

THE SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY OF THE SEPARATED EASTERN CHURCHES

Abbé Pierre Pourrat has published a valuable history of Christian spirituality. Abbé A. Tanquerey, Fr. J. de Guibert and others have written treatises on spiritual theology. Unfortunately, their studies do not take into account the life of the eastern churches since the separation between East and West. Abbé Pourrat for instance has not studied eastern Christianity after St. John Damascene.

But before trying to present very incomplete considerations on that eastern spirituality, the writer would like to remind his readers that there are still many eastern communities not united with Rome. The Christians of Byzantine tradition such as the Greeks and the Russians, the Armenians, the Chaldeans are not even in communion with one another; their teaching in some fields of theology is different. In the following pages we will take into consideration only the spiritual tradition of the Byzantine and more particularly, the Russian Church.

The eastern Christians not united with Rome agree with the Catholic Church on the fundamental principles of Christian spirituality. Anything to the contrary would be difficult to conceive. Both spiritualities have the same sources: Holy Scripture, the tradition of the first centuries, the dogmatic definitions of the first ecumenical councils. Our common veneration of the Blessed Virgin, for example, developed mainly after the definition of the divine maternity at the Council of Ephesus. The ideal of primitive monasticism, which later inspired western monasticism through the influence of Cassian and St. Benedict, remains the fundamental inspiration of Orthodox monasteries to this day.

The centuries when the two Churches were united have provided both with a common deposit of teaching on the nature of man, the scope of human life and the aim of our spiritual activity: the union

with God in love. We both agree that our first duty is to make room in our hearts for God by means of self-abnegation, through abstaining from worldly pleasures. In opposition to many Protestants, Orthodox and Catholics believe in the superiority of virginity and would consider a monastic vocation a kind of second baptism. We agree on the need of continual prayer and, in general at least, we would agree that our union with God must be accomplished through the means of sanctification which Christ has established for his Church—I mean the sacraments. However, when, after the separation, Catholics and Orthodox have sought that spiritual perfection, they have each taken somewhat different ways.

Did the nature of the Oriental soul itself induce her to take a different way? Is that difference the result of exterior circumstances? It would be very difficult to give a precise answer to such questions or to indicate to what extent each of these two elements contributed in giving to eastern spirituality its characteristic features. Whatever the origin of the differences may be, during the following centuries the Westerner made use of his human mind with more confidence than the Easterner in freeing himself from his egoistic tendencies in order to leave place in his heart for God alone. His analytic mind patiently studied the steps of that purification, elaborated the rules, and formulated methods of prayer, using every human means to draw closer to God. He did not fear reasoning and looked for precise definitions.

The Oriental, on the other hand, has been less analytic. He concentrated his attention more exclusively on the goal, union with God, and tried to acquire an immediate possession of God, sometimes by violent means alien to the Christian tradition and soon condemned by the Oriental Church itself. But there is no doubt that the physiognomy of the two spiritualities is also largely the result of the two different positions in which these two Christian communities found themselves during the course of the centuries.

After the division of the Roman Empire, Byzantium kept to some extent the organization of the old Empire in which the Emperor, civilian head of the State, was also the Pontifex Maximus. As a counterpart of the heavenly Sovereign, the Byzantine Emperor—and later the Russian—considered it his duty to make thorough

provision for both the temporal and spiritual welfare of his subjects. Church and state relations assumed a special form in these eastern countries. Religion became a national institution protected by the state. Under such conditions the Church did not need to fight as much as in the West in order to fulfill her obligations. She was allowed to continue to play the role of the privileged sister of Lazarus, Mary, and did not have to engage much in the human, exterior action of Martha. Later, little by little, the different parts of the Byzantine Empire were invaded by the Moslems and remained for centuries under their yoke. These new rulers also prevented external religious acts. The centers of Christian life during this long period were mostly centers of worship and prayer.

In the West, on the contrary, the old Roman Empire soon weakened and collapsed, making way for new independent states. Finding herself thus in continuously changing situations, the Latin Church to guarantee her freedom was forced not only to stress the supranational authority of Peter's successor in the Roman see but also to perform more exterior activity than did her eastern sister. Later, the discovery of the new world prompted her to organize her missionary work—another example of her necessary adaptation to new environments. As a living body, the Church had to develop a diversified spirituality to accommodate herself to her new and different obligations.

Some particular events, however, did leave their imprint on eastern spirituality. One of them was the iconoclast heresy. After having fought to defend the veneration of icons, eastern Christians developed their veneration to an extent which sometimes surprises, but in fact is very inspiring to, western Christians who come across it.

