

BYZANTINE MARIOLOGY

Byzantine Mariology. Such was the topic that was presented to me for the preparation of the groundwork of discussion in this seminar. I must confess that I tried to alter the topic, for I have never given any particular attention to Mariology. However the program was already fixed and it was necessary either to refuse my collaboration to this meeting or to accept. I thought that the latter would be more profitable to me and I trust that the results of my efforts will show that it has been profitable for you also, to some lesser degree at least.

My remarks will fall under three heads: 1) some methodological observations; 2) a brief study of the Mariological doctrine of some 14th century Byzantine theologians (Gregory Palamas, Nicholas Cabasilas); 3) a summary statement of the attitude of some modern Orthodox theologians (Androutsos, V. Lossky, G. Florovsky) to the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and of the Assumption.

1. Methodological Observations

It is important first of all to avoid equivocation, as much as may be, with regard to the term Byzantine. Because the chief representatives of the Byzantine tradition are not in communion with the See of Peter, and, for the most part, have not been for some 900 years, the whole of this tradition is often practically assumed to be non-Catholic. This is not and cannot be so. In a way, the classical period of theology is the fourth and fifth century: St. Athanasius, the Cappadocians, St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Leo. Apart from the dogmatic decisions of the councils of this period, which are common to all, the theological development in the West followed in the wake of St. Augustine and of the controversies of the West, while in the eastern part of the empire theological development followed chiefly the heritage of the Gregories and Cyril together with the controversies of the East.

But these are all equally Catholic sources. The same is to be

said of the continuators of this tradition,¹ when it has become specifically Byzantine. I mention two, because no one can cavil about their explicit devotion to communion with the Holy See: St. Maximus the Confessor (+662) and St. Theodore of Studion (+826). Not only this, but the perfect legitimacy of the Byzantine tradition has been acknowledged in councils (1274 and 1439); and more recently in solemn pontifical documents (e.g., Pius XII for the 15th centenary of Cyril of Alexandria). More, the Holy See tends to consider itself as above all difference of rite, as when Benedict XV declares the Church to be neither Latin nor Greek nor Slav, but Catholic. The result then is that the non-Latin traditions in all that pertains to their history, liturgy and canon law are to be preserved, save of course where there is something opposed to true faith or right morals. What is to be preserved cannot but include theological thought; for in the foregoing all the sources of that thought are included.

We are faced then with a complex and paradoxical situation: on the one hand there is the Catholic theological tradition, itself multiple (Thomist, Scotist, Suarezian variants), which is *de facto* western, because only the West has persevered in communion with the See of Peter, and because, in effect, there is to my knowledge no Catholic theologian capable of developing the Byzantine theological tradition within the communion of the See of Peter; on the other hand there is the Byzantine theological tradition which in its sources and in the greater part of its doctrines is Catholic, but which, as a whole, may perhaps better be termed only virtually Catholic. Why is this? Because the Church in the course of her history has gradually attained a greater awareness of her own nature and of the content of the teaching confided to her; but this has necessarily been in terms of the experience and thought of those effectively in union with the Holy See. Thus the great outstanding points of difference with the Orthodox concern points that have been developed and defined in the West, without the sharing of a common experience. I refer to the *Filioque*, touching upon the nature of God, to

¹ Cf. Dvornik, "The Byzantine Church and the Immaculate Conception," in *The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception*, Notre Dame Press, 1958, 112 (hereafter cited as *Dogma I.C.*).

the infallibility of the successor of Peter, touching upon the nature of the Church, and to the Immaculate Conception, touching upon the nature of man (original sin).

And similarly, in the churches of Byzantium, there has been a development in terms of their experience and thought and in the experience and thought of those who were and are the heirs of the Byzantine tradition. The fact of such a development and the need of further development is recognized by their theologians.² Particularly the doctrine of Gregory Palamas has received synodal approbation. It will not be irrelevant to note that it was a convinced Palamite, Mark Eugenicus, who was the great obstructor of an effective entente at the Council of Florence. And these developments have taken place without the sharing of a common experience with the West.

Is there no issue from this complex and paradoxical situation? We must live and work in hope. Hope is grounded in faith. By faith we all have the commandment to love one another; and if to love one another, then without question also to understand one another. That to which we all look, the sacramental communion of the Churches of God, is the work definitively of the pastors, the bishops. That does not now occupy our attention. There is work also for theologians; it is the work above all of understanding traditions that are not immediately their own, without loss of understanding each of his own proper tradition. This is but a first, though utterly basic step. Intertwined with it there will be a discerning of virtualities in the other tradition of developments analogous to those of one's own tradition. Reasons must be sought why such virtualities knew no final development or perhaps were rejected. In the matter that will shortly occupy us, it is to me evident that there are real virtualities tending to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception; these, however, were and are obstructed by the way in which the Adamic nature and sin are conceived. In dogmatic questions, there is then the possibility that these virtualities be activated, so that the acceptance of the dogma in question be, what in fact it is, the nat-

² Cf. F. Gavin, *Some Aspects of Contemporary Greek Thought*, Milwaukee, 1923, xxiii. See also J. Meyendorff, *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas*, Paris, 1959. (Patristica Sorbonensia 3), 323ff.

ural fulfilment of that other tradition and not an imposition from without. And if there are in the diverse traditions points which are truly antithetical, these will appear for what they are. And if it comes to conversion, this will be facilitated because all sense and act of haughtiness on either side having been put away, members of either tradition will recognize that they have been responsible for their part in the estrangement that made the aberration possible.

The foregoing has been said, clearly, by a Catholic from the point of view of the Catholic. What may be said, still by a Catholic, but from the point of view of the Byzantine tradition? And here by Byzantine I mean one that recognizes Gregory Palamas as a great doctor. It is far too soon to express more than a hope of the direction in which a way may be found. Meyendorff,³ speaking of the Cydones, 14th century Byzantine Thomists, who entered communion with the Holy See, remarks: "Whatever may be the confessional judgment made about these conversions, without question they constitute an abandonment of the living spiritual tradition of the Christian Orient." Judgment can really not yet be made. What was it that these brothers thought the doctrine of St. Thomas would bring to the solution of the crisis⁴ through which Byzantium was then passing? Did they mean to import the doctrine of Thomas, as it were an erratic block, into the field of Byzantine theology and culture? I do not know. But in any case, with our present knowledge of St. Thomas' work and with that more limited that we have of Palamas', I would not hesitate to affirm that they are not antithetical because their scopes and methods are diverse. If Augustinian, Thomist, Scotist and Suarezian traditions can live together within Catholic unity, is there no place also for a Palamite tradition, which would be a true representative of the Byzantine tradition? If you like, this is a *futuribile*; but at least it is possible to mention it.⁵

The method then to be followed in "Byzantine Mariology" is

³ Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, 325.

⁴ See H. G. Beck, *Theodorus Metochites: Die Krise des Byzantinischen Weltbildes im 14. Jahrhundert*, Munich, 1952.

⁵ Cf. E. von Ivanka, "Palamismus und Vätertradition," in *L'Eglise et les Eglises*, Chevetogne, 1955, II 29-46.

not the collection of a series of texts from one or several authors that tell in favor of this or that particular doctrine or that seem to do so; nor yet to take a pattern from elaborated scholastic treatises of Mariology to be filled in as well as may be from Byzantine sources. Rather, first, single theologians need to be taken who are richer in Marian doctrine; that doctrine is to be studied in breadth and depth with the ear attentive always to the main themes of Byzantine theological thought. Later it will be possible to discern the trends of development.

