom we live - as at times we may find ourselves living in the presence of saints - but in reproducing in ourselves the very features of Christ. The Spirit produces this holiness by transfiguring us into Jesus in the capacity of our character, temperament and sensibility. Every saint, one may say, represents one shaft of light of the Word Incarnate.

Hence the work the Holy Spirit accomplishes is to make of us sons. Such is the case in baptism where the Father says to us, as Scripture relates, "You are my Son, this day I have begotten you." We also respond with the entire Christian community: "*Abba, I am here to bear witness to you as my most loving Father and Lord. Abba, into your hands I commend my Spirit. Abba, be it done unto me according to your Will.*" For in baptism a marvelous dialogue begins between us who are made sons in the Spirit, and our heavenly Father. From the moment of our baptism there is born this 'familiarity' with God that we often forget, but that nevertheless constitutes the new life in the Spirit. And the new life in the Spirit constitutes the daily actualization of the life of sonship in God.

Such actualization is not easy because we unfortunately still carry within us the old seal of slavery that makes one fear his master, remain far from him, and solely out of constraint, obligation and duty, revere and obey him. Every commandment is endured as a burden precisely because we are a slave and not a son. A son that has been touched by his Father's paternal heart, that has lived the love of the Father and that feels fully reborn by the Father no longer nurtures fear, but abandons himself with serene trust "*as a child held in its mother's arms.*" Through serene trust he feels all the tender heartbeats of the Father's love that continuously extends pardon, mercy and pours forth love. Certainly at times as a good teacher, God recalls us to obedience, invites us to unconditional service and even puts us to the test in a sorrowful and exacting manner. But all this is intended by God for the entire and total good of his beloved and predilect children. He knows our weakness and sins, yet he intends to purify us and make us grow within his own purity of love and holiness, provided his children implore his pardon and trust in his mercy.

2 - The dialogue between the Father and the Son within the effusion of love

The presence of the Spirit, received in baptism and reconfirmed in the sacrament of confirmation, comprises a fundamental two-fold movement: one movement is toward God and the other is toward neighbour. The new attitude of the Christian toward God is that of feeling and living the life of a son, reproducing within himself, by virtue of the Holy Spirit, the sentiments that reside within the hearts of the Father and the Son. Within us the Holy Spirit resonates, enlivens—or otherwise put—places us within the eternal dialogue of love between the Father and the Son who stand in a rapport of mutual affection.

The Holy Spirit infuses within us the Spirit of the Father that impels us to love Jesus, the Son; he impels us to know the Son, to fully grasp him in the Gospel - his most beautiful truth, and to receive within us his work of redemption. The Christian that lives the new life in the Spirit is essentially one that is in love with Jesus, who

gives first place in his soul and in his actions to Jesus. As the Father loves the Son and his thoughts are entirely directed toward him so that the Son is pleased, likewise the Christian that is imbued with the Holy Spirit turns his gaze, heart and attention entirely toward Jesus who becomes the centre of his thoughts, his interests, his prayers, his studies and his meditation in listening to the Word of life Jesus proclaims in the Gospel.

Within the Christian the Spirit also arouses sentiments of the Son toward the Father. Such sentiments consist of abandonment to the Father, docility, obedience, sacrifice and submission. Jesus reveals, "*My food is to do the will of my heavenly Father,*" nothing more. His nutrition and the purpose of his existence is to "*do the Will of the Father.*" Jesus accomplishes only and solely that which his Father tells him to do. He does nothing on his own initiative because as the Son, he abandons himself to the Father and knows that the Father upholds, embraces, sustains and guides him.

Now the Holy Spirit reproduces in us these same filial sentiments toward God our Father. He arouses in us submission to his Will, serene trust, docility, abandonment and an immense willingness to serve, even to the point of sacrificing ourselves like Jesus. The Holy Spirit therefore pours forth in us this marvelous harmony of sentiments, and he does it in such a way that he attracts our heart toward the Son as the Father does. He contemporaneously attracts the hearts of us, his sons, toward the Father to live this experience of love and effusion between the Son and the Father, and that constitutes the same love that flows between the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit.

3 - Fraternal communion in light of the Trinitarian mystery

The Holy Spirit opens the heart of Christians to their neighbour. But in what does this rapport consist? It consists in the rediscovery and living of true love in the Spirit, which begins in the day of our Baptism and that we must assimilate. It is a rapport that reproduces the love that is actualized from within the Trinity: a love that proceeds from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. It is a love that does not seek itself, but on the contrary, is eager to make the other emerge, whereby the other may shine in all of its reality. It is a love that conceals and loses itself in the other.

Indeed, the entire story of salvation is born from the Father, from his heart. God desires that all mankind be saved. From eternity He ardently desires that man become his son. To accomplish this desire He sends his only begotten Son while remaining invisibly concealed behind him. It is the Son that shows himself. It is the Son who reveals himself, who appears in all of his splendor and in all his glory, which fills his humanity. The Father therefore remains concealed behind the Son. The Son, for his turn, in the supreme moment of sacrificing and consummating himself on the cross, glorifies his Father and declares before the eyes of the world the infinite love of the Father. The Father and the Son mutually compete in such a way that out of love, one Person desires and does everything that the other Person may emerge in his stead.

Similarly the Holy Spirit has the sole purpose of operating in such a way that the Son and the Father are glorified, loved and recognized. He conceals and loses

himself behind them. The Son, in his turn, after having resurrected and ascended into Heaven, no longer shows himself to the world as the physically visible one, but sends the Spirit that effuses himself on the Apostles in tongues of fire. It is the Spirit that manifests the Son.

Forgetting oneself, the one disappearing before the other, the revealing of the one to the other is the conduct of the love of the three divine Persons. In the gift of the Spirit that reveals and transmits this modality of being, one is able comprehend and live an authentic communion in love that consists in the total gift of self in order to receive in oneself the other, thus becoming with the Spirit one sole Spirit.

Such a relationship to one's neighbor assumes a two-fold movement. The first movement is that of exiting from one's own subjectivity to give oneself to the other. This is the active dimension of self-offering. The second is reentering within oneself to receive the one who gives himself. This is the passive dimension of acceptance. The two directions co-exist in the Christian that is filled with the gift of the Holy Spirit in such a way that he is both receiving and giving (cf. 1 Cor. 12:25, Gal. 5:13; 6:2). There cannot be one without the other in the actualization of a true fraternal communion.

Giving oneself requires that at the moment in which the person forgets himself in order to give himself to the other, he must also know how to receive the other and place him in his own stead. If one is inclined only to give without the willingness to receive, his self-offering is not a communication with the other, but a simple self-affirmation. Conversely, if one is eager to only receive and lacks the generosity to give himself, he remains closed in egotism and is of himself practically incapable of receiving the other.

By this means, the interpersonal rapport assumes a highly unitive value. It profoundly conjoins the individual subjects in one sole spirit of understanding and of mutual receptivity (Rm 12:10.16;15:7). Neither subject feels isolated, misunderstood, ostracized or alone capable of giving. Each and all are placed in the condition of sharing the dimensions that consist of the true self-offering: the active dimension of giving and the passive dimension of receiving, of loving and being loved.

In such a context, the Christian acquires a connatural sensibility that renders him aware of the other's interior disposition, assets and defects, of his needs and aspirations. He possesses such awareness not to judge the other, but to commiserate with him. He gives of himself in proportion to the other's being and not his own, adapts himself to the other's needs without imposing his own, and shares in the other's reality without insisting on his own. Above all, he looks for the other's betterment, the free and total expansion and the development of his person, and not for his own satisfaction.

In this manner one who sets out to receive another must accept that person as he is, respecting his personality, at times filled with imperfections and limitations. Her must not leave that person in his miserable state, but with the awareness that the other, feeling received and loved, may flourish in his own capacity and be renewed in the correct understanding of himself, free to act and to express himself (cf. 1 Ts. 5:11; Rm. 15:14). The giver, in turn, feels loved and pardoned by God, so as to lovingly correspond to the Father's plan, while avoiding the pitfall of self-interest. However, all this requires a profound sense of spiritual freedom that only the gift of

Trinitarian love through the Holy Spirit can bequeath to the heart.

Conclusion

This aforesaid exchange of love among persons favors a marvelous symphony of souls, a total and intense co-participation while avoiding self-identification or self-annihilation. Instead each reveals himself for that which he is and can do, accentuating his own identity, without however losing the union of souls and common love. On the contrary, each person contributes to the other's cooperation and complementarity. Indeed, the gift of the Spirit consents to a mutual presence and, thus, to the maximum unity, respecting and maintaining the plurality of those that receive and live in him.

In our respective communities the Holy Spirit continues to work this marvelous exchange of communion between the Father and the Son that makes them one sole Spirit of love, while remaining always two Persons perfectly distinct. For his work to attain its purpose, there is principally required the ability of allowing oneself to be touched by the Holy Spirit in order to obtain humility and the joy of becoming like him, the Gift of love.

METROPOLITAN VELYAMYN RUTSKYJ'S COMPILATION OF THE RULE OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT DURING THE BASILIAN REFORM

Rev. Dr. Augustine Babiak

Towards the end of the XVIth century, the Kyivan Metropolia and —along with it— monasticism experienced a great decline. As a result, from 1590 onward, the hierarchy began to gather at synods and contemplate the question of the a renaissance of religious life and of the Eastern Church. Once the metropolitan and bishops understood that the Constantinopolitan Church, which found herself under the Turkish yoke, was in a far worse situation and could not help them in any way, they turned their eyes towards Rome, which eventually led to the Union of Brest in 1596.

At that time, monasticism in the Kyivan Metropolia did not possess any organic unity. Monasteries were autonomous and independent. They did not converse with one another, nor did they form any religious Order on the pattern of Western Orders.

As to common monastic life, it existed in larger monasteries, where the monks were required to live in accordance with the ‘rule of the divine scriptures’ or ‘in accordance with the rule of St. Basil the Great and the Holy Fathers.’

Eastern monasticism, in contrast to Western monasticism, did not reveal some larger pastoral, intellectual or charitable activity. Monks sought solitude; hence, complete separation from the world and earthly matters.

Several half-empty monasteries entered the re-union with Rome. Regarding the reform of monasticism, the metropolitan and bishops at first could not even entertain such a notion, since there were no qualified persons for its implementation. Furthermore, it was urgent to fortify the Uniate Church and ensure its legal existence. Metropolitan Hypatij Potiyj took up this task. He was fervent for the glory of God, an inspired preacher and renowned writer-polemist. Through his indefatigable work, he ensured the existence of the Uniate Church. There was, however, a lack of people and material resources for a spiritual renewal.

Nevertheless, God's Providence sent —within a short time— worthy and educated men, who were ready to serve ‘in hunger and in cold,’ Ivan Kuntsevych and Ivan Velyamyn Rutskyj, who entered Holy Trinity Monastery in Vilnius and began therein a reorganization of monasticism, which in time spread throughout the entire Kyivan Metropolia. While still a lay theologian, Rutskyj had a plan of re-organizing the Uniate Church through the reorganization of monasticism. When he, therefore, became the Kyivan Metropolitan in 1617, he formed from the monasteries and monks under him an Order based on a Western model. Immersed in the writings and intrigued by the activities of St. Basil the Great (+379), Rutskyj compiled a Basilian Rule for his Order. At that time, in the Kyivan Metropolia, there began the activity of the organized *Order of St. Basil the Great in the Congregation of the*

Blessed Trinity, which from 1932 onward carried the official name *The Basilian Order of St. Josaphat* and is known by the faithful as *The Basilian Fathers*.

In January of 1605, before his entrance into the monastery, Rutskyj considered a plan regarding the rebirth of the church and formulated a project under the name “A discourse of a certain Rusyn concerning the rectification of governance in the Greek Rite.” Having analyzed the condition of the Eastern Church, he came to the conclusion that the cause of all its troubles was twofold: a lack of knowledge (*education*) among our elders (i.e., *metropolitans and bishops*) and a lack of perfection and holiness of life.¹ In his mind, in order to have good bishops it follows that you ought to educate good monks, who respect the traditions of the Eastern Church, and select from among them the hierarchy. For the reform of monasticism, however, which sank so low, it was necessary to have educated persons, who could not be found either in all of Rus' (Ruthenia) or even in Greece. Therefore, he advised that one look to some Western Order similar to the life of the Ruthenian monks, most especially to the Order of St. Basil the Great. This would be a great help to the Uniate Church. These monks would have to accept the Eastern Rite and learn the language. They would come to one of the Uniate monasteries and lead the Ruthenian monks to holiness of life. These Western monks, he thought, could possibly be the *Discalced Carmelites*, who do not eat meat and their other customs were very similar to Eastern monks. Yes, says Rutskyj, monasticism will be reformed and become the worthy foundation for the rebuilding of the entire structure of the church. The fruits of this reform would be:

1. Monks will distinguish themselves with education and holiness of life.
2. We will have good preachers and confessors, which we have not had to date.
3. We will establish many schools, from which will emerge well educated eparchial priests and also good laypersons for the nation.
4. Those ascending to the episcopal throne will know their obligations and how to fulfill them.
5. In this way, we can also help our other brothers, who share the same rite.

Rutskyj allegedly composed this “Discourse” at the advice of the Discalced Carmelites. In 1605, he travelled with them to Moscow concerning the Union, but without any success. Already, in the following year, Rutskyj went to Rome, where – aside from the above-mentioned agreement with the Carmelites – he presented to the papal secretary a project called: “Regarding additional means on how to assist the Greeks and Rusyns,”² in which he asserted that Catholic missionaries have thus far been unsuccessful, because they have not adapted to the rite, customs and traditions of those peoples and have not been persistent.³

¹ *Discursus Ruteni cuiusdam de corrigendo regimine in ritu Graeco conscriptus Vilnae anno 1605 in Januario* (=Discursus Rusci), AOSBM 4 (1963), 126-134.

² WEM 1; 156 (23-27). This project of Rutskyj was printed in 1613 by the Carmelite Thomas of Jesus in a well circulated book: *Thesaurus sapientiae divinae*.

³ In this project Rutskyj invites Latin Orders to create Eastern branches and establish monasteries in Rus' (Ruthenia).

The central theme of the Roman consultations of Rutskyj, as is apparent from many documents, was the reform of monasticism or, more precisely, “the monks of the Order of St. Basil the Great.” In the instructions of the Papal Secretariat of State to the new nuncio in Poland, Francisco Simonetta, we read: “The Holy Father instructs you to accept the plan of Rutskyj and reverently help him, along with the king and bishops of the crown, who can help much with this issue... If these ideas of Rutskyj receive support and the reform of the rule of St. Basil among the Greeks, for which he is striving, is realised, then —with the passage of time— there could possibly be good and beautiful fruit as regards the bond that they share with Muscovy, becoming for this latter nation a beacon of the true faith...”⁴

The reorganization of monasticism commenced in earnest between 1607-1612. In September of 1607, at the Holy Trinity Monastery in Vilnius, there began a “new form of monastic life, or rather an ancient form, but long neglected within the Order of St. Basil.”⁵ – wrote Rutskyj, admitting that he himself composed the daily schedule for the Basilian community, “adjusting the monastic discipline to that of the well-established Western Orders, whom he encountered while still a layperson and with whom he communicated in Vilnius. Especially the Jesuit Order, to whom — one has to admit — he was indebted, since they generously gave advice and help on how to formulate the spiritual life.”⁶

Rutskyj was the master of novices and St. Josaphat assisted him. Josaphat was ordained a priest by Potiyj in the second half of 1608.⁷ Both of these men of God gave to young monks that which they had of greatest value: Rutskyj – his effective initiative, Western education, models of Latin Orders and the teaching of the Church Fathers, especially St. Basil the Great; while, Josaphat handed down elements of Eastern monasticism, the liturgical celebrations, Eastern monastic traditions and an example of a holy life. These two men created one harmonious body, accepting all that they deemed good and holy, not adverting to whether it was Eastern or Western.⁸ It is interesting that not only Josaphat but also Rutskyj were great penitents. Like Josaphat he also wore a hair shirt, a cilice and often flagellated himself.⁹

After the death of Potiyj (18 July 1613), Joseph Rutskyj was confirmed as the Kyivan metropolitan. With redoubled intensity, he continued the already initiated reform of monasticism, which was substantially renewing of the church. Thus, having traveled to Rome in 1615, he obtained for his monks papal permission to establish schools based on a Jesuit model and also four student stipends at the Greek

⁴ ASV, *Nunziatura di Polonia*, vol. 173; 142-143, Instructions for the Apostolic Nuncio from 11.11.1606.

⁵ WEM 1, Metropolitan Rutskyj "About obstacles to union" (1624).

⁶ WEM 1: 156-157.

⁷ AC 6: 116. In the court decision of the metropolitan court from 20.10.1609, there is information given that Josaphat was already a hieromonk by 23.08.1608.

⁸ Solovij M. – The Great A., Saint Josaphat.., 107.

⁹ *Vita Ruscii*, AOSBM 4 (1963), 164.

College of St. Athanasius in Rome.¹⁰ His first concern, however, as writes Rutskyj in a letter to Cardinal Borghese, was to establish a novitiate for the education of new postulants to the Order.

Having already a definite body of individuals and monasteries (a total of 5), Rutskyj convoked the first monastic Chapter at his family inheritance in Novhorodovychach in Belarus. He invited also two Jesuit theologians in order “to have sufficient information about what occurs in other organized Orders... They were not called to decide matters with us, but to give us their thoughts, should they be asked.”¹¹

At the first Chapter, Metropolitan Rutskyj reorganized Eastern monasticism in the Kyivan Metropolia and founded *The Order of St. Basil the Great* on the paradigm of Western Orders. Here are its main characteristics:

1. Reformed monasteries will be united and create one monastic body – the Order. Monks of this Order will preserve the General and Particular Rules as formulated by Metropolitan Rutskyj and the Chapter’s Constitution.¹²
2. The metropolitan will be in charge of the Order. He will care for its development.¹³
3. Although the metropolitan was the highest authority over the Order, within the Order, the protoarchimandrite, who the Chapter —from their own ranks— elected for life, will be in charge.
4. Four consulters will assist the protoarchimandrite in governing the Order.
5. In individual monasteries, an hegumen will govern -- for 4 years.
6. The protoarchimandrite will convene a General Chapter every four years.
7. The Order and the hierarchy ought to be irrevocably united.

The most important point of the new *regula* was centralization, since —to this point— the monasteries in the Kyivan Metropolia were not united among themselves and did not have a common central authority. The second intriguing element was the unification of the Order with the hierarchy. Besides this, the renewed Order was to care for “the souls within the Greek Rite.” Presenting the monks with the new rule, “which he himself had composed from the works of St Basil the Great,”¹⁴ the metropolitan explained that times have changed and “the basic need of the souls, who are perishing in our Rite, demands that we care not only about our own spiritual life, but also for the laity.”¹⁵

¹⁰ Welykyj A., *Documenta Pontificum Romanorum Historiam Ucrainae Ilustrantia* (=WDP), Romae. 1953, vol. I: 356-357.

¹¹ AC 12: 8. Protocol of the Basilian Chapter from 1617 to 1709 published in: *Archiohraficheskyj sbornik do kumentov otnosyachchya k istorii Severo-Zapadnoi Rusi*. Vol. 12, Vilnius 1900 (Henceforth, listed as the abbreviation AC 12.)

¹² AC 12:10 – First protocol of the general Capitola in 1617.

¹³ AC 12:10 – First protocol of the general Capitola in 1617.

¹⁴ AC 12:10.

¹⁵ AC 12:10.

At the second Chapter, held in 1621 in Lavrysh (in Belarus), there many rules were compiled that dealt with internal discipline.¹⁶ The third Chapter, at Ruti in 1623, is characterized by two pivotal moments. First, the main phase of compiling the Chapter's Constitution and Rule was finished. It is necessary to note that Metropolitan Rutskyj hastened this Chapter by two years, on account of the precarious danger of some Basilians joining Latin Orders. One reason for this was fear of persecution, since at that time the Orthodox were inciting the Cossacks to attack the Uniates. Thus, the second pivotal moment of the third Chapter was that every monk had to take an oath before the Blessed Sacrament exposed that he would take remain in the Eastern rite.

Consequently, besides the moral example of St. Josaphat, the Basilian Order had the solid legislation of Metropolitan Rutskyj, imbued with the spirituality of St. Basil the Great. The witness of this reality was the unification that occurred from 1617 to 1743 of all those monasteries with Rome under this one "Ruthenian Order of St. Basil the Great." The Basilian legislation of the Congregation of the Holy Trinity, as compiled by Metropolitan Rutskyj, governed itself according to its General Rules, Particular Rules and the Chapter's Constitution.

1) The General Rules

As mentioned earlier, the General Rules were promulgated by Metropolitan Rutskyj at the first Chapter in 1617.¹⁷ Based on the writings of St. Basil the Great, he included short, unchangeable ascetical norms for the Order. Here was concisely phrased "the goal of the monastic life: to become like God in love. You do not simply have to train yourself in love, leading a life of prayer and work, but you must also —by word and deed— draw your neighbour into that love."¹⁸ The metropolitan asserted that for the attainment of this goal you have to renounce the devil, the world and yourself; then, take up your cross and follow Christ, maintaining poverty, chastity and obedience in the common life.

For Rutskyj, keeping these three vows is the foundation of the common monastic life. Already in 1605, he wrote that Eastern monastics "do not know anything about the three monastic vows (poverty, chastity and obedience), and that upon these vows is based the monastic vocation. If one removes them, monks will in no way be differentiated from laypeople."¹⁹ Moreover, of prime importance for the metropolitan was the preservation of the spirituality of St. Basil the Great. Rutskyj had to compose various rules himself, however, in order to adapt to new situations, since in St. Basil the Great he did not find what was needed for his time.²⁰

¹⁶ Chapter protocol in AC 12: 17-27.

¹⁷ The General Rules of Metropolitan Rutskyj are found in the sources in five languages: *Old-Slavonic* – see Zapysky OSBM I (1924) 56-72; *Polish* – Cedr Mistyczny, Suprasil 1717; *Italian* – Regole del N.S. Padre Basilio, Rome: 1854; *Ukrainian* – WEM 1: 33-48.

¹⁸ WEM 1 33.

¹⁹ Eastern monastics also vowed to God that they would keep poverty, chastity and obedience, but in a different form than in the West.

²⁰ WEM 1: 32.

Comparing the General Rules with the Rules of those Orders with whom Rutskyj was in contact, we see from among the sixty-eight rules only about eight were taken from the Jesuits.²¹

In summary, the General Rules of Metropolitan Rutskyj are truly a pearl of Basilian asceticism and literature from the XVIIth century. They were spread throughout all the Basilian monasteries, so that “the monks were obligated to read them entirely through once a month in the refectory.”²² What is interesting is that Metropolitan Rutskyj gave them also to the Supral’skyj Monastery, even though this monastery did not belong to the Congregation of the Holy Trinity until 1751.

2) The Particular Rules

Metropolitan Rutskyj underlined in detail the obligations of every office in the Order. First of all, the rule for the protoarchimandrite, for whom the main obligation was to visit every monastery under his charge.

The promulgation of the rule was divided between the first and the second Chapters. We note that in the compilation of the Particular Rules, Metropolitan Rutskyj had greater difficulties, than with the General. Thus, as a paradigm he took the Jesuits’ Rule. In this manner, for example, of the 26 regulations for the superiors of the house only about eleven are original, the rest (15) were borrowed from the Jesuits. With time, the Basilian Chapters added still other rules for students, professors and confessors. The Particular Rules had a great influence on the life and development of the Order, since they showed every monk, how and what he must to do.

To the Particular Rules, one may add also the Rules for bishops, which Metropolitan Rutskyj wrote in the last years of his life.²³ In ten chapters, it details how a bishop is to relate to himself (holiness), to his monastic vows, to the metropolitan, to the Basilian Order, to his priests, to the souls under his care, to his domestic help and to foreigners. In the Rules, it also shows how a bishop should care for church goods and what he is to do, when he feels the approach of his own death. Bishops, as Rutskyj delineates, “ought to relate to the Order as to a mother, who gave birth to them in God.”²⁴ From the study of many sources, we are convinced that these rules had a great influence on the life of bishops. It is not yet known if the Rules for the bishops are an original work of Metropolitan Rutskyj or if he borrowed them from similar Western rules.

