

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	2
1 Deification (gr. Θέωσις).....	6
1.1 Man's final end.....	6
1.2 Misunderstanding of eternal happiness.....	6
1.3 Deification in the Christianity.....	7
1.3.1 General understanding of eternal happiness in Christianity.....	7
1.3.2 Deification in the Scripture.....	8
1.3.3 Deification in the Tradition.....	9
1.3.4 Sacramental reality of deification.....	11
1.3.5 Moral dimension of deification.....	11
1.3.6 Deification as understood by Hesychasm.....	13
1.3.7 Controversy of Hesychasm and Scholasticism.....	14
2 Prayer.....	16
2.1 Relation between God and man.....	16
2.1.1 Relations in general.....	16
2.1.2 God - man relation.....	16
2.1.3 Man - God relation.....	17
2.2 Prayer in Christian's life.....	18
2.2.1 Prayer as the basis of Christian's spiritual life.....	18
2.2.2 Prayer as the mean of man's deification.....	19
2.3 Three methods of prayer by St. Simeon.....	20
2.3.1 Continuity of oldest monastic prayer's rules with St. Simeon's rules.....	21
2.3.2 The first method of prayer.....	22
2.3.3 The second method of prayer.....	23
2.3.4 The third method of prayer.....	23
2.4 The inner prayer.....	25
2.4.1 Making inner prayer unceasing.....	25
2.4.2 Chotky – a tool for frequent practicing prayer.....	25
2.4.3 Psychosomatic technique.....	26
2.5 Theology of Jesus prayer.....	29
3 Prayer of the heart in the Gospel of John.....	31
3.1 John 2:1-12 The wedding in Cana.....	32
3.1.1 Symbols.....	33
3.1.2 Interpretation.....	33
3.2 John 2:13-17 Jesus clears the temple.....	34
3.2.1 Symbols.....	35
3.2.2 Interpretation.....	35
3.3 John 4:5-30 Jesus and the Samaritan woman.....	36
3.3.1 Symbols.....	36
3.3.2 Interpretation.....	36
3.4 John 4:46-54 Jesus cures the son of an official.....	37
3.4.1 Symbols.....	38
3.4.2 Interpretation.....	38
CONCLUSION.....	40

INTRODUCTION

Common experience shows that man of today lacks the spiritual closeness to God which involves man's wholeness – his soul and body. He turns to false religions, or even to ideologies, to fill the emptiness in his life. These false religions offer the “newness of being”, the “new taste of life”, the “full contact with divinity”, but their “newness of being” destroys the individuality of man; their “new taste of life” provides only a taste without nourishment; and their “contact with divinity” is a contact with a complete emptiness. The Deserts Fathers and saints who were followers of Christ have found a cure for this emptiness, and they offer it to all men as the way of man's deification.

The tradition of Hesychasm, defined as “a *general name for the contemplative tradition of Eastern Orthodox Christianity but one with a number of specific meanings. ... that seeks not mystical phenomena or even ecstasy, but like the best of Western mysticism, divine love that inflames the human heart with love of God and neighbor and brings humanity to its fullness,*”¹ or as the spiritual tradition that “*espoused the idea that the method of spiritual ascending is an experiential vision of the energies of God by the whole person – both body and soul,*”² provides a special mean to reach the deification of man, even here during the earthly life. This mean is the prayer of the heart, the unceasing constant prayer. Dictionaries usually mention it as Jesus' prayer and describe it as, “*the prayer addressed to Jesus, linked to a special method of prayer involving physical techniques. ... The method involves controlled breathing, bowed head and concentration upon one's heart.*”³ To be more precise, and as we will see later, it is the short sentence said within one breath, repeatedly invoking the name of Jesus Christ. Depending on the tradition, it is either “*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner*”, or “*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.*”⁴

- 1 Richard P. McBriend et al., eds., *The HarperCollins encyclopedia of Catholicism* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1995), 613.
- 2 George C. Papademetriou, *Introduction to St. Gregory Palamas* (Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2004), 38.
- 3 Richard P. McBriend et al., eds., *The HarperCollins encyclopedia of Catholicism*, 706.
- 4 Theophan the Recluse, *The path to salvation*, trans. fr. Seraphim Rose (Platina USA : St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1996), 62.

The matter (words) of this prayer is usually known as the Jesus' prayer. During this prayer the whole body and soul of the one practicing it are involved in this spiritual movement in harmonized unity. It is an active way of being filled and changed by the Holy Spirit, “*by which we cry out, 'Abba Father!'*” (Rom 8:15).

Thus the goal of this thesis is to expound on the spirituality of “prayer of the heart” within the concept of man deification as understood in the Christianity. We will do this while providing the description of methods of this prayer and bringing parts of the Gospel of John as the mystical image of this prayer.

To see and understand the spirituality of prayer of the heart, the tradition of Hesychasm has to be expounded as to its doctrine about deification by participation in the divine light during the prayer. When encountering this topic the error of misunderstanding the deification itself may occur, and the error of misunderstanding the prayer as to its purpose and to its methods. The structure of this thesis follows the emphasis given on these points for their correct understanding, and is following: firstly, we will describe the problem of man deification. Rightly understanding our divinization, as the aim of prayer, can help us avoid misunderstanding prayer of the heart as some kind of yoga meditation, or pure psychosomatic exercise. The question of the divinization will be explored as it is described by the Holy Scripture itself, then how it is described by the Fathers and saints, and how the deification of man, concretely during the prayer, is seen by Hesychasm. It is important not to omit the sacramental means of man's deification, which is emphasized by Hesychasts. Within the hesychastic approach the controversy from 14th century between the Scholasticism, presented by bishop Barlaam, and Hesychasm, presented by St. Gregory Palamas will be shortly described.

To the second point, after exploring the meaning of deification, the prayer itself will be described, as to its importance and its purpose in Christian spiritual life and as a mean for

man's deification; then techniques/methods of prayer as taught by the eastern fathers who were concerned about purity of prayer.

The last part "The interpretation of the Gospel of John" will consist of the mystical interpretation of some part of the John's Gospel, based on personal contemplation founded on the application of the knowledge about unceasing prayer from previous chapters.

The literature sources in this discourse, along with Scripture itself, will follow the concrete part of the topic discussed. General theological topics, will be covered by the authors of the eastern tradition, which are concerned:

- with the Incarnation and man's deification in general, e.g. works of St. Irenaeus⁵; St. Athanasius⁶; St. Basil the Great⁷; St. John Chrysostom⁸; St. Cyril of Alexandria⁹; St. Maximos the Confessor¹⁰ who were the great teachers of the Incarnation and deification doctrine;
- with virtues of man, especially with charity and humility, e.g. works of St. John Climacus¹¹, whose book *The Ladder to Divine Ascend* is considered as the guideline for spiritual growth for Christian; St. Isaac the Syrian¹², the ascetic teacher;
- with prayer in general, e.g. St. John Climacus; St. Isaac the Syrian, who is also considered to be the a great teacher of prayer;
- with unceasing prayer itself, e.g. St. Simeon the New Theologian¹³, who is considered as the forerunner¹⁴ of Byzantine Hesychasm, and as the great teacher and master of unceasing prayer, and his writing about "Three Methods of Prayer" will take main

5 from 2nd century.

6 *297, +373.

7 *329, +379.

8 *349, +407.

9 *376, +44.

10 6th – 7th century.

11 *579, +649.

12 *613, +700.

13 *949, +1022.