The following I present with trepidation as a minimal sample, hoping that it has not failed too grossly in satisfying the exigencies indicated above.

2. *Byzantine Mariology*

a) *Gregory Palamas*

How may one set up a composite position of a Byzantine author's doctrine of the Mother of God, without placing it in a Procrustean bed? The term Mother of God was first a christological term, having to do with the scheme and scope of man's salvation, and that salvation is conditioned and explained by God's intent and purpose in making man and by the sort of being that he made him. This is what has come to be called anthropology.⁶

Some notion of the anthropology of Palamas,⁷ our first author, is therefore first in order. It will be seen to be profoundly Byzantine.

⁶ A like starting point is indicated for the Latin tradition. Both Journet and Jouassard in their contributions to *Dogma I.C.* speak of a certain dialectic in the development of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, in which the notion of original sin is of critical importance. But the doctrine of original sin is at the very heart of any Christian anthropology.

⁷ Gregory Palamas (1296-1359), Athonite monk and archbishop of Thessalonica, is known in the west mostly for his part in the hesychast controversy and for his doctrine of the uncreated divine energies. But it is not upon the controversialist and speculative (*parce verbo*) theologian that we here draw, but upon the teacher and pastor of souls. For bibliography see Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, 15-22; also H. G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, Munich, 1959, 715². The exposition given in the text is based primarily on my reading of homilies 5,14,16, 37 (*P.G.*, 151). The homilies of the Sophoclis edition were not available to me. See M. Jugie, *L'Immaculée Conception dans l'Écriture sainte et dans la tradition orientale* (Bibliotheca Immaculatae Conceptionis: Textus et Disquisitiones 3), Romae

That same common ancestral curse and condemnation we all had before Christ, spread upon all from the one forefather, transmitted, as it were, from the root of human kind and inherited with nature; but each one, by the things he did on his own account, drew from God upon his own person either rebuke or praise, being able to do nothing with regard to that common curse and malediction and the evil lot that comes down from above to him and through him to those that come after. But Christ came, the liberator of nature, transmuting the common curse into common blessing; and, having taken our guilty nature from an undefiled virgin and presented it to himself new, with no share of the old seed, he made it guiltless and justified so that all those that are born of him thereafter in the spirit remain apart from the ancestral curse and condemnation.

What then? Does he not give a share of his grace to each of our persons? Does not each one of us receive from him the remission of his transgressions insofar as he took from us and renewed not person but our nature, to which he was united in person? And how? He that perfectly wills all to be saved for the sake of all bowed the heavens and came down and by deeds and words and his own sufferings showed the whole way of salvation and went up again into heaven, drawing after those that believed. So then not to the nature alone, which he took from us in unbreakable unity, but to each of those that believe in him would he grant perfect redemption. And this he has done and does not cease to do, through himself reconciling each of us to the Father, drawing each to obedience and healing our every disobedience.

Therefore it is that he ordered holy baptism and established saving laws and preached repentance to all and gave all to partake of his body and blood. For it is not simply the nature but the person of each believer that receives baptism⁸

I have cited this long passage because it gives in one sequence Palamas' view of man and his salvation. It is in such a view that his Marian doctrine must be set. I would note immediately four things with regard to this passage. 1) Palamas does not use the term "original sin" but some of its many equivalents.⁹ 2) The doctrine here presented is in close relation with St. Paul's 5th chapter to the

1952, 225-240; also Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, 317-322, and Dvornik in *Dogma I.C.*, 109. On the nature of Palamas' homilies see Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, 389-397.

⁸ Palamas, hom. 5—*P.G.* 151.64B-D (hereafter only the column of *P.G.* 151 will be given).

⁹ For the terminology see Jugie, *op. cit.*, 25ff.

Romans.¹⁰ 3) The distinction of nature and person is acutely felt. 4) Palamas' view of redemption and the Christian life is profoundly sacramental.

This salvation the Word of God could have accomplished in some other way than by himself becoming man, yet this was indeed the most fitting. For the devil had obtained his tyranny by deceit, yes, but with a certain justice God had left man in this tyranny, as he had freely consented. In justice then he first overcame the devil, in the Passion; then with power completed the work, in resurrection and judgment.¹¹

The scheme of salvation here limned is one familiar to western readers particularly through St. Leo's use of the theme *ratio iustitiae* and Venantius' Passiontide hymn. Yet this same doctrine has strong affinities with a passage of St. Maximus, where the likeness to Leonine doctrine is much less prominent.¹² This passage, as that of Palamas, has to do with the fall and the renewal of man in Christ. For Maximus, Adam (man) in the first instant of his being turned from God to things other than God and so characteristically to sense pleasure. But pleasure presides at the conception of every man, and so the state of estrangement from God and proclivity to pleasure is necessarily passed on to every one so born. To break this round of procreation, there was need of a conception without seed and birth without corruption.¹³

¹⁰ Cf. also hom. 16-201A.

¹¹ Hom. 16-189. The last statement (189d1-4) seems a clear reflection of Rom 4, 25.

¹² Maximus, *ad Thalassium* 61 (P.G. 90.628ff). I have read this passage many times without ever being reminded of Leo's *ratio iustitiae*; the first reading of Palamas brought Leo to mind. See, for the devil's being conquered by that which he conquered, hom. 16-192A, 208C, 205A, 209B.

¹³ Cf. my study "Maximus and Origenism" in *Berichte zum XI. Internat. Kongress*, Munich, 1958, 8ff.—The paradisiac state. Our Lord says (Matt 22,30) that in heaven there will neither be marriage nor giving in marriage. St. Paul (Gal 3,28) says that in Christ there is neither male nor female. In the Mosaic account of the fall it is clear that Adam and Eve knew one another only outside paradise. Though St. Thomas rejects the notion of an asexual mode of procreation (S. T., I, 98,2), yet (*ibid.* ad 4) he maintains, with St. Augustine, the absence of corruption in intercourse and in child-birth had there been intercourse before the fall.

With this doctrine in mind, the following passage from Palamas is not at all surprising:

God, then, sends the archangel to the Virgin, she remaining virgin, and makes her his own mother by the (angel's) address alone; since, if he were conceived by seed, he would not be a new man, nor would he be sinless¹⁴ and savior of sinners. For the movement¹⁵ of the flesh to begetting (*genesis*), as it is insubordinate to the mind set in us by God to rule our faculties, is not altogether without sin. Therefore David said: *In iniquities was I conceived, and in sins did my mother conceive me.* If then the conception of God was from seed, there would not be a new man, nor leader of the new and never-aging life. For, being of the old stamp and heir of that fall, he would not be able to bear in himself the fulness (*pleroma*) of the undefiled Godhead and make his flesh the inexhaustible source of sanctification, so as to wash away the stain of those first parents by the abundance of power and to suffice unto sanctification for all that come after. Therefore not an angel, not a man, but the Lord Himself came and saved us, being conceived and taking flesh in the womb of a virgin and remaining immutably God.¹⁶

Here of critical import is the new man. Adam, at first, was new (*neos*) and spotless; but persuaded by the devil gave in to pleasures of the flesh. So to renew his creature, to make him new (*kainos*), the Lord was born of a woman that he might have our nature, yet born of a virgin, without seed, that he might have none of our oldness.¹⁷

What so far has been said pertains predominantly to the question

¹⁴ Sinless—*anamartētos*—is said uniquely of the Lord. In hom. 16 I noticed such a use 8 times (e.g. 192B, 193C13, 196D9). The text of 192B is interesting for its adaptation of Job 14, 5 and Matt 19, 17 (*Koine* text); though introduced as Scripture citations the editors of the Migne text give no references.

