

**“FROM FEAR TO TRUST”:  
A THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE ON THEODICY**

**written by Fr. Dr. J. Buciora**  
COMMISSION ON FAITH AND WITNESS  
OF THE CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

**INTRODUCTION**

In the contemporary theological discourse, there is a constantly growing interest in the subject of Theodicy. As the discussion on the subject develops from the variety of theological perspectives, there are numerous approaches to identify this particular field. Any discussion on Theodicy is mostly contextual that asks for more analysis. From one side, contextualization of Theodicy incarnates essential elements of human life, but from the other, it limits the discussed subjects to a particular approach. From the other perspective, contextualization of theological exercise brings us a living and valuable experience of people with God. This living experience with God broadens our perspective of the approach to the subject of Theodicy as a living reality.

Theodicy is a very stimulating question that entertains other very essential questions regarding our relationship with God and humanity. At the present time, when the concepts of the all-powerful God and God as a Judge, are so much removed from societal beliefs, very rarely we will hear the terms "fear" and "trust" as they apply to our life. Despite all the negative convictions and beliefs in the all-powerful and almighty God, as this will be shown in our analysis, the Orthodox Church brings the concept of "fear" forward and underlines it especially in its worship: Divine Liturgy.

The main purpose of this discourse is to analyse the theological element of Theodicy that is contained in a simple acclamation: "Fear of God". Although, this is a very short phrase, it contains in itself a tremendous amount of theological content that will be discussed in our discourse.

**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The initial interpretation of the phrase of "fear of God" has, at first, a negative connotation that prevails in contemporary society. As everything is understood in modern society in the context of individual rights and privileges, this phrase even has a very offensive content that is very difficult to reconcile with the individualistic concept of beliefs in God.

As we begin our analysis of modern man's approach to God and Theodicy, we have to direct our foremost attention to the historical background of Western Society that portrays God and a "fear of God" in a harmful light. This conclusion can be also applied to medieval Eastern Christianity, which was heavily influenced by the Western way of thinking. The best example of this mindset in Western Europe can be found on the frescos of Michael Angelo in the Sistine Chapel in Rome or even some of medieval Eastern Orthodox iconography. "The fear of God" was portrayed, as an image of a horrifying "Judgement" in the centre of which there was an all-powerful God on a

throne judging the entire human race. This concept of the "fear of God", as this was portrayed on the paintings in medieval Western Europe, had one main objective: to educate people in a depicted form and to deliver a message to Christians of the final consequences of man's separation from God. This approach was similar to the approach taken by St. Gregory the Great regarding the use of icons in early Christianity. According to St. Gregory, the icons were regarded as books of the "illiterate".<sup>i</sup> This was a "psychological methodology" to describe the metaphysical reality of human life outside of the Divine realm. We can call this kind of approach to Theodicy as an "educational pedagogy". The use of pedagogical language was directed towards those people who were unable to comprehend or grasp the reality of distortion of life on earth. The final goal was always the same: educational salvation.<sup>ii</sup>