Whenever a Westerner really comes to know the eastern communities, he is first of all surprised to notice in them the absence of some aspects of spirituality as it has been developed in the Occident since the separation. Let us try to give a few examples. The heresies of Berengarius and the denial of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist intensified in the West the exterior veneration of the Holy Eucharist which had already been initiated a little earlier. That exterior veneration later grew through the institution of a special

feast with a solemn octave, processions, exposition and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. All that is unknown in eastern spirituality. The Orthodox keep the holy Species to give, when necessary, the Holy Viaticum to the sick. Some Catholics have written that they have no respect for it and that they keep it without due veneration. This is not true. We find in Russian spiritual literature letters from bishops censuring priests for having kept the sacred Species in improper places or for having let it spoil. But the Greek, Russian, or Rumanian Orthodox will not go to church to pray before the Blessed Sacrament kept in the tabernacle. When they enter the Church they make deep bows before the icons they especially revere, but they will not consider the sacramental presence of Christ in the tabernacle and generally will not make any exterior signs of veneration towards it.

Frequent communion, although not forbidden in the Eastern Church, is still an exception among eastern Christians. As a matter of fact, Holy Communion itself is not for the Orthodox exactly what it is at present for most Catholics. One must live with them for some time before realizing that. When receiving Holy Communion, the Orthodox seems to reflect more on the fact that he is taken up by Christ and united to him than on the presence of Christ within him. In Oriental religious literature you will hardly ever find prayers in which the believer, after communion, addresses himself to Christ present in him. After communion, the Orthodox communicant thanks God for his gift, but as a general rule his thanksgiving is not directed toward his Divine Host.¹ There is a nuance here which is perhaps not easy to detect but which is nonetheless real. Understanding without restriction the words of Christ: "You can have no life in yourselves unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood" (John 6,54), the Eastern Church does not wait until the child has reached the age of reason to administer the Holy Eucharist. Instead she gives Holy Communion to infants very soon after baptism under the species of wine alone if necessary. There is even a special formula for giving communion in these cases. For the

¹ Many of the latin Postcommunions are formulated in the same spirit: "Fideles tui, Deus, per tua dona firmenter. . . ." (Septuagesima Sunday)

adult the priest will say: "The servant of God, John (or Peter or Mary as the case may be), receives the Most Precious Body and Blood of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the remission of his sins and for life everlasting." For the infant he will say only: "The Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ is given to the infant, Nicholas (or Sergius), for life everlasting."

According to Russian custom, the communicant, considering himself in some way ennobled by his contact with Christ, does not kneel for the rest of the day. He remains standing in the church even while other faithful kneel. In accordance with Russian rubrics, the altar boy who has received communion no longer kisses the hand of the priest when he hands or takes back the censor. When the communicant leaves the church his parents and friends kiss him and congratulate him. A Russian lady once told the writer: "I cannot understand why you Catholics always look so sad when you come back from the communion rail. We Orthodox are joyful after communion and proud to have been united to Christ." Obviously she took for sadness the usual recollection of the Catholics during thanksgiving.

There are some other characteristics. Later in Church history we see how St. Bernard contemplated the merits and dignity of St. Joseph, and laid the foundation for the flourishing of a great devotion to him which was especially augmented by St. Teresa. The institution of new feasts in his honor and the publication of various books and articles about him, have done much to promote this devotion.

There is nothing similar to this in the East. At present in the Byzantine Church St. Joseph is venerated as a saint of the Old Testament. His feast is celebrated with the other holy ancestors of Christ, especially King David, on the Sunday after Christmas. On the other hand, the Byzantine Church has kept a greater veneration for the saints of the Old Testament, and most especially for St. John the Baptist, than has the Latin Church. As one can expect, the Eastern Church does not venerate saints who have been canonized in the Catholic Church since the separation.

When it became impossible for the faithful of the West to make the pilgrimage to Palestine, the Church fostered a devotion which

has since become most popular: the Way of the Cross. The meditation on the Passion of Christ is one of the chief spiritual exercises in western spirituality. The eastern churches do not know the Way of the Cross and at present, outside of Holy Week, they do not place much stress on the veneration of the Passion of Christ. It seems that the mystery of the Incarnation has held the attention of the eastern world more than the Redemption has. The rosary of the Blessed Virgin, so popular in the West, is unknown in the East.