²¹ PIDRUCHNY P., *Narys zakonodavstva Vasylianskoho Chynu sv. Josaphata* – vid 1605-1969 (unpublished dissertation from 1976).

²² AC 12 17-18 – Protocol of the Lavryshkyj Chapter of 1621.

²³ The Rules for bishops are published in AC 12: 201-210 and in WEM 1 : 369-380.

²⁴ AC 12: 204, WEM 1: 372.

3) The Chapter Constitutions

They are called the Chapter Constitutions for two reasons: firstly, they were compiled at the first Chapters; secondly, every Basilian Chapter had the legal right to change them or add new rules.

Here was delineated the direction, that is the form of governing the renewed Order. Besides this, they give actual decisions for timely questions (for example, how to behave with Orthodox monks, who desire to enter the renewed Order; what to do with those who desert the Order). To the Chapter Constitutions we can also add “Observations about the election of the protoarchimandrite, and about an elective and an ordinary General Chapter.”²⁵ We notice that in the composition of both the Chapter’s Constitution and Directives about the election of the protoarchimandrite, Metropolitan Rutskyj took as a paradigm Western legislation, especially the Rules of the Jesuits. Here we have in mind the manner of running a monastic Chapter, terminology and certain prescriptions for monastic life. Although in 1686 the Chapter Constitutions were reviewed by the Basilians at the request of the Apostolic See, nevertheless, they remained in force until the Dubenskyj Chapter of 1734.

From the above mentioned, it is clear that all the rules of Metropolitan Rutskyj had two composite elements: Eastern and Western, old and new. Yet, in 1605, he wrote “there is nothing wrong with beginning to learn from those, who once learned from us, when we had ecclesiastical unity,”²⁶ having in mind the Latins. Moreover, Metropolitan Rutskyj was never a blind imitator of everything that is Latin. On the contrary, he wanted his monks to unqualifiedly remain in the Eastern rite and faithfully maintain their Eastern practices. Even though the Polish language was dominant at the time, he wanted his “priests and brothers in church to preach the Gospel in no other language than Ruthenian (Rusyn).”²⁷

Rutskyj intimately connected his community with St. Basil the Great -- the greatest authority of the common life in the East. Thus, he wrote: “compiling the General Rules, I expended all my strength to gather in some form (in one typikon) the Rules of Our Holy Father, Saint Basil, scattered throughout his various works.”²⁸ Therefore, the monastic community of Metropolitan Rutskyj can truly be called *The Order of St. Basil the Great*, and its monks – *Basilians*. And those who today assert that no Eastern monastics “have the right to call themselves Basilians,”²⁹ they appear anachronistic, because the Basilian Order was founded by Metropolitan Rutskyj based on the spirituality of St. Basil the Great. As a consequence, Pope Urban VIII in 1631 officially confirmed the Basilian Order founded by Metropolitan Rutskyj with papal approval and it became the foundation for all Basilian legislation.

²⁵ See: AC 12: 176-182.

²⁶ *De corrigendo regimine...* in AOSBM 4 (1963), 130.

²⁷ AC 12: 43.

²⁸ WEM 1: 32.

²⁹ Thus, asserts Fr. Gribomont, but he probably knew nothing about the case of Metropolitan Rutskyj because he proposes that St. Josaphat Kuntsevych carried out the reform (and with 30 monasteries).

What relates directly to the monastic life in the Basilian Order was at first fairly strict. Obedience to the superior and his assistants, and fairly severe discipline – these were new elements which Metropolitan Rutskyj attempted to incorporate into the life of the renewed Basilian community. Monks were obligated to rigorously keep the General and Particular Rules. For their transgression and also for any disobedience or delinquency (lateness) they were punished severely. For being late to choir or to the refectory, for example, the monk was to fast “to the designated hour of the following day.”³⁰ For major transgressions, known to all, usually moral, the superior had the right to incarcerate the transgressors in the monastic prison, even on only bread and water. These types of prisons were supposed to be “according to ability in each monastery.”³¹

The monastic community, based on the paradigm of Western Orders, was composed of two main groups: priests and brother-helpers. There is still one difference which played a very important role in its day: there were monks from noble and non-noble families. For the episcopacy and other ecclesiastical positions, they nominated, almost without exception, monks, who came from well-known families, “as then, unfortunately, almost all of them were Latinized.”³²

The most important occupation in all monasteries remained the traditional choral prayer – the church office (*tserkovne pravylo*). Thus, at the Lavryshivskyj Chapter of 1621, they order: “We want all public divine worship to be celebrated in choir.”³³ One novelty was that Basilians were to receive Holy Communion every Sunday and Holy Day, and they were expected to confess at least once a week.”³⁴ To the traditional choral prayer, Metropolitan Rutskyj added in his rules various pious practices, which then Western monks practiced fervently, especially after the Council of Trent. In Basilian monasteries, regarding such pious practices, introduced spiritual reading, meditation, that is reflection with prayer, and an examination of conscience was held at a designated time. Everything began and ended with the sound of the bell and the vicar was vigilant that everyone would do what was demanded by the daily discipline.

In 1622, Rutskyj wrote to Rome that the Uniate Order of St. Basil the Great of the Congregation of the Holy Trinity surpasses all Latin Orders in the Polish Kingdom in its rigor: “they never eat meat and have many fasts to which they strictly adhere.”³⁵ Rutskyj at all costs wanted to preserve in the renewed Order the ancient tradition that monks never ate meat. Therefore, in response to his request, Pope Urban VIII in 1625 by letter ordered the Basilians, “to refrain from eating meat

³⁰ WEM 1 – 42 – General Rules, Rule 8.

³¹ AC 12: 19, 97.

³² WLB 1: 29.

³³ -AC 12: 27 – Lavryshiv Chapter of 1621.

³⁴ -WEM 1: 46 – General Rules.

³⁵ -WEM 1: 76 The letter of Metropolitan Rutskyj to the Congregation *Propaganda* from 28.7.1622.

dishes,”³⁶ and the Lavryshiv Chapter of 1626 deterred transgressors with an ecclesiastical censure.³⁷ This custom was maintained until 1667.

Until the end of his life, Metropolitan Rutskyj expended much energy so that the new Order, founded by him, be spiritually and intellectually strong and that it spread not only within the Kyivan Metropolia, but throughout the neighbouring countries. He gave many of his monastics a higher education. “The Vilenska Congregation of St. Basil is growing wonderfully” – he wrote to Rome in 1624, “that it already has its own theologians, scholars of the Greek and Latin languages, which in Rus’ neither we, nor our parents remember.”³⁸

At the Lavryshivs’kyj Chapter of 1626, Metropolitan Rutskyj “fundamentally showed the great need of a common theological seminary.”³⁹ It may be said that here was completed the main phase of the reorganization of Ruthenian monasticism about which Metropolitan Rutskyj dreamed of in 1605. Thus, to the Chapter’s Constitution were added a few resolutions as for example: “no monk should be allowed to be ordained without a certificate and permission of his superior; the superiors of monasteries ought to give a report about the state of things in the monastery and of the spiritual progress of the brethren,”⁴⁰ etc.

In 1629, in Zhyrovytsjak, was held the fifth General Chapter. At this Chapter they discussed issues almost exclusively of an economic character. They spoke of the creation of a foundation, the organizing of monastic goods and the building of a church in Zhyrovytsjak, etc.

In July of 1636 was held the Vilenskyj Chapter, the final one during the lifetime of Metropolitan Rutskyj, which lasted 15 days and at which was discussed all of the most important issues of the Order. Here he delivered a long talk to the twenty-four members of the Chapter, where he admonished some superiors, who did not fulfill their obligations. Metropolitan Rutskyj always encouraged the monks to speak in Ruthenian “especially and always in church and in homilies. Therefore, the metropolitan and we, Chapter fathers, clearly resolve that the fathers and brothers in churches speak and preach the Word of God in no other language than Ruthenian.”⁴¹ At this Chapter, all the Rules and Chapter Constitutions were read. Then the monks demanded “that in Basilian Rules, where St. Basil the Great is cited, the source of the citation be given.”⁴² Among the observations was that “the Rules for Metropolitans and bishops have not been formulated as had been agreed upon at the

³⁶ WDP 1: 460.

³⁷ AC 12: 31, n. 4.

³⁸ WEM 1: 138.

³⁹ AC 12: 31.

⁴⁰ AC 12: 33.

⁴¹ AC 12: 43.

⁴² AC 12: 37.

first Chapter.”⁴³ Metropolitan Rutskyj did not get to writing the rule for bishops and regarding the rules for metropolitans, he obviously ran out of time, because on July 5, 1637 he died. Before his death, he wrote his will, in which he reflected on his life, -- full of labour, difficulties and dreams in which he expresses his faith in all that the Church teaches and for which he was ready to sacrifice his life.

We proclaim that Metropolitan Rutskyj left behind a well-organized Basilian Order, which became the foundation of the Uniate Church, since from this Order throughout the XVIIth-XVIIIth centuries emerged all the metropolitans and bishops of the Kyivan Metropolia. As for the Basilian nuns, he left the so-called rule, based on the spirituality of St. Basil the Great, which was used by their monasteries.

⁴³ AC 12: 37.

THE WORD OF GOD IN THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT: THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS

Very Rev. Basil Koubetch, OSBM
Protoarchimandrite Emeritus

Introduction

Since only monks and nuns profess religious vows and not all Christians, one thing must be made clear, namely, St. Basil did not intend to compose a special treatise on religious vows the way we understand them today. His asceticism is interwoven within his ecclesiology. St. Basil consistently combined moral norms with the social and practical dimensions of Christianity.¹ The works of St. Basil comprise a great number of documents that call everyone to a disciplined way of Christian life, pointing towards a spiritual and moral ideal of the highest level. As a result, his *Homilies* also were not addressed merely to the laity, since they resemble very closely the ‘ascetical writings’² addressed to the monks. The writings of St. Basil directed to all Christians “cannot be understood as a form of an ordered and complete monastic system under the guidance of the bishop himself.”³ His teaching about the evangelical counsels (vows), therefore, is a compilation of many fragments from different works and responses concerning the Christian life.

To understand correctly the essence of St. Basil the Great’s teachings about the evangelical counsels it is important, first of all, to define his key spiritual insights. As we have already seen, he attempts to answer every question with Sacred Scripture. Even when explicating in his own words, St. Basil wants to make sure that he does not contradict the Word of God in any way.

What and how does St. Basil teach about the evangelical counsels (the vows)? He is very careful to make clear that it is the words and teachings of the Lord God. Every question about obedience, chastity and poverty, ***he tries to answer with the Word of God.*** St. Basil is convinced that Holy Scripture has given him the “knowledge of truth.”⁴ His ascetical teaching, therefore, is neither less nor more radical than the Word of God. This is the first key.⁵

The second key: ***it is important to learn not to let our thoughts wander aimlessly.***⁶ We need to concentrate our thoughts on God in a radical way in order to love Him more than anyone and anything, and not to be attached to any worldly

¹ CLAUDIO MORESCHINI, *Introduzione a Basilio il Grande*, ed. Morcelliana, Brescia, 2005, p. 61.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 61 (“non possono essere intese come le forme di un sistema monastico ordinato e completo, presieduto dal vescovo stesso”).

⁴ ST. BASIL THE GREAT, *On God's Judgment*, part 1.

⁵ The main Biblical texts are provided below for each evangelical counsel.

⁶ See the *Longer Rules (LR)*, part 1 in *The Ascetical Works of St. Basil the Great*.

good. St. Basil underlines that to attain any goal, we need to choose the exact means and an appropriate form of execution. A life that is pleasing to God, according to the Gospel of Christ, is gained by breaking all attachments to worldly aspirations.⁷

Main Biblical Texts:

1 Cor. 7, 32-33: “*...The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please his wife...*”

John 15, 19: “*If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*”
(The underlined words are the ones quoted by St. Basil in the text).

The third key: ***constantly keeping God in mind.*** This constitutes the content of our recollection. Just as one who is lost cannot find the way to his destination, so also the one who is not concentrated on God, since —on account of worldly cares—he is unable to follow Christ.

Main Biblical Texts:

Philippians 3, 20: “*But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*”

Luke 13, 33: “*So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.*”

The fourth key: ***to please God in all things by fulfilling His commandments.***⁸ Our entire life has only one goal and one rule: to fulfill the commandments of God according to His will.⁹ St. Basil encourages us here to follow the example of Christ Himself, who did not come to do His own will but the will of His Father. It is important to remember that for St. Basil the place where it is best to completely fulfill all God’s commandments is in community.¹⁰ Religious vows, therefore, are closely tied with the theme of community life.

Main Biblical Texts:

John 6, 38: “*For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.*”

Psalm 16 (15), 8: “*I keep the Lord always before me; with the Lord at my right, I shall never be shaken.*”

1 Cor. 10, 31: “*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*”

The fifth key: ***the love of God engenders a spirit of self-renunciation and the renunciation of all worldly things.*** The spirit by which a monk or a nun is guided, when he or she professes religious vows and tries to live by them is, first of all, a

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ See *LR*, 5, part 3.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ See *LR*, 7, 1.

positive turning to God “with his or her undivided heart.”¹¹ The love of God is not only a human action or virtue, but a gift¹² of God Himself. This gift develops and becomes the virtue of charity, which by its power encompasses the fulfillment of all God’s commandments.¹³ St. Basil also lists the following things that we should renounce: property, vainglory, human customs,¹⁴ attachment to unnecessary things connected to this life and family love, when it is opposed to God's love.¹⁵

Main Biblical Texts:

Mt. 16, 24: “*..If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*”¹⁶

Luke 14, 33: “*So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot by my disciple.*”

1. Obedience

1.1. Obedience to God’s Commandments

Faith, hope and love of God, which enable the Christian to hear to God’s Word and perfectly fulfill it, is the basis for obedience in St. Basil. Without a doubt, God’s Word is the main rule to be observed in the spirit of obedience. “Everything that the Lord has handed down through the Gospel and His Apostles should be observed without exception.”¹⁷ Superiors should pay a special attention not to command anything that would oppose the Word of God. Both they and those under their guidance should avoid anything that might lead to negligence in fulfilling God’s Word.¹⁸ Instead of his or her own will the Christian has to strive with all his or her powers to do God’s will.¹⁹ Doing this, he or she will live and act in the spirit of self-renunciation and gradually will be freed from “evil vices.”²⁰ God’s commandments should be fulfilled in the way the Lord has decreed.²¹

¹¹ *Letter to St. Gregory*, 2, 4.

¹² Meaning “natural gift” or “intrinsic desire,” see *LR*, 2, 1.

¹³ See *LR*, 2, 1.

¹⁴ Renunciation also means *conversion*: “to put off the old nature with its practices” (*Col. 3, 9*), which is “corrupt through deceitful lusts” (*Eph. 4, 22*). Let us, therefore, leave behind all worldly passions that can be an obstacle to reaching the goal of a pious life (*LR*, 8, 1).

¹⁵ See *LR*, 8, 1-2.

¹⁶ St. Basil explains the meaning of these words in the following way: “To deny oneself means to forget about the past and to leave behind one's own practices... To take up one's cross means to be ready even to die for Christ; to mortify the body and the passions; to endure the dangers for Christ's name and not to be attached to one's own life” (*LR*, 6, 1).

¹⁷ *The Moral Rule*, 12, 3.

¹⁸ See *LR*, 24.

¹⁹ *LR*, 34, 3; *On God’s Judgment*, 4; *The Moral Rule*, 9.

1.2. Following the Obedient Christ

St. Basil, being an expert and devotee of the Holy Scripture, concentrates his attention in a special way on the example of Jesus Christ, who is obedient to His Heavenly Father. In addition to this, he also focuses his attention on the obedience to the Holy Spirit.

Main Biblical Texts:

John 6, 38: “*For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.*”

John 8, 28: “*I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me.*”

John 12, 49: “*The Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak.*”

John 16, 13: “*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.*”

Philippians 2, 8: “*And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.*”²²

1.3. Following the First Christian Community

Very often St. Basil emphasizes the necessity of obedience to superiors in order to maintain unity in a community. One of the best examples of this unity and order he sees in the first Christian community.²³ The exemplar of this unity, however, is the Holy Trinity. In this first Christian community “nobody was seeking to do his own will, but all together in the one Holy Spirit were trying to do the will of our Lord Jesus Christ.”²⁴ It is impossible to be in a community without obedience to the superior because all together should make “one body in Christ” (Rom. 12. 5).²⁵ The Head of this Body is Christ.

Main Biblical Texts:

Acts 4, 32: “*Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul.*”

²⁰ *LR*, 41, 1. Here St. Basil shows different expressions of our passions and lack of self-renunciation, which refers in a special way to our ministry. The choice of work according to our will is based on seeking oneself and leads to pleasing oneself instead of doing that which is ‘useful’ according to the will of the superior.

²¹ See *The Moral Rule*, 12 and 18 in *Basilio di Cesarea - Regole Morali, catechesi evangelica della vita cristiana*, Artioli, Maria Benedetta, ed. Città Nuova, 1996, pp. 109 and 113.

²² *LR*, 28, 2.

²³ See *LR*, 24, 1.

²⁴ *On God's Judgment*, 4.

²⁵ In *LR*, 24. St. Basil does not quote Rom. 12, 4-8, but paraphrases it. In this *Longer Rule* 24, he quotes Rom. 12, 11 “Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord.”

Eph. 4, 3: “*Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*”²⁶

1 Cor. 14, 40: “*But all things should be done decently and in order.*”

²⁶ *On God's Judgment*, 4

PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL TRANSFIGURATION IN THE ANAPHORA OF ST. BASIL

Rev. Dr. Steven Hawkes-Teeple, SJ

The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is celebrated ten times each year in present-day Byzantine usage. It is worth noting that, unlike the Chrysostom anaphora, different forms of the Basil anaphora have been present in nearly every branch of the Eastern churches at one time or another. The Byzantine form of the Basil anaphora is the longest, which in all likelihood indicates that it is the latest form. Through church history, people have frequently been willing to add things to an anaphora, but few have had the courage to take anything out. Some people believe the Chrysostom anaphora is an abbreviation of the Basil, but the two texts are quite distinct. One only has to read the two texts to see the obvious differences.

Studies over the past century have made it clear that there are connections between the person of St. John Chrysostom and the anaphora that bears his name. However, when we turn to the Basil anaphora, the best that can be said is that we have many unanswered questions. Did Basil write it, any of the various versions of it? We can't say. Is there any hard proof of a clear connection between the historical person Basil of Caesarea in Cappadocia and the anaphora? At this point, not really. A number of scholars have tried to show some sort of connection, but none of these efforts has really succeeded. What we find in the earlier forms of the Basil anaphora seems to have both a theology and a vocabulary from a period before Basil's period.

Today the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is the dominant liturgy, but in the early centuries it was not so. Until the ninth and tenth centuries, the Liturgy of St. Basil was the ordinary liturgy of Sundays and major feasts of the Byzantine world.

I have been asked to speak on "Personal and Communal Transfiguration in the Basil anaphora," easy topic because of the very nature of the eucharist and its prayers. The Divine Liturgy does not exist to transform the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, our Lord, God, and Savior. God has given us the eucharist in order to transform you, and me and all of us. The Basil anaphora is about nothing else than transformation of persons in God's grace. In fact that is what all anaphoras deal with.

Like Chrysostom and many other anaphoras, Basil has a sort of hourglass structure. It begins with the vast cosmic sweep of the Trinity in heaven and all creation. Then, bit by bit, it narrows down to a certain period and place, the historical life of Jesus of Nazareth, our Lord, God and Savior. It highlights that night before his Passion and the seder meal with his disciples. Then from there, we look at a larger and larger field of all the people touched by Christ and his saving life, death, and resurrection. We consider first all those who have gone before us, all the deceased, saints and sinners. Finally we pray for the living, people around the world, rich and poor, sick and healthy, young and old. So we are bringing to our prayer angels, saints, the deceased both good and bad, the living, and in some sense even those not yet born. It's gigantic.

Most of us who go to Byzantine liturgy regularly have heard the opening dialogue of the anaphora with Chrysostom liturgy and consider it part of that liturgy, but the dialogue is actually the first of the nine sections that make up the Basil anaphora. The basic structure of our Divine Liturgy was worked out with Basil long before the various Chrysostom prayers were plugged in later.

The opening priestly greeting speaks of the grace, love, and communion of the holy Trinity being with us, in us, around us, and penetrating every aspect of our lives. We are called to become people more and more deeply embedded in the life of the Trinity. As I live more and more in the middle of the reciprocal love of God Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, truly I can never be alone. I am supported, sustained, and loved by the most powerful force. This is already given; our challenge is to live it out.

Next, we are asked on to lift up our hearts. This is obviously a symbolic call to turn our attention and our affection to God and his service, and to keep in mind that our liturgy on earth is, and should be, a reflection of the eternal liturgy in heaven. All of us are busy with a great many things. Those things are generally good and worthwhile things. It is perfectly reasonable to be concerned with and involved in updating my address book or working on the plans for my summer travels. But it is helpful for us to set those things aside as we begin to pray, whether private prayer or liturgical prayer. I would want to emphasize the beginning aspect here. It is good for us to leave these things aside when we enter into our prayer. As we begin, we need to focus on God's love for us and our response to God. Later on, we will bring into our prayer many of those concerns and offer them up to God.

In the final element of the dialogue, the priest says, "Let us give thanks to the Lord" (Εὐχαριστήσωμεν τῷ Κυρίῳ, Благодаримъ ГДа), to which we originally responded only "It is proper and just" (Ἄξιον καὶ δίκαιόν ἐστιν, Достойно и праведно есть) and was later extended. These two brief assertions, just a very few words, contain the whole spirituality of Christian life. Our life of prayer and, indeed, our whole Christian life needs to spring from gratitude. God has first created me and then called me to be a Christian, to be reborn in baptism to live a graced life. God's grace has touched my life in dozens of ways over the years. It's always God who starts and we who respond. If our prayer is only requests, then we haven't yet tapped into the basic current of Judeo-Christian prayer from at least the time of Abraham 2,000 some odd years before Christ. God made us and formed us and is sustaining us at this very moment. Whatever we have to say to God needs to start with thanks.

Our response, "It is proper and just," can sound a bit timid and unsubstantial, sort of like a liturgical version of "yeah, sure." But it is a significant reinforcement of what we just said. It is fitting and proper for humans to thank God, indeed it gives our life meaning. Our life starts to make sense when we are giving thanks to God.

Then we turn to the second section of the Basil, which runs from the end of the dialogue until the Holy, holy, holy. In most churches for centuries this has been read quietly by the priest while the congregation sings. That this text has very rarely been heard in the past thousand years is particularly tragic. These texts were originally conceived to be our common prayer, offered by the whole community to God, as well as a statement of God's loving intention for all of us.

Interestingly, the second section of the Basil starts with God the Father and our relationship with him. The text gives many titles and descriptions for God the Father — eternal Being, Master, Lord, God almighty, enthroned in glory in heaven, yet also present in the depths (бездны in Slavonic, τοὺς ἀβύσσους, the abysses, in Greek).

This last is a key statement. Much of theology and spirituality focuses on God in eternal serene majesty, which is right because God is the source of serenity and majesty. However at times that can lead us to ask, “Where is God in the difficulties, even the tragedies of this world?” I think the Basil here suggests a response. God is fathoming the depths, ἐπιβλέπων τοὺς ἀβύσσους, призирай бездны. It’s important to remember that the gaze of God the Father is not a passive looking on, like one of us watching something happen. When we witness a traffic accident, generally there is little that we can do. God’s looking on things is an active, loving involvement. He is present and involved. It is difficult and challenging for us that God doesn’t prevent tragedies from happening, but we all know that they do happen. What is key is that God is actively concerned and involved in the depths, where life is hard and painful.