Analyzing the later development of medieval European Western Christianity, we have to emphasize a dramatic shift of methodology used by the Church in its quest for expansion. A continual separation from the sacramental experience of God in Christian's life dramatically changed the orientation of people towards Theodicy. A negative shift in the experience of God by people was consequential for separation and removal of God from Christian life. God came to be known as God of vengeance and judgement. In order to understand the development of defining God in the terms "order of justice" as this was presented in the medieval Western Europe, we would have to go back to the early Christianity of the Roman Empire and Blessed Augustine, whose works together with Tertullian, Anselm and Thomas Aquinas were proclaimed as the official teaching of the Western Church at the Council of Trent (1545-1563). The oversimplification and one-sided exegetical literal interpretation of the Old and New Testament verses by the Western scholastic theologians formed an environment of biblical fear of apocalyptic magnitude. This approach also distorted, via legalistic interpretations of biblical images, the aspect of incarnation and Christ's death on the cross. As a final outcome, the medieval theological thought followed the Roman juridical tradition that developed a theory of "ransom" and "satisfaction of the divine justice". In the end, the Church was transformed into a moralistic religion with a "sadistic God" in the centre. Because of the complexity of the subject and its importance in the development of Western theological thought, it would be appropriate to study it in a different context. Analyzing this kind of approach towards Theodicy from the present perspective, we have to be critical. The fearful presentation of the image of God, as this was presented at the medieval time, could frighten people from one side. From the other side, God was robbed of the essential element of faith: love. It is because of Divine love, that God manifested Himself in divine-human flesh of Christ transforming the entire human life into restored relationship with God. Faith in God without hope of love tyrannizes people that bring them into a slavery of faith. We have to underline the thesis that it is not the fear of God that should mobilize people to faith. It is not the fear before hell that man lives by faith, hope and love. The most fundamental principle for Christian life is not fear but love. It is love that overcomes fear. The overemphasis of the fear of God and the sinful nature of man by the medieval theology created a certain type of mentality that paralysed and destroyed the presence of God in the mind of man. According to contemporary Orthodox thought, the basic mistake made by medieval Christian theology was the over-emphasis of one of the elements of eschatology: fear over love. The medieval moralists concentrated themselves exclusively on the subject of eschatology: the end of the world, condemnation of man and Divine retribution. This methodology was used as an image of a fearful God primarily as a method to convert pagans.<sup>iii</sup> From the Western perspective, the most thorough investigation on the subject of the theology of

fear and guilt was presented by a French historian J. Delumeau, who describes the centuries from XIII -XVIII as the centuries of the “murderous man and horrifying God”.<sup>iv</sup> In reality, God’s revelation has been used by a particular religious group as a weapon to annihilate the opponents.<sup>v</sup> As a consequence, the Church of the medieval age became an institution of law, punishment and Divine justice. In essence, for the medieval Western theologians, God became a heavenly policeman who, for the purpose of keeping law, order, justice, and punishment, was envisioned as a horrifying Judge. It was a process of Divine treachery.<sup>vi</sup> It was French Revolution and the Enlightenment in the Western Europe that brought the final blow to the “theology of fear”. At the end of the eighteenth century, people rebelled against the belief in a fearful God and, as a consequence, the other extreme of non-existence of God appeared. It was Jean Paul Sartre and Hegel who were the first ones in the Western Europe to proclaim the death of the scholastic God. The final touch to this proclamation was made by Nietzsche, who categorically stated, “God is dead”.<sup>vii</sup> In reality, the last three centuries were in the history of the Western world a “moral protest against a religion of fear”.<sup>viii</sup> We must be quite honest to state that centuries of the presented “theology of fear” tremendously weakened the Church and considerably discredited its credibility. For S. Bulgakov, it is essential for Orthodox theology at the present time to re-establish the authentic balance between eschatological fear and love. In the Orthodox perspective, eschatology cannot be reduced to the doctrine of God as the Judge and Avenger.<sup>ix</sup> Orthodox theology has to redefine a true image of God in the retrospective of the entire context theology. Even the grievous distress of our separation from God cannot harm the authentic image of the Loving-kindness of God.<sup>x</sup> A patristic approach to the discussed subject is not only required, but is necessary and fundamental for proper theological discourse. In general, the Orthodox approach has to be holistic which embraces all the spectrums of Church life. A further analysis of the “pedagogy of fear” was introduced by N. Berdyaev and N. Fedorov in the first part of the twentieth century, which in itself deserves to be studied. The rebellion against the “theology of fear” in Western Europe is without any doubt one of the reasons, according to P. Evdokimov, of the contemporary atheism.<sup>xi</sup> We are a part of this process as we are a part of Western society. If the Orthodox Church wants to be relative to the philosophy of modern society, the Church has to address this question in the perspective of the historical mindset that is essential for our analysis.