At the time of the Renaissance we witnessed in the West a more rational systematization of spirituality. In the Low Countries, the Brethren of the Common Life; in Spain, Dom Garcia Ximenes de Cisneros and especially St. Ignatius Loyola taught methodical prayer to the faithful. St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross outlined the different kinds of mystical prayers. That systematization was not introduced in either Greek or Russian spirituality and the only form they have which could be compared to it is the Prayer of Jesus of the Hesychasts.

As is well known in the West, with the advent of St. Ignatius religious life underwent a great change. "Ignatius made a real alteration in the center of gravity of the devotion of the religious," writes Pourrat. "Until his day it revolved around the psalmody of the Divine Office. The Jesuit says his office in private; this is the most important of his religious exercises but it is not the whole of his devotion. Meditation and examination of conscience form the framework of his spiritual life and make a rampart about it and protect it efficaciously against the assaults of the world amidst which he has to be preserved and to grow. Ignatian spirituality is also an inspirer of zeal. It develops the spirit of initiative and conquering ardor."

Many religious congregations were founded in that period, patterned more or less in the same spirit, and all of them have played a very important role in the life of the Church during the succeeding centuries. It is most especially from that time that the differences in eastern and western spirituality have really intensified. So far the eastern churches separated from Rome have not produced religious congregations comparable to Catholic ones. Religious life has main-

tained, in these churches, the old traditional form of our contemplative orders, such as the Carthusians or Benedictines.

During the following centuries two great heresies, Jansenism and Quietism, also provoked very sharp reactions in the Catholic world and added new features to western spirituality. It would be incorrect to say that in Russia nobody had ever spoken about the Heart of Jesus as the center of his love. Some pages of St. Dmitri of Rostov could be compared to the writings of St. Gertrude and St. Mechtilde. But the devotion to Christ's humanity and especially to his Sacred Heart never spread as it did in 17th century Europe following the apparitions to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. In the East this devotion remained quite exceptional and was generally rejected because it placed too much emphasis on the human qualities of Jesus.

The devotion to the Sacred Heart has given rise to many theological studies on the love of Christ awakening such spiritual attitudes as generosity, desire to atone for the iniquities of the world, and so forth. It has occupied a large place in the spirituality of the last two centuries. In the life of many Catholics the devotion of the First Fridays, the Forty Hours, the consecration of families to the Sacred Heart have taken on greater importance. This spirituality, so centered on the human heart of Christ, was not only not adopted by eastern Christians, but generally aggravated them.

The struggles and the needs of the Church led her to develop other aspects of abnegation and charity. The apostle embroiled in the hectic life of our 20th century must develop the spirituality of action which has been so aptly described by Fr. de Grandmaison. In our day, when family life has so often become unstable, the spirituality of marriage has been deeply explored.

The eastern churches have not been affected by all these influences and have continued throughout the centuries in more or less the same situation. Occasionally, some Latin influences have been felt in the East, but they have been localized and did not gain general approbation. As an example of such influence, one could mention the *Imitation of Christ* which has been reprinted 15 times in Russian.

In the East, worship has remained much more communal than

in the West. It has been nourished principally by the liturgical life. Therefore it would be unjust to measure the spiritual activity of these churches only by a consideration of the amount of spiritual literature they have produced. For a long time in western Europe the only language used by writers, especially in the Church, was Latin, and Latin has remained until now the official language for the liturgy. When scholars began to use the vernacular, Latin was less and less understood by the faithful. The liturgy lost thereby a great deal of its didactic power. It became necessary to increase the number of new spiritual writings.

Such was not the case in the Byzantine world. When missionaries left the shores of the Bosphorus to carry the message of the gospel to northern regions, when Russian missionaries preached the gospel in Siberia, in China, in Japan, they translated not only Holy Scripture but all the liturgical services into the language of these people. Thus, the splendor of the Byzantine church services helped monks and faithful to find in their churches that contact with the divine, supernatural world for which they were longing. "The heart of Orthodoxy," Fr. Sergius Bulgakov likes to repeat in his books, "lies in its rites." During the liturgical action, for Easterners, and particularly for Russians, time and eternity meet and in some way unite.

