



# Being Human: Fully Alive

by John Bazlinton

## A Tribute

The title of this third talk in 'The Way' series, 'Being Human: Fully Alive', stands in stark contrast to the realities of our fallen human condition, subject to death. Its author, the artist John Bazlinton, who was one of the major inspirers of this course, died in the summer of 2008, and his talk has to be presented on his behalf.

John came to the Orthodox faith by encountering God in the Divine Liturgy, and he remained entranced by its often-repeated assurance that God is 'the Lover of Mankind'. His friends find it impossible to credit that a loving God could allow all the affection, humanity, quirky wit and passion for detail that endeared John Bazlinton to us to be just snuffed out. Rather, we believe that he lives on through the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 'raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep' (1 Corinthians 15:20). We therefore dedicate this presentation to John, in hope: 'May his memory be eternal'.

## The Purpose of Life

Why are you alive? What is the purpose of your life? Believe it or not, it is not to become pious, religious, or 'super-spiritual' - not even to become 'Christian'. The Orthodox Church believes that the purpose of life is to become truly and beautifully human. Yet this is a paradox, an apparent contradiction: because the Church knows that to be truly human, truly normal and fully alive is to be spiritual; and to be spiritual is to be fully alive. We find our true spiritual selves by becoming what God intends us to be - truly human and fully alive.

In this session, we will discuss the Orthodox Christian view of what it is to be 'normal', that is, to be truly human. You will find that what we mean by 'human' is something far grander, far more wonderful than the cramped, limited definitions of secular thought, than the narrow, sceptical rationality of the Darwinites or the Dawkins's of this world.

**First**, we will look briefly at what 'spiritual' means for people - the quest for spiritual experience.

**Second**, we will look at the Christian understanding of how mankind failed and still fails to live up to its original calling.

**Third**, we will look at the Christian answer.

**Last**, we will look at what goes into making an Orthodox Christian believer, and at the new possibilities opened to us by faith.

The philosopher Bertrand Russell once remarked that most people would rather die than think; the sad fact is that most people do prefer to die. I imagine you are on this course

because you are unusual: you are willing to get to grips with the serious questions of life and living.

So the first thing that needs to be said in this discussion is that, essentially, philosophy and religion deal with the same basic questions about life. They may give different answers and use different terms, but the questions are the same.

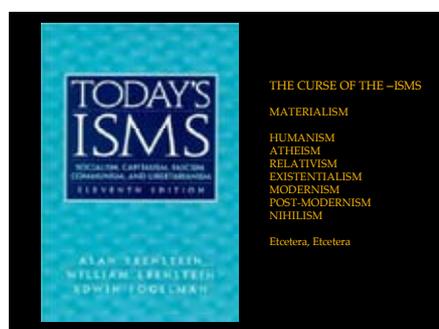
So, what is so Christian about that? If a philosopher and a religious person ask the same questions – such as, ‘What is the meaning of life?’ – what is it that makes the Christian religion so special? By the end of this session, I hope that you will agree that Christianity answers the deepest questions that any philosopher ever asked.

In fact, every one of you is a philosopher. It’s like having a belly-button: you may not think about it but everyone has a philosophy: a set of beliefs, ideas, assumptions about yourself and about the world around you. Even if you haven’t thought them through, you have them. But whether or not you *have* thought things through does make a difference. The most famous of Greek philosophers, Socrates, says: ‘*The un-examined life is not worth living*’.

### So let’s examine our life

The first question you must ask yourself is: what do you want out of life? What is your quest? Nowadays, the Western culture that influences more and more of the world offers us an answer: material comforts. We live in a materialistic culture.

Many people in the Western world today hold this view. Materialism denies that there is a God. It says: you may have a ‘soul’, the part of you that thinks or feels or imagines, but you do not have a ‘spirit’ – the part of you that prays to God. If there is no God, there is not much point praying. Matter is all there is, so when you die, that is it.