14 Hilarion Alfeyev, *St. Symeon the New Theologian and orthodox tradition* (New York, USA : Oxford University press, 2005), 1, Introduction.

part in our analysis of prayer itself; St. Nikiphoros the Monk¹⁵, the follower of St. Simeon; St. Gregory of Sinai¹⁶; all of them provides useful teaching about unceasing prayer. Their texts are quoted in the book *Philokalia*, which is the collection of texts (written between 4th -15th centuries by the eastern fathers and gathered by Nicodemus the Hagiorite in 18th century) about spiritual life and growth, whereof some parts are especially dedicated to the unceasing prayer. Another important author is St. Gregory Palamas¹⁷, the defender of hesychasm.

Used secondary sources cover the topic of deification through prayer as understood by Hesychasm, and also provide some historical information about development of hesychasm. Special place as the inspiration to write this thesis has the book *The way of a Pilgrim* from anonymous monk of the mount Athos monastery. The book was written in 19th century and provides the introduction to the unceasing prayer by very narrative way. However it does not provide sufficient information, and in some way can be even dangerous, because it does not give necessary background for understanding prayer of the heart.

Reading the texts of the Scripture and meditating upon it with the specific pre-understanding, gives the new way for Scripture's interpretation, and was used for choosing and quoting verses from Bible. This pre-understanding means, to use the specific light to read the texts, e.g. the light of deification – man becoming God; light of prayer - man's communicating with God, or light of unification of prayer with God who is acting in us, thus the already acquired understanding of the topic is used as the pattern for Gospel interpretation.

15 From 13th century.

16 From 13th – 14th century.

17 *1296, +1359.

1 Deification (gr. Θεώσις)

1.1 Man's final end

There has never been a man who has not wanted to be perfectly happy. Man will never be fully satisfied unless he achieves perfect happiness which is the final end. The desire to be happy, or to reach a perfect good is a part of human nature as it is the object of man's will. Perfection is the necessary condition for this desired good.¹⁸ Every religion tries to give the answer where the eternal happiness is and how to obtain it, and each religion is based on the expectation of the hope of a future life. They, the religions, proclaim that the perfect good can only be a part of man's eternal life which is to come after his earthly life. Man experiences suffering during his present life, and religion offers the eternal happiness as a place without suffering, but their teaching about the realization of this happiness and peace differs depending on the understanding of the divinity and humanity. Common to all religions is that to reach man's eternal happiness he has to act during his earthly life in some way and according to various laws or commands, e.g. Mosaic law in Judaism, Sharia law in Islam, five precepts in Buddhism, Law of charity in Christianity.

1.2 Misunderstanding of eternal happiness

Many religions come with insufficient understanding of man's last end, which consists in removing his desire for the good, or in man's depersonalization, or in annihilation, or in his consumption by an endless universe¹⁹, or is based on man's sensual bodily pleasure²⁰. On the one hand, the previously mentioned misunderstandings of man's happiness contradict themselves, since the subject of eternal happiness and his desire for good must continue to

18 Saint Augustin of Hippo, "De beata vita", in *The Fathers of the Church, Saint Augustine*, trans. Ludwig Schopp (New York: Cima publishing Co.,INC, 2008), 55 – 85.

19 "Man, than no longer man, will transcend Nature, and impersonally, yet consciously, help to fulfill the Law of the higher Evolution, of which Nirvana is but the beginning." *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines*, ed. W.Y.Evans-Wentz (London: Oxford university press, 2000), 13.

20 "Serving [the believers] will be immortal youths with jeweled and crystal cups filled with the purest wine which will neither give them headache nor hangover, with fruits and meats of their desire. They will be fair ones with lovely intense eyes like guarded pearls; A reward for the good deeds of their past life." *The Holy Qur'an*, trans. Abdulah Yusuf Ali (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 2000), 621, 56:17-24.

exist after death, because if happiness has to be communicated, it needs its proper object with capacity to receive it. If man does not exist, or if his desires for the perfect good do not exist anymore, there is no meaning for happiness, and man is deceived by his natural desire for the supernatural good. On the other hand by proclaiming that the physical pleasure and bodily desires must be fulfilled in themselves additionally along with the spiritual enjoyment of higher reason.

Thus we see that the idea of the eternal rest is present throughout all ages and cultures, and religions try to lead man to their understanding of the eternal happiness, which is not always the right understanding. By the Incarnation of the Son of God, by His coming to the world, this problem was enlightened by the new light and the new way was open.

1.3 Deification in the Christianity

1.3.1 General understanding of eternal happiness in Christianity

Contrary to the previously mentioned misunderstandings is the doctrine about man's deification that is taught and emphasized by the true followers of Christ. The stress is on the preservation of man integrity and personality, and only within this integrity man is united with the perfect good, which is God Himself. The doctrine of deification of man is a central point of the theology, asceticism, and mysticism in Christian faith, especially in eastern spiritual tradition²¹, where the term “deification” is used more frequently. Western (Latin) tradition based on scholastic talks more about the beatific vision²². In fact it is the same idea and understanding, just a different point of view is emphasized. In both traditions the idea of deification is based on the Scripture and on the Tradition, which will be now shortly expounded.

21 Alfeyev, *St. Symeon the New Theologian*, 255.

22 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, vol. 2, 5 vols. (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981), 2:627-628, I-II.q3.a8.

1.3.2 Deification in the Scripture

The Holy Scripture points to the mystery of deification either directly, or by more descriptive way showing the essence of it and how is to be understood. Firstly we can see that Jesus himself explicitly named men as gods when quoting Ps 82:6, "*Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'?*" (John 10:34). This divinization of men, as the Scripture itself explains, happens by the way of adoption – men becoming the adopted sons of God the Father through his only begotten Son. We are the children of God – we are gods: "*But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God*" (John 1:12), "*Beloved, we are God's children now*" (1 John 3:2), "*For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren.*" (Rom 8:29), "*for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.*" (Gal 3:26), "*to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.*" (Gal 4:6). The Scripture also provides further explanation of deification as a participation in the Divine Nature that is possible to happen because man was created in the image of God, "*that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature.*" (2 Peter 1:4), "*and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*" (Col 3:10). Man's resemblance/likeness with the Divine is emphasized, "*Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.*" (1 Cor 15:49), "*And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*" (2 Cor 3:18), "*to be conformed to the image of his Son*" (Rom 8:29). The identification of man with a temple points not only to a personal dimension of man divinization, but also to the Ecclesiastical dimension of deification, whereby the unity of all men with the Christ as the source of unity is described, "*Do you not know that you are God's*

temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Cor 3:16), "For we are the temple of the living God" (2Cor 6:16); or with one body, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? ... But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own" (1 Cor 6:14-19), "I am the vine, you are the branches. ... He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:1-5). Thus the Scripture itself provides description of the highest goal of man's existence.

1.3.3 Deification in the Tradition

The Tradition, in the teaching of the Church Fathers, sees man's deification as a direct consequence of God becoming man and as the result of Christ's works of redemption. This approach aroused from the need to fight against Christological heresies. Therefore the greatest defenders of the true christian's faith, e.g. St. Irenaeus²³, St. Athanasius, St. Basil the Great, St. Cyril of Alexandria wrote also about man deification. St. Irenaeus, who defended the true humanity of Christ, writes, *"our Lord Jesus Christ, who did, through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself,"*²⁴ by which he points that Christ humanity had purpose of man's deification. St. Athanasius also wrote about this wonderful exchange saying *"He (Christ), indeed, assumed humanity that we might become God, ... that we might perceive the Mind of the unseen body, ... that we might inherit immortality. ... He became man so we can become God"*²⁵, *"for there can be no adoption apart from the True Son, since He Himself tells us, 'No one knows who the Father is, except the Son' (Lk 10:22)... . Since then all they are called sons and gods [by grace], have received adoption and divinization through the Word"*²⁶. And St.