### **CONTEMPORARY ORTHODOX APPROACH TO “FEAR OF GOD”**

The contemporary Orthodox interpretation of this particular term "fear of God" has a positive interpretation. The "fear of God", as it originates in the Old Testament", has a rather paternal and educational purpose. One of the characteristics of man in the Book of Psalms is the drama of human existence. Psalm 111:10 illustrates the fear of God as the beginning of wisdom and all those who live by it grow by understanding. In its content, the psalms reveal the internal conflict of man and his cry for God. Because God is “life” our approach to God, disregarding our alienation from Him, can be only a positive one. It is a progression towards knowledge of God and our recognition of our separation from the source of life. It is man’s recognition of a rapture of the paradistic relationship with God, which is being experienced, in an existential loneliness. In the contemporary Orthodox theological discourse, the experience of loneliness is the first sign of human mortality.<sup>xii</sup> This process can be characterized as a passage from slavery to the rank of child.<sup>xiii</sup> To illustrate this internal conflict of man that is presented in the psalms we will use one element in the modern development of society that can help us immensely with a proper

approach to this phrase. Two disciplines, which have an immediate effect on our understanding of the concept “fear of God”, are psychology and sociology. Using the discipline of child psychology, allow me to illustrate an example of a child facing the reality of a wrongdoing. When a child does something wrong in front of his/her parents, there is a sense of fear in the heart of a child for the committed act. But regardless of the committed act, this child knows (in most of the cases) that the parents still have a sense of deep parental love. It is a pure trust of child that the parents will forgive and continue to love. This concept of complete love towards parents that goes beyond human logical comprehension has to be applied to our quest for an answer. In our life, we are alienating ourselves from God. This alienation from God has different forms and characters. One of the characteristics of alienation is the personal facet of this reality that becomes even more painful. The fact that we are continually hurting ourselves, suffering and dying are the most meaningful examples of our alienation from God. We may try to justify ourselves and even, using today's individual rights, legitimize our action. But deep down in our conscience, we know every action that separates us from God. We may camouflage our faces, we can even portray other masks of life in our daily activities, but the final outcome is constantly revealed in our separation from the source of all life-God. In effect, it is a manifestation of anxiety over the lost immortal life.<sup>xiv</sup> Using an analogy, we are like the prodigal son (Lk. 15, 11-32) that while living his own life removed from God, eventually comes home for the restoration of his life to the original state. In the prodigal's son conversion, we can perceive an internal urge to contemplate the lost dignity. While the prodigal son was on his own, he was living his own life that is being described by the Gospel as a “far removed country“. It is a life that does not have a name or description. It is life that disappears in self-confinement. It is very characteristic to notice that our alienation from God, although always personal, also avoids any name. It is a sphere of our life that constantly urges us to look for “something other“. But at the very end, as it is portrayed in this story of the Gospel, the prodigal son comes back to his own original senses. He comes to the point of realization that the life he lives is not the life he inherited from his father. With this heavy burden on his shoulders, he comes home expecting the worst. In his mind, he created different scenarios of punishment and rejection from his father and family. In his conscience there was a deep sense of shame that was portrayed in the degradation to the level of a complete loss of human dignity. In the Judaic tradition, the image of swine being taken care of by an individual was interpreted as total abandonment and isolation of this particular individual from the society and family. As we observe the development of the story, there is a most wonderful example of the response from his father. While his son was still far away from home, the elderly father runs to him, embraces him, and cries with him. For the father, it is not important that his son spent his inheritance on a lavish life. This father cries as his son comes back from isolation and self-determination. From one side, we see the immeasurable love of the father towards his son, but from the other, we see a son who comes home with a sense of hope in forgiveness. Based on the above said, it is imperative to characterize the conversion of two polarities. Conversion is not only a directive of man's return towards the Divine, but it is also God's kenosis towards humanity.