### Visual Aid 1: *The Curse of the -Isms*

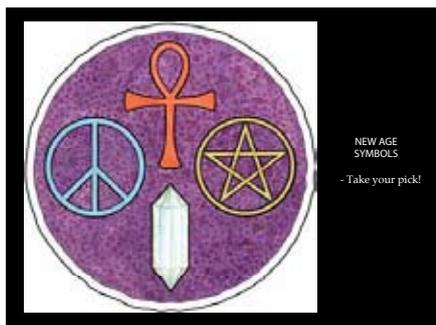
Materialism has spawned a whole set of –isms – all of them God-denying and therefore dangerous: atheism, humanism, relativism, existentialism, modernism, post-modernism, nihilism, and so on.

If matter is all there is, it follows that you should be allowed to do anything to get those material comforts. Materialism says: ideas about ‘good’ and ‘evil’ that flowed from belief in a God are all nonsense, hogwash. As the Russian Orthodox novelist Dostoyevsky put it, ‘*If God does not exist, everything is permissible*’. So it seems that the only moral absolute today is that there are no moral absolutes.

But it takes a lot of faith to believe that your life is essentially open-ended, that it is essentially pointless.

If there is no God, no human spirit, no purpose to prayer, no real good and evil, life is pretty bleak. As the comedian Woody Allen put it in his film *Annie Hall*, 'Life is divided into the horrible and the miserable'. Our whole culture, from arts and media to education and politics, is so materialist that it challenges everything Christians believe to be true. That is why so many children of this generation are lost. The Orthodox Church is not the only Christian institution to be caught unawares by this collapse of faith in anything beyond material things.

In revulsion, some people react against the cold, limited outlook of materialism by getting involved in something called 'New Age Spirituality'. They start looking for thrills in sex and drugs, or they seek inner well-being through yoga and Eastern religions. They tend not to learn much about these religions but they look for whatever makes them feel 'spiritual'.



## *Visual Aid 2: New Age Symbols – Take your Pick!*

Ask them what they mean by 'spiritual' and they look confused. The words 'spiritual' or 'spirituality' are a little like the word 'God'. When there's no real content except your 'feelings', you can make such words mean whatever you want. If you type 'How can I be spiritual?' into the Google search engine on the internet, you will find about thirteen million websites designed to help you become 'spiritual'. That's a whole lot of surfing!

Among other things, you will find:

- 'How to gain spiritual enlightenment for Father's Day through the Power of the Now'
- 'How to gain the very latest spiritual awareness techniques'
- 'How to become a member of the Official Spiritual Beggars Club'

And the most important of all:

- 'How to be spiritual without being religious'.

But I stand corrected. The most important is:

- 'How to free yourself from your mind'. That covers them all!

### **What is going on here?**

The simple answer is that a lot of people are sincerely yearning for something, something beyond those things that can be experienced via the five senses of taste, touch, sight, smell and hearing. But there is a problem with the New Age world-view, which I illustrate with a rather unkind joke. Here it is:

### **The Fried-Egg Test**

*I come up to you and I say: 'Guess what happened to me!'*

*And you say, 'Well, what happened to you then?'*

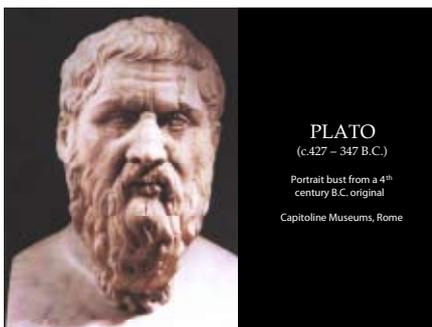
*And I say, 'Well, you know how I used to be sad and lonely and not have much purpose in life? Well, things have really changed. I now have a fried egg on my head and I have such joy in my heart and I feel really at peace.'*

*So you say; ‘Come on! I don’t believe you! What are you talking about! A fried egg on your head!’ So I say: ‘Well, I know you’re not interested in spiritual things but somebody told me (and don’t knock it before you’ve tried it). Take an egg, fry it and put it on your head. Many different kinds of eggs lead to this experience: free-range, organic, double-yoke – that’s even better. So now when I put my egg on my head I find this amazing warm feeling spreads all the way down my back. And now I have such peace. I put an egg on my head before breakfast and the feeling I get from this is really out of this world.’*

I tell this story to illustrate a danger that even Christians occasionally fall into. The fried-egg way to spirituality is irrational. If a vague uplift is what one expects from ‘spirituality’, why not just fry an egg? Does anything ‘spiritual’ make sense?