23 St. Irenaeus was the student of St. Polycarp, who was the direct student of John the Apostle.

24 St. Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson (Massachusetts: Hendricksons Publishers, 1994), 526, Book V, Preface.

25 St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, trans. Jon L. Berquist (Atlanta: Chalice Press, 1999), 22, Chap. 8, §54.

26 St. Athanasius, "I Contra arianos," in Mersch Emile, *The Whole Christ*, trans. Kelly J.R. (London: Dennis

Athanasius continues proclaiming that this deification does not happen by changing the human nature that has to remain preserved, “*We are not sons [of God] by nature, but the Son who is within us [is such by nature]; nor is God our Father by nature, but He is the Father of the Word who is in us, in whom and by whom we cry 'Abba, Father' (Rom 8:15)*”²⁷. His follower, St. Cyril of Alexandria, by protecting the true unconfused divinity and humanity of Christ, enlightened also the way of man's deification “*Two natures come together with one another, without confusion or change.*”²⁸ That means that also man's deification is realized by man's participation in the divinity, not by confusion or change. It begins at baptism and takes its life from the sacrament of Eucharist. And this change is the highest goal of all as St. Basil pointed “*... and, highest of all, the being made God.*”²⁹.

All of these quotes and thoughts from the Fathers shows the continuity and consistency of the true teaching about deification within the Tradition. Even though each of these quotes and authors tries to emphasize another aspect of man deification, they are complementary to each other, and they enriched the fundamental idea of man becoming god. Their thoughts together with the Scripture make the foundation for our next exploration of hesychastic ideas of deification through the prayer, that can be in no way different from above presented doctrine.

But before the description of the hesychastic doctrine about deification, we will explain in short what was meant, when we said above, that man's deification is not about men becoming gods by nature, but by man's participation in the divinity as the apostle Peter said, “*become partakers of the divine nature.*” (2 Pt 1:4).

Dobson LTD, 1938), 93.

27 St. Athanasius, “I Contra arianos,” in Mersch Emile, *The Whole Christ*, 273.

28 Cyril of Alexandria, “1st letter of Cyril of Alexandria to Succensus”, in Fr John A. McGuckin’s, *St. Cyril of Alexandria. The Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts*, (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 355.

29 St. Basil the Great, “On the Spirit,” in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff, Henry Wace (Massachusetts: Hendricksons Publishers, 1995), 16, §9.

1.3.4 Sacramental reality of deification

Man's deification is realized especially through the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist. In Baptism we are born anew for the new life, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God”* (John 3:3), *“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”* (Rom 6:4). Baptism is required for our incorporation into Christ³⁰, but the Eucharist contains Christ himself substantially, and offers us the divine union itself, *“He (Christ) wishes that we become His body, not through charity alone, but that we be actually 'mingled' with His own flesh.”*³¹

Thus Christ himself established the necessary and required instruments for man, to help him on a way towards his salvation. The sacrament of Baptism opens the journey and the sacrament of Eucharist nourishes the wayfarer on his journey with the divine life. This can not be omitted in one spiritual growth.

To make the notion of deification more completed also from the side of man, the moral dimension of resemblance with God has to be mentioned. It has its foundation in the command that Christ gave to us, *“Be perfect as your heavenly father is,”* (Matt 5:48), and it means to strive for a perfection of virtues of charity and humility.

1.3.5 Moral dimension of deification

The required resemblance with God is possible only within already mentioned sacramental dimension, and is to be exercised through charity and humility, as St. John Climacus said, *“God is love. (1 John 4:16). ... Love, by its nature, is a resemblance to God, insofar as this is humanly possible.”*³² Man can not be God if he does not resemble God in his essence, which is love. Now not only love/charity makes us united to God, *since “he that*

30 *Code of Canon Law Latin-English edition* (Washington: Canon Law Society of America, 1983), 68, Can.204 §1.

31 St. John Chrisostom, “Mt. Hom. 50. P.G., Vol. 58, 509,” in Mersch Emile, *The Whole Christ*, trans. Kelly J.R. (London: Dennis Dobson LTD, 1938), 326.

32 John Climacus, *The ladder of divine ascent*, trans. Colm Luibheid (Mahwah, USA: Paulist Press, 1982), 286, Step 30.

abides in charity abides in God, and God in him" (1 Jn 4:16), but also humility, as is emphasized by St. Isaac the Syrian:

*"Humility is the raiment of the Godhead. The Word who became human clothed himself in it, . . . Everyone who has been clothed with humility has truly been made like unto Him [Christ]."*³³

St. Climacus pointed to the necessary connection between these two virtues – one is the perfection (charity), another one is the disposition for perfection (humility), *"Love and humility make a holy team. The one exalts. The other supports those who have been exalted and never falls."*³⁴ These two virtues have special importance also in prayer itself.

But still, one should always remember, especially when talking about human actions and virtues, that it is the grace of God that enables us and make us participants in His Divinity, as St. Maximos the Confessor emphasized:

*"The saints become that which can never belong to the power of nature alone, since nature possesses no faculty capable of perceiving what surpasses it. Nothing in theosis is the product of human nature, for nature cannot comprehend God. Divine grace alone possesses of itself the faculty of communicating deification to being in a manner analogous to them; then nature shines forth with a supernatural light and is transported above its own limits by a superabundance of glory. . . . In theosis, man (the image of God) becomes likened to God, he rejoices in all the plenitude that does not belong to him by nature, because the grace of the Spirit triumphs within him, and because God acts in him."*³⁵

Thus, we can see in the teaching of the Church many dimensions of understanding of man divinization. Once these aspects were expounded, we can examine the hesychastic doctrine about man's deification, which in 14th century brought a controversy between western Scholastics and eastern defenders of Hesychasm.

1.3.6 Deification as understood by Hesychasm

In the context of previously mentioned ways of man's deification we can now explore the specific hesychastic approach about it. Hesychasm espoused the idea that the method of

33 Hilarion Alfejev, *The Spiritual World of Isaac the Syrian* (Kalamazoo Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 2000), 112.

34 John Climacus, *The ladder of divine ascent*, 224, Step 25.

35 St. Maximos the Confessor, "Letter 22," in John Meyendorff, *St. Gregory Palamas and Orthodox spirituality*, (New York: St. Vladimir's seminary press, 1974), 44.

spiritual ascending is an experiential vision of the energies of God by the whole person – both body and soul. This is the crux of the entire basis of the Christian Orthodox perception of participation in living Grace as manifested by the hesychastic movement in 14th century. Hesychasm insists on the theosis-glorification that begins even here in this life, and is made through the prayer of the heart.³⁶ It does not mean that we become God, but we are filled with God's energies such as love and grace, and we participate in these divine uncreated energies.³⁷ A mystic attains during the prayer the vision of the divine light and the glory of God, not of the essence of God, but of His presence and activity, His “energies”.³⁸

The very anthropological and theological structure in hesychastic spirituality was given by St. Gregory Palamas, based on 1Cor6:19 “*your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you*”, as we already mentioned above³⁹. The Holy Spirit is now within our own bodies, that are sanctified by the sacraments and engrafted by the Eucharist into the Body of Christ. God is no longer exterior to us. The Apostles had only an exterior vision of the light when they saw it on the Mount Tabor, because they were not yet participants of the Divine life through the Eucharist which was not yet established, and Christ had not yet died and risen from the dead. But today, Christians, are in living reality members of His Body, the Church, as St. Palamas taught. We see here the strong emphasis of Hesychasm on the ecclesiological and sacramental dimension of our deification. The new active life in Christ for man's whole being is to be found with the grace of Baptism and the Eucharist, and exercised in the interior of one's own being by the prayer of the heart.⁴⁰

Up to now we can see that Hesychasm is in accord with previously described understanding of deification, as seen by the Holy Scripture and Tradition, and teaching about

36 George C. Papademetriou, *Introduction to St. Gregory Palamas*, 38.

37 *Ibid.*, 43.