¹⁵ In hom. 16 (192C) there is the following: "The rising up of the flesh is against the will (*akousios*) and patently strives against the law of the mind; even though by chaste men it is forced into subjection and employed only for procreation, still it brings with it the initial curse, as it is and is named corruption, and properly generates to corruption and, for the man who is ignorant of the honor which our nature has obtained from God, it is a movement of passion likening him to beasts." This is an aspect of Christian tradition not often brought to the fore in these days. It is there (cf. also n. 13) and is pertinent to the point at issue, namely the necessity of birth-without-seed to break the chain of carnal generation and to make possible the *new man*.

¹⁶ Hom. 14—169B-D.

¹⁷ Hom. 16—193A-C; in great part this passage is identical with that indicated in the foregoing note.

of the transmission of ancestral sin and our need and the way of redemption therefrom; just what, however, that sin was and in what condition it has left the first man's descendants needs now to occupy our attention.

The first sin of Adam is spoken of either in terms of disobedience¹⁸ or of a turning to the pleasures of the flesh.¹⁹ The texts given above make sufficiently manifest that its perpetuation is thought of in connection with the exercise of man's procreative powers.

In what condition has it left the first man's descendants? This question is of crucial importance, particularly with regard to the Blessed Virgin's relation to that state. First of all I would call your attention to the passage from Homily 5, quoted at the beginning of this section. There it is clear the curse affects our *nature*, that there is no personal guilt involved, that it is a condition from which man is powerless to free himself. This condition may be further illustrated by texts referring to the wrath of God and dereliction (*egkatalipsis*). Thus we read: "Formerly heaven was closed to us and we were children of wrath (cf. Eph 2,3), which is God's just dereliction (of us) because of our sin and disobedience. But because of the sinlessness of our nature in Christ and obedience to God, we, who adhere to Christ, have become the children of his good pleasure and beloved sons, and heaven is opened to us so that the Spirit of God comes down upon us and remains among us."²⁰ A little later on in the same homily the same ideas are again expressed, but with explicit reference to our "slavery and captivity to the devil." We are also there said to "have been stained by our fellowship with the evil one."²¹

The dereliction is double, involving first death of the soul, then of the body. Having spoken of Adam's condemnation to bodily death for his disobedience, Palamas goes on: "Just as the body's dereliction by the soul and the soul's separation from the body is death of the body, so the soul's dereliction by God and His separation from it is death of the soul, it remaining in another way immortal. For it becomes hideous and useless separated from God, more so than the dead

¹⁸ See hom. 5—65B10,D6; hom. 16—193D.

¹⁹ See hom. 16—193A.

²⁰ Hom. 16—201B; cf. also 213A.

²¹ Hom. 16—204C.

body; but it is not dissolved like the latter after dying because its existence is not due to a composition."²² But the rational soul, so separated from God, does not only suffer a lack of tendency to the good, but actively tends to the worse, so that finally first by separation from the body, then, at judgment with the body it is given over to the fire prepared for the punishment of the angels. From such a dying, Christ saved our nature.²³

The above texts are sufficient, I believe,²⁴ to indicate that the condition of man after the fall is one for which no one, save Adam, is personally responsible; is a state of separation first of the soul from God, then of the soul from the body; that, though in this state man could gain the praise or rebuke of God for his own actions, still he is utterly unable to free himself by himself from this state of death. However, the optic from which man's state after the fall is more habitually viewed places great emphasis on mortality and corruption that are consequent upon the primary dereliction of the soul by God.²⁵

Given such a doctrine, the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God in any proper sense is impossible. Fundamentally it is this doctrine on man that brings modern Orthodox theologians to speak of the Immaculate Conception in a *relative* sense at best.²⁶

Journet will speak of a *state of involution* of doctrine concerning the initial sanctity of the Blessed Virgin.²⁷ This curiously enough is

²² Hom. 16—196A; cf. also 189A, where it is stated that God's leaving man is just, because consequent upon man leaving God.

²³ Hom. 16—196B.

²⁴ Confessedly this presentation is based on an extremely restricted reading of Palamas, and therefore my position is particularly liable to correction or amplification. However, what I have presented is definitely in the Byzantine tradition as I have learned it in Maximus. Further homily 16, on which it is largely based, is in Meyendorff's opinion (*op. cit.*, 391) a magistral synthesis.

²⁵ For this see above n. 15; hom. 16—189AB speaks not of sin, but of mortality and slavery to the devil. But above all note the doctrine, given above, of the corruption and death involved in the process of carnal generation.

²⁶ So Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, 321; this is likewise the phrase of Lebedev (Jugie, *op. cit.*, 452).

²⁷ C. Journet, *Esquisse du développement du dogme mariale*, Paris, 1954, 123; cf. *Dogma I.C.*, 43.

very similar to the position of St. Augustine. The unique way for a man to be without stain of sin is to be born of a virgin, otherwise the universality of sin such as the Apostle teaches is untrue. And therefore indeed, the Lord, who came to save from sin, was born of a virgin.²⁸

There is a further consideration that Meyendorff²⁹ adduces to make perfectly clear that Palamas could not have entertained the notion of the Immaculate Conception. Palamas in speaking of John the Baptist says:

It was not necessary for him to undergo natural death; for that is the condemnation of Adam's transgression of which he was no debtor, being a servant of the commandment and obedient to God from his mother's womb. For the sake of virtue and reverence (for God) the saints should lay down their lives, according to the Lord's commandment; and therefore for them rather a violent death for the Good is suited; wherefore the Lord also tasted such a death. For it was necessary that John's death be the forerunner of Christ's death.³⁰

This passage is introduced as the "hypothesis of the immaculate conception of St. John the Baptist"; but is admitted to lack coherence with Palamas' essentially christocentric doctrine.³¹ But as the Virgin died a natural death a similar hypothesis in her regard is completely excluded. This passage and its use calls for some comment. First I would agree that it does indicate a "conception of original sin" which would exclude any possibility of immaculate conception in the Virgin's case. But this agreement is provisional; is not the conception here supposed that optic that places emphasis rather on mortality and corruption than on the primary dereliction of the soul by God? In a word, a part—and a consequent part—of Palamas' doctrine of original sin is here proposed as the whole. There

²⁸ Augustine, sermon 293, 12 (*P.L.* 38.1335). Jouassard, from whom I have the above reference, will say that "in Augustinianism the doors are shut on all sides against this idea" i.e., the Immaculate Conception (*Dogma I.C.*, 78, notes 88 and 89).

²⁹ Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, 321f.

³⁰ Hom. 40—513C2-10.