The criterion, the standard, for believing something used to be: ‘Is it true?’ Today, it is: ‘Does it work?’ And especially – ‘Does it work for *me*?’

For two thousand years, the Orthodox Church has demonstrated that its beliefs make sense. It does not ask: ‘Do my beliefs work for me? How do they make me feel?’ It asks: ‘Are my beliefs *true*?’ Our grandparents never doubted that some things are true, no matter how we feel about them. We now know that some things our grandparents imagined to be true were not true. But that does not mean that nothing is true.



### *Visual Aid 3: Plato*

#### **The ‘Platonic’ View**

There is one alternative to both materialism and ‘New Age Spirituality’ which is still popular today. We could call it the ‘Platonic’ view. According to this way of thinking, matter and the material world are inferior to the world of the spirit. Matter is at best a shadow of the ideal: ultimate reality is outside what we know on earth. There is a tendency in those who adopt Platonist idealism to disregard, even to despise the material world. They believe in a soul that occupies a body and needs to be released from that body so as to get a purer life. According to this world-view, there is no place for the human body in life after death – an attitude quite unlike Christianity, which believes that God came into matter and took human form in Jesus Christ, reclaiming the material world for Himself.

There may not be many Platonists around at present, but aspects of Platonism have had a detrimental effect at times even on Christian thinking. The body-soul divide is extreme in what is called the Gnostic heresy, and its distaste for matter is present also in other belief-systems.

The Orthodox Church has never thought that way. Look at us. We are both matter and spirit. You take one away and the other is no longer human. A human being is both body and spirit, not one or the other.

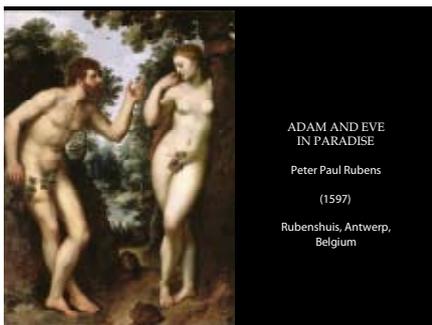
Yet whatever our philosophy of life may be, we all face the same facts: we all live on a tiny planet, suspended in the vastness of space; our tiny planet faces horrendous problems – so horrendous that we sometimes want to run away, into empty, materialist lives, into New Age fantasies, or to the belief that matter does not matter. To quote the Gospel, we ‘hear of wars and rumours of wars ... famines and earthquakes’ (Matthew 24:6-7) and we realize that we ‘are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes’ (James 4:14). It is all too easy to fall into either fantasy or despair.

### So what is the Christian World-view?

Christian faith is rooted in belief in the One true God, who really *is* – who is personal, who created everything that is, and who really acts in human history. We share these beliefs with Judaism and Islam – though in some other ways, we are very different.

The Orthodox Church believes that the human race, at present, finds itself in an abnormal, unnatural state. It is not as it should be. If you have ever been sad or angry, lonely or depressed, if you have ever been sick, you know that this is true. You feel yourself out-of-order, not what you were meant to be.

It was not always like that. In the first chapter of the Bible, God says: ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness’ (Genesis 1:26). Man – that is, both Adam *and* Eve – were magnificent creations, far healthier both physically and spiritually than we are today.



### Visual Aid 4: *Adam and Eve in Paradise*

They were supposed to grow ever more magnificent, until they were, in effect, the perfect image of God – not by their own power, but through the love of God.

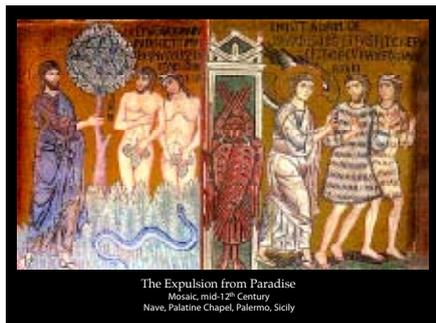
This destiny we call *theosis* – divinization – becoming what God is, by grace, that is, through his love.