In the same perspective, we can definitely say that the concept of “fear of God” has two different polarities that are so characteristic to our life and to the story of the prodigal son. The first polarity is embraced in the definition of “fear“. The phrase warns us about the consequences of our alienation from God. For the Orthodox Christian, this subject is especially emphasized in the third week before Holy and Great Lent: the Week of the mentioned Prodigal Son. The entire

week of the Prodigal Son, especially the reading of the daily Gospels, underlines the aspect of eschatology. One of the characteristic icons of the Last Judgement, that embraces in it the Orthodox teaching on the Last Judgement, is the fresco of A. Rublev from 1408 that is being preserved at the Holy Dormition Cathedral in Vladimir. The fresco, in opposition to fresco of Michelangelo, portrays Last Judgement as an optimistic and joyful event. Even the fire of the Last Judgement is represented on the icon as fire of infinite love of God towards the human race. The Fathers of the Church, who composed the services of the Holy and The Great Lent, were deeply convinced about the negative character of our alienation from God. As we look at all the Lenten services we observe a deep sense of our longing for God. There is a deep call made by those services, particularly to the personal soul, to awaken and to realize the lost relationship with God. There is a deep sense of distortion of our human life and a call to overcome the extreme alienation from God as it is portrayed in the personalities of the Old Testament. A constant reference to the Old Testament is a trial to reverse a course of our life and a call to God to have mercy on the human race. In a sense, it is a call to God to liberate humanity from the oppression and sorrow of loneliness, as our nature of life is communion. We may say, that the services of the Holy and Great Lent, and particularly the first week, lead us towards recognition of our state and our alienation from God. From the other side, it is a call to rebuild the lost relationship with God, experienced by Adam in paradise.

The other polarity, that is particularly characteristic for Holy and Great Lent, is the evidence of the restoration of our pristine and unique place in God's creation. The first Sunday of the Great Lent leads us to the prophetic personalities of Moses and prophets. The one common characteristic for those prophetic personalities of the Old Testament was the vision of God. The Fathers of the Church of the first seven centuries infiltrated in the worship the conviction that God never abandoned us in this world. God continues to care for His creation despite a deep alienation of man. From this perspective, the concept of the "fear of God" brings us a positive assurance, that God is present in the suffering and alienation of humanity. The assurance is exceptionally characteristic on the fifth Sunday, where the example of St. Mary of Egypt prefigures the final restoration of creation. St. Mary of Egypt becomes a role model for the Church to rebuild and to redefine life. In other words, the Church in prayer leads us from a total alienation of humanity to a total restoration of our relationship with God. The conversion of St. Mary of Egypt is finalized on the day of Resurrection where the restoration of humanity becomes final. The "fear of God" leads us from the fear of alienation from God to the joy of being with God again in paradise. The image of St. Mary of Egypt as the final restitution of human destiny towards the Kingdom of God might be the answer to the icon the Last Judgement written by A. Rublev. Even in the aspect of the Last Judgement, as this is represented by A. Rublev, there is a joy as a recapitulation of humanity towards its original place.

The most beautiful example of total conversion of fear into joy and trust is the Theotokos - Mother of God. On the Feast of the Annunciation, the angel of God tells the Blessed Virgin Mary not to be afraid of the Divine presence, because "*she has found favour with God*". The fear of humanity, as it is expressed by the Blessed Virgin, is transformed by the assurance of God's presence in the world. The total transformation of this polarity is finalized by the will of the Blessed Virgin to give herself totally to the will of God. In the Blessed Virgin Mary, the entire human race finds a road to its original destiny. The aspect of the complete trust of Blessed Mary to the will of God is the only answer of humanity to God.

