



The theological and doxological reference to the Resurrection and the Pentecost according to the orations of Gregory of Nazianzus XLI and XLV

La referencia teológica y doxológica a la Resurrección y al Pentecostés según las oraciones de Gregorio Nacianceno XLI y XLV

La referència teològica i doxològica a la Resurrecció i la Pentecosta segons les oracions de Gregori de Nazianz XLI i XLV

A referência teológica e doxológica à Ressurreição e ao Pentecostes segundo as orações de Gregório de Nazianzo XLI e XLV

Eirini ARTEMI¹

Abstract: In the forty-one oration, Gregory of Nazianzus analyzes the divinity of the Holy Spirit, a subject that is developed again with more severe way in his Fifth Theological Oration. Gregory tries to establish the point by quite a different set of arguments from those adopted in the former discourse, none of whose points are here repeated. In the other oration, forty-five, Gregory refers to the importance of the resurrection for the human race. He presents Christ as the new Adam who saved the human from the death and reunites again the man with God. This is a subject that is referred to the oration forty-one, too. In this paper, we will examine the teaching of Gregory of Nazianzus about the divine status of the Holy Spirit and his equality to the other two persons of the Triune God through theological and biblical images. Also, we will present how he connects his teaching for anthropology based on the Christology. In the end we will show how Gregory produced these orations for public festivals within the literarily ripe tradition of pagan festival rhetoric, but he gives to his orations theological content.

¹ Lecturer in the post graduate level of Orthodox Theology Hellenic Open University. Lecturer of Patrologia, Patristic theology and interpretation of church texts in Orthodox school theology in the University of Congo. Teacher of Biblical Koine Greek Language in Israel Institute of Biblical Studies - Rosen School of Hebrew with the cooperation of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, faculty of Biblical Studies. Post doc of ancient and Byzantine philosophy, PhD and MA of theology, bacs of theology and classical philology. *E-mail:* cartemi@theol.uoa.gr.



Mirabilia Journal 31 (2020/2)

Jun-Dic 2020/ISSN 1676-5818

Resumen: En la cuadragésima primera oración, Gregorio de Nacianceno analiza la divinidad del Espíritu Santo, tema que vuelve a desarrollar con más severidad en su Quinta Oración Teológica. Gregory intenta establecer el punto mediante un conjunto de argumentos bastante diferente de los adoptados en el discurso anterior, ninguno de cuyos puntos se repite aquí. En la otra oración, cuarenta y cinco, Gregorio se refiere a la importancia de la resurrección para la raza humana. Presenta a Cristo como el nuevo Adán que salvó al humano de la muerte y vuelve a reunir al hombre con Dios. Este es un tema al que se hace referencia también en la oración cuarenta y uno. En este artículo, examinaremos la enseñanza de Gregorio de Nacianceno sobre el estado divino del Espíritu Santo y su igualdad con las otras dos personas del Dios Trino a través de imágenes teológicas y bíblicas. También presentaremos cómo conecta su enseñanza para la antropología basada en la cristología. Al final, mostraremos cómo Gregory produjo estas oraciones para festivales públicos dentro de la tradición literariamente madura de la retórica de las fiestas paganas, pero le da a sus oraciones un contenido teológico.

Keywords: Doxology – Resurrection – Pentecost’s – Gregory of Nazianzus.

Palabras-clave: Doxología – Resurrección – Pentecostés – Gregorio Nacianceno.

ENVIADO: 20.06.2020
ACEPTADO: 01.11.2020

Introduction

The Liturgy ‘Leitourgia’ is compounded by the words ‘λεῖτος’ (people) and ‘ἔργον’ (deed). It means public deed. Already in ancient times, the Greek word Leitourgia had the meaning not only of public service, but also of public worship. In Byzantine ecclesiastical terminology, the word refers mainly to the religious service at the core of which is the celebration of the sacrament of the Divine Eucharist (Latin: *missa*). Nicholas Cabasilas underlines: “The function of the celebration of the sacraments is to convert the gifts offered into the body and blood of Christ, and its aim is to sanctify the faithful who, through receiving the sacraments, gain remission of sins, the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, and similar good things”.²

The Liturgy is really in the heart of the Church’s tradition. The Liturgy’s roots go back to Jewish worship and the adaptation of Jewish worship by Early Christians³. The

² NICHOLAS CABASILAS, *Sacrae Liturgiae Interpretatio* 50, PG 50, 483CD.

³ JOHN FOUNTOULIS, *Issues about Liturgy*, (Thessaloniki, 1977), p. 14.



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Divine Liturgy is seen as transcending time, and the world. It is a heritage from the apostles which is transmitted from generation to generation down to us. In apostolic era, the worship of God is taken place by the Apostles. This worship exists in the Divine Liturgy. A new element is added to the worship of God. This has to do that the Holy Liturgy didn't have as center only the Triune God, but it has mainly as center the Incarnate Word, Christ.⁴

The Divine Liturgy lifts us up to the very throne of God. As Moses ascended the mountain to receive the Divine Law and as the three disciples ascended the mountain with Christ to behold His transfiguration, so have we been granted a divine ascent. Yet, such a blessing carries great responsibility. Moses delivered the Law to God's people and the disciples evangelized the known world. We are called to be the presence of Christ in the world, 'praising God and having favor with all the people'⁵ and being the instruments through which the Lord will add to the Church those who are being saved.

Almost from the period of Ireneaus of Lyon (2nd Century) there is a strong connection among the faith, the dogmatic theology and the Divine Liturgy, 'But our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion'⁶. The latter the mysteries of faith, of which the Resurrection of Christ has a central place, is filled with dogmatical and doctrinal statements, whether from the doctrine of the Councils, or from the doctrine of the Fathers of the Church⁷. The Liturgical texts of the Church in general are a mine of both precise theology and theological meditation, which can be of great help to anyone who wants to know the faith by praying and worshipping according to the faith.

The liturgical texts consist of the whole dogmatic theology of the Church. So in these texts the believers have the chance to listen to again and again the triadological, Christological, pneumatological theology. The liturgical theology should not be isolated by the patrology, the history of Christian dogma, the patristic theology of different writers and doctors of the Church at different epochs. The study of liturgical

⁴ JOHN FOUNTOULIS, *Issues about Liturgy, (Thessaloniki, 1977)*, p. 14.

⁵ ACTS 2:47.

⁶ IRENEAUS OF LYON, *Contra Haereses*, 4,18,5, PG 7, 1028AB.