³¹ Palamas affirms expressly that the Baptist contracted original sin (Jugie, *op. cit.*, 226⁴, with reference). The homily cited in the text is early (before 1337, Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, 394).

is need of clear recognition of the distinction of fault and debt in original sin. Secondly, the passage presents me with a difficulty. St. John the Baptist is said to be no debtor of the transgression of Adam, because he is an observer of the commandment from his mother's womb. How did this come about? It would be necessary to know Palamas' thought on this if it is to be a proper parallel to the Immaculate Conception. However, he gives no indication; rather he indicates that the commandment observed is that which the saints (understand martyrs) observed, who suffered violent deaths for the sake of virtue and reverence. Are they to benefit by the same hypothesis? No one would suggest it.³²

Such then are the obstacles that hindered Palamas from effectively acknowledging the ever-Virgin's Immaculate Conception. It has been necessary to set them out in some detail, so as to enable us to assess more equitably the import of his encomiums. It is precisely a question of encomiums, as Palamas declares.³³ The encomium is radically the mystery of the Incarnation: the union and tabernacling of the Word first in the Virgin, then his coming forth in the flesh among men: then she, "cooperating with and being involved in (*sumprattousa kai sumpaschousa*) the exalting kenosis of the Word of God, was also glorified and rightly lifted up."³⁴ And after the Ascension, she alone was the "stay and support" in the preaching of the Gospel. There follows the affirmation of her death and her bodily assumption.³⁵

Jugie affirms that the existence and the *raison d'être* of the Immaculate Conception are manifest in the few passages that he cites at

³² Jouassard (*Dogma I.C.*, 79) notes the Venerable Bede's observation on the Baptist. He was conceived in sins, but absolved from them in his mother's womb, for "the gift of the Holy Spirit is bound by no law" (*Homiliarum Lib. II*, hom. 19, *Corpus Christianorum*, 122, 325 : *P. L.* 94,208). This, Jouassard observes, is a liberating principle later to have its effect.

³³ Palamas, hom. 37—461A11. This is the homily on the Dormition, and is above all given to the praises of the Virgin. Hom. 5, on the Presentation, and hom. 14, on the Annunciation, are concerned also or more so with the Incarnation. The effort to laud the Virgin recurs in Cabasilas' orations, in Theophanes of Nicea. The dogmatic bulls of Pius IX and Pius XII also make explicit reference to such an intent.

³⁴ Hom. 37—464B.

³⁵ Hom. 37, particularly 464C, 465C, 468C.

the outset of his treatment of Palamas.³⁶ "The affirmation is categorical: Though the Virgin is born of Adam's seed, she is born too by the intervention of the Holy Spirit, who has so chosen and purified her ancestors that no stain has been passed on to her, so that she has been able to give the Word a flesh entirely immaculate, at once *new and ours*."³⁷ "There is an eternal foreordination of the Blessed Virgin, in view of her being the Theotokos."³⁸ "This has been realized in the course of history by the Holy Spirit's selecting and purifying the ancestors of the Blessed Virgin. And without question, there are texts that affirm the need of a virgin absolutely stainless for the conceiving and bearing of the bestower of purity."³⁹

Yet so long as Palamas nowhere makes clear what precisely is the purification to which he refers—and Jugie admits that such is the case, it cannot be affirmed absolutely that Palamas taught the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin. True, this purification is attributed to the Spirit; but the progressive purification through the generations must at some point come to the removal of the last vestige of the ancestral sin. Yet, how can this be when the very act of procreation conveys the curse and condemnation to the offspring. Nor does Palamas suggest an exception to this rule, save birth without seed. Hence the text used above, "flesh, new and ours,"⁴⁰ is not probative: flesh, new because born without seed, ours because born of a woman. The new flesh comes, of course, from the Virgin; but the newness is not of the Virgin's own flesh, but the Lord's; and that newness is due to his being conceived without seed.⁴¹

Jugie's presentation, then, of Palamas' doctrine with regard to the initial sanctity of the Blessed Virgin, is also unsatisfactory; for he does not adequately recognize that Palamas does not bring the two affirmations—the unique sinlessness of Christ and the complete purity of the Virgin—into a stable and theologically understandable relation. Meyendorff, on the other hand, is too absolute in his nega-

³⁶ Jugie, *op. cit.*, 229. The five citations occupy pp. 227-229. He adds further passages, pp. 230-240.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 230.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 227².

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 228².

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 229², taken up in the conclusion p. 230.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 227.

tion.⁴² For the Catholic theologian, it would seem to me, Palamas' doctrine appears in a state of incomplete development; the grounds for that development are present; obstacles likewise are present. For the latter, parallels have been indicated in western tradition. The Orthodox theologian, I think, could prudently admit that Palamas' doctrine in this question is incompletely coherent. It is for him to say whether coherence is obtainable, or even desirable. For a dialogue between Catholic and Orthodox in this matter, the preferred area would not so much be the term of the development, but its conditions, above all the full sense of the revelation brought to us by St. Paul in Romans 5.

The Glory of the Theotokos

What speech, God-Mother Virgin, will describe thy beauty divinely bright? For the things that are thine may not be bound by thoughts or words, as all transcend both mind and word. One may hymn thee, nonetheless, with thy kind permission. For thou art the seat of all graces and the fulness of every sort of beauty and goodness: the board and the icon of every good and of all kindness, as alone of all deemed worthy to receive together the charisms of the Spirit; nay, rather, as holding astoundingly dwelling in thy womb Him in whom are all the treasures of all things and being made his astounding tabernacle. And now hence through death thou art moved to immortality and rightly transferred from earth to heaven so that thou mightest be co-dweller with Him in the eternal tabernacles time without end and there having obtained thy lot, render him propitious to all by thy unceasing intercession to Him.⁴³

This, of course, is oratory; but its grounding in the Christian

⁴² I refer particularly to pp. 320f. The last text cited on p. 320, especially the whole text (hom. 14—176CD) speaks of an augment of purification. The questions of p. 321—"N'était-elle pas la fille de Joachim, et non pas seulement d'Anne? Et ne devait-elle pas mourir comme les autres hommes?"—are put in order to indicate that the Virgin was not free from original sin. But no defender of the Immaculate Conception would say that Mary was not the daughter of Joachim. And if, more recently, some Catholic theologians maintain that the Virgin was glorified without undergoing the death of the body, their reasons are certainly not that such death in this case would necessarily imply the stain of sin. Palamas' considerations (see at note 30) on natural and violent death would not trouble them.

⁴³ Hom. 37—469AB. A part, at least, of the passage occurs elsewhere. Cf. Jugie, *op. cit.*, 232¹.

mystery is manifested: the ascription of the fulness of grace is grounded in her role as Theotokos, from which also flows her present role of universal intercessor.

She alone is placed between God and all of human kind; for she made God son of man and men sons of God. Alone of all women of her nature she is mother of God above nature; queen of the entire creation by reason of her ineffable child-bearing. Indeed she partakes of a greater dignity, a higher power and "the ordination from heaven through the divine Spirit."⁴⁴

The Virgin-mother stands at the confines of created and uncreated nature. Only through her does one come to God. The lesser only through the greater have a share "in him that is established beyond being";⁴⁵ and the Virgin-mother is incomparably greater than all, she who received him that none can receive. She first received the all-pervasive fulness of him that fulfills all, she made him attainable to everyone and distributes to each as she is able in proportion to each one's purity, so that she is the storehouse and mistress of the wealth of the Godhead. She is the cause of things that were before her, the protector of those after her, the procurer of eternal things. She is the topic for prophets, source for apostles, solidity for martyrs, foundation for teachers. She is the glory of those on earth, the delight of those in heaven, the embellishment of the whole creation. She is the beginning, the source and root of ineffable goods. She is the peak and perfection of every saint.⁴⁶

Such doctrines as the universal mediation of the ever-Virgin, as her full collaboration in the work of redemption, are either manifest in the foregoing or lack but little of explicit statement. The affirmation of the use of reason very early or from the very beginning facilitates the affirmation of such a collaboration.⁴⁷ To elaborate such

⁴⁴ Hom. 37—465AB, summarized.