In the Basil, the main thing which the Father has done is that He has granted us the knowledge of God’s truth. In the infinite love of the Trinity for all of us, God has chosen to reveal to us the reality about who God is. This has enriched our human life by showing us what the real parameters of human life are. We are oriented toward God; that’s where we started and that’s our goal.

Because we know this, we need to praise God, to sing to God, to worship God, to thank God, to glorify the one true God and to offer our spiritual worship with contrite heart and humble spirit, as the Basil says. As we said earlier, our life starts to make sense when we are giving thanks to God. We don’t really see what it means to be who we are until we start to give thanks. Giving thanks to God makes us more fully human. This is essential, but it is also so easy to lose sight of.

Obviously the turning point in the revelation of who God is, is Jesus. The Basil says, not as I think we might be inclined to today, that Jesus revealed certain things, but that God the Father revealed Himself through Jesus. The text here follows an older patristic theology, which emphasizes strongly the unity of God and plays down the differences between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This very tightly unified vision of the Trinity is one of the reason why scholars tend to think that anaphora is older than Basil of Caesarea.

So, as we said, God the Father revealed himself through Jesus. Jesus is our hope, the image of God’s goodness, and the seal bearing God’s likeness. And there follows a further list of Jesus titles.

And then, through Jesus, God has revealed the Holy Spirit. It is by means of the Spirit that, not only we humans, but even the angelic powers, are enabled to worship God and to offer unending praise to God. Here in the Basil we find one of the most developed pneumatologies or theologies of the Holy Spirit for this early a period. This point would seem to support Basil’s connection to the anaphora because of his known concern for the Spirit and Spirit theology.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth and the Gift of our divine adoption as daughters and sons of God. The Spirit is the pledge of our future inheritance and the first-fruits of the eternal blessings to be received from God. In addition, the Spirit is the life-creating power and the wellspring of sanctification. Being a Christian is too hard for a mere mortal without the Spirit's divine assistance. Because we have the Spirit at work in us, we have the strength to live this life.

All this takes us back to the point mentioned above in the opening dialogue: the heavenly liturgy of saints and angels with the Holy Trinity, the eternal celestial liturgy, leading us to the Holy, holy, holy, where we proclaim that God is indeed holy, more holy than anything else. The hymn, which is the third part of the anaphora, sings this holiness on earth, as it is sung by the angels and saints in heaven. Our liturgy on earth should try to reflect the heavenly liturgy, to be an image of the heavenly one.

In the fourth section, between the Holy, holy, holy and the words of institution, the Basil continues with the theme of holiness, but then marks a sharp contrast. Here we go back to creation for a moment and then reflect on our beginnings. We were lovingly created, honored with the image of God, placed in a delightful paradise, promised eternal life, and the enjoyment of eternal blessings. Then we all know what happened—the Fall.

It is also worth noticing that the Basil points out that our life with God is a relationship of choice and love. We were given all things and our obedience was required. We had to make choices.

The Basil speaks of God's righteous judgment, but says that immediately after the fall God provided for humanity the salvation of rebirth in Christ (in Greek τὴν ἐκ παλιγγενεσίας σωτηρίαν, in Slavonic и паки бытие спасение). Thus God began the long preparation for the Incarnation. In spite of our disobedience, God did not turn away from us, nor forget his creatures, but intervened again and again in merciful loving-kindness. God sent the prophets and the Old Testament Law to guide and prepare us, and, finally, at the chosen time sent the Son.

The closing lines of this fourth section of Basil's liturgy go into a lyrical description of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost. It all turns back around from Jesus enthroned in heaven and comes to the Last Supper, which isn't chronological at all.

Then in the fifth section, as in most anaphoras, Basil's liturgy has the words of the institution of the eucharist at the Last Supper. The bread and wine are presented to God as a symbol of his coming sacrifice of his life on the cross. In some ways, it is a sort of memorial before the fact. Jesus clearly expressed that the bread and wine are his body and blood sacrificed for humanity for the remission of sins. The Basil then contains Jesus' command to repeat the ritual, which is taken silently in most liturgical usage. This command is absent from the Chrysostom.

There follows the brief sixth section of the anámnesis, which ties together our remembrance of what Christ did in the past with what we do here and now. Since we know all that God has done for us in the passion, the burial, the resurrection, the

ascension, the enthronement in heaven, and awaiting his return in glory, we come together as a church community to celebrate God's love for us. It began in the past with all these great mysteries, but it continues for us in the present and will support us in the future. This leads us up to the elevation of the gifts with the words "offering to you, your own, from your own; always and everywhere" (Τὰ σὰ ἐκ τῶν σῶν σοὶ προσφέρομεν, κατὰ πάντα καὶ διὰ πάντα or Твоя от Твоих Тебе приносяще о всех и за вся).

Next we come to the epiclesis, the invocation of the Holy Spirit, which has a double structure. It is important to note that before we ask God to send the Holy Spirit on the bread and wine, we first ask that the Spirit be sent upon us. This is the real goal of the Divine Liturgy and all our Christian prayer — to transform us. If we manage to transform nothing but the bread and wine, then in some sense the liturgy has failed. We need to be transformed into an eschatological community at service of the Lord, as God's continuing presence in the world around us.

So that we may be transformed, we ask God to bless and sanctify the gifts. In the Chrysostom, we pray that God's Spirit *make* (ποίησον in Greek, сотворив in Slavonic) the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Basil's Liturgy uses an older phrasing asking God to *show* (ἀναδεῖξαι in Greek, in Slavonic показати) the gifts to be the body and blood. Once again this very ancient formulation suggests that, at least in its earlier form, the anaphora goes back further than the historical Basil of Caesarea.

Then the anaphora contains a very important statement. It tells us what is the purpose of our liturgy, of all these prayers and songs, indeed the purpose of our whole Christian life. So what is this purpose? What do we hope to accomplish in all this? It's actually quite simple. "So that all of us who share in this one bread and chalice may be united with one another in the communion of the one Holy Spirit" (Greek ήμᾶς δὲ πάντας τοὺς ἐκ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἄρτου καὶ τοῦ ποτηρίου μετέχοντας ἐνώσαι ἀλλήλοις εἰς ἑνὸς πνεύματος ἁγίου κοινωνίαν, Slavonic "nas zhe svich, ot jedynaho chilba i chashy prychashchajushchychsja, sojedyny druh ko druhu vo jedynaho Ducha Svatoho prychastije").

A couple of things are worth noting here. First and foremost is that the whole focus of the liturgy points to us receiving communion. Obviously those guilty of major offenses like murder, apostasy, and adultery should abstain, but the ordinary Christian should receive regularly, remembering that the formula for the administration of communion says it is for the remission of sins. From the late classical period well into the 20th century, this basic point was forgotten or overlooked. We in the Eastern churches are frequently irritated about pressure on us from the Western church, but sometimes the West is right. The restoration of frequent communion — which was certainly a Latin innovation — is unquestionably one of those points. All of us Byzantine Christians, whether Orthodox or Catholics, have done well to imitate the Roman Catholics on this point.

We also notice that we are praying that God unite us. It can seem on the surface that we are not asking for very much, but, in point of fact, we are asking for everything. We pray to be united, that is to say, at peace with one another. So we are asking for an end to all human conflict and injustice — a pretty tall order. But it is not

just with our human brothers and sisters on this planet, the third rock from the sun, but also to be united in the communion of the Holy Spirit. So we are also aiming for a perfect and complete union of ourselves with the divine will of God. That is pretty much all we could possibly ask for. If we had all that, we would need nothing more. This, then, is why we go to church, do liturgy, and receive communion. We hope, bit by bit, day by day, to get a little closer to those exalted spiritual goals. That is the purpose.

The rest of this section in which we pray not to receive communion unworthily and we ask for mercy and grace is simply spelling out a bit what we have already requested from God. All these things are simply part of the ultimate unity with God and all creation that we seek.

With this prayer for mercy and grace, the Basil makes a transition to the eighth part of the anaphora, prayers for the living and the deceased. When we sing the troparion to the Theotokos was once the point, at which the diptych for the deceased was read in the Middle Ages.

We may note that the prayers regarding the saints are located immediately before the prayers for the deceased. This reflects the perspective of the early church, such as we find in St. Paul, where all Christians, including the deceased, are considered, at least in some sense, saints. So the community prays for them and with them. Later the church makes a distinction between the great saints and the ordinary deceased members of the community. Basil's liturgy, which is so extensive in others areas, is surprisingly brief in its prayers for the deceased.

These prayers for the deceased are in many ways simply an extension of our prayer that we be united with one another in the communion of the one Holy Spirit. In addition to our union with God, we are also asking to be united with the Theotokos and with all the great and holy women and men of times gone by. And we are also asking that all the deceased in the same way be united to God and, one day, also to us.

The intercessions of the second sort, those for the living, are much longer. They also form a remarkable list of petitions, in which the Basil has a particularly poetic turn. We pray, first of all, for the church and its leaders. We recommend to God's grace especially benefactors, whose generosity supports the church and her work. In exchange for the earthly gifts they bring, we ask God to give them spiritual blessings; in exchange for the earthly, the heavenly; in exchange for the temporal, the eternal; in exchange for the perishable, the incorruptible.

Then the anaphora turns to the secular leaders of our government, praying that they may bring us peace and tranquility to support our Christian life. Continuing our prayers for the government, we ask that God maintain the good and the virtuous in their goodness and virtue. I find it particularly touching and striking that it adds a request that God help turn those who are evil to good.

In praying for the present church community, we also pray for those who are absent for reasons beyond their control. In the first place, this includes the sick obviously. Once again here, the Basil has a fairly lyrical tone:

Fill the houses with every good thing, preserve the marriages in peace and harmony, nurture the infants, instruct the young, support the aged, encourage the faint-hearted, gather the scattered, lead back those who have strayed, and unite them to your holy, catholic, and apostolic church.

And it continues to pray for the mentally ill, those who are travelling — remembering that travel before the modern era was always a very dangerous proposition — and particularly for those, who are generally in the very weakest position in most societies, the widows and the orphans. We also pray in a special way for prisoners and those who have been condemned by society's authorities.

In a thoroughly Gospel spirit, the anaphora calls on us to pray 'for those who love us, for those who hate us, and those who have asked us to pray for them, unworthy though we be.' Once again, this is a very striking petition.

Our prayer then opens out even further to all people. The Basil asks for God's mercy and grace on those people we would want to pray for, but whom we cannot remember. In a certain sense here, we are almost asking to unite ourselves to God's loving and saving intent for all humanity.

In the liturgical celebration, as we all know, these intercessions are broken up by the invocation for the hierarchy, "Among the first, O lord, remember..." "Ἐν πρώτοις μνήσθητι, Κύριε..." "Въ первыхъ помяни, Гди..." In the early centuries, this was the point, at which the diptych for the living was read.

In the final part of these intercessions, the Basil circles back to the church and its leaders. We ask for God's grace for the bishops, the priests, and the deacons. The celebrant prays for himself. We also pray for an end to schisms and divisions in the church.

Finally we conclude with the closing intercessions,

Accept us all into your kingdom, showing us to be children of the light and of the day. Grant us your peace and love, O Lord our God, for you have given us everything.

And then the final doxology aloud,

And grant that with one voice and one heart we may glorify and praise your most honored and magnificent name, Father Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

All of these many requests directed to God simply reinforce and spell out more fully what we asked back in the epiclesis: that we be united with one another in the communion of the Holy Spirit. We ask that things may go well so that we may be able to serve God and all our brothers and sisters generously and peacefully. Doing so, we hope to grow as God's daughters and sons. In different ways, we ask God to help us with that growth.

NATURAL CONTEMPLATION IN ST. BASIL OF CAESAREA

Rev. Dr. Enrico Cattaneo, SJ

For St. Basil (c. 330-379) “natural contemplation” (*physikē theôria*) is the capacity to see in sensible realities traces of God’s wisdom and beauty. It is a natural capacity connected with the use of reason, which cannot fail to rise up to the Creator, when taken by surprise and wonder at the world’s order and beauty. This view of nature is not utilitarian, but rather contemplative and requires a mind free from the passions. Thus, starting from the book of nature, man is able to elevate his mind to God and, going beyond created reality, he contemplates with the eyes of his soul something of the Divine Beauty. In summary, this is the essence of Basil’s thought, which we will now try to illustrate.¹

The Bishop of Caesarea preached and then wrote out nine famous sermons on *Gen 1,1-25*, i.e., the first five days of creation, according to a theological-spiritual interpretation, going against the more common trend of an allegorical interpretation, employed by those under the influence of the Alexandrian school.²

Thus, the Bible’s literal sense, as intelligently understood, is the point of departure. After every creative act, resounds the affirmation: *And God saw that it was good* (*Gen 1,8*), *kalòn*, i.e., beautiful, according to the Septuagint version – the Scripture inspired by God – not only affirming the goodness of creation but also the harmony of its order. Basil comments:

The Beautiful (*kalòn*) is what is done in accordance with the rules of art and seeks the usefulness of its end. Thus, He had clearly established the purpose of created things and, by His manifest words, He approved every part of creation inasmuch as it conformed to its end. [...] God is described as the Supreme Artist, praising each one of His works; and, when His work is complete, He will accord well deserved praise to the whole together (*Hex. 3,10,1-3*; ed. M. Naldini, 102).

The Psalms also sing of God’s glory present in creation (cf. *Ps. 18,2*), since He has created all things in His wisdom:

¹ Among the works of St. Basil, we also include the *Enarratio prophetam Isaiam* (= *In Is.*), whose authenticity is not accepted by most scholars, but which we consider reliable, as we hope to prove in a forthcoming publication.

² BASILIO DI CESAREA, *Sulla Genesi* (Omelie sull’Esamerone), ed. M. NALDINI, Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, Mondadori 1990. The creation-of-man theme was treated by Basil not sequentially, for it appears also in his later works (cf. BASILE DE CÉSARÉE, *Sur l’origine de l’homme*, par A. SMETS - M. VAN ESBROECK, *SCh* 160, Paris 1970) and it was taken up by his brother GREGORIO DI NISSA, *De hominis opificio* (PG 44,124-256; trad. it. di B. SULMONA, *L’uomo*, Città Nuova, Roma 1982).

What language can attain to the marvels of the Creator? What ear could understand them? And what time would be sufficient to relate them? Let us say, then, with the prophet, *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all* (Hex. 9,3,11; Naldini 280).

There is a page from his *Commentary on Isaiah* that seems to be taken from the *Hexameron*:

Admire in birds the wisdom and harmonious disposition of the Creator: how their weight is borne upon the air; how air's subtle nature serves as a vehicle for their wings; how, by the extension of their wings, they pass through the air, while their tails function as a rudder directing their flight; how those birds unfit to walk supplement with their wings the weakness of their legs. As for animals, those made for swimming and those made for hunting have bodies adapted according to their particular mode of life: some have bodies made for grasping, i.e., they have claws; others have webbed feet, like fins, to more easily push and move through water. All things are filled with God's wisdom (*In Is.* 78; PG 30, 249AB).

Above all, *Rm* 1,20 states without hesitation that certain perfections of God can be known from creation. Basil often has recourse to this text:

The created world [...] is really the school (*disaskalèion*) where reasonable souls exercise themselves, the training ground (*paiideutérion*), where they learn to know God; since by the sight of visible and sensible things the mind is led, as by a hand, to the contemplation (*theôrian*) of invisible things. *For, as the Apostle says, the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made* (*Rm* 1,20)" (Hex. 1,6,2; Naldini 20-22).

Here the term *theôria* – contemplation³ – appears, indicating the purely intellectual act, which starts from visible reality and, then, rises from the senses to the invisible:

May God who, after having made such great things, [...] grant you the intelligence of His truth, so that you may raise yourselves from visible things to the invisible Being, and that the grandeur and beauty of creatures may give you a just idea of the Creator. *For the visible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, and His power and divinity are eternal* (*Rm* 1,20)" (Hex. 3,10,5-6; Naldini 104).

In the classical world, the idea of “contemplation” has had a long and complex history.⁴ For Plato, the “contemplation” of Ideas – the Good and the

³ Cf. S. RENDINA, *La contemplazione negli scritti di S. Basilio Magno*, Excerpta ex dissert. ad Lauream in Fac. Theol. Pontif. Univ. Greg., Roma 1959; TH. ŠPIDLÍK, *La sophiologie de S. Basile* (Orient. Christ. Anal. 162), Roma 1961, 225-233.

One – begins with the sensible world, as when beginning with corporeal beauty, one can step by step arrive at the contemplation of Beauty Itself.⁵ Aristotle placed a distinction between the “active life” (of the *polis*) and the “contemplative life” (of the philosopher, uninvolved in the *polis*). Philo of Alexandria wrote *De vita contemplativa*, which is not a treatise on mysticism, but rather a description of the life of the “contemplatives,” who formed a veritable monastic community, completely dedicated to prayer and the ascetical life.⁶ Plotinus also developed an ascending path to Beauty.⁷

First of all, we observe in Basil the presence of the concept of “analogy”:

Let us glorify the supreme Artificer for all that was wisely and skilfully made; by the beauty of visible things let us raise ourselves to Him who is above all beauty; by the grandeur of bodies, sensible and limited in their nature, let us conceive of the infinite Being whose immensity and omnipotence surpass all the efforts of the imagination (*Hex.* 1,11,7; Naldini 36).⁸

This is what Basil calls “natural contemplation,”⁹ i.e., the knowledge of God not directly, but mediated through creatures:

“In the contemplation of nature (*physikē theôria*), reflection on the Holy Trinity is also involved, since from the beauty of created things, by means of analogy, the Creator is contemplated” (*Ep.* 8,12; PG 32,268B).¹⁰

This contemplation does not have a practical purpose, but it obviously presupposes a moral life, a discipline and purification of the senses, because without this purification, the mind itself is not “perspicacious,” i.e., it is no longer able to “see” beyond the sensible:

The true and lovable beauty, which is the blessed and divine nature, can be contemplated only by those who have a purified mind (*Hom Ps.* 29,5; PG 29,317B).¹¹

⁴ Cf. A. GRILLI, *Vita contemplativa. Il problema delle vita contemplativa nel mondo greco-romano*, Paideia, Brescia 2002, 26-39.

⁵ Cf. PLATONE, *Symposion* 210e-212e. It seems that Socrates alone was in grade to intellectually cross this divide.

⁶ *Oeuvres de Philon d'Alexandrie*, 29 (par F. DAUMAS - P. MIQUEL), Cerf, Paris 1963.

⁷ Cf. PLOTINO, *Enneadi* I, 6 (ed. V. CILENTO, Bibliopolis, Napoli 1986, 206-229).

⁸ Cf. *Hex.* 6,1,4 (Naldini 166): «...through visible things you arrive by analogy to Him, Who is invisible».

⁹ About this concept, cf. J. LEMAITRE, «La ΘΕΩΡΙΑ ΦΥΣΙΚΗ», in *DictSpir* 2 (1953) 1806-1827 (here Basil is totally ignored).

¹⁰ The concept of analogy was already employed by Philo: « It is by analogy that the intelligible world is understood from the sensible world» (*De somniis* I,188).

¹¹ Cf. RENDINA, *La contemplazione*, 34-37.

Some passages in the *Commentary on Isaiah* return to this need for a purification of the mind and a detachment from the passions:

He, who does not believe in the Lord, does not encounter the true beauty of nature, nor reach its contemplation. In fact, there is no enjoyment felt in the harmony of limbs, nor in the tones of a healthy body; for Beauty *par excellence* in the divine nature is known only by a mind purified in a perfect manner, as the Psalm says: *On account of your glory and your beauty* (*Ps 44,4*). Therefore, he that does not perceive the rays of divine beauty by the inner eye calls what is ugly, beautiful; and if he negates what is beautiful, he obviously adheres to its opposite (*In Is. 175*; PG 30, 412CD).

The danger offered by the senses is that once obsessed by corporeal beauty, one can think that true beauty lies only therein:

No one, drawn gently away from the bitterness of vice, gives glory to a lascivious lifestyle; while the soul, yielding to the slavery of physical beauty, maintains that therein lies the nature of true beauty (*In Is. 175*; PG 30, 413A).

Thus, it is not the senses that are evil, rather their abuse, like those addicted to vice of drinking. In this regard, the text *Is. 5.11-12* contains a “woe” addressed to die-hard drinkers, who spend time from morning to night in banquets, music and dance. The prophet names the detrimental effect of this vice as the loss of a religious sense. In fact, these men *do not observe the works of the Lord and do not understand His handiwork* (*Is 5,12*).¹² Basil comments:

They do not find the time to understand the wonderful works of God, nor give their eyes a chance to look up at the sky and see its beauty, in such a manner that beginning with this wondrous order, they could reach an understanding of their Creator (*In Is. 154*; PG 30, 372B).

They do not have time to observe *the works of God* and understand *the labour of His hands* (*In Is. 155*; PG 30, 373B).

This text of Isaiah invites Basil, most certainly under the influence of Origen, to place a distinction between the verbs ‘to observe’ (*emblēpein*) and ‘to understand’ (*katanoèein*):

“To observe” indicates the perception of things through the eyes, “to understand” means the contemplation of invisible realities through the intellect. Since *the invisible things of God, from the very creation of the world, can be contemplated by the intellect in His works* (*Rom 1,20*), he, who does not admire [His] works, does not arrive at an understanding [of Him], which comes through the intellect. What does the word [of the Prophet] mean? Drunkenness is a principle of atheism, because the intellectual faculty, which is given to us to know God, is darkened (*In Is. 156-157*; 376AB).

¹² We have developed this theme in our work: «Il vizio del bere in S. Basilio Magno», in J. MIMEAULT - S. ZAMBONI - A. CHENDI (a cura di), *Nella luce del Figlio. Studi in onore di Réal Tremblay*, EDB, Bologna 2011, 589-610.

The contemplation of God through His works is not therefore something optional, something extra that could be done without, rather it touches the eternal destiny of man; thus, “observing” creation without “understanding” the Creator is man’s true sin, because it means missing the end for which he was created:

If it is a sin *not observe the works of the Lord* and *not to understand His handiwork*, then let us raise the eyes of our minds and see the creative words of God’s works, and let us contemplate the Creator from the immense beauty of creation by means of analogy. And since *the invisible perfections of God, from the creation of the world, can be contemplated by the intellect in His works* (*Rm 1.20*); thus, the perception of sensitive creatures is called “vision” and the intellectual perception of suprasensible reality is called “understanding.” For Isaiah says: *They do not observe the works of God* – i.e., they do not look upon sensible things with their eyes – and *they do not understand the works of His hands*, i.e., they do not look by means of the intellectual power to understand the invisible realities (*In Is.161*; PG 30, 381C-384A).

Rather,

those who contemplate the wisdom by which the celestial beings are ordered, namely, the position of the stars, their motion and reciprocal relations, these understand the grandeur of His [God's] intelligence, so they can say: *His intelligence has no measure* (*Ps 146, 5*) (*In Is. 168*; PG 30, 396C).

Ultimately,

There are two ways by which we can rise to the knowledge of God and perfect ourselves: either through natural concepts, going from visible reality to the Creator, or through the teachings given in Scripture (*In Is. 212*; PG 30, 485AB).

The purified mind is called Sion, because [its height] forms an observatory¹³ of all nature. For it is from a certain height, i.e., from the apex of the mind, that the world and its wondrous order are contemplated, and from there one arrives at God. From up there, you can see all created things and their lowness. When the mind is immersed in wine and other passions, it falls under the power of drunkenness; on the other hand, the purified mind has God as its support (*In Is. 291*; PG 30, 629A).

A much debated topic within the Platonic tradition is whether the contemplation of divine realities also implies a “going out of oneself.” For Plotinus “it is necessary that the intellect comes out of itself and ceases to reason in order to attain the highest object of its desire. It is an ecstasy, in the truest sense of the term.”¹⁴ The same applies to Philo.¹⁵ While Origen resolutely rejects

¹³ In fact, Sion is interpreted as “observatory” according to some ancient Hebrew etymologies.

this notion of ecstasy, which he identifies with being out of one's mind.¹⁶ Basil is of the same mind [as Origen] and limits the term strictly to the level of morality: the soul is called to "go out" from sin and the cares of this life, if it is to receive the Word of God:

When the soul enters into contemplation of divine things and turns away from the cares of the body, it "goes out."¹⁷ When it is overrun with human concerns, or the care of the body, or because it no longer strives toward higher things, then it goes from the outside to the inside, or, shall we say, it is at home or in the city, i.e., it returns to bodily cares (*In Is.* 193; PG 30, 452AB).