⁷ CONSTANTINOS - DAMASKINOS FYLAKTOS, *Historical and Theological Aspect of Anaphora (Eucharistic Prayer) of the Divine Liturgy of St. Gregory the Theologian*, (Athens, 2016), p. 114. GEORGE FILIAS, *Tradition and Development in the Worship of the Church*, (Athens, 2014), p. 92. IDEM, *Studies of History and Theology of Orthodox Worship*, (Athens, 2002), p. 127.



hymns, of their appearance, their development and content, fulfils the study of the theological writings of the Church Fathers. Several Church Fathers are not only the authors of theological treaties, but are also the source of the hymnographical material. The study of liturgical parts and mainly of hymnography completes our knowledge of history and of the system of Byzantine theology. The believers should not limit the study of patristic writings only to theological treaties written in prose, but it is necessary to turn themselves also to ecclesiastical poetry, iconography, symbolism, and more generally, to liturgy.

Although the great importance of the connection of the Holy Divine Liturgy with the dogmatic theology, in the first centuries this relation was rather restricted. Basilus of Caesarea wonders: 'Does not this dogmatic truth come from that unpublished and secret teaching which our fathers guarded in a silence out of the reach of curious meddling and inquisitive investigation? Well had they learned the lesson that the awful dignity of the mysteries is best preserved by silence'⁸, and he continues:

In the same manner the Apostles and Fathers who laid down laws for the Church from the beginning thus guarded the awful dignity of the mysteries in secrecy and silence, for what is bruited abroad random among the common folk is no mystery at all. This is the reason for our tradition of unwritten precepts and practices, that the knowledge of our dogmas may not become neglected and contemned by the multitude through familiarity.⁹

In the fourth century, there are many church fathers who contributed with their theology to the texts of the holy liturgy. One of them is Gregory the theologian or Gregory of Nazianzus. He wrote many orations for many Christian Feasts. In these orations he analyzes many theological subjects and a lot of them were included into the hymns of liturgy.

I. The theology of Gregory of Nazianzus in his orations XLI and XLV

I.1. The use of images for Holy Spirit and His attributes before and after the Pentecost in the oration XLI

The attempt of Gregory to speak about the Holy Spirit was a difficult work because that period there was a confused aspect of Christians of the Holy Spirit. Gregory insists on the presentation of the third Person's of God sanctifying and divinizing

⁸ BASIL OF CAESAREA, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 28, 66, PG 32, 188AB.

⁹ *Ibidem*, PG 32, 188B.



function. In the light of His self-revelation and deeds of divinization, Gregory uses pictures to speak for Holy Spirit and to support that He is fully and unequivocally God.¹⁰

Gregory preaches this oration in front of Pneumatomachians in 479 and he tries to analyze the divinity of the Holy Spirit¹¹. He uses pictures from the material world to speak about the homoousion and the divinity of Holy Spirit with the God Father and the God Son. He follows all the previous fathers of the Church. He speaks about the divinity of Holy Spirit as He appeared to the apostles in the form of tongues of fire on Pentecost.¹² He explains in this oration that holy people saw the divinity of the persons of God as revealed- in Their attributes, not as God is in the essence of His Divinity.¹³

Gregory explains that God and mainly Holy Spirit appeared as fire or as tongues of fire because the fire is the mean for the purification of people, the consuming fire which burns up the malice¹⁴. The fire was used in the antiquity for the people or places to be purified. There was a connection with fire and purification.¹⁵

One more image of Holy Spirit is His revelation as light.¹⁶ The fact that God is light sets up a natural contrast with darkness. If light is a metaphor for righteousness and goodness, then darkness signifies evil and sin. So, the Holy Spirit as God can be characterized as light.

In his forty first oration ‘On Pentecost’¹⁷, Gregory of Nazianzus deals with the question of the Deity of the Holy Spirit as an answer to Pneumatomachian and

¹⁰ CHRISTIAN A. BEELEY, ‘The Holy Spirit in the Cappadocians: Past and Present’, *Modern Theology* 26:1 (2010), pp. 90-119, on p. 99.

¹¹ PAUL GALLAY, *La vie de Saint Grégoire de Nazianze*, (Lyon – Paris, 1943), p. 146. STYLIANOS PAPADOPOULOS, *Gregory Theologian and the presuppositions of his pneumatological teaching*, (in greek), (Athens, 1989), p. 48.

¹² GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41, 12, PG 36, 445A.

¹³ *IBIDEM*

¹⁴ *IBIDEM* 41, 12, PG 36, 444BC, 445A.

¹⁵ HOMER, *The Odyssey*, book 22, 481-495, with an English translation by A.T. Murray, (London, 1919).

¹⁶ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41, 6, PG 36, 437B.

¹⁷ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41, PG 36, 428-452. EIRINI ARTEMI, ‘The Divine Personhood of the Holy Spirit in the teaching of Gregory Nazianzen’, *Vox Patrum*, 37 (2017), t. 68, pp. 179-192, on p. 181.



Eunomian detractors, something that he analyzed with more strict way in his Fifth Theological Oration (Oratio 31: ‘On the Holy Spirit’).¹⁸ In this oration he proceeds to establish the point by quite a different set of arguments from those adopted in the thirtieth one discourse.¹⁹ Until the fourth century, the Holy Spirit is spoken of as a ‘force’, or as ‘power’ emanating from God, rather than as God himself.²⁰ He was thought as creature.²¹ Gregory underlines with emphasis that the Holy Spirit is God. Anyone who refuses something like this, the divinity of the Holy Spirit²², is heretic.

Gregory analyzes a narration of the deed of the Third Person of the Holy Spirit after the ascension of Christ²³. His intention is to introduce his audience through the history of the Spirit's interactions with visible and invisible creation²⁴. As he does so, Gregory ultimately summarizes his entire understanding of how and why the Holy Spirit relates to Christians as it does²⁵. He wants to speak for the deity of the Holy Spirit. He invokes the assistance of the Spirit for his preaching, like Homer who wanted the help of muse to enlighten him and to reveal him for things about Gods which were not known to ancient poet. He immediately picks up on the distinction between dominion and servitude that he introduced in Oratio 34 ‘On the Arrival of the Egyptians’.

By this way, he unquestionably highlights the deity of the Holy Spirit: ‘As for what concerns the Spirit, may the Spirit assist me and give me speech, as much as I would like; but if not that much, as much as is fitting to the occasion. And he will assist entirely as a master, but not as a slave, not awaiting a command, as some suppose. For

¹⁸ BEELEY, ‘The Holy Spirit ...’, p. 100.

¹⁹ CH. G. BROWNE, J. ED. SWALLOW, *From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, Vol. 7, ed. by PH. SCHAFF, H. WACE, (Buffalo - New York, 1894).

²⁰ *IBIDEM*.

²¹ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41,6, PG 36, 437A: ‘They who reduce the Holy Spirit to the rank of a creature are blasphemers and wicked servants, and worst of the wicked. For it is the part of wicked servants to despise Lordship, and to rebel against dominion, and to make That which is free their fellow-servant’.

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ IDEM, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41, 11-17, PG 36, 444A- 452C,

²⁴ *IBIDEM*.