38 *Ibid.*, 31.

39 Section 1.3.2 Deification in the Scripture and Tradition.

40 John Meyendorff, *St. Gregory Palamas and orthodox spirituality*, trans. Adele Fiske (St. Vladimir's seminary press, 1974), 113-114.

participation, not about the change of essence. The obscurity comes with the description of these energies that a man (a mystic) is participant of. This problem arose in 14th century, and was discussed between Barlaam and St. Palamas and is known as hesychasm controversy.

1.3.7 Controversy of Hesychasm and Scholasticism

The controversy started by the Greek monk Barlaam. He was under the direct influence of Latin Scholastic rationalism, in which the contemplative method of uniting with God's energies cannot find place⁴¹. His opponent was St. Gregory Palamas. Barlaam saw the doctrine about visible energies contrary to the monotheism, because if the energies experienced by mystics, as hesychasm proclaimed, are visible, it means that they are created, so man would participate in the created divine nature, which is contrary to the teaching of the Church. Anything "uncreated" outside the divine essence would imply a heretical ditheism – a visible God and an invisible God.⁴² Whereas St. Palamas defending the Hesychasm opposed Barlaam saying that the vision of the "uncreated light" was possible because this same "light" was seen by Apostles on Mount Tabor (Matt 17:2); and that while the "essence of God" is beyond physical contact, God becomes visible and knowable to man through the "divine energies". It is the same light that illuminates Moses' face (Ex 34:29-30), the Stephen face (Acts 6:14) and the vision he had (Acts 7:54-56), and the light that blinded Saul on his way to Damascus (Acts 9:3).⁴³ The uncreated light contemplated by Hesychasts is not the essence of God, but the energies of God which are also uncreated. A mystic "sees" and participates at the energies first by intellect and it overflows to the sensible vision of the divine light and the body is made more divine.⁴⁴ St. Palamas speaks of the divinizing gift of the Holy Spirit, the glory of the divine nature communicated to the saints, whereby man is deified in his

41 George C. Papademetriou, *Introduction to St. Gregory Palamas*, 32.

42 *Ibid.*, 34.

43 John Meyendorff, *St. Gregory Palamas and orthodox spirituality*, 97.

44 Georgios I. Mantzaridis, *The Deification of man, St. Gregory Palamas and the Orthodox Tradition*, trans. Sherrard Liadain (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), 101.

participation.⁴⁵ The hesychastic doctrine about the uncreated energies and deification of man by participation in them through the prayer is still not yet fully accepted by the scholastic theology. Just recently it was recalled by the authority of Pope Saint John Paul II, who during his visitation in Greece mention Hesychasm as the enriching teaching for whole Christianity.⁴⁶

Up to now in our chapter about deification, the final goal of man was identified as his union with God, as man's sacramental and moral participation in Divinity. The Hesychastic tradition professes additional way of man's sanctification that does not oppose the Scripture or Tradition. This way of man's sanctification happens through the prayer of the heart, and it is the result of man's illumination by the divine light withing the firstly mentioned dimensions of deification – sacramental and moral. This is the necessary background for proceeding to the discussion about unceasing prayer itself. Omitting this background one can be misled on his way of finding true prayer as is understood by the Church Fathers, looking at the prayer of the heart as on self-center psychosomatic exercise instead of theocentric longing. Such attitude to prayer is dangerous and does not bring any benefits to the one praying, rather it separates him from God.

The unceasing prayer, which will be expounded in the next chapter, is the way of true relation with God, and, as we have already opened in the discussion about deification, it puts man into such a strong relation with the Divinity that he is changed wholly – literally “illuminated” by the Holy Spirit in him. Thus firstly we will describe the relation between God and man itself, and the communication that is the foundation of each relation. Then we will proceed to the prayer, which, as was said, is the communication of man with God, and three methods of prayer of which the highest is the pure prayer of the heart that can become unceasing.

45 John Meyendorff, *St. Gregory Palamas and orthodox spirituality*, 99 – 102.

46 St. John Paul II. *Angelus*, August 11th 1996.

2 Prayer

2.1 Relation between God and man

2.1.1 Relations in general

Communication as defined in dictionary is the process of intellectual intercourse between individuals or groups; as all the means that serve to bind human beings together.⁴⁷ Thus we see that in every relation of rational beings is required some kind of communication, between the site/actors of the relationship, and every communication happens within a relation. In the relation we focus on, there are two sites - God and man, therefore two directions of communication should be considered:

- God towards man, communication from God to man;
- man towards God, communication from man to God. Within this direction, prayer is the mean of communication.

These two directions of communication between God and man will be now shortly covered, to understand the role of prayer as a kind of man-God communication.

2.1.2 God - man relation

God fully and out of his love communicates to man his grace that is the cause of divine life in us, *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3:16), *“Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her”* (Eph5:25); and His grace is communicated to us through Christ, as He is the Head of the mystical body we are his members, He is the source of divine grace:

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. .. I am the vine, you are the branches. ... He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:1-5)

Furthermore, the reception of what is given depends also on the condition of the receiver, since one can not receive what he has no capacity to receive, either according to the quantity

⁴⁷ Charles George Herbermann et al., eds., *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol IV. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 1967), 33.

or intensity (half liter glass can not be filled with one liter of water) or according to the nature of thing received (non rational animal can not learn math). In the case, when the source/cause of grace is infinite God, there are no obstacles on His side. The quantitative/intensity limits are on the side of man, but not the limit of nature since man is made on the image of God and for the union with God through God's grace. But man is able to increase the capacity to receive more and to make the relation with God from man's side stronger.

2.1.3 Man - God relation

Jesus himself defined what is required from us for this relation, “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind*” (Luke 10:27; Dt 6:5), the wholeness of one loving. We are therefore called to the relation with God in our completeness, as a whole person. Man is a composite of body and soul, we must never forget the corporeality of man. The example of spousal love shows that a lover has a need to be always with the beloved one, to be united with him/her without ceasing and in a bodily way – to be in permanent communication with the object of his love. A warmth arises from the heart and overflows a whole person longing for beloved one. St. Isaac the Syrian in his homilies compares this state to a state of a drunk man, when talking about love towards God:

"Through such zealous and divine diligence... a man begins to be stirred to divine love and straightway he is made drunk by it as by wine; his limbs become limp, his mind stands still in awestruck wonder, and his heart follows God as a captive. He becomes, as I said, like a man drunk with wine, with the love of God ... He forgets all his sorrows and afflictions and becomes insensible of all sinful passions through his inebriation."⁴⁸

Since such a zeal, that really grasps a whole man into the relation, is possible in a worldly profane life, it should be also possible in spiritual life, where the wine is God's love. We can even say that this “inebriation” is a sign of man being in deep love with God, which is the requirement for our relation with God.