If we apply this analogically to ourselves, we may be just enlightened by the very fact, that God loves us regardless of our transgressions and alienation. The concept of the "fear of God" leads us to the concept of complete hope and trust in the Divine. Based on the example of a child and the story of the prodigal son, trust and hope are the ultimate answers to the concept of the "fear of God". In our prayerful life and longing for God, "fear of God" transforms itself into a tremendous hope, joy and happiness, based on the fact that God still accepts us regardless of our alienation and refusal to share with Him His Divine life. In other words, it is the proclamation as a glorious chant where we express our total dependence on God. We realize the supreme sovereignty of God and His power over the entire creation. It becomes a confirmation of total dependency of human life on God. The "fear of God" has a positive and educational character that warns us that life without God is a meaningless utopia and complete annihilation of any purpose of life. Without the concept of God, we become a temporary anomaly that turns itself back into a madness of non-existence. The phrase also warns us before the alienation and degradation of our calling. In other words, the fear of God should exorcize all fear of what is not God.<sup>xv</sup> From the other side, this phrase advises us before the ultimate act of human will to love God and to be in unity with Him. The refusal to accept God's invitation to share His Divine life pulls us into sphere of total deprivation of human dignity. Where there is no God, there is no shame. Where the human consciousness is eradicated, shame acquires a form of righteous life. In this context, we can only agree with Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky who concluded that without God everything would be permissible.<sup>xvi</sup> In this context, the phrase "fear of God" acts as a constant remainder of the higher Divine call that constantly pulls us into the realm of discovery of our angelic destiny. It helps us to realize that we are in a process to rediscover our own human authenticity. As we reverse the "fear of God" into the complete trust of the loving God, our life completes itself in the radiant glow of God's presence in our life. The motion of trust in God leads us directly to the realization of our eschatological transcendence.<sup>xvii</sup> In the words of Blessed Augustine: "Let us fear prudently that we may not fear vainly" (Hom. 15:1). It is a radiant glow of Moses in the Old Testament and a total transformation of St. Mary of Egypt. It is the glory of God that brings the saints to the ultimate beauty as it is seen in God's presence. It is a living experience in the life of God: it is a Theophany. Fear of God transformed into a complete trust in God becomes a "face to face" relationship with Him who is the origin of our life: "...used to speak to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend" (Exodus 33:11).<sup>xviii</sup> Using the phrase of one of the contemporary Orthodox theologians P. Evdokimov, we become the "walking icons" in the midst of God's creation. In retrospect, it is a gift of God's holiness to humanity.<sup>xix</sup> For a Christian, the "fear of God" becomes a life's passion that is totally embraced by the state of sainthood.

## **ECCLESIOLOGICAL CHARACTER**

It is essential to confirm another very essential aspect of this phrase. It is very characteristic that this phrase is being presented in the context of a worshipping community: the Church. The call to be fearful of God leads us also into an established relationship with God. It is not a generic proclamation, but a precise and characteristic directive to all those, who have established unity with God. In this context, the phrase contains a certain conviction of privilege and honour of all those who belong to His Church. It is not only privilege and honour, but it is also responsibility to preserve this unique and divine calling. The place to hear and to accept this calling is the

community: the Church.