They, who maintain atheism to be normal, are "out of their minds":

Truth can be grasped from the created world by those who are dedicated to the intelligent study of creation; but those who, although living in the world and despite being illuminated all around by God's wisdom, suffer from ignorance of God; they are *in darkness at midday* (cf. *Is* 16.3 LXX). [...] They are out of their minds, because their doctrines do not differ in anything from their imagined fantasies. [...] Although creatures preach to us so clearly the power of the Creator, it is true folly and sheer madness to consider that God does not exist and to return to idols and statues (*In Is.* 304; PG 30, 649BC).¹⁸

There is a passage from the *Commentary*, which is surprising in several respects. In a digression on the biblical meaning of 'morning,' the theme of contemplation is taken up in conjunction with Psalm 5, 4: *In the morning, I present myself before Thee and watch*. Basil comments:

As long as one is an observer of beauty, which shines in visible reality, he is called a 'natural philosopher' or 'student of nature,' but when one goes beyond these realities, and is present before the God Himself, after having known in what manner all things are beautiful, and then from such [created] beauty rising up to Beauty Itself and the truly Desirable One, the vision of Whom is limited only to pure souls, who progress towards the realities above the natural, these persons – called by some metaphysicians (*metaphysikà*) – can become contemplatives. So when – it is said – I present myself to You and I approach the contemplation of You with my intellect, then I will acquire that

¹⁴ J. LEMAITRE, in *DSp* 2,1865.

¹⁵ Cf. FILONE, *Heres* 68-85.

¹⁶ J. LEMAITRE, in *DSp* 2,1866.

¹⁷ The reference is to [Is.] 7.3, where the Lord instructs Isaiah to "go out" to meet King Ahaz.

¹⁸ *HomPs.* 33,3 (PG 29,357A): "Magnify the Lord [...], he, who observes with a great mind and deep consideration the magnificence of creation, can arrive at the contemplation of the Creator from the beauty of creatures." *HomPs.* 44,10 (PG 29,409A): "[The Church] has a contemplative mind. Consider – it says - creation, and benefiting from the order that's within it, rise to the contemplation of the Creator."

contemplative capacity by means of an illumination that comes from knowing [You] (*In Is.* 162; PG 30, 385A).

This beautiful text, with clear echoes of Philo and Plotinus, also reflects the thinking of Origen. In fact, it implies the traditional breakdown of philosophy into morals, physics (or natural philosophy) and contemplative, as recorded by [Origen] the Alessandrian.¹⁹ The above text from *In Is* omits the first level (the moral), focusing on the transition from second to third, i.e., from “natural” philosophy to “contemplative” (*enoptikē*). Now Basil refers many times to this tripartite division²⁰ and use of the adjective *enoptikos*:²¹

The intellect united to the divinity of the Spirit becomes contemplative [adjective – *enoptikos*]; it contemplates great visions and sees the divine beauty, at least in the measure of the grace granted to it and insofar as its own constitution allows (*Ep.* 233,1; PG 32,865B).

On the dependency of Basil to Origen, M. Girardi writes: “The coupling of the ‘trilogy’ of Solomon [Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs] to the tripartite division and progression of philosophy into ethics, physics and *enoptica* or metaphysics (others add logic; i.e., the more traditional succession of logic, ethics, physics) was consciously developed and theorized in an articulate manner by Origen, who touched up on the forced and artificial parallelism with the three progressive levels (moral, natural, mystical) of Christian wisdom. Basil essentially borrowed from him, re-elaborating in his own manner the characteristic features of the three books of wisdom in view of the Christian education of believers.”²² In the text just quoted, M. Girardi stated that the third part of philosophy was called “*enoptica*” or “metaphysics,” without saying from which author he had borrowed the term. It is precisely the above text of Isaiah 162 that uses this particular term, which is a truly amazing thing, since it is an example of a *hapax legomenon* [ἄπαξ λεγόμενον – meaning “(something) said (only) once”], an only occurrence within the entire body of ancient Greek literature.

Let us continue with the *Commentary on Isaiah*. The sign of a truly great mind is the ability to make the transition from created things to their Creator, as well as being able to see Divine Providence even in the smallest of creatures:

A truly great mind is one that contemplates great realities, one that is capable of penetrating into the reasons (*logoi*)²³ of created

¹⁹ Cf. ORIGENE, *CommCt prol.* (GCS, Origenes VIII, 75-79).

²⁰ In *HomPs.* 32,7 (PG 29,341A), Basil enumerates as the parts of philosophy, logic, ethics, science of nature and *epoptikē* (that is metaphysics). In *HomPs.* 44,9 (PG 29,408C) he speaks of the disciplines of ethics, physics and *epoptikē*.

²¹ In *De Spir. s.* 18,47 (PG 32,153A9), Basil speaks of *epoptikē dynamis*. Concerning the adjective *enoptikos*, certaining borrowed from Origen, cf. RENDINA, *La contemplazione*, 27. This adjective is absent in Philo.

²² M. GIRARDI, *Basilio interprete della Scrittura*. Lessico, principi ermeneutici, passi, Edipuglia, Bari 1998, 44.

²³ On the concept of the “*logos* of things”, cf. J. LEMAITRE, in *DSp* 2,1818-1824.

things, and they understand the beauty of the Creator's wisdom in the universe. A great mind is capable of penetrating the arrangement of things created by God and His Providence, which extends unto the most minute of creatures, and from them to contemplate His righteous judgments. A great mind understands the King of glory and power of the Lord through the angels, the powers and all the glory that surrounds the heavenly realities (*In Is.* 237; PG 30, 536A).²⁴

His sermon on Psalm 28 echoes this text:

He gives glory [to God]; i.e., he, who is able to give the reasons according to which the universe was created and is maintained by [God's] Providence, which extends to smallest of creatures, and how, after this present economy, judgement will be carried out. He, who with clear and sound reasoning, is able to contemplate individual realities and, after having contemplated them, is able to present to others what pertains to God's goodness and just judgements. These persons, who live in accordance with such contemplation, bring glory and honour to the Lord (*HomPs.* 28,2; PG 29,285A).

Equally, in the *Hexameron*:

May He, Who has given us the intelligence to recognise the great wisdom of the Artist in the smallest things of creation, grant us to perceive even greater things and conceive still higher thoughts concerning the Creator (*Hex.* 6,11,9, Naldini 206).

Ultimately, it is about knowing how to listen to the voice of creation, according to words of the Psalm:

The heavens declare the God's glory (*Ps.* 18,2): why don't they [the heavens] send an audible voice to our ear. Yet, he, who investigates the reasons (*logoi*) of the world's constitution and discovers the qualities of the celestial bodies, gives them a kind of voice and he learns to recognize [in them] the greatness of the Creator's glory. At this the prophet invites us: *Lift up your eyes and see Him, who has manifested to us all of these things* (*Is* 40,26). In fact, raising one's eyes means to contemplate profoundly and arrive at knowledge of the One, Who has created them, through these visible realities (*In Is.* 162; PG 30, 385B).

There is also a wrong way to observe nature, i.e., not for religious or scientific purposes, but through superstition. These are the devotees of astrology, who monitor the movement of the stars, thinking that they know in advance the unfolding of human affairs. For Basil, this is not true knowledge:

This is the doctrine of the principles of this world, totally dedicated to the examination of the stars, their movements, their

²⁴ On the concept of Providence in Basil, cf. B. PETRÀ, *Provvidenza e vita morale nel pensiero di Basilio il Grande*. Pars dissert. ad doct. in Theol. Moral., Roma 1983.

constellations and configurations, affirming that the cause of human events depends upon them (*In Is.* 191; PG 30, 448A).

This pseudo-science feeds belief in fate and destiny and diverts away from faith in Providence and prayer:

Everyone, who gives importance to the circumstances around nativities and takes into account the necessity of both fate and destiny, draw people away from faith in God and true religion [...]. They subject human events to the influence of the constellations, and so deny that human affairs are governed by Providence. Thus, neither prayer nor religion serve any purpose; and even if these sometimes seem to be effective, they are, in fact, inevitably subjected to the law of fate (*In Is.* 275; PG 30, 601C-604A).

In the *Hexameron*, homily VI, Basil criticises at length those who give credence to astrology, as if there was a relationship between the stars and a person's fate in life:

But those who overstep the borders, making the words of Scripture their apology for the art of divining about nativities, pretend that our lives depend upon the motion of the heavenly bodies, and that the what Chaldeans read in the planets will indeed happen to us. By these very simple words *let them [the celestial bodes] be for signs* (*Gen* 1,14), they understand neither the variations of the weather, nor the changes of seasons; they only see in them, at the will of their imagination, the distribution of human destinies. What do they say in reality? When the planets cross in the signs of the zodiac, certain configurations formed by their meeting give birth a certain destiny, and another configuration would produce a different destiny (*Hex.* 6,5,1-2; Naldini 178-180).

At this point someone might ask whether this conception of “natural contemplation” in Basil is too philosophical and not Christological enough. In fact, in the texts that we have seen, they elevate the natural ability of the human mind to a level rarely found in ordinary people and society, i.e., to a level free from the influence of passions and superstitions. According to the Christian doctrine taught by Basil, only the grace of Christ, i.e., his Spirit, restores man to his original dignity and, therefore, to the right use of reason. Hence, the grace of Christ is necessary for “natural contemplation.”

Towards Him [= Holy Spirit] turn all things needing sanctification, to Whom tend all things that live in virtue, as being watered by His inspiration and helped on toward their natural and proper end. [...] He is the fount of sanctification and intellectual light, supplying, as it were, through Himself, illumination to every rational faculty in the search for truth (*De Spir.* S. 9,22; ed. B. Pruche, SCh 17 bis, 324).

Thus, there is no purification of the soul without the grace of the Holy Spirit:

Now the Spirit does not inhabit the soul in spacial sense. How indeed could the corporeal approach the incorporeal? This inhabitation results from the withdrawal of the passions which, coming afterwards gradually on the soul from its friendship to the flesh, have alienated it from its close relationship with God. Only then, after a man is purified from shame, whose stain he took through his own wickedness, and has come back again to his own natural beauty, as if he was polishing his Royal Image and restoring its ancient form, only, thus, is it possible for him to draw near to the Paraclete. And He, like the sun, will by the aid of thy purified eye show you in Himself the image of the invisible, and in the blessed spectacle of the image you will behold the unspeakable beauty of the archetype (*Ib.*, 9,23; *SCh* 17 bis, 326-328).

Once again the difference with the previous texts seems very small, especially considering the many allusions to Plotinus,²⁵ but this Spirit cannot be other than the Spirit of Christ, poured out from the Father. The action of the Spirit is one with that of Christ, Who purifies and sanctifies through the Spirit, because the Trinity is undivided. Therefore, we can affirm:

The passions, which previously dominated life through conflicts and turmoil, were removed by the peace of Christ, who pacified all earthly and heavenly beings by reconciling them to Himself (cf. *Col* 1,20)» (*In Is.* 250; *PG* 30, 560A).

This purified sight is able to perceive not only the divine beauty, but also the beauty of the Cross despised in the universe:

Why was the economy of the Incarnation accomplished through the Cross? Because those saved were collected from the four parts of the earth (cf. *Mt* 24:31). In fact, the cross is divided into four parts in order to touch the four parts of the cosmos. Hence, the chosen death on the cross was so that all parts of the cosmos, through the four parts of the cross, can participate in salvation. Another reason could be that besides the wooden cross, there was an intelligible cross etched into the cosmos, since the four parts of the universe touch at the center, and, thus, from the center energy extends into its four parts (*In Is.* 249; *PG* 30, 557B).²⁶

The coming of Christ and the Cross have eliminated idolatry and superstition:

In fact, after the coming of Christ the worship the statues ceased [...]. With the appearance of the light [of Christ], they finally saw what had previously been hidden in the darkness of ignorance; i.e., wood is only wood, stone is only stone, without being deceived by their external form, their natural substance was recognised. The advent of Christ, which is the salvation of the whole world, was terrible to the demons. Today, those famous

²⁵ See the notes of B. Pruche in *SCh* 17 bis, 324-329.

²⁶ On the cosmic cross, cf. Justin, *IApol.* 60,5 (ed. Ch. Munier, *SCh* 507, 286).

places, those workshops of deception, are abandoned. Delphi is no more; there are no more oracles; the prophet is silenced; they continue to drink from the fountain of Castalia, but those who drink do not fall into ecstasy;²⁷ Amphiaraus is on the run;²⁸ Amphilochus is gone; their statues are gone. Even the invisible powers have withdrawn faced with the fear of the Lord and the glory of His strength. When the cross is named, idols are put to flight (*In Is.* 96; PG 30, 273D-276B).

Another salutary effect of the coming of Christ is peace among the nations, the fruit of true wisdom:

And nation will not take up sword against nation (*Is* 2:4). Until the fiery words of wisdom operated in the world, nations rose up against each other, pointing at one another words like swords, finely honed, brilliant in thoughtful eloquence. But when he [Christ], our Peace (*Eph* 2:14), came, glory to God in the highest heavens and peace on earth was proclaimed (*Lk* 2:14); then, all lies fell silent in the face of truth. As suddenly as birds cease to chirp at the appearance of an eagle above, so the nations ceased to throw words at one another. Some had declared that there was no Providence, others said that it only extends to the moon; likewise, concerning the soul, some wanted to prove that it was mortal, others that it was immortal; similarly, concerning fate, some declared that it dominated everything, others held that it did not exist. But when “the foolishness of preaching” came (cf. 1 Cor 1:21), the crucifixion was glorified, and we came to believe in the resurrection and the last judgement; thus, the nations ended their wars and lived in peace (*In Is.* 75; PG 30, 244C-245A).

Conclusion – Summary

Basing himself on the texts of Scripture, Basil affirms, without any hesitation, the human mind’s natural capacity to have a “contemplative” vision of the cosmos; namely, from the order of things and from sensible beauty we can raise up our minds to God and Beauty Itself. In this way, the Bishop of Caesarea is well within the most-pure classical tradition, from Plato to Plotinus, although with important correctives.²⁹ While the path traced by the platonists was

²⁷ The “prophet” is evidently Pythia, who worked at Delphi, near the spring of Castalia. Cf. ORIGENE, *C.Cels.* 7,3.

²⁸ Amphiaraus and Amphilochus were two soothsayers; the first was forced by the Thebans to flee, the second, the son of first, was killed by Apollo.

²⁹ Aristotle had grasped the “divine” character inherent in the scientific observation of nature. Cf *De Part. anim.* 1.5 "it would be really childish to draw back from studying even the smallest of beings. Since, in all the works of nature, and this can be applied to all beings without exception, there is always cause for admiration. These words attributed to Heraclitus, Aristotle gave in response to some foreigners, who came to visit and speak with him. When they found him

progressively a separation of the soul from the sensible, Basil (in the wake of Theophilus and Irenaeus) adopts the Christological way, centered on the mystery of the Incarnation, which has as its goal as the sanctification and glorification of the whole man, including the cosmos, through the gift of the Holy Spirit. In fact, the natural capacity of contemplation is constantly blurred either through the misuse of creatures (eg. alcoholism) or by superstition (e.g. astrology). Only by the grace of the Spirit, the fruit of the Cross of Christ, can man free himself completely from passions and superstitions, and recover the right use of his reason, which is ultimately created to know God and share in His life.

warming himself at the kitchen fire, the philosopher told them: “Enter without fear, come in. The gods are in here just as they are everywhere.”

THE WORD OF GOD IN THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ST BASIL: POVERTY

Very Rev. Basil Koubetch, OSBM
Protoarchimandrite Emeritus

1. Introduction: Some General Principles of Basilian Poverty

Saint Basil is particularly demanding regarding poverty. As was previously noted in my first conference, he is ‘radical’ inasmuch as Christ’s gospel is ‘radical.’ St. Basil’s teaching about poverty (and similarly about the other moral virtues) is fully grounded in Sacred Scripture.

In his evangelical directives, our founder actually does not distinguish between ‘commandment’ and ‘counsel.’ He treats every word of God as an obligatory commandment for each and every Christian.

Consequently, St. Basil’s teaching about poverty does not belong strictly to the realm of monasticism. His teaching about poverty is directed to all the baptized,¹ as is the Word of God.²

The tragic social climate of 368-369, marked by a drought and famine that spread throughout all of Cappadocia, certainly influenced St. Basil’s sensitivity to the needs of the poor. In his discourses, he manifests solidarity with those who needed the basics to survive. During this general famine, St. Basil could not accept that a certain few were growing wealthier. He considered this to be a social injustice and therefore severely reprimanded the rich. St. Basil was convinced that the storing and withholding of the necessities of one’s neighbour for personal gain is a great offense against the commandment of the love of God and neighbour.³

The concept of detachment from wealth in St. Basil is intimately tied to the concept of mercy and love of neighbour.

In the light of the example of the first Christian community (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37), St. Basil tightly unites the concept of poverty to the concept of community. All possessions should be given for the use of the entire community.

¹ Cf. Basilio di Cesarea, *Il Battesimo*, text, translation, Introduction and Comments by ed. U. NERI (Brescia: Ed. Paideia, 1976), 77-80. «I sacramenti esigono dunque una vita evangelica pura e integrale: senza ostacoli che vi si frappongano, senza sconti o interpretazioni di comodo» (*ibid.*, 77).

² Cf. for example Homily VI (*On the words of Luke: 12, 16-21*) : VI. Гомілія до слів Луки «розберу мої стодоли, більши побудую» (Лк 12,16-21), and also about avarice, Homily VII (*On the Rich Man*); Гомілія до багатих; in НАУКИ СВ. ВАСИЛІЯ ДЛЯ НАРОДУ, (Глен Ков, Н.Й., 1954), 70-94.

³ Cf. VII. Гомілія до багатих (*On the Rich Man*); *ibid.*

Who is poor in spirit? On the one hand, St. Basil considers all the poor to be ‘poor in spirit,’ regardless if they have become so freely according to our Lord’s teaching or for some other reason: “Those are poor in spirit, who have become that way, for no other reason, than by conformity to the teaching of the Lord, who said: ‘Go and sell whatever you have, give it to the poor, and you will have a reward in heaven’ (Matt. 19:21). One is not far from beatitude, if one accepts poverty —by whatever means it comes— and lives according to God’s will, as did poor Lazarus (Lk 16:20-21).”⁴ Nevertheless, everyone must eliminate avarice. When a person has not cleansed his heart of the excess desire for material goods, then material poverty has nothing in common with the evangelical spirit of poverty. In the words of St. Basil: “Poverty is not always desirable, except when it is freely chosen, in accordance with the evangelical counsel. Many are indeed poor, but in spirit some are extremely avaricious and thus they are not saved through their poverty, but are judged according to their vice. Therefore, not every poor person is worthy of praise, but only the one who considers the command of Christ to be of greater value than the treasures of this earth. It is these that the Lord calls happy and blessed, when exclaiming: *Blessed are the poor in spirit* (Matt. 5:3).”⁵

The **general principle of St. Basil’s teachings** is: “Our entire life has but one goal and only one rule: to observe the commandments of God according to God’s pleasure.”⁶ The person who truly loves God above all else and one’s neighbour as oneself is free of any material obstacles in serving God. St. Basil illustrates this very resoluteness, exemplary faith and Christian conduct in his Moral Rules. Rule 2: “It is impossible for a man to serve God when he concerns himself with affairs that are contrary to piety (...). It is impossible for a man to become a disciple of the Lord, when he is attached to any temporal goods or retains something, even in some small way that is opposed to God’s commandment.”⁷ These words are supported by the following biblical texts: “*No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other*” (Matt. 6:24); “*Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me*” (Mat. 10:37); “*Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life, will lose it...*” (Matt. 16:24-25).⁸ This is the thread that binds St. Basil’s ascetical works and unifies them into a whole.

⁴ *The Shorter Rules* – Question 205 in A. ŠEPTYCKYJ, *Аскетичні твори Св. Отця нашого Василія Великого* (ATB), (Рим: Видавництво ОО. Василіян, 1989), 321.

⁵ Гомілія на Псалом 33, 5 (*Homily on Psalm 33, 5*), in Св. Василій Великий - Гомілії на Псалми (ВГП), Укрایнська Духовна Бібліотека – ч-53, (Нью Йорк: Видавництво ОО. Василіян, 1979), 128.

⁶ *The Wider Rules* – Question 5, 3 (ATB), 155.

⁷ ATB, 44-45. Cf. Basilio di Cesarea, *Regole Morali: Catechesi evangelica della vita cristiana*, ed. U. NERI, (Roma: Ed. Città Nuova, 1996), 98-99.

⁸ Ibid.

2. The Basilian Concept of Possessions

“Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common” (Acts 4:32). The reflection of this text is actually present in all of St. Basil’s discourses concerning poverty. Material goods are not evil in themselves. They are good and necessary for life, they are gifts from God.⁹ Nevertheless, material goods are not designed for the individual, but for the common good, that is for all. Therefore, according to the understanding of St. Basil, material wealth has a communal and social nature and role. The proof of this is the Basiliad,¹⁰ which St. Basil established near Caesarea on his own lands for the purpose of helping the poor and all those who find themselves in need. Material goods are good only if they are used for the common good and not privately. This truth was understood by St. Basil in the Word of God, that is in the Scriptures, and he teaches the same in his words and the example of his life.¹¹

Keeping all this in mind, St. Basil then compares the finality of temporal goods and the priority of eternal goods. He teaches that temporal goods do not belong to us, and that they are not an essential part of a human being, but rather the soul is what makes us who we are. For example, St. Basil underscores that the soul is more essential to a person than one’s own offspring; hence, one must care more about the salvation of one’s soul, than for the welfare of one’s own children.¹²

In the light of St. Basil’s teachings and life, we can draw the following conclusions in accordance with Sacred Scripture: we may make ***reasonable use*** of material goods, in the spirit of the common good, and that there are to be ***no personal or individual holdings***.

3. Luke 12:16-21

This text about the rich man, whose lands brought him enormous harvests, St. Basil applies to the life of Christians in his sixth homily,¹³ along

⁹ In his work *On Baptism*, St. Basil quotes I Tm 4, 4: “**For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.**” Cf. Basilio di Cesarea, *Il Battesimo*, 80.

¹⁰ P. FEDIUK, *Святий Василій Великий і християнське аскетичне життя*, in ANALECTA OSBM, (Roma-Toronto 1978), 162.

¹¹ Про природу речей (*On the Nature of Things*); cf. *The Shorter Rules – Question 92* (ATB), 275.

¹² Cf. VII. Гомілія до багатих, 91 (Homily VII - *On the Rich Man*).

¹³ Ibid. 70-79.

with other biblical texts. We can synthesize this exegesis with the following points and texts.

The Lord did not bless the rich man with excessive wealth in order that he gather it in bigger and better granaries, but that he share it with others. “The gracious Lord desired to turn his heart toward generosity and kindness.”¹⁴ For the Lord send the rain and sun upon both the righteous and unrighteous (Mt. 5:45). The Lord tells us to do likewise. St. Basil quotes the ‘commandments’ that the rich man neglected: “*Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due*” (Proverbs 3:27); “*Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you*” (Proverbs 3:3); “*Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house*” (Is 58:7).

The greedy rich man does not wish to share his bread. He is disturbed and does not know what to do. He asks himself: What shall I do? St. Basil describes the tragic state of this rich man and compares it to “the gluttons, who would rather burst from overeating than share the scraps that fall from their tables with the poor.”¹⁵ This man is alone and unhappy, because he thinks only of himself.