²⁵ DANIEL G. OPPERWALL, *The Holy Spirit in the life and writings of Gregory of Nazianzus*, (McMaster University, 2012), p. 41.



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he blows where he wills, and upon whom, and whenever and however much he wishes. Thus, we are inspired both to think and to speak about the Spirit'.²⁶

For Gregory, the Holy Spirit is beyond human comprehension. He always was and is and will be, without beginning, without end, but is always ranked and numbered with the Father and the Son. He is in a mutual relationship with the Father and the Son.²⁷

According to Gregory's pneumatology, the Spirit as God is always the same as Himself and as those with whom he is ranked, invisible, eternal, uncontainable, unchanging, without quality, without quantity, without form, intangible, self-moving, ever-moving, self-determining, self-powered, all-powerful.²⁸

Gregory reviews the work and the role of the Spirit in the whole *oikonomia* from the beginning of the creation to the Pentecost. Before the Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was present in energy in his works, but the role of Holy Spirit revealed Himself on the day of Pentecost. This day the Spirit was present in person or substantially²⁹, 'in a way analogous to the substantial or personal presence of the Son from his incarnation to his Ascension'.³⁰ On that day there is the third part of the accomplishment of the revelation of the Person of God. Especially, Gregory speaks to his audience about the catalytic role of the Holy Spirit from the creation of the world to the liking of the disciples of Christ on the day of the Pentecost.

So, there are the basic stages of the Spirit's working in creation, beginning with the Spirit's relationship to the angels, and continuing through the ways in which the Spirit works in the Old Testament prophets, and finally the disciples of Christ³¹. For this Cappadocian father, the 'illumination (ἐλλάμψις)' and 'completion (τελείωσις)' of the angels are the work of the Spirit, as are the ability of the Old Testament prophets to have the vision of, both God and the future. Gregory's discussion of the disciples

²⁶ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41,5 PG 36, 436C-437A, trans. V. E. F. HARRISON, *Saint Gregory (of Nazianzus), Festal Orations*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, New York 2008, p. 148.

²⁷ IDEM, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41, 11, PG 36, 444A.

²⁸ IDEM, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41, 9, PG 36, 441BC.

²⁹ THOMAS A. NOBLE, *The Deity of the Holy Spirit according to Gregory of Nazianzus*, (Edinburgh, 1989), p. 96.

³⁰ *IBIDEM*.

³¹ DAVID G. OPPERWALL, *The Holy Spirit in the life and writings of Gregory of Nazianzus*, (McMaster University, 2012), pp. 41-42.



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focuses on the three stages of their own reception of the Spirit. These three stages are indicated for Gregory thus.³²

In the period of the Old Testament, God Father reveals Himself to the population of Israel. In the New Testament, the second Person of the Triune God, the Word, incarnated. He became total man and remained total God. So in the period of the New Testament there is the revelation of the Son of God. After the Pentecost there is the revelation of Paraclete, of Holy Spirit, the third Hypostases of the Triune God. Of course, it should be underlined that the three divine Hypostases of God are in no way separated. The Divine Unity consists of the Father, with His Son and His Spirit distinct from God and yet perfectly united together in Him. Every attribute of divinity which belongs to God the Father -life, love, wisdom, truth, blessedness, holiness, power, purity, joy- belongs equally as well to the Son and the Holy Spirit. The being, nature, essence, existence and life of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are absolutely and identically one and the same.³³

In God, in eternity, as well as towards the world in creation, revelation, incarnation, redemption, sanctification, and glorification –the will and action of the Trinity are one: from the divine Father, through the divine Son, in the divine Holy Spirit. Every action of God is the action of the Three. No one person of the Trinity acts independently of or in isolation from the others. The action of each is the action of all; the action of all is the action of each. And the divine action is essentially one.³⁴

The Holy Spirit reveals Himself to man from the time of creation of the universe until the end of the world. The progressive revelation of the triune Godhead, firstly of God Father, then of God Son and, later of God Holy Spirit, is a process of God's condescension to people's inability to understand the mystery of the Godhead.³⁵ So before the Pentecost, the Holy Spirit acted in angels³⁶, patriarchs³⁷, prophets³⁸, disciples of Christ.³⁹

³² *IBIDEM*, p. 42. Gregory of Nazianzus, *In Pentecostem*, Oratio 41, 11, PG 36, 444C.

³³ EIRINI ARTEMI, 'The triadological teaching of Gregory Nazianzen about God in his twentieth Oration *On Theology and the office of Bishops*', 25.3.2014. IDEM, 'Gregory Nazianzen's trinitarian teaching based on his Twentieth Theological Oration', *De Medio Aevo* 4.2 (2013), pp. 127-146. esp. p. 129.

³⁴ *IBIDEM*.

³⁵ EIRINI ARTEMI, 'The knowledge of the Triune God according to Isidore of Pelusium', *Vox Patrum* 34 (2014), t. 61, pp. 327-342, esp. p. 340-341.

³⁶ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41, 5, 10, PG 36, 436B, 444A.



On the Pentecost, the Holy Spirit reveals Himself as third Person of the Triune God. Pentecost is the day when God clearly demonstrates that salvation and redemption are the work of the triune God. The Father is the source, the initiator, and the final goal of all the redemptive acts of God. The Son is the embodiment of the mission of God. The work of salvation is accomplished through His birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. The Holy Spirit is the empowering presence of God who makes us holy.⁴⁰ The Pentecost is the day that the Holy Spirit appeared ‘in bodily form’⁴¹, as Christ, the incarnate Son lived with us ‘in bodily form’.⁴² But does the Holy Spirit also have a bodily form?

Perhaps, Gregory means with the ‘bodily form’ of the Holy Spirit, how the third person of the Triune God appeared or manifest Himself in figure or outward appearance, to become visible from invisible. This does not mean that Holy Spirit became truly in a bodily form as the Son became with His incarnation real man and remained real God. The Holy Spirit appeared as a dove in the baptizing of Christ and as tongues of fire on Pentecost. This is the bodily form of the Spirit⁴³. Using the word ‘bodily’ Gregory wanted to show the ‘real’ work of the Holy Spirit after the resurrection of Christ. So, he used expressions which can be misunderstood⁴⁴ as the divine economy has shifted from the ‘bodily’ manifestation of Christ to that of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵

The Spirit is present not just in his activities and energies, as he was present to the past⁴⁶. He has united himself to the Church in his very essence and being. At Pentecost God bestows God: the gift and giver are one. Which is the difference between the operation of the Holy Spirit in the world before the Church and outside the Church and in His presence in the Church after Pentecost? ‘As the Word, “by whom all things were made,” revealed the Wisdom of God in creation before He was sent into the world or entered its history through His Incarnation; so also the Holy

³⁷ IDEM. *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41, 11, PG 36, 444A.