The call has two dimensions: God and man and men's interrelationship within the community. In the context of community, it is not an individual call but a communal action of the worshipping Church. As a worshipping community, the Church realizes this dimension as a process that is being achieved in a communal life. In this perspective, the phrase of "fear of God" is being realized not only on the personal unity with God, but it is also extended to the entire Body of Christ.<sup>xx</sup> The unity with God is also extended to the other members of the community, whom we also approach with tremendous joy and honour. Consequently, the "fear of God" brings the entire community into the presence of God. It is exactly the presence of the Holiness that is causing fear, trembling, and reverence that belong to the core of religious feeling.<sup>xxi</sup> We will be right to present this experience as a sweet feeling that being caused by the presence of God has no "equal on earth".<sup>xxii</sup> The experience of man's participation in God's life, according to Evagrius, is man's knowledge of God that brings him so much pleasure.<sup>xxiii</sup> Those words were once again recalled by St. Maximus, who defined the acceptance of God's love as a "divine and inconceivable pleasure".<sup>xxiv</sup> It is sweetness of inclusivity, in opposition to exclusivity, that puts us in front of the Divine presence. In an ecclesial life, it is a living faith of the worshipping community in front of awesome God.<sup>xxv</sup> In the context of the community, the "fear of God" brings us the aspect of hope that in extension is offered to the entire Church.<sup>xxvi</sup> We can't forget that it is a "fear of God" as hope and not a human initiative that brings us together. From the liturgical point of view, the "fear of God", as it is expressed right before the distribution of the Eucharist, is transformed by the very Body and Blood of Christ. The "fear of God" leads us ultimately to the very life in God. It is this vision and participation in God's life that the Orthodox Church can't detach its gaze in fear and admiration.<sup>xxvii</sup> Because the call for participation in the Divine takes place within the Sacrament of the Eucharist, our life is essentially sacramental that leads us ultimately to a new dimension of life. The Eucharist, according to liturgical papyrus of DorBalyzeh, feeds the "hope of eternal life".<sup>xxviii</sup> In its foundation, it is an ultimate thirst of humanity for God that feeds and transform man's life. The fundamental characteristic of sacramental life of a Christian is the aspect of trust that comes out surprisingly from the "fear of God". In fact, the sacramental aspect of our life is an invitation from God to enter into the relationship with Him. We are invited to direct and shape our life that is found in the Eucharist.<sup>xxix</sup> In effect, the Eucharist is the place, where the relationship of God and humanity is restored.<sup>xxx</sup> In the eucharistic community, God becomes the final transformation that is being shaped in our approach to the Divine. Life in God is our hope that is constantly accompanied by the elements of fear and trembling (Phil. 2, 12). In the eschatological perspective, the elements of fear and trembling are transformed in our life into an actual manifestation of life of Christ. The Eucharist forms Christ within us.<sup>xxxi</sup> It is the reason why the members of the early Church called themselves Christians. (Acts 11:26). The actual manifestation of Christ in our life brings us back to the original destiny that is found in the Kingdom of God. In the original context of God's creation, "we were created in paradise and for paradise, we were exiled from paradise, and Christ "leads us back into paradise".<sup>xxxii</sup> In this context, man finds himself again in paradise, where he trembles and fears, like Adam in the garden, before God. It is a process that leads us from the horrifying image of God of the scholastic West to the total transformation and joyful participation in the very life of God. It is an experience of the Apostles of Jesus Christ after the Resurrection: from fear to joy, from uncertainty to glorification.

It has to be emphasized that the phrase “fear of God”, as this is presented in the liturgical context, is correlated with the additional phrase that, according to our analysis, complements the first one: “ With fear of God and with faith and love draw near”. If the first part of the phrase reveals the awesome presence of God and, according to our analysis, our “total unworthiness”<sup>xxxiii</sup> in participation in His life, the second part of the phrase overflows with love and assurance of God’s love for humanity. God descends in His kenosis to the level of humanity in order for all those members of the worshipping community with “faith and love” to ascend to His Divine life. God calls His creation for the participation in His Kingdom. As we look at the phrase from this particular perspective, it is entirely God’s initiative to share His life. From one side, the phrase contains a tremendous amount of reality of our alienation from God, but from the other side, the phrase never abolishes the indescribable will of God for humanity to ascend to the original destiny. It is important to notice at this point that, according to Orthodox theological thought, our way of theologizing about God is immediately rooted in our approach to Divine in worship.<sup>xxxiv</sup> It might be seen as a logical paradox that goes beyond anything known in the aspect of human life. The entire relationship of the Divine and humanity is a paradox of paradoxes. Although man can reject the relationship and participation in the Divine, God, like a loving father, patiently waits for His creation to return His call. As we look at this particular phrase, we might be overwhelmed by the reality of paradoxes and unknown contradictions. It is exactly here that the theological perspective on Theodicy enters another dimension.<sup>xxxv</sup> It is here that Theodicy deals with the infinite love of God for creation and the extreme possibility of an ultimate rejection of God by man. We have to remember that the entire phrase is an invitation from God to participate in His Divine life. At this particular moment man can reject this call and return to his own illusionary perfection. It is a mystifying risk on part of God to give man such an ultimate choice. Regardless of the choice man makes in life, there is a constant will on behalf of God to share His Divine life. It might be correct to point out that the phrase enters another level of analysis of Theodicy that has to be studied with tremendous humility. It is only with the prophetic humility that we can approach what St. Ignatius referred as “medicine of immortality and antidote of death”<sup>xxxvi</sup>

## CONCLUSION

As we can observe, based on this very brief analysis, the phrase “fear of God” contains in itself an enormous amount of theological content. It would be our oversight to analyse this phrase based only from a historical or contextual approach. The Orthodox Church, as this was presented in our short discourse, rejects the idea of analysing the phrase in separation from the second part of the acclamation that carries in it a theological completion. The traditional presentation of the phrase by the medieval Western Church has to be approached with a critical and constructive analysis. The entire centuries of presentation of the phrase “fear of God” in the negative Scholastic theological mindset thought created a culture of negation of God in man’s life. In order to redefine an authentic Orthodox theological perspective on the discussed subject we have to reconstruct the proper approach to Theodicy that would avoid reductionism.