⁴⁵ Hom. 37—473A1. The notion of participation of the highest always through the immediately contiguous is a widely spread idea, at home above all in Neoplatonic thought. The phrase I have here directly translated supposes God to be beyond being—in a Plotinian fashion?

⁴⁶ Hom. 37—472B and D, 473; an almost complete parallel in hom. 14—177AB. The same texts occur a third time, see Jugie, *op. cit.*, 236¹, 237².

⁴⁷ On the use of reason, see Jugie, *op. cit.*, 233; Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, 320 notes that Palamas makes of Mary's presentation and life in the temple a model of hesychast life. By the term *collaboration* I intend to refer to what is

points would be to go beyond the limits of this study, and particularly because it would be necessary to provide a speculative structure, which Palamas has himself not provided. However, some structure there is; all is referred to the mystery hidden from all ages in God: the mystery of the Incarnation.

The epithets addressed to Mary, despite their rhetorical or lyric character, are all related to her role in the Incarnation; they are not then an infringement of the unique cult rendered to God, but, on the contrary witness to an extreme Christocentrism in piety and in the conception of history: the veneration given the Mother is addressed in fact to the God-Man that she bore. Indeed it is only when this veneration is considered apart from the precise concept of the divine Maternity that the biblical and traditional domain is left behind . . .⁴⁸

But such structure must be primordial to any who would truly revere the Mother of God.

Let us summarize the whole matter. That which determines the place of Mary between Christ and the Church may be said in a word: *Theotokos*, Mother of God. As we have said this is not a *first principle* from which one can deduce everything (as geometry from a postulate); rather it is a *personal relation* that commands all the rest: the divine anticipations of the Creator in favor of His Mother, and the escort of graces that go along with her accession to this motherhood.⁴⁹

Apart from certain turns of phrase, due doubtless to particular preoccupations at the time of writing, both authors—the one Orthodox treating of Palamas the other Catholic writing on Marian theology—are in fundamental agreement. It is on this ground that discussion between Catholic and Orthodox concerning their unequally and diversely developed traditions concerning the ever-Virgin Mother of God may best be engaged.

involved in speaking of the Virgin as Coredempstress. See the passage cited above at n. 33.

⁴⁸ Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, 318.

⁴⁹ R. Laurentin, *Court traité de théologie mariale*, Paris, 1953, 111. Journet (*Esquisse*, 141), from whom I have taken this citation, is unwilling to accept the opposition of first principle and personal relation.

b) *Nicholas Cabasilas*

Nicholas Cabasilas (d. by 1390) has produced three elaborate orations on the Mother of God: On the Nativity, the Annunciation, the Dormition.⁵⁰ He is best known for his *Exposition of the Divine Liturgy* and more so for his seven-book work *On Life In Christ*.⁵¹ "The mystical doctrine of Cabasilas is entirely Christocentric and in its major tendencies and fundamental concepts has little to do with Palamism."⁵² But Palamism here means Palamas' speculative theology, expounded in his controversial writings against Barlaam and Akindynos.⁵³ For our question they are both representatives of the same current of doctrine.

A proper treatment of Cabasilas would require consideration also of his doctrine of the primitive state of man and the rest; but brevity and our present purpose will be served if we draw from his Marian homilies some points in comparison with the doctrine of Palamas already expounded.

Cabasilas' leading thought with regard to the Blessed Virgin seems to be that of the *new man*.

It was fitting that the mother of the sinless one be found like him also in this and that man by the zeal and strength of his own mind be greater than sin. For first human nature itself should appear for what it is, that so it give the artist the honor and glory due him. But in the first of the race and those that came from him, corrupted by sin man was not to be found whole. And the second Adam, being also God by nature, did not allow the other nature, that is ours, to appear purely, since He was not so related to sin as is the way of man in this life. For he, not being capable of both, did not choose the good in preference to evil nor so pursue the good as being able to be evil, but was incapable of sinning. Hence it was necessary that there appear one able to sin but who even so did not sin, as God willed man to be in this life. For, otherwise the creator's art would have been in

⁵⁰ These orations were published by Jugie in *Patrologia Orientalis* XIX, 3 (1925), 456-510. In reference to Cabasilas' homilies I shall give the (unbracketed) page number of *P.O.* XIX.

⁵¹ For Nicholas Cabasilas see Beck., *op. cit.*, n. 7, p. 780. An English translation of the *Exposition of the Divine Liturgy* has just been published by Miss Joan Hussey.

⁵² Beck., *op. cit.*, 781.

⁵³ Beck., *op. cit.*, 322f. In the controversy Cabasilas without question stood on the side of Palamas.

vain, and this in the fairest of his works, nature in no single man preserving the form that it was the artist's intent that it should receive. Further the law of God would not be perfectly kept, but the wise one would be giving laws uselessly, there being no one to follow all the laws, and commanding things he had no one to obey, and, when he spoke, having no one who wanted to listen, and in all things blessed, yet in this not blessed—how is this reasonable.⁵⁴

This thought, in various ways, is the very warp and woof of Cabasilas' oration on the Nativity.⁵⁵ The Virgin is truly the first man and formed directly by God himself.⁵⁶ He makes a particular point that the Virgin conquered with only such help from God as other men have.⁵⁷ The wall of separation, which sin sets up between man and God, did not here exist; nor did the Lord do away with sin (in the Virgin) when he descended, for he did not yet have that by which sin is destroyed, namely *blood* and *passion*.⁵⁸

"Before that day came when God, bending the heavens, should come down, she contributed to the common salvation in this way: with her very coming to be she constructed a dwelling for him that is able to save and made a fine house for God. . . . And the king had nothing to reprehend in the palace."⁵⁹ This statement says clearly three things: the Virgin 1) from the first moment of her existence, 2) without the shadow of anything reprehensible, 3) cooperated

⁵⁴ Cabasilas *In Nat.* 14—480¹⁹-481⁷.

⁵⁵ See especially *In Nat.* 5-7, 16.

⁵⁶ *In Nat.* 4—469³⁶⁻⁴³; cf. *In Dorm.* 6—500³⁶-501⁹.

⁵⁷ *In Nat.* 7—474⁸⁻¹⁴ and 8, particularly 475¹⁰⁻¹³. Jugie, in his introduction (462, note 2) and in his book on the Immaculate Conception (249¹) takes note of this and understands the help given as including such as was given to Adam. Cabasilas' position is extreme, perhaps, but consonant with his constant intent to emphasize the Virgin's complete realization of the divine *skopos* for human nature. One should note also his repeated reference to the Virgin's body as spiritual (*In Nat.* 4—469⁵; *In Annunc.* 2—486²; *In Dorm.* 10—506³¹, 12—509¹⁰). In *In Dorm.* 10 the phrase is explained by reference to 1 Cor 15,44 and by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, so that the bounds of nature are transcended.