Every Byzantine church is divided by its iconostasis. In front of the iconostasis, in the section of the church symbolizing the actual world, the faithful stand and assist at the liturgical action. They are the Church Militant marching towards eternity. Behind the iconostasis is the sanctuary, facing the East and symbolizing eternity, the reign of the Holy Trinity, the Triumphant Church. The iconostasis itself is covered with icons suggesting that the saints are present and interceding for us. In that setting, symbolic of both the temporal and the eternal, bishops and priests represent Christ, while deacons and servers, intermediaries between God and the faithful, symbolize the angels. The different parts of vespers and matins, very often celebrated consecutively, during the all night service, symbolize the different stages of the Creation and Redemption. During the Eucharistic Sacrifice, called the Divine Liturgy, the main parts symbolize the four periods of Christ's life: the hidden, the apostolic, the

suffering, the glorious. They make actively present for the faithful the drama which was their salvation.

The monks or faithful who devotedly follow the services of the liturgical year are thus obliged to live through the various stages of the spiritual life. Any exterior description of these ceremonies would give a very inadequate idea of their didactic strength. One must experience them, understanding, of course, the language used, to realize their impact. Let us try, nevertheless, to give one or two examples.

In the Byzantine rite, lent begins two days earlier than in the Latin rite. It begins on Monday morning. The preceding Sunday, after vespers, the priest reads the gospel reminding the faithful of the words of the Savior: "If thou art bringing thy gift, then, before the altar, and rememberest there that thy brother has some ground of complaint against thee, leave thy gift lying there before the altar and go home; be reconciled with thy brother first, and then come back to offer thy gift" (Matt 5, 23).

At the end of the service, the priest kneels facing the faithful and asks them to forgive his negligences. The faithful, answering together, forgive him, and then proceed to ask the same of their family and friends. Immediately after that, there takes place just the opposite of what is done on Holy Saturday: all the curtains and decorations in the church are replaced with black draperies. For forty days the very expressive services of lent will be celebrated in that atmosphere of affliction. The famous prayer of St. Ephraim, followed by the proscribed four prostrations, is said frequently during these services:

O Lord and Master of my life, do not grant me the spirit of sloth, faint-heartedness, lust for power and idle talk. (Prostration).

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to your servant. (Prostration.)

Yes, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own offenses and not to judge my brother, for you are blessed forever and ever. Amen. (Prostration.)

Who has not heard about the glorious service of the Resurrection, beginning at midnight on Holy Saturday in Russian churches? The

church is filled with incense, brilliant with lights and candles, and as the choir sings without interruption, the priest exclaims: "Christ is risen!" and the faithful answer with growing enthusiasm: "He is truly risen!"

As we wrote before, meditation on the sufferings of Christ does not take the same place in Byzantine spirituality as it does in the Latin. We do not know any examples of stigmata in the East. The Resurrection is really the central mystery. And, undoubtedly, for an Oriental, especially for a Russian, Easter has yet another significance than it has for a Latin. For Latins who had so much reason to fight against the rationalistic world, Easter recalls the great historical miracle of Christ by which he has decisively asserted his divinity. For the Russian, Easter is something more. For them Easter is the great feast of hope, the confirmation of the future resurrection and glorification of all creation, the final triumph of the reign of God. The expectation of the City to come is always alive in some way in the depth of the Russian spirit. To quote Fr. Kologrivov: "The deification of humanity, the transfiguration of the world is the end of history and the unique positive solution to the enigma of existence."

This explains why the feast of the Transfiguration celebrated August 6, and paid scarce attention by the Latin world, is one of the 12 feasts of the first class with octaves in the Byzantine rite. It is indeed a prefiguration of the feast of Easter.

While the evolution of spirituality from the days of St. Benedict to the present was taking place in the western Catholic world, in the monasteries of the near East, especially Mount Athos, and later in Russia, Hesychasm became the general rule for monks. Hesychasm is that system of concentration of mind and purification by means of which one can endeavor to establish in the soul complete *ἡσυχία*—full quietude up to the suspension of the faculties in mystical rest. "Until every palpitation of the heart becomes a single and continual prayer."

The basic exercise for that continuous prayer of the Hesychasts is the ejaculatory prayer which they have called the Prayer of Jesus: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner." This prayer, writes Fr. Bulgakoff, repeated hundreds of times and even

indefinitely, forms the essential element of the whole monastic rule. It may, if need be, replace the offices and all other prayers, such is its universal value. The power of this prayer is not in its content, which is simple and clear (it is the prayer of the publican), but in the "most sweet name of Jesus." The ascetics testify that this name has in itself the power of the presence of God. Not only is God invoked by this name, but he is already present in the invocation. This may be said, of course, of every name of God, but it is especially true of the divine and human name of Jesus, a name belonging to both God and man. In short, the name of Jesus present in the human heart gives it the power of deification which our Redeemer accorded us.