As we study the phrase, we can easily perceive the difficulties that arise from our analysis. The constructive theological approach has to be comprehensive and holistic. The analysis in this approach would enter other dimension of Theodicy that is instrumental for our approach and

comprehensive in its content. The holistic approach is critical for our analysis in order to avoid misinterpretation made by the past. Our brief analysis of the subject indicates that the holistic approach to the subject is dictated by the very experience of the Church. The Divine Liturgy, where the phrase “fear of God” finds its appropriate place, defines the theological approach to Theodicy. Further analysis on Theodicy has also to include, the aspect of anthropology and Christology, as constitutive elements of Theodicy. Without those elements the entire analysis would be automatically inadequate. As this was shown in our discussion, the “fear of God” in our further analysis of Theodicy, enters the very life of God. Behind the initial negative impression of the phrase, that was captured was centuries by the medieval West, we discover assurance of God’s presence in our life. If the “fear of God” is attributed to the fall of man, the infinite love of God leads our discussion to the original destiny to live with the Divine that is articulated in the second part of the phrase. The assurance of God’s presence in our life, despite our alienation, comes in the very life of God: the Sacrament of Eucharist. God not only assures His creation of His constant presence in the world, but He gives His only begotten Son in order to bring man to His original place. It is exactly here, that entering the field of Theodicy, we have to enter the entire discussion with extreme humility. This new entrance defines our limitations of speculation. This also asks us for further analysis of Theodicy. Let us only hope that the analysis of Theodicy will continue in the future that will be relative to life of man and to the entire creation of God.

---

<sup>i</sup> Rev. Dr. Michael Azkoul, *Perichoresis: The Christology of the Icon*, in: *The Patristic and Byzantine Review*, vol. 7(1) 1988, p. 76.

<sup>ii</sup> Look in: Christos Yannaras, *Elements of Faith. An Introduction to Orthodox Theology*, op. cit., p. 84.

<sup>iii</sup> It is very interesting to notice, that the idea of a fearful God was inherited, according to some historians, by the Western world from the pre-Christian beliefs. In the period of time, the beliefs in God of vengeance, influenced by the Greek and German culture, was integral for this type of image.

<sup>iv</sup> J. Delumeau, *Grzech I strach. Poczucie winy w kulturze Zachodu XIII-XVIII w.,* przeł. A. Szymanowski, Warszawa, 1994, p. 8.

<sup>v</sup> It is important to notice the entire discussion on the subject of “death of God” by the Orthodox theologians in the seventieth of the twentieth century, in: *Orthodoxy and the death of God; Essays in Contemporary Theology*. Edited by A.M. Allchin. London, Fellowship of St. Sergius, 1971.

<sup>vi</sup> Christos Yannaras, *Elements of Faith. An Introduction to Orthodox Theology*, T&T Clark, Edinburg, 1991 T&T Clark, Edinburg, 1991, p. 83.

<sup>vii</sup> Christos Yannaras, *An Orthodox Comment On “The Death of God”*, in: *Orthodoxy and the death of God; Essays in Contemporary Theology*. Edited by A.M. Allchin, (London), Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1971, p. 40.

<sup>viii</sup> It is interesting to notice, that this conclusion was presented not to long ago by the General Synod of the Church of England, look in: *The Mystery of Salvation: The Story of God’s Gift. A Report by the Doctrine Commission of the General Synod of the Church of England*, Church House Publishing, London, 1995.

<sup>ix</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *The Eucharist. Sacrament of the Kingdom*, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, Crestwood, 1988, p. 42.