³⁸ *IBIDEM*.

³⁹ IDEM, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41, 5, 10, PG 36, 436B, 444B.

⁴⁰ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41, 11, PG 36, 444C

⁴¹ *IBIDEM*.

⁴² *IBIDEM*

⁴³ IDEM, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41, 11, PG 36, 444B

⁴⁴ STYLIANOS PAPADOPOULOS, *Patrologia*, 2, (Athens, 1990), p. 501.

⁴⁵ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41,11, PG 36,444B. *IBIDEM*, 11, PG, 444C.

⁴⁶ *IBIDEM*, 11, PG 36, 444C.



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Spirit (in whom the divine will–creator and upholder of the universe–was fulfilled from the moment of creation) was at a given moment sent into the world to be present there not only by His operation, common to all three Persons of the Trinity, but considered as Person⁴⁷. All believers together constitute the collective dwelling place of God⁴⁸. Ever since the Day of Pentecost, the Spirit of God, as a Person, as Lord⁴⁹, has indwelled the temple, which is the body of Christ, all true believers. So, the Holy Spirit as a Person reveals the counsel of the Godhead and administers our inheritance in Christ on our behalf.⁵⁰

In this part of the Oration, the Holy Spirit is presented as ‘He is the Lord’⁵¹. Gregory the theologian with this term ‘Lord’ sealed later the theology of the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in 381, because in the Creed the Holy Spirit is called ‘the Lord, and Giver of Life’⁵². The Spirit represents the perfection of the Divinity itself of the Triune God, in its existence beyond time and place.⁵³

The Holy Spirit is Christ’s gift to His church. In John 14:16 & 26, Jesus Christ promised that when he returned to his Father, he and his Father together would send the Spirit to indwell those who believe in Christ and be with them forever. The Old Testament anticipations of the Spirit, and this promise of Christ to send the Spirit, were fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. The outpouring of the Spirit from heaven on the Day of Pentecost is a one-off, never-to-be-repeated fulfillment of the prophetic symbolism embedded in the Feast of Pentecost, in the same way that the crucifixion of Christ on the Passover day is a one-off, never-to-be-repeated fulfillment of the prophetic symbolism embedded in the Passover Feast. Just as the Crucifixion could only happen at Passover, so the out-pouring of the Spirit could only happen at Pentecost.

The important thing is that the Holy Spirit appeared as tongues of fire as it was said by the Prophet Isaiah: “With other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this

⁴⁷ VLADIMIR LOSSKY, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, (New York, 2002), pp. 157-158.

⁴⁸ 1 COR. 3: 16–17.

⁴⁹ 2 COR. 3:17.

⁵⁰ JN 16:12–15.

⁵¹ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41, 11, PG 36, 444C.

⁵² PAPADOPOULOS, *Patrologia*, p. 502.

⁵³ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41, 9, PG 36, 441AB. BEELEY, ‘The Holy Spirit ...’, p. 100.



people, and not even so will they listen to Me⁵⁴ says the Lord. Additionally, Gregory explains that at Pentecost, God did the reverse of what he did before, meaning with the direct way the tower of Babel⁵⁵. At Pentecost, God poured out his Spirit. At Babel, the people did not have the Spirit of God. The people of Babel tried to make a name for them. They were not trying to do God's will or glorify his name.

The consequence of this was that God cursed them by confusing their language. They could not co-operate with each other and so they were scattered. God did the opposite of this at Pentecost. People were able to understand each other again and co-operate to build God's city, the church⁵⁶: 'But as the old Confusion of tongues was laudable, when men who were of one language in wickedness and impiety, even as some now venture to be, were building the Tower⁵⁷; for by the confusion of their language the unity of their intention was broken up, and their undertaking destroyed; so much more worthy of praise is the present miraculous one.

For being poured from One Spirit upon many men, it brings them again into harmony'. The presence of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost did not end. Into that mystical Body men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation are to this day still being incorporated, by the power of the Holy Spirit working through the Church and its sacraments⁵⁸. Through the Church, everyone can be gaining the transformation with the grace of the Holy Spirit and become the testimony of the one truth of Triune God which was revealed not only through the holy people but through the Incarnation of the Word Himself. As example of the above words, Gregory presents himself who became the preacher of the only Truth of God and of his Theology.

And He is the Spirit of Meekness, and yet is provoked by those who sin. Let us therefore make proof of Him as gentle, not as wrathful, by confessing His Dignity; and let us not desire to see Him implacably wrathful. He too it is who has made me today a bold herald to you – if without rest to myself, God be thanked; but if with risk, thanks to Him nevertheless; in the one case, that He may spare those that hate us; in the other, that He may consecrate us, in receiving this reward of our preaching of the Gospel, to be made perfect by blood.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ IS.28:11. GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41, 15, PG 36, 449B.

⁵⁵ Gen. 11:7

⁵⁶ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41, 16, PG 36, 449C.

⁵⁷ GEN. 11:7 GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41, 16, PG 36, 449C.

⁵⁸ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41,6, PG 36, 437B.

⁵⁹ IDEM, Oratio 41,14, PG 36, 448BC.



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Gregory gives emphasis to the fact that He is not saying therefore that the full revelation of the Spirit's deity came after the ascension of Christ. Only then, the Spirit's deity was revealed when he came at Pentecost to dwell with the disciples. It was then that the things which the disciples could not bear before the Passion were taught by the Spirit. Of these things, the one was the deity of the Spirit himself.⁶⁰

He underlines the parts of John's gospel⁶¹, which refers to the Paraclete who totally reveals Himself on the day of Pentecost. On that day there was a historic fact the descent of the third Hypostases of Triune God. In this fact, we have the total distinction of Holy Spirit from Christ. He, the Holy Spirit wasn't the resurrected Christ. He was another Paraclete, the advocate who bodily "received" his place to this part of historical Christian Church. The event of Pentecost reveals the deity of the Spirit, his consubstantiality with Father and Son as God. Hence, he is said in John to be 'another Paraclete' since the word 'another' marks not only one who is distinct, but also one who is co-equal⁶². So, it is obvious that the era of the Holy Spirit starts after the ascension of Jesus and His return to the bosom of the Father. This distinction is typical and not essential because there is not action of the Holy Spirit without the presence of Jesus and the opposite. The spiritual presence of Christ is the foundation of the time of the Spirit if the Spirit continues and confirms the work of Jesus and carries the testimony of Christ.

Additionally, the Holy Spirit shares the grace and the gift of God to people and reveals the Father and the Son. For this Gregory underlines the Spirit's attributes 'the Spirit of Adoption, of Truth, of Wisdom, of Understanding, of Knowledge, of Godliness, of Counsel, of Fear (which are ascribed to Him) by Whom the Father is known, and the Son is glorified; and by Whom alone He is known; one class, one service, worship, power, perfection, sanctification'.⁶³

Why does Gregory characterize the Holy Spirit with above these names? Gregory uses name for the Holy Spirit that are found in Scripture. He calls the Holy Spirit, the 'Spirit of Adoption', bases on Romans 8:15. He enables us to call the God Father as our Father and we can share in Christ's sonship. The Holy Spirit is the guarantee for

⁶⁰ *IBIDEM*.