48 Hilarion Alfejev, *The Spiritual World of Isaac the Syrian*, 251.

St. Climacus saw the prayer not only as the proof of our love and relation with God:

“War proves the soldier's love for his king; but the time and discipline of prayer show the monk's love for God,”⁴⁹

but also as the mean of the converse and union of man with God:

“Prayer is by nature a dialog and a union of man with God. Its effect is to hold the world together. It achieves a reconciliation with God. Prayer is the mother and daughter of tears. It is an expiation of Sin, a bridge across temptation ...”⁵⁰

The logical consequence is now obvious – since the obstacle of the communication between man and God resides on man side, and this limit is set by the insufficient relation of man towards God, the prayer, which builds the relation and union between man and God is the way, how the obstacle can be diminished. It is exactly a prayer that builds up and shows one's love to God, and it is the love that quickens and strengthens one's prayer.

2.2 Prayer in Christian's life

2.2.1 Prayer as the basis of Christian's spiritual life

According to the understanding in the Eastern Christian asceticism, prayer is the basis of Christian's spiritual life. Prayer shows a zeal of the Christian for God, it is the mirror of spiritual life, “*Your prayer will show you what condition you are in. Theologians say that prayer is the monk's mirror.*”⁵¹ St. Isaac the Syrian understood prayer as the entrance door to divinity, and as the mother of all virtues, “*Capture the mother, and she will bring you the children*”, prayer builds our virtues. Without prayer a Christian can not grow, and even he can not live his new life in Christ, as prayer is the Holy Spirit in us “*by which we cry out, 'Abba Father!'*” (Rom 8:15), “*Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.*” (Rom 8:26). We see how strong emphasis was put on the prayer by the Fathers. It is not only the way of communication with God, but through it the virtues are acquired and man is also

49 John Climacus, *The ladder of divine ascent*, 278, Step 28.

50 Ibid., 274.

51 Ibid., 278.

capable to receive the infused virtues. It helps with self-knowledge in Truth, because it is the Holy Spirit in us that is the Spirit of Truth⁵².

Now we will proceed to one specific aspect of prayer, which makes a connection with previous sections about man's deification. Prayer as seen by the Hesychasm is the direct instrument of our deification.

2.2.2 Prayer as the mean of man's deification

As we saw in St. Isaac image of “inebriation by divine love”⁵³ (in section 2.1.3), there is some kind of “inebriation” which results from unceasing contact with the love of God, and this love transforms man “into the resemblance with God”. Along with the Sacraments, prayer is one's contact point with God. That is the reason why the Eastern Christian asceticism sees prayer as the mean of man's deification. Without communication no relation is possible, without prayer, which is the basis of man's spiritual life, no deification is possible. According to St. Macarius of Egypt⁵⁴, the unceasing prayer of the monk allows him even during his earthly life to enter into an eschatological reality, the Kingdom of God, which embraces him wholly, his spirit and his body. The whole man, body and soul is called to divine glory.⁵⁵ A whole man is involved, a whole man is changed, whole man is “enlighten” by the light of God, as the hesychastic tradition teaches. This illumination of the body through the prayer by the Divine light can be even mysteriously visible and it was a usual experience of saints. Many peoples brought witnesses about these visible signs of hesychast's change into “*the most dazzling brightness of its noon-day shining, ... ineffable light went on shining all the time he was talking.*”⁵⁶ The life of St. Seraphim of Sarov is a great example of someone 'living' this prayer. St. Simeon the New Theologian himself experienced this

52 From the Byzantine prayer “Heavenly King” to the Holy Spirit.

53 Hilarion Alfejev, *The Spiritual World of Isaac the Syrian*, 251.

54 Egyptian monk and hermit, called also the “lamp of the desert”, lived in 4th century.

55 John Meyendorff, *St. Gregory Palamas and orthodox spirituality*, 26.

56 N.A.Motovilov, *A Conversation of Saint Seraphim of Sarov with N. A. Motovilov; A Wonderful Revelation to the World*, trans. Jordanville Press (Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1962).

change, and therefore he spoke from his experience about total transfiguration of man's nature including his body⁵⁷, “Such was this great Simeon ... being prompted by the energy of the Holy Spirit, he became day by day entirely fire, entirely light, he became god by adoption; and as son of God, he spoke with the Father and God, like Moses.”⁵⁸. This change is attainable, according to the teaching of Hesychasm, “only by the power of prayer characterized by a deep tranquillity of the spirit, which is engaged in constant contemplation of God by invoking the name of Jesus.”⁵⁹

One willing to be changed through this prayer has to be careful about the way he prays. The Eastern Fathers distinguished many ways of praying, talking about contents of our prayers but also about methods how to pray, which is very important aspect in the prayer of the heart. St. Simeon the New Theologian⁶⁰, who is very rich in the teaching about the unceasing internal prayer, disclosed three kinds of methods of prayer, one can exercise but only the last one is the true prayer of the heart.

2.3 Three methods of prayer by St. Simeon⁶¹

2.3.1 Continuity of oldest monastic prayer's rules with St. Simeon's rules

The first doctrine of monastic prayer was written by Evargius of Pontus⁶², in 4th century. Some of his rules show that already in that time the pure continual prayer was practiced:

“3. Prayer is a continual intercourse of the mind with God. Stand resolute, fully intent on your prayer. 9. Pay no heed to the concerns and thoughts that might arise the while. They do nothing better than disturb and upset you so as to dissolve the fixity of your purpose. 28. Do not pray by outward gestures only, but bend your mind as well to the perception of spiritual prayer with great fear. 34. Undistracted prayer is the highest act of the mind. 35. Prayer is an ascent of the

57 Hilarion Alfeyev. *St. Symeon the New Theologian and orthodox tradition*, 266.

58 Nikitas, “Life of Simeon,” in Hilarion Alfeyev, *St. Symeon the New Theologian and orthodox tradition*, 262

59 St. John Paul II. *Angelus*, August 11th 1996.

60 The text *The Three Methods of Prayer* is attributed to the St. Simeon the New Theologian, but some theologians says that the author is Nikiphoros the Monk, who is the author of a very similar treatise *On the Watchfulness and the Guarding of the Heart* about psychosomatic technique of prayer.

61 St. Simeon the New Theologian, “The Three Methods of Prayer,” in *Philokalia*, ed. Nicodemus the Hagiorite, trans. G.E.H. Palmer, P. Sherrard, K. War, vol 4., 5 vols. (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1998), 64-75.

62 +399.

mind to God. 66. When you are praying do not fancy the Divinity like some images formed within yourself. Avoid also allowing your mind to be impressed with the seal of some particular shape, but rather, free from all matter.”⁶³

This intellectual prayer as presented by Evargius became the “prayer of the heart,” a personal prayer explicitly addressed to Jesus, the “Jesus prayer”.⁶⁴ The continuity of Evargius' rules of prayer is seen also in the work of St. Simeon. Among the ascetic writers, St. Simeon was the first to speak of dispassion and deification in experiential manner from his personal experience⁶⁵. The central theme of Simeon's three methods of prayer is the need to guard the heart, by some authors⁶⁶ called also the watchfulness, or the guarding of soul. The eastern fathers⁶⁷ describe a 'Heart' as a spiritual center of human person, where all the powers of the soul reside, sometimes it is called also the inner place⁶⁸. It is the most important place, where a man meets God and where God 'resides' in man. It is not just the emotional center, or the center of affections. Without purifying the “heart” from affections man can not attain the true prayer and the desired contact with divinity. It can be even said, following St. Simeon's thoughts, that the purity of the heart is the basis of the right prayer and the goal of the right prayer. If one does not guard his intellect, he cannot attain purity of the heart, which is the requirement to see God, “*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*” (Matt 5:8). Keeping watch over intellect means to have a control over passions.