⁵⁸ *In Nat.* 10—475³⁶-476¹¹.

⁵⁹ *In Annunc.* 3—487⁴⁻¹⁰. The term here is *hama to phunai*, similar to a phrase frequent in Maximus (*hama to einai* or *genesthai*) referring to the simultaneity of a condition or act with the very coming to be of a thing (see *Ad Thal.* 61—*P. G.* 90, 628A; *Ambiguum* 42—*P. G.* 91, 1340A5, 1341B14).

with God for the salvation of the world. It implies further that Mary had the use of reason from the first moment of her existence.⁶⁰

Cabasilas is aware of diverse interpretations of tradition concerning the Virgin. "If some of the sacred doctors say that the Virgin was prepurified by the Spirit, indeed one must think that they wanted to speak of purification as an augment of graces; these men speak in this way of angels being purified in whom there is nothing evil."⁶¹ Was he aware of the difference that his insistence on the Virgin as the *new man* placed between himself and Palamas?

In one passage Cabasilas brings together the notion so dear to him of Mary-new man and the divine Motherhood. God, then, in creating willed that there be one that perfectly fulfilled his commandments and was without sin. For he had placed such power in man. And when he had conquered, God was to confirm him in the good.⁶² Both these happened to nature through the Virgin alone. The first, through what she herself did; the second in that she became mother.⁶³ In fact, the whole of Cabasilas' consideration of the Virgin is so intimately tied up with her role as Theotokos and with her conformity to her son, either by anticipation or afterwards, that her perfect observation of the commandments is not ultimately, so it seems, conceived apart from her Son. For fundamentally all this was directed that she might make God our brother who would work our salvation.⁶⁴ There is further a group of passages where texts expressly said of our Lord are wittingly applied to the Virgin. All the gifts which Adam had or would have had were brought together in the Virgin alone, "who also justified all men, as St. Paul says of the Savior."⁶⁵ The Virgin entered the holy of holies before Jesus. The reference is to the Virgin's presentation and living in the temple at the age of three; but the supposed fact is taken to have a spiritual

⁶⁰ Jugie has remarked this in connection with other texts (*P.O.* XIX. 460 note 1). See also above note 47.

⁶¹ In *Nat.* 10—477¹⁻⁵. See above note 42.

⁶² This happened to the Virgin before her death. She also enjoyed here below the life of the blessed. In *Dorm.* 10—506^{28ff.} Jugie, *op. cit.*, 256. Cf. the end of note 57.

⁶³ In *Nat.* 15—481⁸⁻²⁵.

⁶⁴ In *Dorm.* 6—501^{10ff.}

⁶⁵ In *Dorm.* 6—501⁷.

value. In the same vein, the multiform wisdom of God, which he takes to be the Incarnate Word, and which in St. Paul's text is manifested through the Church, is for Cabasilas manifested through the Virgin.⁶⁶

For it was necessary that she share with her Son in all things that providence (works) for us. As she gave him part in her flesh and blood, so she received in turn of his graces and likewise all griefs and pain. Bound on the cross, he received the spear in his side, while the sword pierced her heart, as the divine Simeon relates. . . . So she first, with the death of the Savior, became of like form (*summorphos* Rom 8, 29) with the like; and therefore before all partook of the resurrection. For when the Son had loosed the tyranny of hell and had risen, she was favored with sight and conversation and accompanied him, as much as might be, when he went away to heaven. And when he was gone, she stood in his stead for the apostles, surrounding the other companions of the Savior with benefits, by which she did well by our common nature, and filled up the lack of Christ (Col 1, 24) more rightly than any other. To whom but to the Mother are such things due.⁶⁷

The text is rich and very suggestive, especially for the relations of the Virgin-Mother with the Church, though this *filling up of the lack of Christ* is meant only for the time before her own assumption.

However that may be, all centers on her being the mother of the Savior.

O salvation of men and light of the world and way to the Savior, and door and life and all the other things the Savior was rightly called for my salvation. For he is the cause, thou the co-cause of my sanctification and of all the things that I enjoy from the Savior through thee and thine alone. Thine is the blood which washes away the sins of the world; thy body is the member in which I am sanctified, in which (is) the New Covenant, in which is all hope of salvation. Thy pity (*splagchnon*) the kingdom of God.⁶⁸

These samplings of Cabasilas' Marian doctrine that I have laid before you show at once a community with and a diversity from his

⁶⁶ In Dorm. 3 and 9—498²⁰, 505^{25ff}.

⁶⁷ In Dorm. 12—508^{19ff}.; cf. the text of Palamas (note 34).

⁶⁸ In Dorm. 13—509^{42ff}.

older contemporary Palamas. In particular his express doctrine on the absolute initial sanctity of the Virgin-Mother makes manifest that there is room within that tradition itself for a doctrine which some modern authors say is alien to Orthodoxy. Nor would there be grounds, as in the case of Scholarios, for affirming that the doctrine was due to his knowledge of Latin theology. Yet so long as such sanctity is not put in relation with Christ's *universal* redemption, as long as sinlessness remains undistinguished, and so, in the line of the Maximian tradition, identified with a seedless birth, the problem posed by the complete initial sanctity of the Virgin is not solved.

3) *The Attitude of Some Modern Orthodox Theologians*

Before undertaking to report briefly on some modern Orthodox theologians, an historical reminder is in place. Within a hundred years of Palamas' death Constantinople fell to the Turks. For nearly 400 years there was no possibility of promoting theological activity nor the publication of sources. Theology in Russia has its own history, an account of which Prof. G. Florovsky proposes to publish soon. Theological writing, whether Russian or Greek, in the past hundred years has been variously influenced by western currents of thought. Since the upheavals of the first World War there has been quite a revival of Palamite theology, sometimes considered as distinctly proper to Orthodoxy. This gives a present day relevance to the considerations on Palamas and Cabasilas.

Chrestos Androutsos (d. 1935), in his *Symbolike*,⁶⁹ treats of the Immaculate Conception in a note to the chapter on original sin. Original sin, he notes, is necessarily composed of two elements: the loss of original justice and the inner corruption of man's spiritual nature. These are bound together, for original justice is not an added gift.⁷⁰ Of the Immaculate Conception he says: "Since original

⁶⁹ Chr. Androutsos, *Symbolike ex epipseos Orthodoxou*, 2d. ed., Athens 1930. The book is composed of two parts: Part I on the genuine symbolic books; Part II on the dogmatic differences of the Churches. The following points are taken up: the Church, Revelation, the Trinity, the Primitive State of Man, Original Sin, Redemption, Means of Grace, Worship. In each chapter there are three divisions: the position of the Orthodox, of the Western Church, of the Protestants.