⁶¹ JN 16:7; 14:26; 14:15.

⁶² THOMAS A. NOBLE, 'Gregory Nazianzen's use of Scripture in defence of the deity of the Spirit', *Tyndale Bulletin* 39 (1988), pp. 101-123, on. p. 121.

⁶³ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Pentecosten, Oratio* 41, 9, PG 36, 441B.



our adoption, who unites us with God. So, the Spirit bears witness that the believers are children of God.

The Spirit is characterized as ‘Spirit of Truth’⁶⁴ because His work is to lead the only truth of God. This truth declares the existing reality and the Spirit as Spirit of truth gives substance to this realness. The Spirit is called “Spirit of Wisdom, of Understanding, of Knowledge, of Godliness, of Counsel, of Fear”.⁶⁵ Gregory uses the characteristic of the Holy Spirit which are found in Isaiah. By these predicate nouns, the Cappadocian father wants to show that the Spirit of God illuminates our hearts and gives us understanding of the supernatural revelation of God’s truth and will through the incarnation of His Word. The Scripture provides several phrases that describe the characteristics of the Holy Spirit. Gregory ‘exploits’ these characteristics to speak about the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

In the end we should add that in the eve of day of the feast of Pentecost, on the day of the celebration of Pentecost and on the next day, the Orthodox Church has some hymns which show the influence of Gregory’s oration 41 to the liturgical texts. So, in the Orthodox Church in the Eve of the feast, the writer of hymns underlines: ‘We are keeping the feast of Pentecost and of the Coming of the Spirit, and the appointed time of the Promise, and the fulfillment of our hope. And how great, how august, is the Mystery’.⁶⁶ So, on Pentecost someone can recognize most of the parts of 41 oration of Gregory for the revelation of the Holy Spirit, on his deity and about the three stages of his revelation through the history of Israel. The event of Pentecost reveals, according to Gregory, the deity of the Spirit, his consubstantiality with Father and Son as God.

I.2. The triadological teaching of Gregory in his Oration XLV *on Easter*

Gregory distinguishes between theology (*theologia*) and economy (*oikonomia*).⁶⁷ “Theology” refers to the mystery of God’s inmost life within the Blessed Trinity and ‘economy’ to all the works by which God reveals himself and communicates his life. Through the ‘oikonomia’ the ‘theologia’ is revealed to us; but conversely, the ‘theologia’ illuminates the whole ‘oikonomia’. God’s works reveal who he is in

⁶⁴ JN 14:15, 15;26, 16:12. 1 JN. 5:6.

⁶⁵ IS. 11:2-3.

⁶⁶ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41,5, PG 36, 456.

⁶⁷ IDEM, *In Sanctium Pascha*, Oratio 45, 4, PG 36, 628C.



himself; the mystery of his inmost being enlightens our understanding of all his works. So it is, analogously, among human persons. A person discloses himself in his actions, and the better we know a person, the better we understand His actions'.⁶⁸

In the oration 45, many of the teachings of the oration 38 are repeated. One of the characteristic texts in which there is a repetition, is the one which is referred to the nature of God. God is eternal: 'He always was, He always is, and always will be or rather, God is'⁶⁹. The divine essence is boundless: 'The Divine Nature then is boundless and hard to understand; and all that we can comprehend of Him is His boundlessness; even though one may conceive that because He is of a simple nature, He is therefore either wholly incomprehensible or perfectly comprehensible'⁷⁰. With the word God, it is meant the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the 'Triune God'⁷¹. Also, in another part of this oration, Gregory explains for the God: 'For in Himself He sums up and contains all Being, having neither beginning in the past nor end in the future...like some great Sea of Being, limitless and unbounded, transcending all conception of time and nature, only adumbrated by the mind and that very dimly and scantily'.⁷²

In the previous part of oration 45, Gregory, according to Brian Matz, uses a neoplatonic language mixed with the biblical language into his knowledge of what it means for God to be.⁷³ Gregory speaks about the coeternity of the Hypostases of the 'Triune God and how this can be a testimony for the coequal Trinity'.⁷⁴ The Easter is the honor of the whole 'Triune God'.⁷⁵ The creation visible and invisible, logic and illogic, with mind and without mind is no longer 'primarily worshipping the victorious Saviour who defeated death, but the entire Trinity'⁷⁶. It is the first time that Pascha is

⁶⁸ 'In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy Spirit', *CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH*.

⁶⁹ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Sanctum Pascha*, Oratio 45, 3, PG 36, 625C.

⁷⁰ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Theophania, sive Natalitia Salvatoris*, Oratio 38, 7, PG 36, 317CD. Idem, *In Sanctum Pascha*, Oratio 45, 4. PG 36, 628C.

⁷¹ *IBIDEM*.

⁷² *IBIDEM*, 3, PG 36, 625C.

⁷³ BRIAN MATZ, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, series: Foundations of Theological Exegesis and Christian Spirituality, (Grand Rapids, 2016), p. 57.

⁷⁴ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Sanctum Pascha*, Oratio 45, 4, PG 36, 628B.

⁷⁵ *IBIDEM*, 2, PG 36, 624B.

⁷⁶ DRAGOS ANDREI GIULEA, 'The Cappadocian Paschal Christology: Gregory Nazianzen and Gregory of Nyssa on the Divine Paschal Image of Christ', *ZAC* 12 (2009), pp 477-503, esp. p. 478, ref. 3, Doi 10.1515/ZAC.2008.029.



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not only the worship of theanthropos (real man and real God) Logos, Christos who defeated the death and ‘crashed’ the head of devil, but Pascha became the feast for the glory and celebration of the whole Triune God.

When the Cappadocian father refers to God, he explains that God is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.⁷⁷ In fact, Gregory as all the Cappadocian fathers identify person with hypostasis – namely, a real concrete existence – and teach that the three persons, or hypostases, are three absolutely distinct and unique modes of personal existence, that are, nevertheless, co-equal, co-eternal and co-substantial; with one and the same divine being, power and activity.⁷⁸

Again, in this part of this oration, Gregory repeats the same text word by word to show that the Triune God has three persons without mixture, and He is one God, and by this way Christian religion distinguishes the view of monarchy of God that Jews support and polytheism of ancient Greeks: ‘But when I say God, I mean Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. For Godhead is neither diffused beyond these, to bring in a mob of gods; nor yet is it bounded by a smaller compass than these, so as to condemn us for a poverty-stricken conception of Deity; either Judaizing to save the Monarchy or falling into heathenism by the multitude of our gods’⁷⁹. The Triune God is the being, because He is beyond place and time: ‘For Was and Will Be are fragments of our time, and of changeable nature. But He is Eternal Being’.⁸⁰

Concerning the above passage from Gregory, father Loudovikos wrote:

the only definition of monarchy [from the Cappadocians] must be that of Gregory of Nazianzus: ‘Monarchy that cannot be limited to one person, for it is possible for unity if at variance with itself to come into a condition of plurality; but one which is constituted by equality of nature, and agreement of opinion, and identity of motion, and a convergence of its elements to one, something that is impossible to happen in the created nature; so that though numerically distinct there is no division of ousia’.⁸¹

⁷⁷ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Sanctum Pascha*, Oratio 45, 4, PG 36, 628C.