In the St. Simeon's explanation of the three methods of prayer, a reader can exercise his own prayer's practice and his spiritual life, since prayer is the nourishment for man's spiritual life, and practicing it without prudence can harm one's life. In the western spirituality, the great mystic of 16th century St. John of the Cross in his book *Ascent to Mount Carmel*

63 Evargius Ponticus, *The praktikos, Chapters on Prayer*, trans. J.E.Bamberger (*Cistercian Publications: Messachusetts, 1970*), 56-80.

64 John Meyendorff, *St. Gregory Palamas and orthodox spirituality*, 30.

65 Hilarion Alfeyev. *St. Symeon the New Theologian and orthodox tradition*, 274.

66 Nikiphoros the Monk, St. John Climacus, St. Gregory of Sinai.

67 St. Climacus, *The ladder of Divine Ascent*, 261 – 273, Step 27.

St. Makarios the Great, in *Philokalia*, vol.4, 201.

68 St. Dimitry of Rostov, “The inner closed of the Heart,” in St. Theophan the Recluse, *The path to Salvation*, trans. S. Rose (London UK: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1966), 43.

Gregory Palamas, *The Triads*, trans. N. Gendle (New Jersey: Paulist Press, Inc, 1983), 43.

describes the very similar way of purifying of the heart.

2.3.2 The first method of prayer

The first method of prayer, as distinguished by St. Simeon, is “*when a person stands at prayer, he raises hands, eyes and intellect heavenwards, and fills his intellect with divine thoughts, with images of celestial beauty, of the angelic hosts, of the abodes of the righteous.*”⁶⁹ As we can clearly see, the intellect of one practicing this way is fulfilled with the things he read in Holy Scripture or in some spiritual books. He found it sweet and beautiful to stay in the presence of these images, and he can even weep tears while staying in this prayer. He asks God to allow him to be always in such beauty and to be engaged in this activity. But these “intellectual delusions” distract and delude, and the consequence is that one praying this way can not attain a state of holiness or dispassion. He can be also deluded into thinking that his bodily senses experience and enjoy a divine light, or sweet scents, or voices around. St. Simeon describes it more strictly, “*some have become completely possessed by demons and wander from place to place in their madness. Other fail to recognize the devil when he transforms himself into an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14)*”. Evil tries to substitute the true warmth and spiritual delight by sensual and imaginary delusions and persuades man's intellect to turn him from God⁷⁰. This trap of devil is widely described by many saints and mystics. The most important attentiveness or the guarding of the heart in this case lost the right meaning, because it was used in wrong way. It became a poison for a person practicing this method of prayer. Instead of guarding of the heart, the imaginations and delusions are welcomed and initiated by the intellect itself. Unfortunately, we can experience and see this kind of prayer widely used by many people.

2.3.3 The second method of prayer

The second method of prayer, as described by St. Simeon, is when a man tries to

69 St. Simeon the New Theologian, “The Three Methods of Prayer,” in *Philokalia*, vol.4., 67.

70 St. Gregory of Sinai, “On stillness”, in *Philokalia* vol.4., 271.

withdraw his intellect from every sensually and imaginary things, and tries to concentrate it in himself. His intellect is still in the fight with delusions. It wanders on the battlefield – sometimes examines thoughts, sometimes pays attention to the words of the prayer, sometimes recovers man from passions that overcame him. It is like a fighter without any rest, without stillness. St. Simeon wrote, *“he is like a person fighting at night: he hears the voices of his enemies and is wounded by them, but he cannot see clearly who they are, where they come from and how and for what purpose they assail him. ... He cannot ever escape his noetic enemies, but is worn out by them”*⁷¹. Another problem of this method seen by St. Simeon is that one practicing it can see himself as experienced enough in the guarding of the thoughts, and as being in the higher level of asceticism, so he tries to teach other people how to pray. This kind of prayer causes harm and *“is better than the first, just as a moonlight night is better than a night that is pitch-dark and starless.”*⁷²

2.3.4 The third method of prayer

In the third method of prayer, the most important element, as explained by St. Simeon, is obedience, *“for it is the love of obedience that delivers us from entanglement with this evil world, rendering us free from anxiety and impassioned craving. ... If through obedience you make yourself dead to every worldly and bodily attachment, how can anything transient enslave your intellect?”*⁷³ We can see that St. Simeon understands the obedience as the only effective mean to guard the heart. Only by entrusting the whole soul and body to God and to the spiritual father, one is free from distractions. In this method we are not raising our hand or concentrate our thoughts on the heavenly things, as in the first method, nor we let our intellect wandering on the dark battlefield to search for enemies who strike him, as in the second method, but the first step is to learn obedience to pure our conscience in three respects:

71 St. Simeon the New Theologian, “The Three Methods of Prayer”, in *Philokalia vol.4.*, 69.

72 Ibid., 69.

73 Ibid., 69.

- with respect to God – to prevent oneself from anything against worshipping Him,
- with respect to our spiritual father – conform our will to his will;
- with respect to other people – not to do anything that we hate, and material things – not to misuse them.

One can fulfill this only in humility and love. Humility makes him able to give himself to the hands of God and his spiritual father. Humility therefore becomes the most effective weapon against distraction from evil. Love makes him able not just to protect himself from doing evil things to others, and from misusing the things, but also strengthen him on his way, and is the perfection of his relation to God. *“Unless humility and love, simplicity and goodness regulate our prayer, this prayer – or, rather this pretence of prayer – cannot profit us at all.”*⁷⁴ In the case of those without spiritual father, St. Nikiphoros⁷⁵ gives the advice that they must diligently search for one, and if no guide is to be found, they must renounce worldly attachments, call on God with a contrite spirit and with tears⁷⁶. A more strict opinion is presented by St. Gregory of Sinaj, without spiritual director it is impossible to practice this prayer, because either *“you will fall into delusion and will fail to attain healing; or you will grow negligent, you will never make any progress during your whole life”*⁷⁷

St. Simeon not only described the three methods of prayer, but gives also the guideline how to attain the perfect inner prayer.

2.4 The inner prayer

2.4.1 Making inner prayer unceasing

The inner prayer is exercised in two states, the first is when man himself strives for it, and the other self-impelled, when prayer exists and acts on its own. The first state is a

74 St. Simeon Metaphrasis, “Paraphrase of the homilies of St. Makarios of Egypt,” in *Philokalia*, ed. Nicodemus the Hagiorite, trans. G.E.H. Palmer, P. Sherrard, K. War, vol 3., 5 vols, (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1986), 293.

75 St. Nikiphoros the Monk, often known as Nikiphoros the Hesychast or the Athonite, lived in 13th century.

76 St. Nikiphoros, “On Watchfulness,” in *Philokalia vol.4.*, 204.

77 St. Gregory of Sinaj, “On stillness”, in *Philokalia vol.4.*, 268.

voluntary movement, the voluntary desire, like acts building the acquired virtue, a longing for unceasing contact with the beloved, the permanent “inebriation”. The final state happens when one is drawn along automatically. In the controlled movement, breathing has the important role here, it is a way how can our body adopt the prayer on its own bodily level. St. Climacus says, “*Let the remembrance of Jesus*⁷⁸ *be present with your every breath. Then indeed you will appreciate the value of stillness*”⁷⁹ Once the one praying is able to enter the interior prayer, which requires to have control over his breath, and he repeatedly invoke the prayer “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner”, it comes naturally that this formula is said in one breath, divided in two parts, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God” is said during the breath in, and “have mercy on me a sinner” is said during the expiration. This makes the bound between breath, which is the act of bodily part of our nature, and the prayer itself. One practicing it will soon realize that the prayer is not just on his lips or in conscious intellect, but that each breath evokes the prayer. This bound will keep the prayer active even during sleep and in the morning, the the prayer will be on the lips without intentionally invoking it, but just by the tight connection with breathing. This is the final state, when the inner prayer takes place in the body, without consciously invoking it.