But, instead of evolving, they ‘devolved’. They became less than they were originally intended to be.

Think of it. What did Adam and Eve lack? They lived in an intimate, personal relationship with their creator God and with each other. They can hear Him, they can reason, they can speak; they have language, they are creative. They are truly *homo sapiens*, ‘wise’ or ‘knowing’ human beings. Their existence is an affirmation of the goodness of life and living. Their qualities give them the direction and purpose to be fully themselves; to be truly human, and therefore fully alive. –So alive, that they were free to make choices.

Then comes a challenge. If you are free to trust, you are free to mistrust. Seeds of doubt are sown in their minds. Did God *really* tell them this and that? Why did God warn them not to eat from a certain tree? ‘Take full control of your lives’, the doubt said to them. ‘You

will be gods, without God. You will know good and evil'. So Adam and Eve, representing all mankind, broke trust with God. They broke trust with the Giver of Life – and death came into the world.



### *Visual Aid 5: The Expulsion from Paradise*

What that distrust led to still haunts us to this day. The rest of the Bible is about trust: people who trusted in God and people who did not trust him. It is the same throughout human history. It is the same today. To believe in God is not to believe philosophically, that is, not just rationally, that ‘there is a God’; to believe is to *trust* in God.

When Adam and Eve broke trust with God, several things happened.

Sin came into our life. Sin is not only a crime: not only evil action against our fellowman and against ourselves, and so an offence to God. Sin is also a sickness. When you live out of harmony with life, when you act in a way that is out of harmony with God, the Giver of Life, you die. Little by little, in big or little ways, something inside you dies. You know it, deep inside, when you do something that is out of harmony with life. Something in you gets sick.

The symptom is guilt. No one needs to accuse you; you accuse yourself. You try to cover up what you did wrong, and the tension inside makes you angry, bitter, resentful. You get more sick, even physically. All this, just because of the spiralling sickness we call sin.

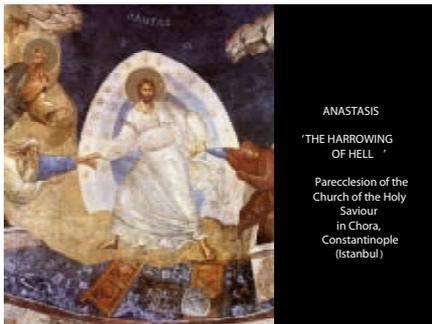
When we get sick, the world gets sick. When Adam and Eve broke trust with God, they started distrusting each other. Now, we live in a world where we can put a man on the moon but cannot – or will not – save half the world’s population from hunger. Isn’t there something wrong here?

When we lose our relationship with God, our closest relationships with each other fall apart. We start to compete, to oppress, to blame. God catches Adam in the act, ‘red-handed’ – and what does Adam say? ‘This woman that YOU gave me, SHE made me choose’ (Genesis 3.12 [capitals added]). When you feel guilty, it is easy to get angry and afraid. You blame someone else – and, bang! – there goes another relationship. The more we sin, the more addictive it becomes. It is like a cancer that spreads through our whole body.

As the Christian author C. S. Lewis once put it, ‘We hate ourselves and we hate our neighbours *as ourselves*’.

Now if Christians just believed in the Fall of Man, our lives would be pretty bleak. In all the confusion, it is easy to forget that Adam and Eve fell away from *something*. From what? What was the destiny that they abandoned, when they abandoned God? It was to become the full image of God, through the love of God. It was to grow to the stature of one person – Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ was there from the beginning, from all eternity. He is God. He is also our model, the model of what and who we were originally supposed to be. When Adam and Eve failed to live up to his image, he came down to them. He became a real human being. He died a human death. He rose again in glory – just as we shall rise again.



### *Visual Aid 6: The Resurrected Christ: The Anastasis*

In Christ, we see the full meaning of what it is to be the image of God. *Theosis*, which is the God-intended destiny of every human being since Adam and Eve were created, means in effect – becoming Christ. Christ is ‘*the express image*’, the icon, the accurate picture of who God is.