⁷⁸ *IBIDEM*, 3-4, PG 36, 628A-D.

⁷⁹ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Theophania, sive Natalitia Salvatoris*, Oratio 38, 8, PG 36, 324C. *IDEM*, *In Sanctum Pascha*, Oratio 45, 4, PG 36, 628D.

⁸⁰ *IBIDEM*, 3, PG 36, 625C.

⁸¹ NIKOLAOS LOUDOVIKOS, “person instead of grace and dictatodotherness: John Zizioulas’ finaltheological position”, *The Heythrop journal* XLVIII (2009), pp. 1–16, esp. p. 8, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2265.2009.00547.x



Why is called by Gregory the Passover as the Passover to the honor of the Trinity? Gregory by the word honor expresses the triune God himself who is the basis of Christ's resurrection. He bases the event of Christ's resurrection on the eternal triune being of God. For one more time the Cappadocian father supports that God is beyond time and space, the universe, and even all purity and goodness.⁸² Gregory speaks with the One and at the same time Triune God, rejecting the teaching of monarchy that Jews support and the polytheism of ancient Greek.⁸³

To sum up, Gregory analyses the triadology underlining the one essence and the three persons of Triune God. He explains how difficult is for the believer to have the knowledge of God and teaches the simple nature of God: 'He is therefore either wholly incomprehensible or perfectly comprehensible'.⁸⁴ Gregory does not analyse the theory about the essence and the attributes of God. It can be estimated his reference for God is rather superficial because he repeats some parts of his teaching on Homily 38 without more explanations and without deepening on the Triadology of God. That is happen, because there are some parts from the previous orations of Gregory which are repeated. A characteristic example is Gregory's homily 38, which underlines the boundless of God as we referred above.

Also, another common part of the orations 45 and 38 is 'For in Himself He sums up and contains all Being, having neither beginning in the past nor end in the future; like some great Sea of Being, limitless and unbounded, transcending all conception of time and nature, only adumbrated by the mind, and that very dimly and scantily...not by His Essentials, but by His Environment'.⁸⁵

As we can suppose, Gregory repeats his triadological teaching in his oration 38 to the oration 45⁸⁶, because for the Cappadocian father this is not the main subject in this

⁸² GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Sanctum Pascha*, Oratio 45, 3, PG 36, 625C.

⁸³ *IBIDEM*. 4, PG 36, 628C.

⁸⁴ *IBIDEM*. 3, PG 36, 628A.

⁸⁵ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Theophania, sive Natalitia Salvatoris*, Oratio 38, 7, PG 36, 317B. *IDEM*, *In Sanctum Pascha*, Oratio 45, 3. PG 36, 625D.

⁸⁶ Another part of the orations 38 and 45 which is identically is: "But since this movement of self-contemplation alone could not satisfy Goodness, but Good must be poured out and go forth beyond Itself to multiply the objects of Its beneficence, for this was essential to the highest Goodness, He first conceived the Heavenly and Angelic Powers. And this conception was a work fulfilled by His Word, and perfected by His Spirit. And so the secondary Splendours came into being, as the Ministers of the Primary Splendour; whether we are to conceive of them as intelligent Spirits, or as Fire of an immaterial and incorruptible kind, or as some other nature approaching this



oration. In Oratio 45, he wants to analyze the passion, the crucifixion of Christ and of course the important role of His resurrection to the human mankind.

I.3. The person of Christ in the oration XLV of Gregory of Nazianzus

Beeley aptly remarks: ‘Gregory’s doctrine is both Christocentric and focused on the entire Trinity at the same time⁸⁷ and he observes that ‘To regard these two conceptualities as divergent theological positions is to miss the point of both’.⁸⁸ In this oration, Gregory reveals again his triadological teaching of the oration 38, which is repeated with same words. Then he speaks about the person of Christ, His passion, His crucifixion and His resurrection and the importance of all these in the salvation of the mankind.

Christ, the incarnate Word came in the earth to save the man from the trap of death and to unite him again with His God. The man’s participation into the attributes of God presupposes the purification of believers. The ultimate source of this purification is God. ‘Christ effects the purification of Christians⁸⁹, enlivening all of the virtues that they practice and purifying their bodily senses’.⁹⁰

In this Oratio, Gregory thrusts the Incarnation of the second Word of Triune God to a soteriological finality and defines as accurate as he could the ‘communicatio

as near as may be. I should like to say that they were incapable of movement in the direction of evil, and susceptible only of the movement of good, as being about God, and illumined with the first rays from God — for earthly beings have but the second illumination; but I am obliged to stop short of saying that, and to conceive and speak of them only as difficult to move because of him, who for his splendour was called Lucifer, but became and is called Darkness through his pride; and the apostate hosts who are subject to him, creators of evil by their revolt against good and our inciters”. GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Theophania, sive Natalitia Salvatoris*, Oratio 38, 9, PG 36, 320CD. IDEM, *In Sanctum Pascha*, Oratio 45, 5, PG 36, 629AB.

⁸⁷ CHRISTOPHER BEELEY, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the knowledge of God. In Your Light We Shall See Light, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology*, (Oxford, 2013), p. 227. ANDREW HOFER, O.P., *Christ in the Life and Teaching of Gregory of Nazianzus*, (Oxford, 2013), p. 46.

⁸⁸ BEELEY, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity*, p. 227.

⁸⁹ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Theophania, sive Natalitia Salvatoris*, Oratio 38, 13, PG 36, 329BC. Ors. 11.4; 30.6; 39.1; 40.7.

⁹⁰ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Sanctum Pascha*, Oratio XLV, 13-14, PG 36, 641A-D. BEELEY, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity*, p. 84.