2.4.2 Chotky – a tool for frequent practicing prayer

The eastern fathers offer also the instrument for practicing invocation of Jesus prayer as often as possible, and to make it unceasing easier. Prayer rope, also known as chotky (gr. κομποσκοίνι, slav. вервица), is the helping tool with two main purposes:

- to count the number of times one has said the Jesus prayer - chotky consists from many knots and on each knot the Jesus prayer is to be said, and it helps to count how many times the Jesus name was invoked;
- as the reminder and recall to prayer - as chotki is in permanent contact with the palm

78 The “remembrance of Jesus” denotes the Jesus' prayer, not just as the simple remembrance of the name of Jesus.

79 St. Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 270, Step 27.

of one who wears it, it builds the reflex of prayer.

The beginners in the Jesus prayer needs to pray it hundreds times per day, and as they advance in prayer, the number of repetition is also increased, almost up to five thousand times per day. This process builds a constant presence of prayer in one's mind. Once the prayer is already seated in the heart the prayer rope is not so important any more, because, as we said before, each spiration becomes knots of prayer rope and a “remembrance of Jesus name”.

2.4.3 Psychosomatic technique

St. Simeon now gives the description of something like psychosomatic technique for of the attaining the perfect prayer. First, is the preparation for the prayer: before the prayer itself, one should start with being dead to everything, it means to be free with respect to everything, which we have already described. Now comes the complete detachment of one's thoughts from worldly matters, or even from his own body. When one purified himself from these distractions and obstacles from meeting with God, the act of prayer itself follows.

Now, let us quote St. Simeon teaching about practicing the prayer itself, and analyze it a little bit:

“Then sit down in a quiet cell, in a corner by yourself, and do what I tell you. Close the door, and withdraw your intellect from everything worthless and transient. Rest your beard on your chest, and focus your physical gaze, together with the whole of your intellect, upon the center of your belly or your navel.”⁸⁰

St. Simeon emphasized here the external and bodily preparation. “*go into your room and shut the door and pray*“ (Matt 6:6). After this preparation the psychosomatic process begin,

“Restrain the drawing-in of breath through your nostrils, so as not to breathe easily, and search inside yourself with your intellect so as to find the place of the heart, where all the powers of the soul reside.”⁸¹

This and following part can make an impression of some non-christians meditation, which focuses on the technique of breathing and on emptying oneself. Contrary to these Hindu techniques, the purpose here is not to restrict one's breathing as the activity of life to free

80 St. Simeon the New Theologian, “The Three Methods of Prayer”, in *Philokalia vol.4.*, 72.

81 *Ibid.*, 72.

spirit from the flesh, but it connects the soul with the body of one praying⁸². The control over breathing has some important aspects. The first comes at the beginning - to calm the whole body after rushing or stress. The second is that it gives a rhythm to the Jesus prayer, as will be described later. Another and most important aspect, according to St. Nikiphoros, is that breath acts as the carrier for the intellect to enter into the heart⁸³. The importance of breathing will be explained later on in connection with making the prayer unceasing.

Here, we can also see another, spiritual meaning of Jesus' words, "*go into your room and shut the door and pray*" (Matt 6:6). It is about entering into one's own heart. To shut the door means the already described guarding of the heart, not letting anyone in, and not letting the intellect to wander around.

*"To start with you will find there darkness and an impenetrable density. Later, when you persist and practice this task day and night, you will find, as though miraculously, and unceasing joy. From as soon as the intellect attains the place of the heart, at once it sees things of which it previously knew nothing. It see the open space within the heart and it beholds itself entirely luminous and full of discrimination."*⁸⁴

This is the time when a lover meets his beloved one. This meeting can happen only in the secret chamber within man's heart. The same experience is described by St. Nikiphoros as the indescribable delight from the intellect united with the soul⁸⁵. King Solomon describes the same in his Song, "*I would lead you and bring you into the house of my mother, and into the chamber of her that conceived me. I would give you spiced wine to drink, the juice of my pomegranates.*" (Son 8:2).

As St. Simeon describes:

*"From then on, from whatever side a distractive thought may appear, before it has come to completion and assumed a form, the intellect immediately drives it away and destroys it with the invocation of Jesus Christ,"*⁸⁶

in his third method of prayer, only now can intellect drive away and destroy all the

82 John Meyendorff, *St. Gregory Palamas and orthodox spirituality*, 26.

83 St. Nikiphoros, "On Watchfulness", in *Philokalia vol.4*, 205.

84 St. Simeon the New Theologian, "The Three Methods of Prayer", in *Philokalia vol.4*, 73.

85 St. Nikiphoros, "On Watchfulness", in *Philokalia vol.4*, 206.

86 St. Simeon the New Theologian, "The Three Methods of Prayer", in *Philokalia vol.4*, 73.

distractions and evil temptations. Here is the place where the “inebriation by love” described by St. Isaac is applied, when drunk man stands “*still in awestruck wonder, and his heart follows God as a captive*”, and there is nothing that can distract him from the delight caused by wine. St. Nikiphoros, when describing this part, says that this is the kingdom of heaven in us (Luke 17:21), and when intellect concentrates its attention in the heart seeking for the kingdom of heaven in the pure prayer, all external things become abominable and hateful to it⁸⁷. But to be more precisely, it is Jesus, who protects, as Psalm 91 says, “*For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence; he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge*”(PS 91:3-4). It is exactly the Jesus' name, by which the one praying guards himself from the evil distractions and from the devil, as Jesus' himself promised it as the first sign of believers, when He appeared to the eleven after his resurrection, “*in my name they will cast out demons*” (Mark 16:17). By the “*invocation of Jesus Christ*” we should understand the words of the prayer, “*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me*”. This repeated invocation is important. St. Climacus emphasises the Jesus name as the most “*powerful weapon in heaven or on earth.*”⁸⁸ St. Simeon also says⁸⁹ that one can not attain this kind of prayer easily, it is necessary to proceed through the first and second method of prayer to reach the third one.

One who attained the inner prayer can be make this prayer unceasing by practicing and using the right technique. There are but some examples of saints, e.g. St. Siluan the Athonite, who received the gift of the unceasing prayer of the heart in short time⁹⁰.

2.5 Theology of Jesus prayer

Now we will provide a short theological explanation of the content of the Jesus prayer, “*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.*” This short sentence contains

87 St. Nikiphoros, “On Watchfulness”, in *Philokalia vol.4*, 206.

88 St. Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 200, Step 21.

89 St. Simeon the New Theologian, “The Three Methods of Prayer”, in *Philokalia vol.4*, 75.

90 St. Siluan the Athonite, *Pisanija starca Siluana*, trans. Tazlarova (Kostelni Vydri(CZ): Karmelitsanske nakladatelstvi, 2010).

real Christian truths and faith. Some explanations, e.g. in book the *Way of a Pilgrim*, say that Jesus prayer is the whole Gospel in short.

“*Lord Jesus Christ,*” it is only within the Holy Spirit that one can truly acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, since it is written “*No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit*”(1 Cor 12:3), and it is the Holy Spirit that “*intercedes for us*” (Rom 8:26). The name “*Jesus*” is the earthly name of the Incarnated Word. “*Christ*” tells that He is the one anointed. He is a truly man, and one accepts Him as Lord and Master.