⁷⁰ Androutsos, *op. cit.*, 180f.

sin is transferred physically through generation, it clearly follows that the Lord alone, as being born supernaturally from the Virgin Mary, is removed from the original stain. This all the Eastern Churches unanimously confess, and particularly Critopoulos (d. 1639) expressly condemns the Immaculate Conception . . .⁷¹ Terms such as spotless, stainless, immaculate, pure, are to be referred not to original sin, but to the lack of personal sins. And in this regard Critopoulos affirms that the Virgin is sinless, receiving this gift in view of her role. The Symbolic books to which Androutsos refers are not so explicit as he would suggest.⁷²

Vladimir Lossky (d. 1958) is known for his essay on *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*.⁷³ In the chapter on the *Economy of the Son* he speaks of the Mother of God; much the same matter was used in 1948 in a paper read at a meeting of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, but more developed and more nuanced.⁷⁴ Apparently the plan for the meeting called for papers on the scriptural, the dogmatic and the devotional aspects of belief concerning the Blessed Virgin. The term *Theotokos* is first of all Christological; and there are those who accept the Christological doctrine of the Incarnate Word of God and reject any particular reverence for his Mother. So the fundamental dogmatic datum must be taken in the light of the Church's devotion. Similarly Scripture would yield little were it not considered in the light of the Church's devotion, and by that he means tradition. The challenge passages (as Lk 11, 27, 28) are considered. He indicates that in full context—that is of Scripture and tradition, wherein the notion of mere physical motherhood is left far behind, these texts contribute to the Church's "assurance with which she exalts the

⁷¹ Androutsos, *op. cit.*, 201. M. Candal (*Enciclopedia cattolica s.v.* "Metrofane Critopoulos") says that he was the first of the Orthodox to deny the Immaculate Conception—art. 17 of his *Confession*.

⁷² For the *Confession* of Peter Moghila, see Jugie, *op. cit.*, 403f. A matter of fact affirmation of the sinlessness, even unique, of our Lord is not necessarily an exclusion of the Immaculate Conception. So much the state of affairs in Palamas and Cabasilas has shown.

⁷³ London 1957; the original French edition, Paris 1944.

⁷⁴ *The Mother of God*, edited by E. L. Mascall, Westminster, 1949. Lossky's contribution, *Panagia*, 24-36.

Mother of God, ascribing to her an unlimited glory (p. 26).” He then institutes a comparison, a parallel between the Mother of God and the Church: Mary, retaining and pondering the words spoken to her, the Church, complement of Christ’s humanity to whom is committed the fulness of revealed truth.

Those sayings of Christ, which seem harsh to his Mother, are sayings which exalt the quality which she has in common with the sons of the Church. But while they, as guardians of tradition, can only become more or less conscious of the truth and make it fruitful in them, the Mother of God, by virtue of the unique relationship between her and God, whom she can call her son, can alone rise here below to a complete consciousness of all that the Holy Spirit says to the Church, reaching this plenitude in her own person. But this complete consciousness of God, this acquisition of the fulness of grace appropriate to the age to come, could only happen to a deified being.⁷⁵

Fulness of grace in her person, appropriate to the age to come—what is involved in this statement? Lossky’s answer intends to show the “special character of the Orthodox Church’s devotion to the Sovereign Queen of Heaven.”

If I may break in on my summary analysis with a comment of my own. This fulness of grace of which Lossky speaks should not be reckoned in the light of Lk 1, 28—*gratia plena* in the Vulgate (and similarly in the Syriac), but rather in the sense of a Pauline *pleroma*, more particularly of the “mystery hidden from all ages in God” (Eph 3, 9—Cabasilas has used Eph 3, 10 of the Virgin). The acquisition of such grace belongs to the consummation, though the Virgin has it now, before the consummation. The present possession, therefore, of such grace implies the Assumption; but to this the Virgin approached by degrees.

But to return to the tenor of Lossky’s remarks. “Incontestably she who was chosen to be the Mother of God was at the summit of Old Testament holiness.” The transition is made to the new in the person of the Mother of God, showing us how the new covenant is

⁷⁵ *Art. cit.*, 28. The reference to “sons of the Church, guardians of tradition” does not directly consider the Twelve. That would be a special question. We have seen, however, above what both Palamas and Cabasilas say of the role of the Virgin in the Church before the Ascension (cf. Acts 1, 14).

the fulfilment of the Old. It is here that two strong currents of Marian thought, that we have met in Palamas and Cabasilas, come together. First, the gradual providential preparation for the Incarnation of the Son of God, attaining its term in the Blessed Virgin, finds there a term that is in no essential way discontinuous from its antecedents. Second, Mary, in the exercise of her liberty, in her *Fiat*, speaks for fallen humanity. In such a context Lossky says:

The Roman Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception, as it is unfortunately formulated, seems to break up this uninterrupted succession of instances of Old Testament holiness, which reaches its term at the moment of the Annunciation, when the Holy Spirit came down upon the Virgin to make her fit to receive the Word in her womb. The Orthodox Church does not admit the idea that the Holy Virgin was thus exempted from the lot of fallen humanity, the idea of a privilege making her into a being ransomed before the redemptive work, by virtue of the future merits of her Son. It is not in virtue of a privilege received at the moment of her conception by her parents that we venerate the Mother of God more than any other created being. She was holy and pure from her mother's womb, but not with a sanctity which places her outside the rest of humanity-before-Christ. . . . If in the person of the Mother of God we see the highest peak of Old Testament holiness, her own holiness is not limited thereby, for she also surpassed just as much the highest peaks of the holiness of the New Covenant, and realized the greatest sanctity which the Church can attain (pp. 30, 31).

What is fundamentally at work here is not, I think, a rejection of the Immaculate Conception,⁷⁶ but a notion of the increment of the grace in the Virgin, parallel with the unfolding of the work of salvation. Thus, from the outset there was in her complete freedom from any personal sin.⁷⁷ Then, the Annunciation brought an increase

⁷⁶ Here I would put a question to theologians who are exercised in the exposition of the Immaculate Conception. The definition is negatively expressed; it is a preservation from the stain of original sin, and, therefore, a restoration to God's friendship. But what difference is there between this, negatively expressed as it is, and that participation of the divine nature (2 Peter 1, 4) which the Lord effected by the whole of his work (birth to sending of the Spirit)? The Lord died for our sins and rose for our justification (Rom 4, 25).

⁷⁷ "Sin never could become actual in her person; the sinful heritage of the fall had no mastery over her right will" (*art. cit.*, 31).

of grace, so also the Crucifixion, and above all Pentecost, the fullness of the effusion of the Spirit, the fullness of the giving of the mystery hidden from ages in God.

What degree of holiness, able to be realized here below, could possibly correspond to the unique relationship of the Mother of God to her Son, when as head of the Church he dwells in heavenly places? Only the entire and total holiness of the Church, the complement of the glorified humanity of Christ, containing the plenitude of deifying grace, communicated ceaselessly since Pentecost to the Church by the Holy Spirit. The members of the Church can enter into a family relationship with Christ; they can be his 'mother, brothers, and sisters,' in the measure of the accomplishment of their vocations. But only the Mother of God, through whom the Word was made flesh, will be able to receive the plenitude of grace and to attain an unlimited glory, by realizing in her person all the holiness of which the Church is capable.⁷⁸

I need not add that upon this the Assumption of the Virgin follows as an integral part of the mystery concerning her. But Lossky prefers to say not much about it. Christ is preached from the rooftops; the mystery of his Mother is for those within the Church. "Let us therefore keep silence, and let us not try to dogmatize about the supreme glory of the Mother of God."⁷⁹

Lossky's doctrine on the Mother of God is clearly in the Palamite tradition; equally clearly it is indebted to Scripture and to modern Scripture study.