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idiomatum⁹¹. Gregory connects the unity of two natures of Christ, total man and total God, with the goal of his sacrifice. So, he makes the context of sacrifice ‘synonym’ with the hypostatic union in the person of Jesus. Only the incarnate God could purify people and save them from the sin and the death. Only the incarnate Word could give to man the objective salvation. Through his blood, Christ established a New Covenant⁹² of which He Himself became a mediator. Christ immolated for the salvation of all human beings: ‘But that great, and if I may say so, in Its first nature unsacrificeable Victim, was intermingled with the Sacrifices of the Law, and was a purification, not for a part of the world, nor for a short time, but for the whole world and for all time’.⁹³

The second Hypostases of the Triune God became total man and remained total God. Logos created the invisible and visible world with God Father. A specific time He became truly human in the womb of Theotokos. The divine Word became true human with flesh and blood. The only begotten Son, born according to nature of God the Father: ‘the Word of God Himself, Who is before all worlds, the Invisible, the Incomprehensible, the Bodiless, the Beginning of beginning, the Light of Light, the Source of Life and Immortality, the Image of the Archetype, the Immovable Seal, the Unchangeable Image’⁹⁴ came down, and was incarnated, he partook of flesh and blood like to us; he made our body his own, and came forth man from a woman, not casting off his existence as God, or his generation of God the Father, but even in taking to himself flesh remaining what he was:

the Father's Definition and Word, came to His own Image, and took on Him Flesh for the sake of our flesh, and mingled Himself with an intelligent soul for my soul's sake, purifying like by like; and in all points except sin was made Man; conceived by the Virgin, who first in body and soul was purified by the Holy Spirit, for it was needful both That Child-bearing should be honoured and that Virginité should receive a higher honour. He came forth then, as God, with That which He had assumed; one Person in two natures, flesh and Spirit, of which the latter deified the former... The Self-existent comes into Being, the Uncreated is created, That which cannot be contained is contained by the intervention of an intellectual soul mediating between the Deity and the corporeity of the flesh. And He who gives riches becomes poor; for He assumes the

⁹¹ ANTOINE NACHEF, *Mary: Virgin mother in the thought of the Cappadocian Fathers*, Doctoral Dissertation, International Marian Research Institute University of Dayton, (Ohio, 1997), p. 98.

⁹² HEB. 9:15.

⁹³ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Sanctum Pascha*, Oratio 45, 13, PG 36, 640C.

⁹⁴ *IBIDEM*, 9, PG 36, 633C.



poverty of my flesh, that I may assume the riches of His Godhead. He that is full empties Himself; for He empties Himself of His Glory.⁹⁵

The characterization of Christ with some Christological names shows His eschatological glory from the Paschal night. On these names, ‘Great Light’⁹⁶, ‘Glory that is on high’⁹⁷, ‘Light of Light’⁹⁸, ‘the Light that shines in darkness’⁹⁹, ‘Sun of righteousness’¹⁰⁰, a scholar can note the adoption of the previous church tradition by Gregory. These names for Christ were used by Melito of Sardeon¹⁰¹, Origen¹⁰² and Pseudo Hippolytus¹⁰³, and revealed the risen Christ¹⁰⁴. Gregory teaches with emphasis that the Word of God was conceived by the Virgin and she gave birth for Him¹⁰⁵. The Holy Spirit purified the Virgin, before her pregnancy¹⁰⁶ and the incarnate Word was total man with flesh and soul, without sin¹⁰⁷ and by this way he managed to purify the mankind from the original sin.¹⁰⁸

Christ is called ‘the Sun of Righteousness’, a title that prophet Malachias employed for the incarnate Son of God¹⁰⁹ and had to refer to Jesus’ resurrection from the dead early on Sunday morning. Christ came as the Sun of Righteousness to dispel all the sin clouds of earth and to bring in the reign of everlasting righteousness. This Sun will

⁹⁵ *IBIDEM*.

⁹⁶ *IBIDEM*.

⁹⁷ *IBIDEM*.

⁹⁸ *IBIDEM*.

⁹⁹ *IBIDEM*.

¹⁰⁰ *IBIDEM*, 13, PG 36, 641A.

¹⁰¹ MELITO OF SARDEON, *De Pascha* 766-769, ed. O. Perler, SC 123 (Paris, 1966), pp. 60-126, esp. p. 124.

¹⁰² ORIGEN OF ALEXANDRIA, *Peri Pascha*, 2,5; 3,14.16 (194, 3f; 244, 23f; 248, 14 Guéraud/Nautin), in DR. A. GIULEA, ‘Seeing Christ through Scriptures at the Paschal Celebration: Exegesis as Mystery Performance in the Paschal Writings of Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen’, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 74.1 (2008), pp. 27-47, esp. p. 42-43.

¹⁰³ PSEUDO – HIPPOLYTUS, *In Sactum Pascha* 1, (230, 1-12V in DR. A. GIULEA, ‘Seeing Christ through’, 38)

¹⁰⁴ Professor Buchinger underlines that Origen doesn’t refer in the second coming of Christ in the text of the Pascha. Although for Origen, many aspects about eschatology are connected with the Pascha. H. BUCHINGER, *Pascha bei Origines: Systematische Aspekte* (Innsbruck, 2005), pp. 608, 616.

¹⁰⁵ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Sanctum Pascha*, Oratio 45, 9, PG 36, 633CD.

¹⁰⁶ *IBIDEM*, 9, PG 36, 633D.

¹⁰⁷ *IBIDEM*, 13, PG 36, 641B.

¹⁰⁸ *IBIDEM*, 9, PG 36, 633D.

¹⁰⁹ MAL. 4:2. GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Sanctum Pascha*, Oratio 45, 13, PG 36, 641A.



take away the spiritual darkness and will shatter the power of sin and death that we might be justified by grace through faith in His glorious Gospel of peace.¹¹⁰

The Cappadocian theologian uses the term “intelligent soul – ψυχῆ νοερόν”¹¹¹ as an answer to the heretical teaching of Apollinaire. The latter compromised Jesus’ true humanity by denying that He possesses a human mind or soul, since the human mind or soul is an essential component that makes human beings human. And, by compromising Jesus’ humanity, Apollinarism gives us a Savior who cannot save us. If Jesus does not possess a human soul, then He is not truly human, and thus cannot atone for the sin of other humans.¹¹²

Gregory the theologian as Cyril some decades later uses the word ‘empty’ to express the action whereby Christ ‘emptied himself’ in order to give the chance to the human nature to be enriched. The incarnate Word became from rich as God, poor, because he wore the human nature (remaining God)¹¹³. It is worthy to be underlined that §9 of this oration is an exact repetition of verbatim of the §13 of the oration 38¹¹⁴. The same thing happens in the paragraphs 7-13 of the oration 38 and in the same text, the paragraphs 14-15. The same verbatim passages can be found in the oration 45, 3-9 and 45, 26-27. The use of verbatim passages in the work of Gregory reveals that the latter had kept his own documents and his own writings to safe place and he can use them anytime he thinks.