So, how do you and I go about becoming Christ?

The Orthodox Church offers us, first of all, certain special events called the Holy Mysteries, or Sacraments. They are medicine for the soul, because we are sick and the Church is a hospital. But even more, if we indeed receive the Body and Blood of Christ our God in the Divine Liturgy of the Orthodox Church, something starts to change in us. Someone starts changing us.

Irina Ratushinskaya, an Orthodox poet who suffered many years of imprisonment in the Russian Gulag and came to the West in 1986, wrote in an article for *The Times* newspaper: ‘The circumstances of my life are up to God. The way I behave in my life is up to me, so there is great responsibility on each side’.

So it is with the Holy Mysteries. How should a baptized, chrismated member of the Orthodox Church, who receives Holy Communion, live his or her life? Jesus Christ himself suggests how, in the prayer that he taught his first disciples.



### *Visual Aid 7: The Paternoster Cross*

The ‘Our Father’, which some call ‘the Lord’s Prayer’ (in Latin the ‘Paternoster’), is less than sixty words long. In most cultures that have considered themselves Christian, people learned it by heart by attending church or at their mother’s or their grandmother’s knee. The simplest person can appreciate it and the wisest scholar will never exhaust what it means.

Let us look at the opening words. *‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven’* (Matthew 6:9-10).

To become fully human again, we need to rediscover where we come from, who we truly are. We have a Father, not one on earth but in heaven. In the words of the Divine Liturgy, the central worship of the Orthodox Church, we *‘dare’* to call on the heavenly God – as Father.

‘See what incredible love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God’, says the Apostle John (1 John 3:1). In the Aramaic language that Christ and his disciples spoke, Christians called God *Abba*, an intimate name for one’s earthly father. The Church remembered this, even when its language was everyday Greek, and used *‘Abba, Father’* when calling upon the Maker of heaven and earth [Mark 14:36, Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6].

We pray next that the name of God may be *‘hallowed’*, that is, honoured and worshipped. God is to be loved, not for what he can give us, but for being God. We worship him, not because it makes us *‘feel good’*, but simply because he is God. He is the source of life itself and of everything good in life. The purpose of our life is to worship him.

To be human inevitably means to worship something, to hold something to be infinitely valuable, infinitely holy. In Peter Schaffer’s play *Equus*, a boy is shown to worship a horse. The playwright knows that we have this inner drive: no one can be truly human without worshipping something. As he puts it, *‘Without worship, you shrink’*.

Those who visit an Orthodox church service for the first time are often impressed by what seems a total focus on God. The incense, the candles, the embroidered robes, the holy images or icons: all these are meant to direct our thoughts and feelings towards God. They tell us that God is holy – worship him. But to worship him is to love him and to be loved by him. It is striking how often we hear these words in Orthodox services: *‘for you are a good God and you love mankind’*.

That is why we have courage to pray that momentous prayer, *‘Thy kingdom come’*. We are not talking about a place, like the United Kingdom. We are praying that the Lord of the whole world may reign as king over that world. We are praying that the whole world may recognize God.

Jesus asked *‘What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?’* [Matthew 16:26 in the King James version]. Many of us spend our lives on things that are much less than the *‘whole world’*. We allow even little things to rule over us. Napoleon, the Emperor of France, said: *‘I have discovered a strange thing: that men will die for ribbons.’* He meant that they will get themselves killed for a strip of cloth, a medal ribbon to pin on their uniform. The Lord’s Prayer reminds us that God alone fills the whole world and deserves our full attention. We direct our focus back to him.

When we redirect our focus back to God, we pray quite naturally that *‘Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven’*. We are not submitting blindly to God’s will: that would be the act of a machine, not a full human being. We are remembering that God’s will and ours were made to go together. We were created that way. By praying that God’s will be done, I rediscover not what I want but who I really am.

Once we rediscover our relationship with God, we ask God for everything that we need to be fully human, fully alive.

*'Give us this day our daily bread'* – not only the food and material goods to sustain our lives but also the Bread of Heaven, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ that we receive in the Divine Liturgy.