Beginning with the "Paterik," which portrays the lives of about 80 holy monks who lived from the 11th to the 13th century in the caves of Kiev, ascetic and mystical writings have been abundant in Russia, although numerically less abundant than in the western Church. They consist mainly of lives of saints, ascetic treatises, and letters of spiritual direction. The lives of many holy monks and bishops are depicted, but few missionaries and lay people are included. Among the lives of saints we find descriptions of two original groups generally considered as more typical, who have expressed in their unique ways that *kenosis*, that renunciation of the world which animated them to seek perfection.

In the first group are the *strastoterptsy* of whom the Russian Saints Boris and Gleb are the prototypes. Boris and Gleb had another brother, Sviatopolk, who was jealous and desired to kill them. To do this he sent soldiers to encounter them on their way home. Wishing to imitate Christ who was put to death unjustly, the two brothers refused to defend themselves, dismissed their guards, and allowed themselves to be killed. Properly speaking, they were not martyrs because they did not die for Christ, but they are saints because they acted in imitation of Christ.

The other group are the *yourodivy*, the fools for Christ. The fool for Christ wants to lead a very holy life, but he knows that his detachment from the world will evoke the esteem of others and consequently may awake in his heart feelings of pride, the most feared obstacle to union with God. To avoid being considered a saint, the

yourodivy takes on the semblance of a "fool." Thus he lives rejected by society, despised by everyone, poor, wandering, often hungry. There is a certain parallel here with St. Benedict Labre, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Philip Neri, and Fr. Surin, who also partook somewhat of this spirit.

In the spiritual writings of Orthodox Russians we find the same principles of asceticism as appear in our Catholic literature. They discuss the essence of Christian perfection, the imitation of Christ, the nature of temptation, the need of prayer, of sacramental life, of humility, purity, charity, peace of soul, spiritual direction, examination of conscience. They have the same diffidence towards such extraordinary gifts as visions. As an example, here is a page written by a holy monk who died in 1809, the Higumenos or Abbot of Nazarios of Valaam:

Instruction Concerning Prayer at Church and in the Cell

Rise up courageously, my well beloved brother, to assist at the midnight prayer, which precedes matins; stand before God and address to Him your prayer with a pure heart for several minutes as it is said further on.

When the hour of matins has arrived, get up with diligence and betake yourself, without tardiness, to the church for the beginning of the divine office. Having hastened to the church for the conventual prayer, stand at a suitable place; gather within you all the spiritual energies of your soul, so that they do not roam and do not fly away in every direction after images or objects bad or fitted to excite the passions.

Urge yourself, as far as possible, to absorb profoundly into your heart the readings and liturgical chants, and to engrave them on the tablets of your heart

If, upon hearing the chant or the reading done at church, you do not understand them, say slowly, then, with piety, the prayer to Jesus: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

After the divine office, and upon leaving the church for your cell, if it is possible, keep yourself, from remaining close to anyone in any way, or addressing a word to him. But, above all, keep yourself from talking about trifles or from laughing; all that is detrimental; go without delay to your cell, without letting the prayer of the Name of Jesus slip from your thoughts or your lips.

Upon re-entering your cell, close the door and, if you have the strength for it, stand aright; then, with fervor, application, and gratitude, pray for yourself, your parents, your benefactors, and the whole world; accompany these prayers with metanies (prostrations) down to the ground or only to the waist. After that, take a book and begin reading. After a moment of repose, having acted in conformance with this instruction, if a duty has been given you or a common occupation of manual labor, set yourself to this task as if Christ Himself had imposed it upon you and not a man. Go to it ardently, give yourself over to your work with love, labor without a murmur, so as to master your flesh.

If no task has been assigned to you, occupy yourself with manual labor, or better, build and instruct your soul by reading or by some other occupation which does not present an obstacle to salvation.

Apply yourself assiduously so as never to be idle, for idleness is the mother of vice; if it takes root in anyone, he will have much trouble trying to extirpate it

Take care—that you in no way provoke a temptation by staring at an object or person, or judging your neighbor in anything, or doing a wrong inconsiderately. Flee temerity as you would poison; it does great wrong to all men and leads to pride.

Do what you are commanded to do, or that which has always been accepted, or what one asks you to do; never permit yourself to undertake anything which does not concern you, whatever may be its importance.

