

## The Theology of the Person

Theological *personalism* regards a certain way of understanding God. For *personalist* theology (Some of the most representative authors for the *personalist theology* of 20<sup>th</sup> century are: Emile Mounier, Maurice Nedoncelle, Jacques Maritain, Nicolai Lossky, Christos Yannaras, Nikolai Afanasiev, Ioannis Zizioulas), God's ultimate identity resides **not in His Trinitarian nature but in being Person**. *God is Trinity* is just descriptive but is not an ultimate and ontological identity because God can't be just a relational substance; rather He is a Person(s) in which is found the very concrete identity of God. In the meantime, *personalist* theologians talk about the characteristic of the Person to incorporate and to be incorporated without the Person losing His identity. There is a perfect reciprocity between the Person who incorporates and the ones who are incorporated. This incorporation<sup>3</sup> of many persons in one person is the way of explaining the unity of the nature (so unity is defined in a Person not substance)<sup>4</sup>. This happens at all theological levels. For the Trinitarian theology, this is the fundament of the monotheistic aspect of Christianity.

We do confess actually in the Nicæan Creed that: "We believe in one God the Father" (Πιστεύω εἰς ἓνα Θεόν Πατέρα παντοκράτορα). In God the Father are incorporated the other 2 Persons ontologically equal to the Father maintaining their identity unchanged. For Christology, Christ becomes the icon of the Father and He incorporates all the human persons like the old Adam. For the theological personalism it is important to emphasize the role of the concept of *person* at all levels in God. The concept of *person* is the theological explanation for defining God's most ontological identity and, in the meantime, the same concept is used to explain the unity and the multiplicity of God. So, for the *personalist theologians*, the concept we mentioned is to be found at the base of all theological levels. This is important to keep in mind before trying to identify the personalist approach of the preparations and documents of the Holy and Great Council of Crete.

Modern Orthodox theology in the last century courageously developed a theology of the human person. It is to be considered that the use of the expression *human person* in the Holy and Great Council documents is a victory of the *personalist* theology. Our communion with God in his *Personhood* allows theological thinking to approach human personhood as sacramentally incorporated in Christ's Person. This theological system becomes a source for the human person's dignity and for human social rights. Human is no longer just an image of something much greater than him (which could actually be considered as referring to the past) but someone in a present and active incorporation in relation to Christ. If the unity of Trinity is ontologically founded on the Person of Father, the unity of the universal Church is founded not on common ideology or image but on and in a Person. The freedom and the dignity of the human person are an active reflection of the freedom and dignity of the Trinitarian Persons. This leads to the fact that ultimate communion between humans is in their personhood, according to the personalist theology. The One (Christ) who incorporates the many human persons gives them a strong unity and diversity at the same time. Being different remains important but can't affect ontologically the being's unity because, in the Church, it is shared as a common personhood by being ecclesiastically incorporated in the Person of Christ. From here flows the importance of the Person. The Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church finds the source for a theology of the personal freedom and dignity in the corporate Christ.