In order to avoid such a sorrow, St. Basil draws on the example from the earth itself: “Follow the example of the earth! Bring forth fruits as it does and don’t be worse than inanimate things! The earth brings forth fruits, not for its own use, but for your benefit.”¹⁶ He bases this thought on such biblical texts as: “*Sow for yourselves justice*” (Hosea 10:12); “*A good name is more desirable than great riches*” (Proverbs 22:1); “*You sent deliverance to your people, ratified your covenant forever*” (Psalm 112:9); “*He, who monopolizes grain, the people curse*” (Proverbs 11:26). In the light of this, it’s worthwhile to keep in mind Basil’s sensitivity to the conditions suffered during hard times which he characterizes with such expressions as: “Don’t wait for hunger as if it were gold. Don’t think of general deficiency as an excuse for your own excess. Don’t trade in human misery so that using it you can gain money for yourself; you would be giving cause for Divine anger. Don’t deepen the wounds of those who have experienced hard times. While your eyes search for gold, you don’t even see your neighbour. You know how to economize and can distinguish a good from a false investment, but your neighbour, who is in dire straits, you don’t even want to know.”¹⁷ There are still other biblical texts that Basil employs as a basis for this homily: “*Though wealth increase, do not set your heart upon it*” (Ps. 62:11), “*store treasures in heaven*” (Mt 6:20) and concerning the General Judgment (Mt 25:21-46).¹⁸

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 72.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 73-74.

¹⁸ Ibid., 75-79.

4. Mt 19:16-26 (cf. Lk. 18: 18-30)

St. Basil's seventh homily¹⁹ is not so much dedicated to a commentary on a given text, but rather an application to everyday life. He uses the rhetorical method of a dialogue with the rich young man in the context of the years of famine and hunger, where the need to share one's goods was impossible to ignore. In reality, St. Basil paints the wealthy youth as one living among those who were desperately poor. This beautiful and clear lesson concerning poverty is totally grounded in the Word of God. I would like to summarize it in a few points.

To begin with, St. Basil describes the qualities of the wealthy young man, whom Scripture on the one hand praises, yet, on the other, presents him as hapless and hopeless. His positive attributes: the young man recognizes the true Teacher and calls Him the only true and good, which is far from the arrogance of the Pharisees; he is especially solicitous about gaining eternal life. His negative attributes: he is a tempter, asking cunning questions; he doesn't care about the true good, but only about that which is pleasing to others; he doesn't take to heart the salvific sayings that he has already heard from the true Teacher; blinded by the passion of greed, he goes away sad, since he possesses an unstable character and a divided soul; he contradicts himself, referring to Our Lord as a Teacher, yet refusing to be a disciple; he calls Our Lord good, yet refuses to accept what is offered by Him; he inquires about eternal life, but shows himself to be totally given to the temporary pleasures of this life.

After this description of the youth's personal traits, St. Basil then turns to him as a prosecutor, handing down a harsh verdict. The man's observance of the commandments from his youth have been 'worthless,' for he refuses to do what is lacking in order to enter God's Kingdom. Throughout this dialogue, St. Basil is convinced that this youth was all along deceiving himself. In reality, he was far from observing the commandment of loving his neighbour as himself. Here are the reasons behind such a conviction: 1) He goes away sad, when the Teacher commands him to sell his treasure and give to the poor; 2) the very fact that he is rich is proof that he does not love his neighbour and does not care for the poor, because "caring for the poor eats up one's treasure;" 3) he places his own comfort above that of appeasing the common need of those around him, for money clings tighter to him than the very parts of his body; 4) he pines after temporal goods and transitional wealth ("rocks and dust") that should be shared with those in need, thus, obtaining eternal life.

In the second part of this homily, St. Basil questions the very goal of wealth. He paints the conduct of the rich, especially their self-perception as insufficiently wealthy, and their spirit of consumerism. They are always seeking to hoard ever more material goods, greater and more beautiful property, while dreaming up new needs for greater consumption. As a result, all these "things designated for simple use transgress all measure of real necessity." He terms this greed as "artificial and dreamt up by the devil himself."

¹⁹ Ibid., 80-94.

Using as his foundation the Lord's words, "Where your treasure is there is your heart" (Mt. 6:21) and "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God" (Lk. 18:25), St. Basil —in the third part of this Homily— very forcefully condemns the hoarding of earthly wealth, and hiding it as though saying to oneself "we don't know what's ahead of us! There could easily arise unexpected incidents." To the wealthy youth, he answers: "I believe that in burying your treasures, you have also buried your heart!"

Although he does not cite the text concerning the General Judgment (**Mt. 25:31-46**), nevertheless, in the fourth part of this homily, St. Basil dedicates special attention to Divine Judgment that awaits those who possess excess and unnecessary wealth, and have ignored or forgotten their neighbour in need of the essentials for life.

In the fifth part of the homily, St. Basil addresses avarice. In the greedy, he envisages misery and distress in the present, not only in the future. The reason for this he ascribes to "insatiable human passion." The greedy are not happy with the goods they have, nor do they really take pleasure in them. Rather they worry about that which they think they are still lacking. Whatever the eye of the avaricious sees, it longs to have. The words of the prophet Isaiah, thus, become a reality: "*Woe to you who join house to house, who add field to field! Thus there will be no more room for you who remain alone in the land*" (Is. 5:8).

In the sixth part of the homily, he underlines the future fate of the greedy. The hoarded, unnecessary things, useless to life itself, he calls "material for eternal fire." Here he once again bases his teachings on the General Judgment (Mt. 25:31-46) for no other reason than simply to remind us of that day, when "*God's wrath will be revealed from the heavens*" (Rm. 1:18), when "*those who have done good will rise to the resurrection of life. Those who have done evil will rise to judgment*" (Jn. 5:29), when there will come "*flaming revenge, which will devour the rebellious*" (Heb. 10:27).

The seventh part of this homily actually unites the preceding two parts (5th and 6th) with certain conclusions. When treating the nature of wealth, St. Basil underlines its inability to prolong our life or even to help us avoid illness. On the basis of the book of Ecclesiastes, "*There is a great evil that I found under the sun, the rich man who kept his wealth unto his own harm*" and "*I will leave it to my successor. Who knows whether he will be foolish or wise?*" (5:12, 2:18-19). The practice of leaving an inheritance for our children, St. Basil calls a "trick of the greedy" and instead underlines the question of the salvation of the individual soul: "Is your immortal soul not more important to you than all of your children put together (...); who will have mercy on your soul if you neglect it?"

However, in the eighth part of the homily, St. Basil takes into consideration "those who have no children" and accumulate wealth for themselves, resolving to leave behind a 'testament' for the poor and needy as the inheritors of their wealth. Convinced that "once life is over, this is not the time

and place for good deeds,” St. Basil not only rejects such an argument, he outright condemns it.

Finally, St. Basil grounds his conclusions on the following biblical texts: “Remember my son that in your lifetime you were well off” (Lk. 16:25); “Do not fool yourselves! God cannot be deceived! You reap what you sow!” (Gal. 6:7). He is convinced, that the rich young man of the gospels—as well as all those who commit the above mentioned blunders—fool only themselves. In place of this selfishness, he calls for an imitation of Christ, especially keeping in mind that He “for our sake though He was rich made Himself poor to make you rich through His poverty” (II Cor. 8:9) and “He gave His very life for the redemption of all” (I Tim. 2:6).

5. Poverty – Gathering Treasures in Heaven

On the basis of God’s Word, St. Basil is convinced that “our greatest happiness does not consist in transitory and fleeting goods. We are called to share in true and eternal goods. For this reason the rich man should not be considered as wealthy on account of his wealth alone...”²⁰

The commandment of love of God is the measure according to which we must regulate our lives. This is why St. Basil writes: “Heavenly treasure is the only treasure to which we can entrust our whole heart because *where is your treasure, there will be also your heart* (**Mt. 6:21**). If in this world we amass for ourselves any possessions or perishable wealth, our mind will inevitably be buried in them as if in mud. In this way, our soul will not be able to see God. A soul in this state is insensitive toward the eternal goods and the promised reward in heaven. The way that leads to these eternal goods is a strong and free desire that makes our hard work—necessary for their attainment—much easier.”²¹

It is important for us to consistently approach our work out of love for God. “We should not lose ourselves in unnecessary work and overstep the boundaries of self-sufficiency, according to the words of the Apostle: “We should be content with having food and clothing” (I Tim. 6:8). To desire more than we need becomes greed and avarice can bring judgment against us as idolaters. Therefore, it does us no good to be greedy for money, nor to store up riches for unnecessary things. For whoever comes to God should maintain poverty and be filled with the fear of God in keeping with the words of psalmist: “For my body trembles in fear before you, for I fear your judgment” (Ps. 119:120).”²²

As a result, we should embrace poverty in the spirit of gathering treasures in heaven and the Christian receives other blessings as well as

²⁰ XI. Про заздрість (*Homily XI – On Envy*), in *НАУКИ СВ. ВАСИЛІЯ ДЛЯ НАРОДУ*, 142.

²¹ *The Wider Rules – Question 8, 1, 3* (ATB), 163.

²² Лист 9, 3 (22), *Про досконалість чернечого життя* (*Letter 9 – On the Perfection of Monastic Life*), in *Вибрані листи св. Василія Великого* (ВЛВ), Українська Духовна Бібліотека, (Нью Йорк: Видавництво ОО. Василіян, 1964), 44.

forgiveness of sins. “In reality, a balanced and wise approach to money and its use in keeping with the commandment is beneficial for us in many instances and under many circumstances. This helps us to free ourselves of personal sins.”²³

6. Poverty—The Common Good

Saint Basil’s understanding of the communal aspect of poverty is based on the example of the early Christian community (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37). The early Christians were “of one heart” – this means that they lived for love of God and as a result they had a mutual love for each other; “*they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area*” (2:47) and were of “one mind” (4:32) and each of them lived according to the teachings of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 14:26 & 14:12),²⁴ Who reminded them of everything that Jesus Christ commanded them during His earthly ministry. This is the foundation of Basilian asceticism.

For this reason, St. Basil teaches that in communal living nothing should be considered as personal property, but rather that all things serve the needs of the community rather than the needs of the individual. “To consider something as personal property goes against the testimony of the Acts of the Apostles, where it is written: “*No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they held everything in common*” (Acts 4:32). For anyone, who claims something as his own separates himself from God’s Church and from the love of Christ, who taught us by His word and example to give up our lives for our friends (cf. John 15:13). If we are asked to sacrifice our lives, how much more are we to sacrifice our material things.”²⁵

As a synthesis and conclusion for this part of my work, I recommend the work by Fr. Stefan Batruch, who gives a clear presentation of poverty as a Christian moral virtue.²⁶

²³ *The Shorter Rules* – Question 92 (ATB), 275.

²⁴ Cited in *The Shorter Rules* – Question 205 (ATB), 321.

²⁵ *The Shorter Rules* – Question 85 (ATB), 273.

²⁶ Cf. BATRUCH, Stefan – БАТРУХ, о. Степан, *Модель християнського життя у творах св. Василія Великого*, (Львів: Вид. „Свічадо,” 2007), 74-77.

THE ECCLESIAL DIMENSION OF MONASTIC LIFE IN THE THOUGHT OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT

Very Rev. Archimandrite Manel Nin, OSB

The subject of this conference, as suggested by its title—“The Ecclesial Dimension of Monastic Life in the Thought of St. Basil the Great”—is broad and, at the same time, slightly misleading, since St. Basil was a man immersed in the life of the Church, but he was not a monastic “legislator” in the same sense that we have been used to from the Middle Ages onwards. In his *Rules*, Basil sets out “parameters” for the evangelical behavior of celibates living in community, who we call “monks” and “nuns.” Basil does not use the term “monastic,” however, to describe this reality. For him, the recipients of his texts are “Christians” or simply “brethren,” not because Basil believed that only Christians were those who led a “monastic” or “consecrated” life (in the increasingly Imperial Church) but because he considered the Christian vocation to be only one in Christ—the Gospel as lived out within the Church’s communion.¹

In proposing this topic on St. Basil’s labour within the Church, we cannot help but mention his relation to the ascetical movement centred around Eustathius of Sebaste and Messalianism, from which Basil certainly borrowed elements that were valid, such as the evangelical radicalism that marked this movement, but he also distances himself from the movement’s stress (almost radicalisation) on celibacy and prayer, condemning any type of *fuga Ecclesiae*, which valued the monastic experience over and above an ecclesial and sacramental life. For Basil, there is no chance of giving way to a Church that does not stand on the criteria of the Nicene Creed, and merely claims to be founded on an all-encompassing spiritual experience that reduces the value of ecclesial life. In a certain manner, Basil expresses—without citation—the canon of the Council of Gangra, which states: “If someone creates a separate church, outside of the Church, despising the Church and performing acts of the Church in the absence of a priest approved by a bishop, may he be anathema!”²

The relationship between monasticism and the local church is close, as is the relationship between bishops and monks. By this, I would like to indicate the intrinsic (but not always peaceful) relation that binds the beginning of monasticism to the local church. Anthony was committed in the fight against Arianism, travelling twice to Alexandria in support of Athanasius. Ephrem of Nisibis, although not a monk, was presented to the bishops of Nisibis—whom he served as a deacon—with the virtues that adorned ascetics and monks. In his Cathedral Homilies, Severus of Antioch was described as a bishop full of zeal for monastic life and labour. There is also the commitment of the Palestinian monks during the Christological controversies of the V-VI centuries. I can also cite many cases of monks that became bishops and the examples of bishops—not

¹ E. BIANCHI (presentation) in BASILIO DI CESAREA, *Le regole*, (Bose: Qiqajon, 1993), 10.

² Ibid., 11.

monastics prior to the episcopacy—who composed rules for monks: Athanasius of Alexandria within the Egyptian context, Philoxenus of Mabbug and Severus of Antioch within the Syrian context.

Biography

Basil was born around 330 in Pontus. He had a brilliant formation in rhetoric at Caesarea, Constantinople and Athens, where he met Gregory (Nazianzen) and was bound to him in deep friendship. Basil was baptized around 358. In Anessi, along with his mother, his brother Gregory (of Nyssa) and his sister Macrina, he began to lead a monastic life. These were the years in which Basil came to know the more radical ascetic movements such as Messalianism, together with its leader, Eustathius of Sebaste. Although he did not agree with every aspect of these rigorists; nevertheless, he had a great sympathy for them. After journeying through Syria and Egypt in order to discover how monasticism was practised there, he wrote his *Moral Rules*, a compendium of 1500 verses from the New Testament, by which he sought to illustrate the life and behaviour of Christians.

Together with Gregory of Nazianzus he composed the *Philokalia* of Origen, a collection of texts from the great Alexandrian father, mainly exegetical in character.

Despite difficulties (jealousy?) with his bishop, around 364/365 he was ordained a priest. During this period, he wrote the anti-Arian treatise *Against Eunomius*.

The ascetic communities of Cappadocia, which were prior to Basil, he supported them, while they supported him. Often he was asked for explanations and his interpretation of the Gospels. A collection of his responses called the *Asketikon* was compiled. Two versions, one in Latin and the other in Syrian, have come down to us and are called the *Small Asketikon*, which is the first draft of these responses. The Latin version was known to St. Benedict. The Greek text was lost. There is a Greek version of the *Great Asketikon*, which is basically the *Small Asketikon* with a few chapters less and the addition of some other responses by the author. Within the *Great Asketikon* are both the *Longer* and *Shorter Rules*.

In 370, the bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia died. The episcopate and the clergy of the region were in strong opposition to Basil's nomination as bishop of the city, but he—together with a group of ascetics—gave precedence to his candidacy “with a force so convincing”—Gribomont notes—“that it scandalized his friend Gregory of Nazianzus, who was given more to mysticism and poetry, and not to such intrigues and passion for power.” The theological positions of Basil led to communion with Athanasius of Alexandria and the West.

During his episcopacy, he continued to labour as a preacher, as well as carry out other charitable deeds and social works. His *Homilies on the Psalms*

are from the last period of his priesthood and the early part of his episcopacy. The *Homilies on the Hexaemeron* are from the last few years of his episcopacy.

Basil's ecclesiology gives space to the great ascetic ideal, without falling into the extremes of the Messalians. In his correspondence, Basil appears as a person engaged in seeking full communion between churches. Even at the dogmatic level, Basil tried to always create communion, without imposing any positions that were not deemed essential. Around 373, he wrote the tractate *On the Holy Spirit*.

He died on 1 January 379, at the age of fifty.

St. Basil the Great and Monastic Life

We should ask ourselves whether, for Basil, the monastic life existed as something special within the life of the Christian churches and what was its essence. A complete answer to these questions are not found in Basil's works, although in the *Rules*, written for the Christian brotherhood, there are purely monastic aspects and, in some of his letters (to Gregory of Nazianzus and to the nun Theodora), we find a true *forma vitae monasticae*.

For Basil, the foundation of Christian life in a monastic brotherhood is virginity; celibacy (*parthenia, agamìa*)³ and a stable life together in a fraternal community (*koinonia*)⁴, sealed by a profession to be faithful. Another important theme in Basilian monastic literature is renunciation (*apotaghè*), which allows the brother/monk to enter a life according to God, by renouncing the devil, worldly goods and eventually even himself,⁵ and, thus, becoming like unto Christ, who being rich became poor. Configuration to Christ, by embracing a life according to His Gospel, is a theme that is very present in Basil's works.⁶

Another Basilian theme is that of vigilance (he created a new word—*ameteoriston* or a state of non-distraction). With an inner state of disipation one cannot live in the presence of God and obtain the union of a heart dwelling in the constant mindfulness of God.⁷ Through this vigilance a Christian and, therefore, the monk, becomes a temple of God, abiding in Him, through the constant memory of God. The monk firmly fixed in meditation and contemplation of God, wastes no time in distractions⁸ and progresses with perseverance in the Lord. This is the setting for a life of celibacy.

³ Wider *Rules* (WR) 15; Cf., BASILIO DI CESAREA, *Le regole*, 129.

⁴ WR 14; Cf., BASILIO DI CESAREA, *Le regole*, 123-124.

⁵ WR 8; Cf., BASILIO DI CESAREA, *Le regole*, 107ff.

⁶ WR 8; Cf., BASILIO DI CESAREA, *Le regole*, 112-113; also WR 43, 143ff.

⁷ WR 5; Cf., BASILIO DI CESAREA, *Le regole*, 88ff.

⁸ Shorter *Rules* (SR) 306; Cf., BASILIO DI CESAREA, *Le regole*, 414-415.

Basil's "monastic" way was born and developed in Annesi. In that place, Basil tried to involve his friend, Gregory Nazianzus, who preferred, however, only "part time" monasticism.⁹ The Basilian community was located in a solitary place, not easy to find. For Basil it was the only place in the world isolated enough to protect the community from prying visitors.¹⁰

Did Basil guide or merely inspire the monastic communities? Normally, it was a double community: brothers and sisters.¹¹ Basil welcomed members who came from the Eustathian movement, correcting their excesses and emphasizing community life—in full ecclesial communion—opposed to any individualistic tendencies. The brothers led a life of work, prayer and service to the poor in fellowship with one another and in accord with the Gospel. There was manual labour¹² in the community and communal moments of prayer.¹³ The community was headed by a superior. The model of his community is that of the early church in Jerusalem, with which Basil was almost obsessed. The members of the community were not called monks, but brothers. For Basil, the vocation to celibacy and communal life were the sole purposes of evangelical life. In fact, only the *Moral Rules* (a collection of New Testament texts) have the name of the *Rule* and the rule for a Christian is the Word of God, which shapes his life. The *Ascetikon* was the result of fraternal visits Basil made—while still a priest—to various monastic communities.

Basil proposes to the brothers and sisters of his community the imitation of Christ—the one Lord. Love of God and neighbour are lived out in the Basilian community. The communal dimension is essential to help one another in the imitation of Christ. There is also the aspect of obedience to God, which becomes concrete in the obedience of the brothers to one another and to the superior of the brotherhood.

St. Basil the Great and Prayer¹⁴

One aspect that deserves to be emphasized is Basil's conception of Christian prayer. For the Bishop of Caesarea it is an attitude of Christian joy and thanksgiving, in a life subject to the will of God. In the *Wider Rules*, Basil consecrated to prayer question 37, and—one can say—he does so in a polemical context as a response to a query on work and prayer. Basil gives us a presentation of the Byzantine Divine Office, especially during the daylight

⁹ Cf., L. CREMASCHI, (Introduction) in BASILIO DI CESAREA, *Le regole*, 15.

¹⁰ Cf., L. CREMASCHI, (Introduction) in BASILIO DI CESAREA, *Le regole*, 18.

¹¹ WR 33, n. 496; Cf., BASILIO DI CESAREA, *Le regole*.

¹² WR 38; Cf., BASILIO DI CESAREA, *Le regole*.

¹³ WR 37; Cf., BASILIO DI CESAREA, *Le regole*.

¹⁴ Cf., J. GRIBOMONT, *La prière selon saint Basile*, in J. GRIBOMONT, *Saint Basile, Evangile et Eglise*, vol. II, 426ff.

hours. Starting from the Pauline text of 1 Thess. 5, 17, the choice of certain hours are linked to a theme of the gospel of Christ:

- morning prayer in praise of God’s gifts;
- prayer at the third hour in rememberance of the gift of the Holy Spirit;
- prayer at the sixth hour is based on Psalm 54:18;
- prayer at the ninth hour is based on Peter and John in Acts 3: 1;
- evening prayer in thanksgiving for the day;
- at the beginning of the night, Psalm 90;
- at dawn, at the start of a new day.

Basil has a predilection for common prayer. This is marked by the presence and use of the psalms. His employment of the psalms is “thematic.” It is not a *lectio continua* as in the monastic psalter.

St. Basil the Great and the Church of His Time

The Church in the East, during Basil’s time, can be understood as beginning with the Council of Nicaea in 325. During the fourth century, the acceptance or rejection of this council defines the various Christian churches. Basil was a Christian bishop faithful to Nicaea; but also a man who sought unity.

I would like to divide this section into two interconnected points. The first is the movement of Eustathius of Sebaste and his relationship with Basil and his asceticism. The second an analysis of the Church at the time of Basil.¹⁵

First, as regards Eustathius, who was the founder of the monastic movement in the region of Armenia and Pontus. His rigorous and evangelical radicalism attracted Basil and his family as disciples. As bishop of Sebaste, Eustathius organized centers for the poor and sick under the direction of his disciples (monks!), and even sent to Basil—when the latter became bishop of Caesarea—some of his monks to help run the center that Basil opened in his diocese. Eustathius was a spiritual father to Basil. Moreover, the monasticism of Eustathius was marked, on the one hand, by a rigorism and, on the other, an ecclesial form of “social work,” aiding the sick and needy. What were the excesses of the Eustathian rigorists? The synod of Gangra, as we mentioned above: “forbids wives to leave her family and children under the pretense of asceticism; prohibits slaves from running away from their masters [under the same pretext]; requires the observance of the Church’s terms as regards fasting; forbids the celebration of the Eucharist in private homes (hence, the liturgical celebration is always something of the Church, never private); condemns those who rejected the celebrations performed by married priests.”¹⁶ Basil appreciated the thirst for an evangelical radicalism as he witnessed in Eustathius. Basil’s mother, his sister Macrina and his brother Naucratius founded in Pontus two

¹⁵ Cf., L. CREMASCHI, (Introduction) in BASILIO DI CESAREA, *Le regole*, 23ff.

¹⁶ Cf., L. CREMASCHI, (Introduction) in BASILIO DI CESAREA, *Le regole*, 26.

ascetic groups, male and female, who followed many of the principles (rules) of Eustathius, concerning poverty, a life of prayer, community and charity to the poor. Not far from his mother's place, Basil founded his community in Annesi. Basil, however, is not uncritical of Eustathius. He balances the thirst for evangelical radicalism in Eustathius with a desire for a church that is more faithful to the Gospel, refusing any kind of sectarianism, that is a *fuga ecclesiae* and an over-ascetical enthusiasm.¹⁷ Basil will always be for the Church a man of peace and communion, sympathetic to Eustathian enthusiasm, but always seeking ecclesial communion.