Gregory argues that God was born, died and rose for our salvation. Beeley supported that ‘these expressions are not merely linguistic conveniences, but they reflect the very heart of the Gospel in Gregory’s view: the very purpose of the incarnation was for God to assume human existence and specially to undergo death on cross’¹¹⁵. So, Gregory declares: ‘We needed an Incarnate God, a God put to death that we might

¹¹⁰ EPH. 6:15.

¹¹¹ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Sanctum Pascha*, Oratio 45, 9, PG 36, 633CD.

¹¹² EIRINI ARTEMI, “One incarnate nature”: i) Apollinaire’s reading, ii) Cyril’s reading’, *Ecclesiasticos Faros* 64 (2003), pp. 293-304.

¹¹³ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Sanctum Pascha*, Oratio 45, 9, PG 36, 636A. IDEM, *In Theophania, sive Natalitia Salvatoris*, Oratio 38, 13, PG 36, 325D. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, *In Isaiam*, PG 70, 950D; PG 70, 1044B.

¹¹⁴ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Sanctum Pascha*, Oratio 45, 9, PG 36, 633B - 636A. IDEM, *In Theophania, sive Natalitia Salvatoris*, Oratio 38, 13, PG 36, 325A-D

¹¹⁵ CH. A. BEELEY, ‘The Early Christological Controversy: Apollinarius, Diodore, and Gregory Nazianzen’, *Vigiliae Christianae*, 65.4 (2011), pp. 376-407, esp. p. 404.



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live. We were put to death together with Him, that we might be cleansed; we rose again with Him because we were put to death with Him; we were glorified with Him, because we rose again with Him'.¹¹⁶

The Cappadocian Father teaches that Christ is the God-man who lives a full human existence and suffers a horrifying death. This Father doesn't refer to the incarnation of God Son more than to his passions, suffering, crucifixion and resurrection. On the opposite side there was Athanasius the great who insists more on the Incarnation of the Son of God than His sacrifice. Gregory of Nazianzus shows the concernment of Christ's sacrifice to God Father. The latter refused the sacrifice of Isaac and put into the place of the child a ram¹¹⁷, because this sacrifice was less importance than the sacrifice of Christ on the cross which was accepted¹¹⁸. God Father chose to send His Son into the world to die in our place and to save people from the trap of the death and sin. Man's sins and death penalty were placed upon Him, and the mankind was set free.¹¹⁹

To sum up the Easter is the Feast of the Feasts, because men through Christ could stop to creep on the ground and managed to become stars which can have their lights from the only Sun, the Sun of Righteousness¹²⁰. In Pascha we celebrate the sacrifice of Savior of mankind. The one who is God, the High Priest, became the Victim, the ultimate sacrifice for men's salvation. The importance of this oration could be reflected in the orthodox celebration of Pascha and mainly to the ninth song of the paschal canon which based on this oration and mainly to the thirtieth part of this Oration:

O Pascha, great and holy and purifier of all the world – for I will speak to you as to a living person – O Word of God and Light and Life and Wisdom and Might – for I rejoice in all Your names – O Offspring and Expression and Signet of the Great Mind; O Word conceived and Man contemplated, Who bearest all things, binding them by the Word of Your power¹²¹.

¹¹⁶ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Sanctum Pascha*, Oratio 45, 28, PG 36, 661C.

¹¹⁷ *IBIDEM*, 22, PG 36, 653B.

¹¹⁸ *IBIDEM*.

¹¹⁹ *IBIDEM*, 22 & 23, PG 36, 653B. 641C.

¹²⁰ *IBIDEM*, 2, PG 36, 624B.

¹²¹ *IBIDEM*, 30, PG 36, 664A.



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Conclusions

The feasts of Pascha and Pentecost are particularly important in Orthodox liturgy. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the center of the Christian faith, without the resurrection of Christ the preaching of the disciples of Christ will be empty and Christ would be another prophet but not the Messiah. The resurrection reveals Jesus of Nazareth as not only the expected Messiah of Israel, but as the King and Lord of a New Jerusalem: a new heaven and a new earth.

On the Pentecost, there is the historic birth of Church and the revelation of the Holy Spirit. On this day, we have the culmination of the meaning of sacrifice of Christ with the presentation of Holy Spirit into the lives of believers.

Gregory of Nazianzus underlines that God the Holy Ghost, completes the work of Christ. For one more time, the Cappadocian father shows the deity of Holy Spirit. He underlines the divinity of the third person of the Triune God, which is a problem for that era. Many heretics refused the divine and coeternal nature of Spirit. In order Gregory to speak about the divinity of Holy Spirit, he asks the help of the Spirit: “As to the things of the Spirit, may the Spirit be with me, and grant me speech as much as I desire; or if not that, yet as is in due proportion to the season. Anyhow He will be with me as my Lord; not in servile guise, nor awaiting a command, as some think. For He blows where He wills and on whom He wills, and to what extent He wills.¹²² Thus, we are inspired both to think and to speak of the Spirit”.¹²³

Gregory then presents this magnificent description of the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit always was and is and will be, without beginning, without end, but is always ranked and numbered with the Father and the Son. For it was not fitting at any time that the Son is lacking to the Father or the Spirit to the Son. For it would have been the greatest dishonor for the divinity to have come, as it were through a change of mind to a fullness of perfection. Hence the Spirit always is participated in but does not participate, perfects but is not perfected, fills but is not filled, sanctifies but is not sanctified, deifies but is not deified.¹²⁴

¹²² JN 3:8

¹²³ GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41, 5, PG 36, 436CD-437A.

¹²⁴ IDEM, *In Pentecosten*, Oratio 41, 9, PG 36, 441AB.



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Through this oration ‘On Pentecost’ which underlines the divinity of Spirit, Gregory explains that the Holy Spirit is beyond human comprehension. He always was and is and will be, without beginning, without end, but is always ranked and numbered with the Father and the Son. He is in a mutual relationship with the Father and the Son.¹²⁵

For Gregory, the deity of Holy Spirit is a chance to speak about the Triune God: ‘the Trinity as one divinity, and, if you will, one nature; and we will ask the Spirit to give you the word Go.’¹²⁶

The necessity of Gregory to speak for the Triune God seems to the fact that he starts the second oration for Pascha with a quick repetition of the triune dogmatic theology. Moreover ‘the nature of the Church is to be understood as the Church of the Triune God. The Holy Trinity is the ultimate basis and source of the Church’s existence and, as such, the Church is in the image and likeness of God. This being in the image of the blessed Trinity constitutes the mode of the Church’s existence, which, in fact, reveals her nature. Being in God, the Church reflects on earth God’s unity in Trinity. What is natural to God is given to the Church by grace’.¹²⁷

On the sermon for Pascha, the sacrifice of Christ unites again man with God and gives to manhood the objective chance of Salvation. Christ’s sacrifice, passion, death and His resurrection uncover the darkness of evil from the world and give them the bright light of the Sun of rightness.

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