On the spiritual foundation of religious obedience we find the considerations which are frequently developed in Catholic spirituality. "In your bishop, venerate Christ, Supreme Pastor of all pastors," writes Fr. John of Cronstadt (d. 1909). "Confess that through him, after the apostles, proceed for the faithful the grace of priesthood and all the graces of Christ. Submit yourself to him as to Christ Himself."

With regard to the problems of modern life, the eastern churches have not elaborated general principles of moral judgment as clearly as the western Church, and therefore in their letters of direction spiritual directors occasionally exhibit an individuality and severity to which we are less accustomed. Here, for example, is a letter of

Starets Ambrose from the famous Optina Pustin, written in 1906 to his spiritual son, an inveterate smoker:

You say that you are unable to give up the habit of smoking. That which is impossible to men is possible with the aid of God. It is necessary only to make a firm decision to stop this habit, by thinking that it darkens the soul and body. Tobacco weakens the soul, multiplies and fortifies the passions, obscures reason and slowly leads the body to death. Irascibility and anguish are the consequences of the sickly state of soul, caused by tobacco. I advise you to use a spiritual remedy against this passion: make a detailed confession of all the sins of your life from the age of seven, and receive Holy Communion; every day read, while standing, a chapter of the Gospel, or more; and when the urge takes you, read again until it passes; if it returns read the Gospel again. Or even still, when you are alone, do thirty-three metanies down to the ground, in remembrance of the life of the Savior on earth and in honor of the Holy Trinity.

The West has produced different schools of spirituality, often originating in the various religious congregations. In the Byzantine Church it is much more difficult to ascribe spiritual writings to particular schools. Each writer seems to be somewhat independent, yet he still keeps faithfully to the main features of all eastern spiritual writings: strong adherence to fundamental Christian dogmas and ascetic principles; detachment from the world, stressing more the need of passive abstinence than "agere contra." (The scourge, for instance, is not known in eastern monasteries.) We could also add to these characteristics a constant longing for monastic life. As a general rule (one could find some exceptions) the eastern spiritual writer seems to think that the Christian cannot live and take a really active part in the world, even when he makes a serious attempt to improve it for the glory of God, and still remain completely aloof from its spirit.

For the last few decades, and especially since the Russian Revolution of 1917, the position of the separated eastern churches has changed radically. Most of them are behind the iron curtain. Many Orthodox have emigrated to western Europe or the Americas. The only country where Orthodoxy is still the official religion is Greece, and even there relations between Church and state are not always

in full harmony. The Orthodox feel that they must adapt themselves to the contemporary needs of their faithful. In Greece the Zoī (Life) movement, in some ways comparable to our Catholic Action, is flourishing. A few years ago a monk, professor at the Russian Seminary in Paris, Fr. Kyprian Kern, published a little book in which he stated the necessity for organizing in the Orthodox Church what he called a "scholarly monasticism" on the pattern of Catholic religious congregations.

Whenever the Orthodox have been able to share in the spiritual life of Catholic communities, they have generally reacted most favorably to our teaching and practices—except perhaps to some features of our veneration of Christ's humanity.

Some Orthodox writers have helped their brethren discover the treasures of Catholic spiritual literature. Mr. Nicholas Arsenieff, professor at the Orthodox Seminary in New York, has introduced many pages of such Catholic mystics as St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross into his Russian books on spirituality.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that the Russian Orthodox have had a real influence on our western piety. Many patristic studies, the liturgical revival, the reestablishment of the Easter Vigil ceremony, the new iconography with emphasis less on feeling and more on symbolic representation, all these have in good measure felt the influence of the Orthodox who came to live among us.

Many Orthodox, it is true, still seem to fear us. They seem to be afraid of losing their personality, their individuality if they come into close contact with the Latin Church. While some prominent writers, as for instance, the Russian Bishop John of San Francisco, have been publishing books on spiritual themes to help the Orthodox faithful adapt to new conditions of life, others, such as Fr. John Meyendorff, have recently undertaken new studies on *hesychasm* and *palamism* in order to make these ideas better understood in the western world.

In the field of spirituality, the dialogue between East and West has been quietly developing for several years; here there has been a smooth and fruitful exchange of ideas. Our two spiritualities are complementary as are very often the spiritualities of different Catholic schools. The creator has not made only one unique pattern,

and those who, by lack of imagination, would like to reestablish the unity of the Christian world by standardization do not understand the mind of the Catholic Church. A further dialogue between East and West will contribute much to our mutual spiritual enrichment and bring closer to God the whole Christian fold.

PAUL MAILLEUX, S.J.
Russian Center
Fordham University