Secondly, as regards the institutional Church during Basil's time; i.e., around the year 360, in which various councils debated the question of fidelity to Nicaea I, Basil suffered from the behaviour of many bishops who were not always clear about the rule of evangelical faith. These were the years in which Basil as a priest preached charity in his church and solidarity of the rich towards the poor.

In 370, Basil was elected bishop of Caesarea, an election that was contested precisely because of his fidelity to the Word of God and his life based upon the Gospel.¹⁸ As bishop, Basil was a true father to the poor, as he was already during his presbyterate in Caesarea. He condemned all usurious activities that were very common in his time. In his episcopal see, he founded a center of assistance, where over and above the charity it offered, it also provided education and culture. Basil showed a solicitude for all the churches. He was a man of theological erudition, of pastoral experience, of moral and spiritual authority. Basil was a bastion in defense of the Nicene Creed. His model was the church in Jerusalem as exemplified in the Word of God.

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¹⁷ Cf., *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁸ Cf., *Ibid.*, 36.

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INTRODUCTION TO EVAGRIUS FOR MONASTIC FORMATION TODAY

Rev. Dr. Jeremy Driscoll, OSB

I have given you an outline of what I hope to speak about today. When Sister Miriam Claire asked me to come to speak to you, she asked if I would speak about some aspect of St. Basil's monasticism. But I thought you probably know more about that than I do. It didn't seem right for me to address a topic that I was not deeply grounded in. So I asked her if I could speak about somebody who St. Basil very much influenced and who has been very much important in monastic tradition - Evagrius Ponticus. Mine is not a scholarly presentation of this important monastic figure. The time and the setting do not allow for it. But I do hope to speak of him in a way that helps you see his importance for our monastic life today.

Evagrius was born in Cappadocia in the year 354. When he was a young man, perhaps about 15 years old, his father entrusted him to Basil, Bishop of Caesarea, for his education in philosophy and religion. The relationship between them was very close, and Basil ordained him a lector in the Caesarean clergy when he was about 30 years old.

Shortly after that, Basil died and his death left Evagrius without the guide that was so important to him. He went with St. Basil's great friend, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, to the city of Constantinople for the several years that St. Gregory was in Constantinople, particularly important as a theological help to him during the Council of Constantinople in 381. As you know, that Council was critical for its definition of Trinitarian theology, and Evagrius would have certainly been very much imbued with the so called "Cappadocian" solution to the Trinitarian controversies of the time. As you probably know, St. Gregory Nazianzus was very frustrated as the Archbishop of Constantinople and left the city shortly after the Council, leaving Evagrius there without any further guide or reference.

He eventually went to Jerusalem where he tried to become a monk in the monastery of Rufinus and Melania on the Mount of Olives. His monastic conversion was not an easy one for him. We don't have time to go into details, but what is interesting about Evagrius as a person, is how difficult it was for him in the beginning to be faithful to the monastic life. He loved the life of the city. He loved the life of Constantinople and he loved the life of Jerusalem. It would seem that the monastery in Jerusalem was too close to the city for him to remain undistracted by it.

So he was advised by Melania to go to the more radical version of monastic life that could be found in the deserts of Egypt. In Egypt there were different monastic traditions already developed, and Evagrius went among the monks who would have been open to the thinking developed especially under the influence of Origen, whom Evagrius would have learned to admire through Basil and Gregory. In the desert of Egypt, Evagrius makes himself a disciple of some of the greatest monastic fathers of Egypt, most notably, Marcarius the

Great and Marcarius of Alexandria. So after some years in the desert, Evagrius began to write out this monastic tradition that he learnt there and, hence, he is the first major writer of Egyptian monastic tradition.

What Evagrius brought to that monastic tradition was the profound theological background that he had learned from Basil and Gregory, as well as their own preoccupation with the importance of the Holy Trinity in the spiritual life. I would describe Evagrius and his writings as a combination of Cappadocian Trinitarian Theology and Egyptian ascetical life.

I have prepared an outline for you that I hope can summarize the main themes of Evagrius' theology. I will go through that outline with you, only saying a few things about each point. At the end I copied a text for you where Evagrius cites St. Basil, and it is a very beautiful text in which a great deal of Evagrius' theology is summarized and attributed to St. Basil. So at least in that way I will be honoring Sr. Miriam Claire's request that I speak about St. Basil.

Let's look at the first point – what I would call the value of Evagrius in Monastic Formation. The first is that these teachings give a monastic conception of the spiritual life and its various stages. He gives us detailed information about what we would call the interior life and the many different dimensions of the interior life. In doing this he is, as I said, putting in writing for the first time the tradition and wisdom that the monks of Egypt had already developed before him.

The second point is that we have in Evagrius a guide for finding in the Scriptures very useful remedies for the onslaught of demons. I will say more about that later.

The third contribution is what I call eliciting and increasing a desire for knowledge of the Trinity and showing a way to make progress toward this by means of Christ, the incarnate Word. Here we really see the contribution of Basil and Gregory to the Egyptian desert tradition, and it comes through Evagrius. Thus, his importance.

The fourth dimension that we find is an insistence on inner practice and inner work – spiritual exercise. This too, he certainly would have learned from St. Basil from his youth. St. Basil himself was very marked in his own youth by Eustathius of Sebaste, a very strong ascetic. So that's why Evagrius is worth paying attention to in our own monastic life. He focuses the tradition, and he has been a major influence on monastic theology ever since. So that we can experience just at least a taste of his value, I have tried to summarize for you a number of principle themes from his thoughts. That is the second major division of the outline I gave you.

Let's take the first one – Rational Beings: Minds in Souls and Bodies. Look at those three words – mind, soul, body. That's us! Not three different things. We are one reality. These three words help us to understand three different dimensions of ourselves. This is a theology that goes back to Origen and that can be found, in part, in Basil's *Hexameron*.

The first word that we can talk about is the word “mind”, where Evagrius speaks of—point A — the original creation of the mind. The Greek word for mind is “nous”. It doesn’t mean your brain. It means the capacity of a human being to understand, to grasp connections, to perceive the “logos” or reason in the world. Mind in Evagrius means I am created as an icon of God to know God as Trinity and as essential unity. What did God create when he created human beings? He created a creature capable of understanding something of who God is. Who God is, is the Father, Son and Spirit. One God - and the mind is an icon, an image of God. Beautiful!

Then, the mind falls from this beautiful divine plan. And this is the second point, where we need to speak about our souls and our bodies. Now the mind is in a body and a soul. The mind had become negligent in its adherence to knowledge and disintegrates into a soul joined to a body. And so this beautiful creature created to know God as Trinity is instead a divided creature. Monasticism is thus conceived as a way, a path, to recover the original integrity of our creation.

So God in His mercy, not only adjusts to the Fall from original glory, but God also equips the soul and the body with energies that will aid us in the recovery of the original beauty. Monasticism is the place where this wisdom of recovery is taught, this wisdom of how to move now with the body, soul and mind. This wisdom is recovered in the monastic tradition. For this reason it’s useful to talk about the three parts of the soul. That’s the next point on the outline. Again - one soul, not different compartments - but three words that will help us to discover the dimensions of the soul.

This division of the soul is actually part of platonic philosophy, but already Origen and Basil and Gregory and many other Christians have taken this philosophical system into Christianity and began to use it as their own.

But let’s look at how it is used now by Evagrius inside of this monastic tradition. The rational part of the soul, as Evagrius says, is the highest and most noble part of the soul. It is a direct extension of the mind— think of all that I said about the mind as made for the knowledge of God. It’s that capacity, that inner capacity that we have to understand something, to see a connection, to see coherence. In Greek it’s called the “logikos”, - Logos it’s logos - the title of Jesus Christ. John1:1 “In the beginning was the Logos, the Logos was with God and the Logos was God.” And there is logos of the mind. There is a logos of the whole body. There is a logos of the whole creation. With the mind we perceive this logos.

The irascible is the second part of the soul. The positive dimension of the irascible part of the soul is that this is part of the inner life in which we find energy and courage to do something. It’s good energy, and it is given to us by God. He gives us this energy so that with strength we can pursue knowledge of Him. And we can do that with personality, with verve, with strength of character. We can do it in a unique way.

Let's go on to the third part of the soul—the concupiscible. The concupiscible is that part of our inner life where we desire. God has given us this energy. He has given us the desire to enjoy the beautiful world. But alas, in our fallen condition we desire wrongly and the desiring energy is out of control. So we desire too much food and we desire sex inappropriately and we desire too many pleasures that only money can buy. Again, monasticism is training in controlling these energies and learning to desire God himself with our whole being and our whole body. That is the meaning of the last sentence on your outline: "The spiritual life is conceived as a battle to establish the virtues in these different parts of the soul".

With that, let's move on to the third point of the outline, the spiritual life divided into Praktiké and Knowledge. I said in the beginning that Evagrius, in fact, is the first to transmit in writing the rich tradition already established in Egyptian monasticism. He presents this tradition to us with good order. And one of the biggest things that becomes clear in this monastic tradition is that we can distinguish two phases of the monastic life – two different stages of monastic life that are intricately interrelated. In fact, I used the Greek word "praktiké" but the English word would be "practicing – doing things". In fact, if you look back at the three parts of the soul, where we need to practice things is especially in terms of the irascible and concupiscible parts of the soul.

So praktiké is that dimension of the monastic life that involves ascetical practices. It concerns what we do with food, sex and money. What we do with anger, hatred and division. When we make some progress in praktiké, then we can attend to the ultimate goal of monastic life, which is knowledge - in Greek "gnosis".

We want to be certain that we understand this word "knowledge" and how it is used in this monastic tradition. It doesn't mean what you get from books. It doesn't mean what you get from being smart. It means the rational part of your mind is functioning as it ought. It means that you know God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It means that you can gaze on Him with your whole body, your whole being. It means that you see that you were created by God precisely for this relationship with Him. In this sense "knowledge" is the same as love because God is love. God is Love—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—and God loves me in creating me in His image. I love God, I know God if my food, sex, money, anger and relations in the community do not obscure and destroy that love and knowledge.

Let's go to the fourth point – that people's thoughts are demons and their order. This is a dimension of Evagrius' thought that is considered very important and of immense practical value for the spiritual life. Here we are talking of the details of praktiké. The spiritual life, we have already explained, is divided into two major areas. Entering into the details of the first part, called praktiké, we encounter what Evagrius called the eight evil thoughts. We don't have time today to go into this, but I list the eight thoughts that Evagrius' monastic tradition identifies as the eight major problems that you find in monastic life. They are gluttony, fornication, love of money, sadness, anger, listlessness, vainglory, pride. Again, I just want to say there is an immense

practical wisdom in his writings around this. And this wisdom is deeply rooted in the Scriptures and in a way of reading the Scriptures that he surely would have learned from St. Basil and St. Gregory.

If you turn the page, there is a fifth point. This concerns the various levels of knowledge and its details. Here Evagrius distinguishes three levels of knowledge that move in an ascending order. The first level of knowledge is knowledge of corporeals and all created things. Again, we can imagine here the influence of Basil's *Hexameron*. What does it mean, this world in which we find ourselves, this created world? What does this created world mean that, as St. Basil says, finds its climax in the created human body?

The second level is knowledge of incorporeals, providence and judgment. "Incorporeals" is a word that Evagrius uses to suggest that yes, I have a body, but there is a dimension to me that is more than the body – the incorporeal. And, when I understand that, then I am prepared for the goal of my existence – which is the third level – knowledge of the Holy Trinity.

Here you see then, that our knowledge of God is not something different, but knowledge about ourselves. When we understand why we were made – that we were made as creatures capable of knowing God, then we are ready to contemplate flesh and blood and from there ascend to a contemplation of God in himself.

So I know that's a lot, it's too much. But now let's read Evagrius on this page in which he cites St. Basil. Evagrius worked with a unique writing style, in the sense that everything he wrote was very brief. You can see that on a printed page. You see it is not a dense text. It is just four lines. With Evagrius you don't sit down and read for hours and hours. You read two or four lines and then you meditate on that for a week. The text I have given you, by Evagrius' standards, was very long. You will see, when we read it, that virtually everything that I have spoken about these five points is in this text. So I would like to read it, and read it through for you and then just point out briefly how all the themes that are spoken about, are here.

Here we are speaking explicitly of St. Basil. I will read the text.

"That column of truth, the Cappadocian Basil has said: 'the knowledge which comes from men is strengthened by careful meditation and diligent exercise; however the knowledge that by God's grace has come to be within us is strengthened by justice, by the refusal to indulge anger and by compassion. The first knowledge can be received by those still subject to passion; the second knowledge is received only by those who have achieved passionlessness (*apatheia*) – those who are also able at the time of prayer to contemplate the illuminating gentle radiance proper to their mind (*nous*).'"

Everything is there in that text. You see first he distinguishes two types of knowledge like I have just done. Let's be sure we understand the word "knowledge" in the right way. There is a knowledge you can get by careful meditation and diligent exercise. He means studying hard and reading lots of

books, like St. Basil did as a young man in Athens. But now we are speaking of a different knowledge. Look at the text. It speaks of a knowledge that comes by God's grace, strengthened by justice, by the refusal to indulge anger and by practicing compassion. Justice, refusal to indulge anger, practicing compassion—all this is *praktiké*. The first knowledge can be obtained by those still subject to passion. Anyone can do it. You can be angry and eat too much, and you can still grow in knowledge. But not so with the second kind of knowledge. Only those who have achieved *apatheia* have access to this knowledge. And then the text ends with that passionless person and a description of prayer. What do we see in prayer? The illuminating, gentle radiance proper to the mind. This is the way God created us. This is what God created us for.

EAST AND WEST: A PASSING MOMENT

Very Rev. Dr. Ivan Kaszczak

When we hear about Eastern and Western spirituality some think of great differences rooted in history, culture and ceremony. Others may think of a common heritage rooted in its Hebrew genesis and Hellenistic civilization and literature. One may acknowledge there are common roots for both East and West. So, although Latin, Syriac, Coptic and Armenian were used in the Early Christian Church it must be stated that Greek is the language of the early Church and the Fathers of the Church.¹

This commonality of the Greek language and Hebrew culture is also reflected in the Church's early bibliography such as the *Didache* which is: "the oldest Church-Order and the venerable prototype of all the later collections of Constitutions or Apostolic Canons with which ecclesiastical law in the East and the West began."²

Reflecting on the viewpoint of commonality where we share so much in common one can rightly ask: What makes East and West different? The response can be a many faceted answer. It is the changing culture, politics, worldview, philosophy and especially the emergence of monasticism which influenced so many leaders of the early church such as John Chrysostom: "But the outstanding religious development of the fourth century, very important in its influence on the early life of Chrysostom, was monasticism, which was Eastern, and specifically Egyptian, in its origin."³

This paper will not be an exhaustive study, by any means, of the difference between Eastern and Western spirituality. Instead, I have chosen to look at the Paschal mystery and highlight some specific items that speak to the differences between the two spiritualties. Perhaps this type of passing glance will give a small insight into two traditions that are still evolving. Let us begin with Jesus, in the Lucan account of the Gospel.

When Jesus needed a place for himself in the inn (*κατάλυμα*), he was turned away. He came to his own but his own did not receive him (Jn. 1). This constant effort on the part of God in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the New Testament writings to be a part of the human pilgrimage depicts God as a guest (Gn. 18:19). From the beginning, it is God who takes the initiative in the God-Human relationship. Jesus is always a guest in the homes of his followers and those who are simply curious. Even in his final resting place (*μνημειον* - Matt. 27:60), it is as if he were a guest. This is spelled out in *Dei Verbum* 2 (see also

¹ J. QUASTEN, *Patrology, vol. I*, (Christian Classics: Notre Dame, IN, 2005), 20.

² Ibid., 30.

³ D. ATTWATER, *St. John Chrysostom*, (Collins Clear-Type Press: London, 1960), 14.

Ephesians 1:9; 2:18 & 2 Peter 1:4) “It pleased God, in his goodness and wisdom, to reveal himself and to make known the mystery of his will. His will was that men should have access to the Father, through Christ, the Word made flesh, in the Holy Spirit, and thus become sharers in the Divine nature” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 51).

However, hospitality also involves responsibilities on the part of guests. Rabbinic literature outlines many of these duties, including showing gratitude and not giving food to others without the host’s consent. Just as the host is gracious, the guest is also obliged to be gracious. Whether an invitation to break bread is accepted or rejected is fraught with social implications. Accepting an invitation to eat with someone speaks of trust – that you won’t be poisoned, for example. It also has to do with social status. A person of higher rank can gift the host with his or her presence by agreeing to break bread together. The action implies recognition that, at least in basic needs, both parties are equally human and must eat to survive. Furthermore, when it comes to basic humanity, no food is unworthy and all offers to share are equal. Rejecting an invitation to eat may imply an unwillingness to acknowledge the host as basically equal or valued as a human being.

In Middle East cultures, once a person crosses a threshold, he is considered a guest. All honor and deference is paid to the guest. However, one has to be invited in. At the beginning of Jesus’ life he is rejected at that initial point. At the end of his life, Joseph of Arimathea accepts him in, but the temple of the Lord is not made of stone. He seeks followers who will worship in spirit and in truth and he will come with the spirit and make his dwelling place in their hearts. The guest-room Jesus seeks is the individual, where the kingdom can come to fruition. It is to this place that Jesus requires an invitation. Here he stands and knocks. He who has ears let him hear.

Jesus seeks and looks and asks to be part of the human pilgrimage. Some respond and offer him hospitality and are transformed. A tomb becomes a place of regeneration and a prison becomes the place of freedom. The life-giver gives life to those who ask and enters where he is invited. His entrance becomes a time of salvation, which the invitation has purchased.

The Lucan narrative (*diegesis*-may also be seen as proclamation) account of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus is a masterful work of Christian prose. Luke was a gifted writer who portrayed in beautiful words the wondrous events related to the coming of the kingdom: “In Luke we have a prime example of the masterful use of language. Luke’s Greek is polished and exquisitely structured.”⁴ His parables speak of people in whom we can see ourselves and of parallelism, which allows us to interpret and compare for ourselves diverse events and personae. Luke knew the Old Testament and invites us to compare and draw our own picture of Jesus: “..., so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed” (Luke 1:4).

⁴ E. LAVERDIERE, S.S.S., *Luke’s Gospel: Like Entering a Painting, Scripture From Scratch*, (Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1995) 2.

In this section of the paper, I will speak of a few events in the life of Jesus, which may be seen as speaking of Jesus' burial. As Luke was to Gentile Christians as Matthew was to Jewish Christians. The Message of these Gospels was given in terms of a culture. Culture was the language of expressing one's faith. With the use of the Greek tongue, Luke and the Greek speakers at Pentecost introduced Hellenistic concepts into Christianity. Just as an American and an Italian conversing in a common tongue, say Ukrainian, will bring their cultural insight into the words that they choose to use.

This paper is given in the liturgical season in which we have just walked through the Passion and been present at the Resurrection. The Byzantine church has always stated that its faith is expressed liturgically. Our walking with Jesus these past few days is reminiscent of the Jews celebration of Passover. A person asks, "How is this night different from every other night?" They are then told the Passover account. By sharing in the story, a person becomes a Jew. By walking with Jesus and this is why there is so much walking in the Byzantine Church we are being incorporated into the event. The same walk can be found prior to the celebration of Good Friday in the West in the celebration of the stations of the Cross. Then like Byzantines who kiss the wounds of Christ on the *plaschnitsia* (icon of the burial), Latins kiss the feet of Christ on Good Friday. This common kissing in East and West is what makes this celebration different from any other night and makes us Christians.

Since this is a reflection paper and not a strictly exegetical exercise, I will speak to the abovementioned goal not simply from scholarly biblical sources but also from liturgical/inspirational texts, which interpreted the events in the life of Jesus for the edification of the faithful. One of the scriptural legacies found within the liturgical patrimony is the comprehensive view of scripture. For example, Luke was oftentimes interpreted not as a separate literary piece, but rather, as one piece of a puzzle. The lacuna of any given story was fleshed out by superimposing another account of the Gospel of Jesus. This provided the ancient liturgical composer with a mosaic or spiritual icon of the Jesus event in history and its implications for the spiritual life. This method of scriptural interpretation needs to be kept in mind as we quote liturgical sources. They see Scripture as one complimentary unit and they see Christian Liturgy as Christ praying.⁵ Finally, I will conclude with a personal reflection upon the burial of Jesus as related in the Lucan narrative.

In popular literature and liturgical verse the life, death, burial and resurrection of the Savior looms as one seamless cloth in the tapestry of redemption. From the times of the Fathers of the Church to the present, authors and poets have looked for shadows of the future in the labyrinth of the past.⁶ They saw in the pagan past the seed of God's saving grace (*logos spermatikos*)

⁵ R. TAFT, S.J., *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1986), 341: "Our prayers are worthless, but in the liturgy Christ himself prays in us. For the liturgy is the efficacious sign of Christ's saving presence in his Church."

⁶ F. J. SHEEN, *Life of Christ* (New York: Doubleday Publishers, 1977), 30: "It was not so much that His birth cast a shadow on His life, and thus led to His death; it was rather that the Cross was there from the beginning and it cast its shadow backward to His birth."

and they saw in Scripture and Tradition the footsteps of the Master. For this reason, without embarrassment, both East and West have incorporated remnants of paganism into their liturgical life. From the Germanic pagans the Latins have incorporated the Christmas tree and from the Slavic pagans we have the psyanky. These are, in a sense, both Christian, because Christ is the one through whom all things were made and because of His role in creation we have the *logos spermatikos*. As Christ the Word is revealed in creation, creation can be used by all persons to express Christ:

...in particular there were baptism and the Eucharist, both of which united the believer with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection. The representation in terms of word was, of course, the teaching about the events in question, not only about Christ but about the whole Old Testament as well, which foreshadowed Christ.⁷

The infancy narrative (Luke 1:5 – 2:52) may serve us as the alpha or seminal point in the discussion of the Lucan reflection on the burial of Jesus since within it: "...Luke presents the whole gospel, including the mission and ministry of Jesus, as well as his passion, resurrection and ascension. As Luke's gospel in miniature, the prologue presents in symbol the main themes of the gospel."⁸ Some writers look at the swaddling clothes and see only the comparison of Jesus with the Kings of Old and of humanity in general:⁹ "I was nurtured in swaddling clothes with every care. No king has known any other beginning of existence; for there is only one way into life, and one way out of it" (Wisdom 7:4-6). They also find some parallel with the Greek word *katalyma* (Luke 2:7) and the same word used in Luke 22:11 where Jesus hosts the Passover meal for his disciples: "Although born in lowly circumstances and without hospitality, Jesus is the one who will be host to starving humanity. Fully grown and about to lay down his life as servant, Jesus hosts in an inn (22:11) a meal that his disciples will continue in his memory."¹⁰ The angels, as they are interpreted by some liturgical writers, are present at the birth and in the tomb¹¹ they announce the rebirth of humanity and that the Lord is risen: "Why look among the dead for someone who is alive? He is not here; he is risen" (Luke 24:5-6). The icon of the Nativity used in the East shows a cave, where the West has been influenced artistically by Francis of Assisi in the nativity crèche. These portrayals show a different point of emphasis. Iconography always looks beyond the scene and looks at the event from a heavenly perspective. Western representation is like a photograph of the event. Western perspective is human

⁷ B. RAMSEY, O.P., *Beginning to Read the Fathers* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1985), 15.

⁸ E. LAVERDIERE, "The Original Prologue of the Gospel of Luke: Luke 3:1 – 4:13," *Chicago Studies* 38/3 (Fall/Winter 1999): 251.

⁹ R. E. BROWN, S.S., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm., Editors, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1990) 683.

¹⁰ Brown, 683.