But how are these things to sustain us, if we are too sick to receive them? If you are seriously ill, you will find it hard to digest your food. So we pray, in the same breath, *'Forgive us our trespasses'* (or in some versions) *'our debts'*, our sins against God, against each other, and against who we truly are – *'as we forgive those who trespass against us'*, (in some versions) *'our debtors'*. This can be fearfully challenging. We need to know exactly what it means to forgive.

Does forgiving mean no longer feeling anger and resentment? That should be our final state, at which, by God's grace, we may eventually arrive. But if everything depended on our feelings, few or none of us would start to forgive. Initially, it means *refusing to take revenge*, even in our own minds. It means refusing to strike back. Even this can be very difficult but it is essential, if war inside us or around us is ever to cease.

An English poet of the seventeenth century, George Herbert, says: *'He who cannot forgive others, breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass'*. You will notice that God does not break the bridge, we do – if we cannot forgive. We find ourselves with no way out of the anger and pain. We can tell when we have forgiven others if we have no negative emotional response to the memory of what was done to us. We may not be able to forget the hurt but we will no longer have the anger, aggression or hatred towards the person or people who were involved.

The last human freedom left to those in the Nazi death camps during the Second World War was freedom to choose. The greatest freedom of all, as the psychologist Viktor Frankl learned when he was imprisoned in one, was this freedom to choose – and to choose to *forgive*. If you can forgive what seems unforgivable, the person who injures you may still be bound, but you are free.

Then, in the name of real human freedom, we pray: *'And lead us not into temptation'*. St John Chrysostom, that great preacher of the fourth century who gave his name to the Divine Liturgy we celebrate on most Sundays, tells us that this is our most natural cry to God when we face danger. Temptation does not always mean being tempted to do something wrong. It is a time of trial that we pray to be spared from or to pass through unscathed.

Lastly, we pray *'Deliver us from evil'* – or more precisely, *'from the evil one'*. Yes, we mean the devil, not an abstract notion of evil. Since the Fall, 'the Father of Lies' (as Jesus calls him) has tried to deceive us. He holds up a distorting mirror and tells us that the harsh, brutal, frightened image in it is who we really are.

But when we know who we really are, we no longer believe the lies. We are renewed. St Gregory Palamas, a great teacher on prayer from the fourteenth century, writes: 'Salvation is more than forgiveness. It is a genuine renewal of man'. When you are sick, being renewed means becoming well again. Simply put, it means becoming once again who you are.

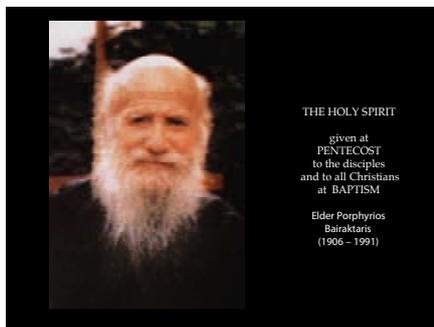
So, who are we? How do we know that we are normal? Is it normal to hate people, be miserable, anxious, resentful, cruel, unfaithful, brutal, and violent? Do we really want to be like that or be around people when they are like that? These are not ‘normal’ traits.

Rather, it is normal to love, to rejoice, to be patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled. St Paul calls these qualities ‘the fruits of the Spirit’. They are signs that a person is normal in the real sense, filled with the Holy Spirit, who is the Giver of Life.

‘You will know them by their fruits’ [Matthew 7:16], says Christ in his Sermon on the Mount. A healthy tree brings forth healthy fruit, not thorns and thistles. So a healthy, normal human being, someone who is fully alive, shows the ‘love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control’ that all of us are meant to have.

Many great saints of the Orthodox Church, including the male and female elders that you find in monasteries, or in the street, maybe in your own life, have these qualities. (We will be saying more about saints in a later talk).

For the moment, I want to draw your attention to one holy man in living memory, the Elder Porphyrios, who died on Mount Athos in December 1991.



### *Visual Aid 8: The Elder Porphyrios*

There are hundreds of testimonies about him from people still living who knew him well, and some of them the authors of this course have heard personally.