George Florovsky, currently teaching at the Harvard Divinity School, contributed to the same meeting of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius a paper entitled *The Ever-Virgin Mother of God*. It is professedly an occasional paper, concerned to suggest an approach to Mariology and to affirm that it belongs to the very body of Christian doctrine.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ *Art. cit.*, 34. Note this setting side by side the mystery of the Church and of the Virgin; it forms the backbone of Journet's *Esquisse*. See, for example, his conclusion (148f.).

⁷⁹ *Art. cit.*, 35. This statement foreshadows Lossky's attitude to the definition of 1950. See *Oekumenische Einheit* 2 (1951), 74f.

⁸⁰ Florovsky is a man of broad patristic learning; he, however, no less than Lossky, does accept the capital Palamite distinction of essence and uncreated energies in God. See his "The Idea of Creation in Christian Philos-

The place of Mariology in the body of Christian doctrine he expresses in this wise.

To ignore the Mother means to misinterpret the Son. On the other hand the person of the Blessed Virgin can be properly understood and rightly described only in a Christological setting and context. Mariology is to be but a chapter in the treatise on the Incarnation, never to be extended into an independent 'treatise.' Not . . . optional or occasional. The Mystery of the Incarnation includes the Mother of the Incarnate. . . . Again there must be a Mariological chapter in the treatise on the Church. But the doctrine of the Church itself is but an 'extended Christology,' the doctrine of the *total Christ, totus Christus, caput et corpus* (p. 52).

Or again: "The Church does not dogmatize much about these mysteries of her own existence. For the mystery of Mary is precisely the mystery of the Church. *Mater Ecclesia* and *Virgo Mater*, both are birthgivers of the New Life. And both are *orantes*."⁸¹

Florovsky has set out more in detail the matters that pertain to the initial sanctity of the Blessed Virgin. It will be enough to indicate what his position is. The Virgin was eternally elected or predestined to serve in the mystery of the Incarnation. She was at once a *representative* of the human race, and *set apart*. There is here implied an antinomy. She was redeemed; yet stood in an entirely unique relation to the Redeemer, whom she alone can call son. So the redemption of this Mother was in a peculiar and personal manner, even anticipated in the Incarnation itself (p. 55).

Mary was prepared for her office. Her *fiat* was freedom of obedience, not of initiative—a true freedom of humility, of cooperation (p. 58). So only is the grace of God received.

Can we properly define the nature and the character of this preparation? We are facing here the crucial antinomy. . . . The Blessed Virgin was *representative* of the race, i.e., of the *fallen* human race. . . . But she was also the *second* Eve. . . . She was set apart by the eternal counsel of God, but this *setting apart* was not to destroy her essential solidarity with the rest of mankind. Can we solve this antinomical mystery in any logical

ophy," *Eastern Churches Quarterly*, 8 (1949), supplement "Nature and Grace" 53-77. This is a translation of a study in Russian, published in Paris in 1928.

⁸¹ *Art. cit.*, 63; cf. note 78.

scheme? The Roman Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary is a noble attempt to suggest such a solution. But this solution is valid only in the context of a particular and highly inadequate doctrine of original sin⁸² and does not hold outside this particular setting. Strictly speaking this *dogma* is an unnecessary complication, and an unfortunate terminology only obscures the indisputable truth of the Catholic belief. The *privileges* of the divine Motherhood do not depend upon a *freedom from original sin*. The fulness of grace was truly bestowed upon the Blessed Virgin and her personal purity was preserved by the perpetual assistance of the Spirit.⁸³ But this was not an abolition of sin. The sin was destroyed only on the tree of the Cross,⁸⁴ and no *exemption* was possible, since it was simply the common and general condition of the whole of human existence. It was not destroyed even by the Incarnation itself, although the Incarnation was the true inauguration of the New Creation. The Incarnation was but the basis and the starting-point of the redemptive work of our Lord. And the *Second Man* himself enters into his full glory through the gate of death.

Redemption is a complex act yet supremely integrated in God's eternal counsel. In its temporal realization the consummation is prefigured, anticipated in the earlier parts; but there is still a real progress in the history of the redemption. The grace Mary had as Mother of the Son of God was not the *complete* grace of the redemption, not yet accomplished. Yet her personal purity was possible. "The true theological issue is that of the divine election. The Mother and the Child are inseparably linked in the unique decree of the Incarnation. As an event, the Incarnation is just the *turning-*

⁸² In what sense this inadequacy is intended has been indicated above—it is the question of mortality and corruption.

⁸³ Note this manner of expression, indicating the divine action (with the human cooperation of course) rather than the state obtained.

⁸⁴ Sin was destroyed only on the tree of the Cross (cf. Col 2, 14-15). But it is not, therefore, necessary to suppose that the Immaculate Conception is an abolition of sin. And if sin is "simply the common and general condition of the whole of human existence," how was our Lord without sin, as surely he was, when he shared the common and general condition of human existence, until he had been glorified? He was tempted or tried as we, yet without sin (Hebr 4, 15). If sin and mortality are inseparable, then if there is a mortal body there is sin. If they may be in some way distinguished, then not only the Lord in the likeness of our sinful flesh (Rom 8, 3) but also the Virgin may be exempted, derivatively not fontally, from sin. The point of this note is to show the extent and the difficulty of the problems raised.

point of history—and the turning-point is inevitably antinomical: it belongs at once to the Old and to the New. The rest is silence.”⁸⁵

I think what I have brought forward from these two authors is sufficient to make clear to us somewhat of the scope and extent of the differences and harmonies that exist between Catholic Mariology and that of some representatives of Orthodox theology. There are tracts of tradition in common, though unequally known to one side and the other;⁸⁶ yet even in these common tracts there are not only misunderstandings, but differences in conceiving all-pervasive elements of revelation. In the matter that has occupied us, this has been above all the nature of original sin and the fall, with which is connected a difference in the habitual manner of looking upon human nature. Together with the foregoing there is also difference in theological training and method.⁸⁷ The problems involved are vast; it is enough if I have been able in some particular to illustrate their nature.

POLYCARP SHERWOOD, O.S.B.
Saint Meinrad Archabbey
Saint Meinrad, Indiana

⁸⁵ *Art. cit.*, 59f. This resting in antinomy is characteristic of Palamite theology. What is involved here is a question of theological method. No one denies that antinomies there are. Journet could not have written his *Sketch of the Development of Marian Dogma* were that not so. The difference is that Palamas would accept antinomies as normative, a theologian like Journet as a stimulus to the work necessary for development. See my comment on this in *Eastern Churches Quarterly* 12 (autumn 1958), 307 (in line 11, for *wherefore* read *whatever*).

⁸⁶ The Immaculate Conception and the Assumption are intimately connected (cf. *Munificentissimus Deus*, A.A.S. 42 [1950], 754); but the thing that joins them is precisely the mystery of Christ. May it not be that, under the impact of the definition of 1854, Catholic theologians and preachers have failed to treat adequately the gradually increasing completeness of our Lady's participation in that mystery. If this be so, we have a concrete instance of tradition being unequally known. See also notes 76 and 84.

⁸⁷ Here it should at least be noted that whereas Latin-using Christianity has received its Christianity historically from the Greek tradition and has at various times in its history been open to that tradition, Greek-using Christianity is historically in no way indebted to the Latin for the faith and has been minimally open to its influence. This massive fact has significance in theology and, far more so, in questions pertaining to Church organization and the primacy.