¹¹ The Liturgical Commission of The Sisters of the Order of St. Basil the Great, *Pentecostarion*, (Uniontown, Pennsylvania: Sisters of St. Basil the Great, 1986), 84.

and Eastern is divine. Together in the one body of the Universal Church, then, we have the divine and human presentation of the Incarnation. This is repeated in a marital analogy in the Byzantine Liturgy at Matins on the Sunday of Myrr-Bearing Women:

Joseph asked for the body of Jesus. He placed it in his own new tomb. It was fitting for the Lord to come forth from the tomb as from a bridal chamber. You destroyed the dominion of Death. You opened the gates of Paradise to the human race. Glory to you, O Lord!¹²

The Lord is wrapped in swaddling clothes as King Solomon (Wisdom 7:4) and is laid in a tomb with linen cloth; however, he rises like the bridegroom at midnight (Matthew 25:6) or some other hour (Luke 12:38) and perhaps means to say, let the dead bury the dead (Luke 9:60). The disciples must keep the lamps burning with the oil of faith (Luke 12:35). Death and birth are two events so tied together. When we are born we begin to die and when we die we are born to a new life. In the West, the celebration of the liturgy is on a rectangular altar representing a tomb. The incorporation prior to Vatican II of a relic in the stone of the altar made the sacrifice of the Mass a celebration upon the tomb of a saint. The altar in the East is a square as was the altar in the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem. This focuses on the divine presence. The Byzantine church has added the usage of the antimension, the relic of the saint sewn in. This emphasizes the celebrations communion with the hierarch and the unity of the Church before God in his holy of holies. The relic in both cases shows a common tradition of sacrifice.

Both at the birth and at the end of Jesus' life, death follows the presentation of oil/myrrh ($\mu\rho\rho v$ / $\sigma\mu\rho\rho v$). In this last case Matthew speaks of the death of the innocents as Jesus flees to Egypt where the first Passover took place (Matthew 2:13-18). The difference between Bethlehem and Jerusalem is that Jesus flees from death in Bethlehem but storms the gates of death in Jerusalem: "I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already! There is a baptism I must still receive, and what constraint I am under until it is completed" (Luke 12: 49-50)! He persistently journeys with great resolve toward Jerusalem in contrast to how he fled Bethlehem, never to return again.

One may even find in the second chapter of Luke a comparison between how Jesus was brought up to Jerusalem (2:22) in order to be presented to the Lord¹³ and the consequent sacrifice (2:24) taken together with the offering that He makes of himself as the living sacrifice (23:46). This same sacrifice is the one which is laid in a tomb in swaddling clothes (23:53). Then they rest according to the commandment (*entolyn*) just as the Lord rested after creation (23:56). So it is that the new creation is formed in the womb of the tomb as humanity rests from the weariness of sin.

Foreshadowing is a theme repeated within the narrative of the Gospels.

¹²Pentecostarion, 85.

¹³ This is lived out today in Byzantine baptisms when a child is presented either at the altar or in front of an icon.

Modern homilists such as Fulton J. Sheen, in his *Life of Christ*, speaks of how Jesus is prepared for burial from the moment of his birth:

The manger and the Cross thus stand at the two extremities of the Savior's life!... He was laid in a stranger's stable at the beginning, and a stranger's grave at the end... He was wrapped in swaddling bands in His birthplace, He was again laid in swaddling clothes in His tomb – clothes symbolic of the limitations imposed on His Divinity when he took human form. (*kenosis*)...He was already bearing His Cross – the only cross a Babe could bear, a cross of poverty, exile and limitation. His sacrificial intent already shone forth in the message the angels sang in the hills of Bethlehem: 'Today in the city of David a deliverer has been born to you – the Messiah, the Lord.' (Luke 2:11)¹⁴

The Lord was the recipient of many acts of kindness from the hands of strangers in his life. It is no small wonder that strangers play such an important part in scriptures such as Abraham's hosting the three strangers (Genesis 18 & Hebrews 13:2) and Lot taking care of the strangers in Sodom (Genesis 19 & Luke 17:32-33). In the Latin celebration of the Mass there is the sign of peace. Strangers are sitting next to each other offering each other the peace of Christ. In the Byzantine Church the sign was discontinued because of its disruption of the order of the service, but remains among the clergy. Where the Roman clergy do not share the sign of peace with the faithful, neither do the Byzantines. The Byzantine greeting of Christ is with us! Relates to the 'Peace be with you.' In essence, they are post resurrection events. The Church proclaimed that Christ was present to the myrrh-bearing women and to the apostles, for when Jesus met with them, he greeted them with 'Peace.'

The Lord also speaks of us as being strangers in this land (Hebrews 11:13 & Luke 9:1-6); of giving our possessions to strangers (Luke 18:22-23); of strangers appreciating God's gifts (Luke 17:18) and of seeing the Lord in the strangers we meet. The final judgment will be against the inability or unwillingness to see Jesus in the stranger: "In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40).

Those who ignore the stranger in their midst will be severely punished for their blindness (Luke 16:25). The Lucan account of the woman anointing Jesus' feet emphasizes the generosity of the sinner in stark contrast to the stinginess of Jesus' host.¹⁵ Some writers even say that in Mark (13:8) the strange woman who anointed Jesus' feet with oil is said to cover up the fact of the disciples' embarrassment:

A secondary interpretation placed on the woman's action relates it directly to his death and burial: the Messiah is anointed for burial at the very beginning of the passion story. The verse is sometimes explained as an

¹⁴ SHEEN, 29.

¹⁵ BROWN, 697.

addition to the story that aimed at covering the disciples' embarrassment over not having anointed Jesus' body before burial.¹⁶

The Byzantine Churches remember the woman who anointed Jesus with oil (μύρον - see Luke 23:56) during Great and Holy Wednesday of Passion Week and sing the following verse during Matins:

O Lord, the woman who had fallen into a multitude of sins, *recognized your divinity and joined the ranks of the myrrh-bearers; before your burial, she offers You myrrh with her tears*: Alas, she says, the stinging night of pleasure seizes me; the dark and moonless love of sin grasps me; accept the stream of my tears and my copious weeping, for You make the waters fall from the clouds into the sea. Incline your ear to the cry of my heart, for You incline the heavens in your ineffable condescension. Allow me to kiss your most pure feet, drying them with the locks of my hair; for these are the feet that Eve heard in Paradise, and trembling at their approach, she hid herself. O Lord, who can search out the number of my sins? Who shall search the depth of your judgments, O God our Redeemer and the Savior of our souls? In your infinite love, do not despise your servant.¹⁷

This verse refers not only to the story in Luke 7:36-50, but also is connected to similar stories in Mk 14:3-9, Mt 26:6-13 and Jn 12:1-8.¹⁸ The difference in the Lucan depiction of the anointing with oil is that "Luke retained this traditional note as an expression of the woman's great respect for Jesus the prophet, but dropped its connection with Jesus' death and burial."¹⁹ Perhaps we may be able to indirectly link her anointing with the Messiah's passion and death.²⁰

Although in Luke, she may not directly be preparing him for burial, her acknowledgment of Jesus as prophet (cf. also Luke 7:16) may be seen to imply his prophetic end. Many of the prophets were persecuted and died in Jerusalem. Since the Lord is a prophet, the anointing may be a preparation for burial even in Luke. This is obviously not an explicit statement but simply an inference. The

¹⁶ BROWN, 625.

¹⁷The Liturgical Commission of The Sisters of the Order of St. Basil the Great, *The Lenten Triodion*, (Uniontown, Pennsylvania: 1995), 557.

¹⁸ E. LAVERDIERE, S.S.S., *Luke*, (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 108.

¹⁹ E. LAVERDIERE, S.S.S., *Dining in The Kingdom of God* (Chicago, Ill.: Liturgical Training Publications, 1994), 52.

²⁰ D. J. HARRINGTON, S.J., *Sacra Pagina Series*, vol. 3 *The Gospel of Luke*, by Luke Timothy Johnson (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991), Luke Timothy Johnson also sees no connection between the Lucan account and Mark and Matthew's account: "Although myrrh was used for the burial of Jesus (Luke 23:56), there is no emphasis on this anointing having any such proleptic significance (against Mark 14:8; Matt 26:12), or on the oil being expensive (as in Mark 14:3-5; Matt 26:7; John 12:3)," 127.

Lord may bespeak the suffering servant of Isaiah (Luke 4:18-19) where he speaks of his prophetic mission and he will later speak of his death:²¹

I. First Passion Prediction	II. Second Passion Prediction	III. Third Passion Prediction
Luke 9:22	Luke 9:44	Luke 18:31b-33
He said, “The Son of man is destined to suffer grievously, to be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and to be put to death, and to be raised up on the third day.”	“The Son of man is going to be delivered into the power of men.”	“Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of man is to come true...when they have scourged him they will put him to death; on the third day he will rise again.”

What is certain is that the liturgical composers in the early Churches of the East saw the anointing of Jesus as a preparation for his burial. This is made evident through the few texts quoted above. The lessons that may be gleaned from this may be placed into two categories: the effects upon Jesus and the effects upon humanity. These two tangents of the burial event are constantly repeated in the liturgical office of the Byzantine Church and have some foundation in the way Luke wants to give purpose to his writing, although scholars tend to disagree with its meaning.²²

What then can be drawn from the shadow of the burial/cross that is perceived in the beginning and throughout Luke's gospel? The lessons drawn by the liturgical writers of the Byzantine liturgy give us insight into the fact that Jesus' story is our story. His burial is our burial. During the Easter Liturgy the replacement for the Trisagion Hymn is: "...since every one of you that has been baptized has been clothed in Christ" (Galatians 3:27). This is also the "song" of every Latin baptism. The Lord is the first fruits that has come forth from the grave and a living testimony that God is a God of the living not of the dead.

So, although some may say that we are reading too much into the Lucan narrative; nevertheless, others say that Jesus' story is a reflection of how our life will be. We must be buried with him if we are to rise with him. In both churches symbolically we die with Christ in Baptism through immersion or pouring of water three times. This is not just for the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity but also for the three days in the tomb. We must anoint ourselves with faith, prayer and good works in preparation for our own burial. We must be dead to sin but alive in Christ Jesus. In essence, the preparation for burial begins with each Christian's birth, although Jesus' situation is a very unique one. He prepared the way for all creation and we are certain to encounter the terminal event for which, as Christians, we should always be prepared.

²¹ This table is an adaptation of the table found in R. E. BROWN, S.S. *The Death of the Messiah*, vo. 2 (New York: Doubleday Publishers, 1993), 1474-1475.

²² HARRINGTON, 29.

On Easter morning, the Byzantine Slavic Churches celebrate a liturgy titled “Resurrection Matins.” During this joyful service the liturgical author finds meaning for the Christian of today in the tomb of the Lord. The following two verses explain prophetically a reason for Christian praxis that springs from the tomb:

I was buried yesterday with you O Christ; but today I rise, resurrected with You. Yesterday I crucified myself with you, O Savior. Now glorify me with You in Your kingdom.

Come, let us partake of a new drink, not miraculously produced from barren rock, but from the Fountain of Immortality, springing up from the tomb of Christ. In Him is our firm strength.²³

One can generally say that in the East the Paschal mystery is present and transformative. It is not simply an historical reenactment. Even though there are more reenactment events such as the breaking open of the tomb symbolically with the knocking on the door with the hand cross and the Romans have no such liturgical practices both churches celebrate the Resurrection as it touches us today. We become part of a story that reaches down to our day. The liturgical celebrations attempt to speak not only to the seen historical event but to the unseen mystical event that is real today—active and transformative.

This same outlook can be applied to all the Gospel proclamations. It is Spirit speaking to us today. The goal of the biblical word is not simply to re-tell but to move the heart. The soul must be stirred, as was the Word when it took flesh and lived among us. The East never reads the Gospel narrative alone. It reads the narrative with the Spirit whispering that the word makes us children of light as long as we believe in his name. This is seen in the layout of the Byzantine church based upon the words of Basil – to the Father, through the Son (on the royal doors) and in the Holy Spirit – in the faithful gathered together. Western Churches have a different perspective. The priest has gone to face the people losing the symbolism of priest and people praying together in the same direction to the Father. Pope Benedict and others place a crucifix on the altar as a reminder that it is Christ through whom we go to the Father. The Roman Eucharistic prayers are directed to the Father.

The Eastern transfiguration of humanity is ongoing in each individual life. To see the Resurrection in the face of defeat and to believe in life in the face of death reminds us that we are children of light and the Father of lights is the source of every perfect gift which comes from above (James 1:17).

²³ *Pentecostarion*, 4.

THE WORD OF GOD IN THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ST BASIL: CHASTITY

*Very Rev. Basil Koubetch, OSBM
Protoarchimandrite Emeritus*

Virginity—Chastity

Introduction

In his ascetical works, Saint Basil does not give separate rules¹ or specific teachings about virginity and monastic chastity. Researchers have reached various conclusions about the causes of his “silence” on this theme of Christian asceticism. Not all of those findings are justifiable, especially when the researcher pays no heed to the weight that Holy Scripture plays in St. Basil’s ascetical writings, nor observes that although he did not answer a single question concerning virginity, nonetheless, he gave valuable lessons about the behavior of persons consecrated to God in the monastic state of life.

One possible reason is that at that time committing oneself to celibacy and monastic chastity was an integral part the conscious and voluntary acceptance of monastic life.² In the beginning, there was no clear vow of chastity as there is now, but rather whoever entered the monastery—by that very act—renounced marriage. The consecrated life and the unmarried (*άγαμία*) state have always been inseparable. In St. Basil’s works purity of body and spirit were derived from the more general principles of mortification, recollection of spirit and the renunciation of oneself.

The historical and ecclesiastical environment could have been another reason for St. Basil’s “silence” on virginity. “There is no doubt that Basil valued virginity—for it was also his state, but rather on account of the Eustachians’s exaggerated enthusiasm and over-attention to this matter, he refrained from speaking on this topic.”³ You cannot help but wonder and take note of the reasons given by this author: “Instead, his married brother and later bishop of

¹ One must remember that the so called “Wider Rules” and “Shorter Rules” of St. Basil in reality do not bear the title of “Rules” in the canonical and technical meaning of religious legislation. Cf. M. G. MURPHY, *St. Basil and Monasticism*, Patristic studies, vol XXV, (Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1930), 97.

² Cf. MURPHY, 31.

³ P. J. FEDIUK, *Святий Василій Великий і християнське аскетичне життя* (St. Basil the Great and the Christian Ascetical Life), Записки ЧСВВ, серія II, секція I, (Рим-Торонто, 1978), 114. The Eustachians were mistaken especially in their condemnation of the married state of life. They broke up many a marriage and, thus, increased the number of adulteries. They rejected married priests and lived as virgins only because of their contempt of marriage and thought themselves above those who live in marriage. These and other errors were condemned at the Synod of Gangra in 342.

Nyssa, Gregory, wrote a separate work *On Virginity*, sometimes over-praising it, probably because he never experienced all the difficulties that Basil—as a celibate—felt.”⁴ St. Basil—an excellent anthropologist—knew and respected human nature with all of its inclinations. He also knew how to channel those inclinations. Thus, to conclude that his own experience of the difficulties of celibacy was the cause for our Cappadocian teacher’s silence on this subject, in truth is hard to believe. In fact, St. Basil, on the theme of virginity and monastic chastity, is not really silent—as will be shown. For entering the monastic state was also the acceptance of virginity—a type of “vow,” which embraced all the other monastics vows.⁵

Examining Basil’s ascetical doctrine⁶—which is addressed to all Christians, we do not find special rules on virginity mainly because we already have Scripture—the only rule for Christian life. “In relation to virginity and monastic chastity, St. Basil followed Church tradition and Christian custom.”⁷ Convinced that man—according to his nature—is able to love God,⁸ and that God unites Himself to those who love Him, and that it is possible on earth to live a common life on the model of the first Christian community, **St. Basil offers the believer valuable and relevant instruction from Holy Scripture. This includes guidance on relations with persons of the opposite sex (regardless of their state of life), on relations within the community (both older and younger members) and also relations with those who do not belong to the monastic community.** Following Church tradition, he did not see the need to repeat the answers provided by the Synod of Gangra on the specific problems that were caused by the Eustachians.⁹ St. Basil’s teaching on virginity and monastic chastity is simply based on Scripture, especially God’s Commandments (Ex. 20, 1-17; Dt. 5,6-21), which include¹⁰ the so-called evangelical counsels (Mt 19, 27-29, Luke, 18, 28-30; I Cor. 7, 25-35¹¹). Insofar as St. Basil “gave

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Cf. MURPHY, 99: “...St. Basil may be said to have constituted chastity the primary and all-inclusive vow of the monastic life.”

⁶ His doctrine is defined by the teaching of God’s Word and directs the faithful to a better understanding of God’s Will in Sacred Scripture. Cf. ed. U. NERI, *Regole Morali, catechesi evangelica della vita cristiana* (Roma: Città Nuova, 1996), 21; in the Introduction, he draws the following conclusion: the Word, which comes from God’s mouth, i.e., Sacred Scripture, became the single source of his thoughts—“unica fonte del suo pensiero è diventata la parola che „procede dalla bocca di Dio”, la Scrittura.” Cf. also U. NERI, *Il Battesimo* (Brescia: Ed. Paideia, 1976), Libro secondo, cap. IV, 324-337.

⁷ А. ПЕКАР (РЕКАР), *Досконалий християнин, чернечий ідеал св. Василія Великого (The Perfect Christian: The Monastic Ideal of St. Basil)* (Нью Йорк: Видавництво Отців Василіян, 1968), 123.

⁸ Cf. *WR (The Wider Rules)* 2, 1 (ATB), 148.

⁹ Cf. footnote 3.

¹⁰ In St. Basil, all of God’s teaching is a “commandment,” a word given to be fulfilled.

¹¹ I Cor. 7, 25-27 given in the *Moral Rules* (LXX, 8).

Sacred Scripture as the norm for a formal monastic rule,”¹² then this most especially applies to virginity and monastic chastity. Thus, we can draw out his doctrine on this theme from the following selections:

1. The Reception of Married Persons into the Monastery (WR 12)¹³

To answer this query, St. Basil begins with I Cor. 7, 4: in marriage, neither the wife nor the husband “rules over his/her own body.” Thus, they can be received into monastic life only when it is done by mutual consent. In case of a disagreement on the part of the husband or the wife, he recalls the words of the Apostle Paul: “God has called us to live in peace” (I Cor. 7,15) and he commands that the Lord’s words be heeded, “If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he can not be my disciple” (Lk 14.26). In this short response, St. Basil twice recalls the obligation to obey God above all else.

2. Relations with Family (WR 32)¹⁴

Basing himself on the Acts of the Apostles 4, 32 —“the community of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of these things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common”—our teacher emphasizes that “the word of God forbids brothers from saying—this is mine and that is yours.” Christian parents and relatives of a monk belonging to the community, should apply the words of Christ: “For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Mt. 12, 50). St. Basil does not advise accepting relatives who do not adhere to the law of God, because it will not be helpful to them and can spiritually harm the monk. He based this position on the following biblical texts: “Who does not love me does not keep my words” (Jn. 14, 24) and “What partnership has righteousness and iniquity? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?” (II Cor. 6, 14-15). All conversations with those who do not belong to the monastic community and are an occasion of sin or stir up memories from one’s sinful past should be avoided. St. Basil recommends that conversation with relatives be held only by those monks who can “wisely and constructively converse with them.”¹⁵

3. Relations with Nuns (WR 32)¹⁶

St. Basil advises that all relations to one’s neighbour occur “in accordance with God’s commandments.” Having renounced marriage, the monk has “even more clearly renounced all worldly cares,” to which the Apostle states: “the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please his wife” (I Cor. 7, 33).

¹² Cf. MURPHY, 97: “he gave to the Divine Scriptures the sanction ordinarily accorded to a formal monastic Rule.”

¹³ Cf. WR 12 (ATB), 167-168.

¹⁴ Cf. WR 32 (ATB), 191-192.

¹⁵ St. Basil is convinced by the arguments in I Cor. 12,8 and Titus 1,9.

¹⁶ Cf. WR 33 (ATB), 192-194.

When helping nuns with a variety of spiritual and material matters, St. Basil advises: *appoint the appropriate persons (who possess piety and respect in all matters and who will be faithful and serious for the task at hand), who will fulfill everything in an orderly and polite manner, while setting a good example for all in presence of witnesses* (Mt 18.16) and, thus, avoiding the slightest shadow of suspicion. Our teacher bases his thoughts on Psalm 111, 5, which states that the man who fears God: “*manages his affairs in truth,*” adding that “this order of action should be obeyed not only in mutual matters between monks and nuns, but also in matters between even two male or two female monasteries.” Hence, based on I Cor. 10, 29 —“*Why should my liberty be determined by another man’s scruples?*”—he commands that our deeds should “*not give anyone an occasion of sin through suspicion.*”

4. A Virgin Who Sinned and St. Basil Converted through God’s Word¹⁷

St. Basil wrote to a young virgin, who sinned by renouncing her vows and marrying. I will show how his lengthy letter is entirely based on Sacred Scripture. The movement of the entire letter flows from the introductory words: “*the Word of God is not fettered*” (II Tim. 2, 9), as cited in the opening section. The letter consists of six parts and each of them has its own content, which recalls the words of God addressed to a virgin who has fallen into sin. By the “unfettered” Word of God, St. Basil condemns sin, rebukes the sinner and points out the way to salvation, helping her grasp that God’s infinite mercy is for all whose hearts are contrite.

Part one: a lamentation over the “true death” that girl suffered by falling into such a grievous sin. “Today, they see the bride of the Lord herself, whose head is Christ, boldly committing adultery.” St. Basil quotes the prophet Jeremiah (8, 23) and Isaiah (22, 2), condemning the shameful crime by the words of the Law, “They have pronounced their prohibition of old You shall not covet your neighbour’s wife” (Dt. 5, 21) and the Gospel, “Whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery already with her in his heart” (Mt. 5, 28). He also employs the words of St. John the Baptist concerning Herodias, “It is not lawful for you to have her” (Mt. 14, 4).

Part two: the saint rebukes her, by reminding her of her fall and the neglect of the honor that she once enjoyed, when living in accordance with her monastic profession, which she now denies; and reminding her of everything that she lost on earth and in heaven through her fall into lawlessness.

Part three: represents how shameful a fall it was, hard and malicious, because she betrayed the heavenly Bridegroom by marrying after her profession of vows: “taking the members of Christ and made them the members of a harlot” (cf. I Cor. 6, 15), “she has revolted from God, her Saviour, and yielded her members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity” (cf. Rom. 6, 19). Other biblical texts cited: Jer. 2, 10-13, Os. 2, 13.

Part four: he rebukes her lover, who is particularly guilty in that he took a living body consecrated to God, the body in which dwells the soul, created in the

¹⁷ Cf. Letter 46; С. ФЕДИНЯК (FEDYNIAK) (translation into Ukrainian), *Вибрані листи Св. Василія Великого* (Нью Йорк: Видавництво Отців Василіян, 1964), 77-86.

image of God. He not only defiled a virgin consecrated to Christ by her vows, but dishonoured the very spirit of the virgin. Cited texts: Dt. 17, 6, Heb. 10, 29, Mk 14, 21, Mt. 18, 7.

Part five: St. Basil gives the sinner remedies, such as the fear of God, meditation on death, God's judgment and the eternity of hell for the unrepentant. Cited biblical texts: Jer. 8, 7, 3.7, 8, 22, Ps. 49, 3; Jn. 5, 29; Dan. 7, 9-10; Mk. 9, 44-48; Mt. 8, 12, Lk. 13, 28. It is worth quoting our teacher as he refers to the whole of Scripture, as a hospital for the body and soul: "You might indeed find many remedies for evil in Scripture, many medicines to save you from destruction and lead you to health; the mysteries of death and resurrection, the sentences of terrible judgment and everlasting punishment; the doctrines of repentance and of remission of sins; all the countless illustrations of conversion, the piece of money, the sheep, the son who wasted his substance with harlots, who was lost and was found, who was dead and alive again. Let us not use these remedies for ill; by these means let us heal our soul." Certainly this passage is a good summary of Basilian biblical spirituality.