What they tell us is a radical challenge to the cynical, cramped view of human nature taught us by the Freudians: the view that we are a bundle of unconscious impulses, driven by selfish animal passions and needs. Elder Prophyrios, the witnesses say, gave those who came across him a feeling of being in touch with what Man had been before the Fall, ‘reforming the ancient beauty’. Here was a man back in his original, childlike innocence and simplicity. He had a deep spontaneous love for God, which spilled over into passionate curiosity about the world God has made and an overwhelming love for the animals and all the human beings that inhabit it.

Father Porphyrios is a radical challenge also to the shrunken image of human possibilities preached by the materialists, the Darwinists and the followers of Dawkins. They treat us as no more than a rational animal, driven by ‘selfish genes’, able only to know the limited truths that science teaches – truths that are deduced from the evidence of our senses.

Father Porphyrios broke out of that materialist straight-jacket, and demonstrated that a redeemed human being might have means of knowing that are unknown to science: an intuitive tuning-in to the mind of God and the riches of his understanding – what the Fathers of the Church called the power of *nous*.

Account after account attests that, when you came to Porphyrios for advice for the first time, he knew your problem before you opened your mouth. He knew your situation, he could speak of your family members, knowing their names, the details of where you lived, and the answer to your problem. He had also the gift of foresight and clairvoyance, and could warn you of approaching dangers or describe appalling but undisclosed evils. He discovered unknown sources of water and described where to find lost objects from a distance. On occasion, he would not just diagnose your sickness and send you to the right doctor, but he would exercise his own gift of healing.

Neither Jesus Christ nor his follower Porphyrios liked to woo people back to God just by 'signs and wonders'. But I will read one of the many accounts, because it is such a challenge to the secular views that dominate our culture and shrink our idea of what it is to be human.

This is a report from Hieromonk Athanasios, then at the Vatopedi Monastery, Mount Athos, now abbot of the Convent of Panagia Machaira, Cyprus:

'Once, when we were at New Skete, we were hosting a Catholic monk who had come to Mt. Athos to learn more about how the monks live, the ascetic life and the general polity of Mt. Athos. We told him about Elder Porphyrios and when he went to Athens he arranged to meet him.

When Elder Porphyrios saw him, without asking him anything, he began to describe this monk's monastery in Italy and their way of life there. He even described a neighboring convent. He saw all the monks and nuns there and mentioned each one of them in specific detail.

The monk was literally dumbfounded because it was the first time in his life that he had met such a man. When he returned to Mt. Athos, he told us, "If someone had told me about these things; that he had seen and heard these things, I would never believe it. How is it possible for this person who lives in Greece to describe our monastery in northern Italy in detail, to tell me all those details, to tell me about the monks, to tell me about the nuns, each one of them individually?" As this monk told us, when he asked Elder Porphyrios how he was able to see all these things, he answered him: "God's grace reveals the mysteries to us, the Orthodox."<sup>1</sup>

What drew people to Porphyrios was not such 'signs and wonders' but an overwhelming sense that he loved them, personally and individually. He demonstrated that *theosis* is not being like God in power and knowledge, but in *love*.

Jesus Christ, who is the exact image of God, did not die and rise again so that we could become 'spiritual', or even religious. He did not rise again in order to make us Christians. He founded the Orthodox Church in order to provide us with everything we need to be holy, as He is holy.

**To be holy** is to be able to love God, and your neighbour as yourself.

**To be holy** is to bind up each other's wounds, even as God, the Giver of Life, heals us.

**To be holy** is to have inner peace, the peace from above, so that our life blesses others.

**To be holy** is to be cleansed and purified, to be a Temple of the Holy Spirit, so that the Spirit of God can fill us.

**To be holy** is to be transfigured into the image of Christ, and so to be gloriously, fully human, fully alive.

*John Bazlinton, Father Alexander Tefft, Christine Mangala Frost, David Frost*

© *THE WAY: Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies* 2004, 2010

---

- 1 Klitos Ioannidis, *Elder Porphyrios. Testimonies and experiences*, trans. from the fifth Greek (revised) edition (Holy Convent of the Transfiguration of the Savior: Athens, 1997), pp. 69-70.