<sup>x</sup> John Chryssavgis, *Repentance and Confession in the Orthodox Church*, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, 1990, p. 66.

<sup>xi</sup> P. Evdokimov, *L’amour fou de Dieu*, Paris, 1973, p. 32.

<sup>xii</sup> Christos Yannaras, *Elements of Faith. An Introduction to Orthodox Theology*, op. cit., p. 86.

<sup>xiii</sup> Tomas Spidlik, *The Spirituality of the Christian East*, Kalamazoo, Michigan, Cistercian Publication Inc., 1986, p. 65.

<sup>xiv</sup> Christos Yannaras, *Elements of Faith. An Introduction to Orthodox Theology*, op. cit., p. 82

- 
- <sup>xv</sup> Dale C. Allison, Jr., *Matthew 10:26-31 and the Problem of Evil*, in: SVTQ, vol. 32(4), 1988, p. 301.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Michael Azkoul, *Prolegomena to a Critique of Western Culture*, in: GOTR, vol. 4(2), 1958-59, p. 160.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Christos Yannaras, *Elements of Faith. An Introduction to Orthodox Theology*, op. cit., p. 66.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Op. cit., p. 66.
- <sup>xix</sup> Thomas Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith, volume I: Doctrine*, The Department of Religious Education. The Orthodox Church in America, New York, 1976, p. 26.
- <sup>xx</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *The Eucharist. Sacrament of the Kingdom*, op. cit., p. 18.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Nicholas Arseniev, *Transcendence and Immanence of God*, in: SVSQ, vol. 3(4)1959, p. 2; Alexander Schmemmann, *The Eucharist. Sacrament of the Kingdom*, op. cit., p. 182.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *The Eucharist. Sacrament of the Kingdom*, op. cit., p. 62.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> In: Tomas Spidlik, *The Spirituality of the Christian East*, op. cit., p.43. In the ascetic literature fear is an effect of solitude and tears that brings foresight, p. 205.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Look in: Christos Yannaras, *Elements of Faith. An Introduction to Orthodox Theology*, op. cit., p. 119.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Op. cit., p. 56.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> It is very interesting to notice that according to the desert Fathers, the fear of God comes only after man's ability to liberate itself from judgement and in a total humility, in: M. Borowska, ks. M. Starowiejski, ks. M. Rymuza, *Apoftegmaty ojcow pustyni*, Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, Warszawa, 1986, p. 136.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Nicholas Arseniev, *Three Chapters from an Unpublished Book*, in: SVSQ, vol 4(1)1960, p. 41.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> In: Nicholas S. Arseniev, *The Glory of God in the Liturgies of the Christian East*, SVSQ, vol. 9(3)1965, p. 113.
- <sup>xxix</sup> One of the studies on this particular subject is offered by Nicholas Arseniev: Nicholas S. Arseniev, *The Glory of God in the Liturgies of the Christian East*, in: SVSQ, op. cit..
- <sup>xxx</sup> Christos Yannaras, *Elements of Faith. An Introduction to Orthodox Theology*, Edinburgh, p. 76.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> It is very important to mention the conclusion made by Alexander Schmemmann. In his conclusion, the aspect of unworthiness to approach Eucharist that prevailed over the centuries is the main cause of the creation of fear of God in the mentality of Christians, in: Alexander Schmemmann, *The Eucharist. Sacrament of the Kingdom*, op. cit., p. 231.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *The Eucharist. Sacrament of the Kingdom*, op. cit., p. 174.
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *Confession and Communion. Report to the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America*, February 17, 1972.
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> A.M. Alchin, *Orthodoxy and the Death of God; Essays in Contemporary Theology*. op. cit., p. 17.
- <sup>xxxv</sup> For Alexander Schmemmann, the entrance into another level in the liturgical context begins at the very beginning of Anaphora at the time, when the priest says: "Let us stand! Let us stand with fear! Let us attend, that we may offer the Holy Oblation in Peace", in: Alexander Schmemmann, *The Eucharist. Sacrament of the Kingdom*, op. cit., p. 159.
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> Ignat., Ephes., 13.