In the last part, the author shows sinners the way of repentance and conversion, reminding them that God is infinitely merciful and always forgives those who return to Him through repentance. "There is, then, a way of salvation, if we will... The great Physician of souls, Who is the ready liberator, not of you alone, but of all who are enslaved by sin, is ready to heal your sickness." Our teacher focuses on the merciful God in two images: the Good Shepherd (Lk. 15, 1-7), Who leaves the sheep in search of the one lost, and the Merciful Father (Lk. 15, 11-32), Who "stands and awaits your return from your wandering. Only come back, and while you are yet afar off, He will run and fall upon your neck, and, now that you are cleansed by repentance, will enwrap you in embraces of love." Other biblical texts cited: Ps. 94, 6; Mt. 11, 29; Is. 25, 8; Ps. 144, 14; Is. 1, 18, Mt. 9, 12-13.

5. The Importance of Temperance (*εὐκρατεία*)

Knowing the strength but also the weaknesses and tendencies of human nature, St. Basil clearly teaches: "Nothing gives such a victory and domination over the body as temperance."¹⁸ This gift of the Holy Spirit (see Gal. 5, 23) is required in various concrete circumstances of life—"beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watching, hunger, by purity..." (II Cor. 6, 5-6).¹⁹

St. Basil gives an excellent lesson in a letter to the monk Urbicius²⁰ concerning temperance, which is the fruit of participating in God's nature. This virtue is required "not only... for carnal lust, but also for all other things that the soul desires..."²¹ He quotes Holy Scripture, but also offers as an example the Son of God, who in His human body "appeared to be continency."²²

¹⁸ WR 16 (ATB), 172.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Cf. Letter 366, ФЕДИНЯК (FEDYNIAK), 209-211.

²¹ Ibid.

It can be concluded that the ascetical teachings of St. Basil on temperance covers all the virtues,²³ and thus also the virtue of purity.

6. The Basilian Tradition (An Addition)

Based on various studies which conclude that it is difficult to attribute the authorship of the so-called “ascetical constitutions”²⁴ to St. Basil, nevertheless, they seem to faithfully convey his teaching in two ways: firstly, by the effort of the author to ground monastic asceticism in Holy Scripture and, secondly, the constitutions do not deviate from the balanced approach of St. Basil’s anthropological writings. It is worth taking into account a few thoughts from them regarding our topic.

6.1. Recollection of Thought

How to fight against distraction? How, in particular, to overcome the thoughts that arise from carnal lusts? According to the teaching of St. Basil,²⁵ the need to maintain constant mindfulness of God is based on the Lord’s teaching “The eye is the light of the body” (Mt 6, 22), drawing attention to the “eye of the soul.” If the soul focuses on its duties and is concentrated on God and what is pleasing to Him, in this manner it overcomes the passions and calms the body.²⁶ Thus, the body in itself is not bad, since it depends upon the guidance provided by the spiritual eye. “When the soul focuses on higher things, the body is not aroused by the passions.”²⁷ Regardless of the place where a monk lives, his behavior stems from the content of his thoughts.²⁸

*6.2. Relations with Women*²⁹

Avoiding any tendency of a Platonic dualism, the author takes into account the nature of both men and women. His ascetical view is based on Prov.

²² Ibid.

²³ Cf. MURPHY, 99.

²⁴ For commentary on the question about the authorship, including ed. L. CREMASCHI, *Nella tradizione basiliana*, (Bose, Magnano: ed. Qiqajon, 1997), 13-39

²⁵ Cf. WR 5 (ATB), 154. This forms part of modern pedagogy: man is not able “not to think on” that which someone commands him “not to think on,” but rather focuses his attention on the chosen subject.

²⁶ Cf. L. CREMASCHI, 59-62. See also Ukrainian translation in ATB, 386-388.

²⁷ Ibid., III Аскетичне Правило (Ascetical Constitutions).

²⁸ Cf. ibid., V Аскетичне Правило (Ascetical Constitutions). This is in accord with St. Basil’s doctrine: WR 5 i 6; SR 21, 201, 306 and other, especially in «Уважай на себе» (*Know Thyself*) (cf. *Нauки Св. Василія до народу* (Глен Ков: 1954), 32-43).

²⁹ Cf. L. CREMASCHI, 63-65. See also Ukrainian translation in ATB, 388-389.

6, 27-28: “Can a man carry fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned? Or can one walk upon hot coals and his feet not be scorched?” He knows well that human nature is easily aroused by the passions. “One must flee from conversations and the friendship of women, when there is no necessity, and if there is such a need, then one must guard against them as from fire and separate oneself from them as soon as possible.” That a monk “is not hurt by frequent conversations with women,” the author simply does not believe and explains that “such a monk possesses not the nature of a man, but rather is a strange creature tottering on edge of both sexes, possessing the nature of a eunuch.” Based on Sirach 20, 4, “Like a eunuch’s desire to violate a maiden,” he attributes even to eunuchs no “lack of desire.” Even if frequent conversation does not harm them, the author urges them to take into account that it can cause “for many—scandal,”³⁰ because “is not easy to convince others that it is merely so.” He drew attention to the fact that careless talk or behavior of a man can spiritually damage a woman by “spoiling her internal virginity, the sweetest to the Bridegroom, through immodest thoughts.” At the end of this lesson, he makes a final plea: “We must take care of and pray for all of the opposite sex, especially for those struggling for angelic purity, since they are walking along the same path as us, but careful in conversing with them, so as not to arouse the passions that we have renounced and left behind.”

Conclusions: How Does a Basilian Live Out Chastity?

1. By being faithful to his/her unmarried-monastic state of life and by being chaste according to the rule of Holy Scripture, the teaching of Christ’s Church and the Holy Fathers.
2. By having an ecclesial understanding and respect for married persons, for the married state of life and for families.
3. When cooperating or working with persons of the opposite sex, by being faithful and recollected in performing the task at hand, by trying to do everything in an orderly and polite manner, by setting a good example, preferably by labouring in the presence of witnesses, so as to avoid the slightest suspicion or stain upon one’s reputation (cf. *WR* 33).
4. Following the example of the Incarnate Son of God by refraining from anything that could damage the purity of one’s body or soul.
5. By nurturing an evangelical love for God and neighbour (to the community and the Church); by avoiding overly-emotional ties to individual persons; by avoiding “cliques” within the community and an over-attachment to one’s own family and relatives.

³⁰ St. Basil is very sensitive to the danger of scandal (cf. *SR* 101, 107, 155, 183). Based on “what our Saviour says in the Gospel that he “did not trust himself to them” (*Jn* 2, 24), St. Basil especially stresses that “ordinary people believe that if a person changed his way of life... he changed the nature of his life, ... a life estranged from the passions, ... even from the necessity of food...». They can be scandalized by even the normal behaviour of the monks. Cf. L. CREMASCHI, 79-83. See also Ukrainian translation in ATB, 396-398.

CONTRIBUTORS

Rev. Dr. Augustine Babiak



Born in Charytanach near Przemysl (Poland) – 17 October 1959.
Priestly ordination – 21 June 1986 by Archbishop Ignatius Tokarchuk.
Pastoral work in the Latin diocese of Przemysl – 1986-1992.
Pastoral missionary work for the Ukrainian diaspora in France – 1992-2002.
Member of the Shevchenko Scientific Society – 2000.
Member of the Presbyteral Board in the Archdiocese Lyons – 1997-2002.
Pastoral work in the Province of Trent and Bolzano, Italy, since 2002.
Member of the editorial committee of the *Modern Ukrainian Encyclopedia* – 2003.
Member of the editorial committee of the Scientific Southeastern Institute of Ukrainian Studies in Przemysl (Poland) in 2003.
Promoter of justice for the beatification process of Father Mario Borzaga and catechist Paolo Thoj Xyooj – 2006-2008.
Deputy Postulator in the beatification process for the Servant of God Metropolitan Andrew Sheptytsky and the Ukrainian martyrs – 2009.

Rev. Dr. Stefan Batruch



Mitred Archpriest Dr. Stephen Batruch – born in 1963, in Miastko, Poland. Childhood and youth spent in the Biały Bór, where he completed the Taras Shevchenko primary school and the public lyceum. Graduated from the Lublin Spiritual Seminary in 1989. Spent one year was in Marino, near Rome, in the Monastery of St. Theodore Studite. Metropolitan Ivan Martyniak ordained him to the priesthood. From 1991 to 1993, he completed his licentiate studies at Lublin Catholic University in theology, spirituality and psychological-psycho-therapeutic councelling. In December 2001, he defended his doctoral thesis on “The Model of Christian Life in the Light of Ascetical Works of Saint Basil the Great.”

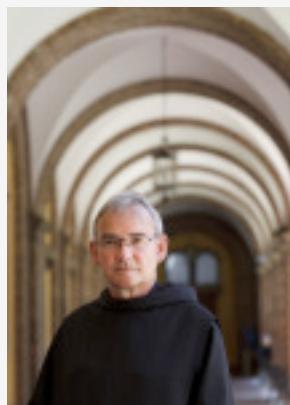
Rev. Dr. Stephen Batruch frequently organizes international conferences, conducts retreats, has written numerous scientific articles, lectures at the Catholic University of Lublin and cooperates with the Theological Seminary of the Metropolia, serves as pastor in Lublin, does pastoral work among students, runs the foundation for spiritual-cultural borderlands, member of the Secretariat for Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation, belongs to the Commission of Ukrainian-Polish Cultural Affairs at the Polish Academy of Sciences, organised numerous events to commemorate Blessed Martyr Omelian Kovch—prisoner of Majdanek.

Rev. Dr. Enrico Cattaneo, SJ



Licentiate in Philosophy (three years), Aloisianum, Gallarate ,1967. Degree in Classics (four), University of Padua, 1971. Bachelor of Theology Degree (three years), Naples, 1974. Licentiate in Biblical and Systematic Theology, Institut Catholique, Paris, 1976. Doctorate in Theology and Religious Sciences, Institut Catholique, Paris (Sorbonne), 1979.

Rev. Jeremy Driscoll, OSB



Rev. Jeremy Driscoll, OSB, has been a Benedictine monk of Mount Angel Abbey in Oregon since 1973. Ordained in 1981. He studied in Rome at both the Augustinianum and Sant'Anselmo, earning an S.T.D. at Sant'Anselmo in 1990. He has lectured, taught and published on a wide range of patristic and liturgical topics. He was a consultant for the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy from 1993-95 and worked in the same capacity for the Congregation for Divine Worship in the Vatican. He lectures throughout the United States and abroad, and, since 1992, has taught for one semester each year

at Sant' Anselmo in Rome and another at Mount Angel Seminary in Oregon. In 2004, he was named a member of the Pontifical Academy of Theology at the Vatican. In 2003, his book *Theology at the Eucharistic Table* was published. In February of 2005, a book on the Eucharist, directed to lay people and called *What Happens at Mass*, was published jointly by Liturgy Training Publications in Chicago and Gracewing in Great Britain. His lecture for the Carl J. Peter Chair is titled "Preaching in the Context of the Eucharist." In 2011, he received from the Catholic University of America the prestigious "Quasten Award for Excellence in Theological Scholarship and Leadership." He is in a second five-year term as a Consultor to the Congregation of Divine Worship in the Vatican.

Mother Valentina Hadarau, OSBM



Mother Valentina Hadarau, OSBM, was born 23 March 1962 at Maieru, Romania. She completed elementary school, high school and technical school in the field of textiles. She entered the clandestine Basilian community in 1980. She lived 9 years as a nun in the underground Church until 1989. In 1990, she went to Rome to study theology. After just one year, she had to return to Romania. Immediately after being freed from their clandestinity, the Basilian nuns did not possess a monastery in Romania; thus, their novitiate was transferred to Albano (Italy), where she was appointed mistress of novices. She was in Albano from 1991-1993 with a group of 17 novices. From 1993 to 1995, she returned to Romania, where she worked in various missions within her province. In 1995, she participated in the General Chapter and was elected as a general councillor until 2001. In 1998, she completed her theological studies at the Pontifical "Regina Mundi," an associate institute of the Gregorian University in Rome. She returned to Romania, where she worked in formation and administration within her province: 2001 as vicar provincial and from 2007 until present as Provincial Superior.

Rev. Matey Havryliv, OSBM



Born on 22 February 1949 in the village of Rudnyky, Lviv region, Ukraine. After elementary school, he obtained a deree at the Technical College in Lviv (electronic processing equipment) and laboured in this field in Hust (Transcarpathian region). Subsequently, he served in the army two years, in Siberia (Sverdlovsk, Krasnoyarsk, Omsk) and Kazakhstan. In 1971, he entered the St. Petersburg Seminary and then the Academy, where he received a Ph.D. degree in theological studies. In 1975, he was ordained to the priesthood (as a monk) by Metropolitan Nicodemus. After returning to Ukraine in 1977, for two years he served in parishes within the Lviv region. On 21 December 1979, he openly joined the Catholic Church and worked at various jobs (electrician, janitor, medical assistant, fireman), while simultaneously caring out clandestinely pastoral work, for which he was persecuted by the KGB. On 23 July 1980, he entered the underground novitiate of the Basilian Fathers and on 14 January 1988, into the hands of the hieromonk Yeronima Tymchuk OSBM, he made his solemn profession of monastic vows. On 4 August 1987, along with other underground priests, religious, faithful and two bishops, they proclaimed their "coming out of" the underground by forming the Committee to Protect the Church, actively working for the Church's legalization. Three times he was arrested and punished with imprisonment, as well as military obligations such as working in Chernobyl in the Autumn of 1987. In 1990, he became the superior of the newly-regained Basilian monastery in Hoshiv. In the spring of that same year, he went with a delegation to *Katholikentag* in Berlin and then onto Rome, where he studied at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, completing a licentiate in liturgy in 1994. After returning to Ukraine, he spent four years as a professor at

the Institute of Basilian Philosophical and Theological Studies in Zolochiv, while teaching at other institutes: Ukrainian Catholic University, Seminaries in Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk, catechetical courses, etc. Since 1999 until present, he served as Secretary and Consultor at the OSBM Generalate, rector of the Pontifical Institute of Pokrov in Rome and as a theological adviser to the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints.

Rev. Dr. Steven Hawkes-Teebles, SJ



Born in 1953, Steven Hawkes-Teebles grew up in San Antonio, Texas. He was baptized into the Catholic Church during his first year at San Antonio College. He completed a BA and an MA in French literature at the University of Texas-Austin. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1982 and was ordained a priest in the Byzantine-Ruthenian Church in 1993. Studying under Archimandrite Robert Taft, he completed a doctorate in Eastern Christian liturgy in 1998 with a dissertation on the liturgy in the commentaries of St. Symeon of Thessalonika. From 1997 to 2001, he was director of the Diaconal Formation Program of the Byzantine-Ruthenian Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He has also taught at Canisius College in Buffalo, New York, and at Regis College in Toronto. Since 2001 he has been teaching liturgy at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome.

Rev. Dr. Ivan Kaszczak

Born in Szprotawa, Poland, on September 13, 1959. Son of Andrew and Teresa (Kofla) Kaszczak. His parents were from Lemkivschyna and were deported to Western Poland in 1947 by the Akcia Wisla program. Most Rev. Basil H. Losten ordained him a deacon in 1984 and a priest in May of 1985. His work has included many pastorates (Troy, NY; Spring Valley, NY; Syracuse, NY; Rochester, NY; Woonsocket, RI; Fall River, MA; Bridgeport, CT; Hempstead, NY and Mt. Kisco, NY), including diocesan responsibilities as Director of Religious Education (1986) and Vocations Director (1986). He also served as Vice Rector of the minor seminary for four years (1997-201). At present he is the administrator of Holy Protection parish in Mt. Kisco, NY. He completed a PH.D. in religious education (with honours) in 2005 at Fordham University, New York.

Very Rev. Basil Koubetch, OSBM – Protoarchimandrite Emeritus

Very Rev. Basil Koubetch, OSBM, was born 30 August 1960 in Umuarama, Paraná, Brazil. He entered the Basilian Order on 17 February 1978 in Ivai. He studied philosophy from 1984-1986 in Curitiba and theology from 1986-1989 at the Gregorian University in Rome. On 10 June 1990, Blessed Pope John Paul II ordained him a priest in Rome. From 1990-1992, he was enrolled in the licentiate program on Eastern church teachings at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. He worked as a secretary and translator of the Apostolic Nunciature in Ukraine: 1992-1994. He was transferred to Rome and worked as Chief Secretary and Archivist OSBM: 1995-1999. Then, he returned to Brazil and worked as a secretary and archivist in the Brazilian Province OSBM 1999-2004 in Curitiba. During the years 2000-2004, he completed a full course of Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola and various other intensive courses in the formation of the human person and the spiritual life. He has spent over 25 years giving retreats for priests and consecrated persons. On 2 November 2004, he was elected Provincial Superior of the OSBM Brazilian Province. During the General Chapter in Rome, on 7 July 2004, he was elected Protoarchimandrite of Basilian Order of St. Josaphat.

Rev. Dr. Milan Lach, SJ



Rev. Milan Lach, SJ, was born in 1973 in Kežmarok, Slovakia. He entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus in Trnava in 1995. He attended the Faculty of Theology at the Greek-Catholic University of Pavol Jozef Šafárik in Prešov and the Faculty of Theology at the University of Trnava. He was ordained a priest by Bishop Milan Chautur, CSsR, in 2001. In Košice, from 2001-2004, he worked at the Michael Lacko East-West Centre for Spirituality. In 2004, he began his licenciate studies at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, obtaining his

doctorate in 2009 with a thesis entitled: *Il contributo di Giorgio Giovannicchio Bazilovič OSBM alla formazione monastica dei basiliani nell'eparchia di Mukachevo (1789-1821)*. From 2009 to 2011, he was director of the Michael Lacko East-West Centre for Spirituality. He taught a semester at the Faculty of Theology at the Catholic University in Košice. In 2011, he was appointed vice-dean of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Trnava, Bratislava, in charge of external relations and development of the faculty. During the summer semester of the academic year 2011/2012, he taught Christian Spirituality (dealing with the spirituality of the Christian East), at the Faculty of Pedagogy at the University of Trnava.

Rev. Dr. Renzo Lavatori



Rev. Renzo Lavatori is a member of the Pontifical Theological Academy. At the Pontifical University Urbaniana, he teaches diverse courses: Christology, Economic Trinity, Fundamental Theology and Escatology in the first cycle and Theological Christocentrism, Pneumatology and Angelology/Demonology in the second cycle. He also teaches at the ISSR Apollinare (Christology and Soteriology) and the ISSR “Ecclesia Mater” at the Pontifical Lateran University. He read lectures in Pneumatology, Fundamental Theology and Angelology at the Theological Faculty in Oradea (Romania). He has held conferences on the Holy Spirit and Angels at the Theological Faculty in Cluj-Napoca and Blaj (11-15 April 2010). He has published numerous works on fundamental themes of the faith, on biblical theology and numerous articles in various theological journals.

Rev. Archimandrite Manuel Nin OSB



Born in El Vendrell, Archdiocese of Tarragona, Spain, 20 August 1956. After elementary and high school, he entered the Monastery of Montserrat on 20 September 1975. In Montserrat, during his years of formation, he attended courses on scripture, liturgy, monasticism and language courses (Latin, Greek and Syriac). From 1977-1979, he completed a two-year philosophy program and from 1979-1984, he studied theology.

In the years 1984-1987, while staying at St. Anselm's College (Rome), he attended the Patristic Institute—the Augustinianum. He also attended courses at Saint Anselm Pontifical Liturgical Institute, which is part of the Monastic Institute, and some courses at the Pontifical Oriental Institute. On June 9, 1987, he obtained a Licentiate in Theology and Patristic studies at the Augustinianum. He worked on the critical edition of "Four Syriac letters attributed to John the Solitary," under the moderation of Bishop Joseph-M. Sauget and Fr. José M. Guirau, OSA. From 1987 to 1989, he has taught theology, patristics, an introduction to Eastern liturgies and Greek language in the monastery of Montserrat and begun research in view of his thesis.

Returning to St. Anselm, from 1989-1993, he attended the Augustinian Patristic Institute. On 20 January 1992, he defended his thesis for a doctorate on: *Juan el Solitario. Los cinco discursos sobre las Bienaventuranzas*. An excerpt of his doctorate was published by the Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, Rome, 1997. The complete doctorate is being published by the Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, scriptores Syri of Leuven.

During his years of study and research, he participated in the Patristic Conference at Oxford and the “Symposium Syriacum,” held every four years. He also collaborates with the publication of the monastery of Montserrat, especially with the magazine *Monastic Studies*, in which he published several articles and, since 1994, he is the director.

During the academic year 1992-1993, he began to teach at St. Anselm, the Pontifical Liturgical Institute and in the Monastic Institute. In March 1994, he was appointed a consultant for the Congregation for the Oriental Churches and he teaches courses for Integrative Year of formation for Eastern students, designed by the same Congregation. From January 1996, he has resided at the Pontifical Greek College in Rome. From academic year 1995/1996, he has also taught at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross and the Pontifical Oriental Institute. Since November 1997, he been a member of the Editorial Board of the new magazine called *St. Ephrem Theological Journal*. From 1996 to 1999, he was the spiritual director of the Pontifical Greek College. From the academic year 1998-1999, he was a visiting professor at the Pontifical Oriental Institute. Since 1998, he has been the assistant dean of the Benedictine Congregation of Subiaco, which belongs to the monastery of Montserrat. Since the academic year 2000-2001, he has taught the Sacraments for Eastern students at the Pontifical Gregorian University. Every year he holds an intensive course in the monastery of Montserrat on patristics, Eastern liturgies and ecclesiology. He is also a founding member of *Syriaca*, a research group in Italy on the Syriac Churches and Literature. Since 2007, he has taken part in training sessions for the hierarchs of Eastern Europe.

On 29 June 1999, he was appointed rector of the Pontifical Greek College in Rome. On 14 November 1999, he was made Archimandrite of the Diocese of Akko, Haifa, Nazareth and all Galilee by the Melkite archbishop of that diocese, Msgr. Boutros Mouallem. On June 2002, he was re-appointed Rector of the Pontifical Greek College and again in April 2007 for another five-year term.

Rev. Fr. Porfiryj Pidruchnyj, OSBM



Rev. Fr. Porfiryj Pidruchnyj, OSBM, was born in Ivai, Brazil, in 1941. He completed his theological studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. In 1976, at the Pontifical Oriental University in Rome, he defended his doctorate dissertation in church history: *A Historical Essay on the Legislation within the Basilian Order of St. Josaphat*. He authored many articles on the history of the Basilian Order and edited many of the books published by the Basilian Monastery in Rome. He is the foremost Brazilian scholar on the history of the Basilian Order of St. Josaphat.

Dr. Michelina Tenace



Michelina Tenace was born in San Marco in Lamis (FG) on 8 May 1954. She studied philosophy in France. She graduated in modern foreign literature at “La Sapienza” University of Rome. She received her doctorate in theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in 1991. She teaches theological anthropology

and courses on Eastern Christianity at the Gregorian University. She is a permanent member of the “Centro Studi e Ricerche Ezio Aletti.”

Her books include: *La beauté unité spirituelle dans les écrits esthétiques de Vladimir Soloviev*, éd. Fates Troyes 1993 (ed. italiana La bellezza unità spirituale, ed. Lipa, Roma 1994); *Dire l'uomo. Dall'immagine alla somiglianza. La salvezza come divinizzazione*, ed. Lipa, Roma, 1997 (2005 seconda edizione aumentata di 3 capitoli) ; *Il cristianesimo bizantino. Storia, teologia, tradizione monastica*, ed. Carocci, Roma, 2000; *L'homme transfiguré par l'Esprit. Lumière de l'Orient sur la vie consacrée*, coll. La Part-Dieu, éd. Lessius, Bruxelles 2005. *Introduzione* in Gregorio Palamas, *L'uomo mistero di luce increata*, ed Paoline, coll. Autori Cristiani del secondo millennio, Antologia e introduzione, Milano 2005, p. 7-110; *Custodi della sapienza. Il servizio dei superiori*, ed. Lipa, Roma 2007; *L'audace de la foi*, ed. Lipa, Roma 2010.