“*Son of God,*” by this short part one confess the sonship of Christ and the fatherhood of the Father. There is no son without father, and no father without a son. Apostle John in his letter writes, “*If anyone confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God resides in him and he in God,*”(John 4:15). Furthermore, the apostle Paul writes (Rom 10:8-12), “*if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved,*” consequently this prayer puts the words of st. Paul into the very practice, “*Every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved,*” (Rom 10:13), “*all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered*” (Joel 2:32). To be saved means to be deified, to be in the presence of God “*God resides in him and he in God*” (John 4:15). The Fathers took these quotations about confessing “*Jesus name*” very seriously, as the proof of the presence of the Holy Spirit in one confessing it.

“*Have mercy on me, a sinner,*” this cry is in the Gospel many times (Matt 9:27; 15:22; 20:30-31; Mark 10:47-48; Luke 18:38-39). It is a cry of someone in need, struggling in his life and asking for help, for mercy. In the Gospel, men cried for specific reason to solve their specific problem, but Jesus' prayer intentionally does not contain any purpose or reason. It should be just a simple act of asking for mercy, “*for your Father knows what you need before you ask him,*” (Matt 6:8), and because by thinking about an actual problem, the purity of the heart, about which we talked above, is lost. By crying “*have marcy on me, a sinner*” one

acknowledges himself as a sinner, and understands that he can not be saved without Jesus. It also express man's weakness and makes man humble as Jesus commanded *“learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls,”* (Mt11:29).

By exploring the theological background of prayer of the heart - its instrumentality for man deification, and the methods how to attain it, the analytical part of this discourse is ended. In the next chapter the spiritual interpretation of some parts of the Gospel of John will be provided based on the knowledge from previous chapters.

The aim of the next chapter is to provide the fuller notion of prayer's spirituality, which should be found also in the interpretation of the Scripture itself. Switching the perspective from “using the Scripture to enlighten a prayer” to “using a prayer to interpret the Scripture” can elevate one's own relation to the Scripture to the higher level and in return to increase the desire for prayer itself. Involving the Scripture into prayer life, and involving prayer into the meditation about the Scripture makes a union that strengthen the one's spiritual life. Thus the spirituality of prayer, particularly of discussed constant prayer, is made more complete by seeing its images in the Scripture. We will look at some passages of the Gospel of John for this purpose – to provide the images of unceasing prayer that can be found by mystical interpretation. This images are the patterns that prove the same purpose of “Jesus acting among people” and “Christ acting in concrete man through inner prayer”. Next chapter can be also considered as the invitation to connect inner prayer with the Scripture. This complementarity of prayer and the Scripture is a lived spiritual reality with God.

Understanding of prayer of the heart expounded in previous chapters will be now used as the key for interpretation of some of Gospel of John's texts.

3 Prayer of the heart in the Gospel of John

This chapter will contain interpretations built on personal contemplation of specific parts of the Gospel of John. The only external source used is the explanation of symbols of numbers in Hebrew tradition, which is taken from St. Augustin and his homilies on Gospel of John.

The passages chosen for interpretation have common pattern of symbols, by which they are connected to the prayer itself. These patterns of symbols are:

- Jesus who is acting in one's life. It symbolizes Jesus name acting through the prayer in one's heart, according to saying of St. John Climacus “*Jesus name is the powerful weapon in heaven or on earth.*”⁹¹
- The situation into which Jesus enters, symbolizes the situation of one's heart before pure prayer – disorder, needs, spiritual death.
- Others actors in that particular situation symbolize man's powers that are not sufficient for man to attain his end, and are in need for Divine help.

These patterns have been found mainly in these passages of Gospel of John:

- John 2:1-12 - The wedding at Cana
- John 2:13-21 - Jesus clears the temple
- John 4:1-30 – Jesus and the Samaritan woman
- John 4:46-53 – Jesus cures the son of an official

The method used in each quotation is following with the order:

1. the interpretations of symbols (numbers, places, occasion, things used, times) will take place first;
2. the anthropological dimension will be observed, finding the analogy within the

91 St. Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 200, Step 21.

passage pointing to the human nature and its weakness, and the need for God's intervention to elevate it; especially in the area of man spiritual life and his desire for union with God expressed by man's prayer;

3. the theological dimension will be observed, as God entering the weak humanity to elevate it; especially entering the heart of man by the way of prayer;
4. the result of this union will be shown; perfection can be attained only in the connection with the Christ within the heart – prayer of the heart.

3.1 John 2:1-12 The wedding in Cana

“On the third day there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; Jesus also was invited to the marriage, with his disciples. When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” And Jesus said to her, “O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now six stone jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast.” So they took it. When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, “Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now.” This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him. After this he went down to Caper'na-um, with his mother and his brethren and his disciples; and there they stayed for a few days.”⁹²

3.1.1 Symbols

Proceeding to the interpretation of symbols that are found in this passage of Gospel of John, we can find actors, which are: the wedding organizers (unmentioned bridegroom and bride). They are the symbol of those who desire to be one body - the union. The servants of the feast symbolize the lower parts of human soul; and the steward of the feast symbolize the intellectual higher power of man. Then there are invited people for a wedding but only Jesus and Mary are mentioned as acting, they symbolize the presence of divinity.

Then there are things and situations: the wedding itself symbolizes the process, necessary

92 John 2:1-12 Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (RSVCE)

step towards the intimate union, it is the constant inner prayer. Wine symbolizes the joy in life, the inebriation by the divine love⁹³, which is required for the wedding, the present six stone jars used for Jewish rite of purification – number 6 is the symbol of imperfection or incompleteness of man⁹⁴ which needs its final element to be completed. They are used for a rite of purification, which is the outward purification, but the requirement is to be purified inwardly. Mary's command “do whatever he tells you” symbolizes the full obedience to the authority of Jesus, which can be done only out of charity.

3.1.2 Interpretation

The organizers of the wedding represent the man longing for a constant, perfect union between bridegroom and bride. This desire can be fulfilled only in union with God⁹⁵. The enjoyment, the result of this union, is “*wine that gladden the heart of man*” (Ps 104:15) and makes one drunk by the love of God. But here in Cana the wine provided by man, is running out. This wine is not the “better wine”, it is not the true enjoyment, because true enjoyment cannot diminish. The better wine will be given by Christ. The wedding celebration is going to be failed, due to missing wine. Such is also the prayer, where one stays only in the level of emotions or fighting with distracting thoughts⁹⁶, in the level of human actions, and does not meet God in the heart. But in this wedding, Jesus and Mary were invited by organizers, who did not know what is going to happen, since Jesus was not yet well known, his first miracle will be performed just here. Such should be a man praying, one should not pray for a purpose of miracle to happen, miracle is not the aim, but the aim is the union. The wedding continues as usual with one problem – wine is running out. Mary noticed the problem, and asked Jesus for his action. But his “*hour has not yet come*”, which means that the man is not yet ready to

93 Symbol used by St. Isaac the Syrian.

94 Augustine of Hippo, “Lectures or Tractates on the Gospel according to St. John,” in *St. Augustin: Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homilies on the First Epistle of John, Soliloquies*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. John Gibb and James Innes, vol. 7, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1888), 65.^{h-}

95 Later on in John 3:27-33 the bridegroom is identified with Jesus himself. So the bride can be rightly understood as man here.

96 First and second method of prayer as described by St. Simeon the New Theologian.

receive the gift of unceasing prayer. Mary asked servants for a full obedience to Jesus, not to lose their zeal to participate on the celebration when the problem is faced. This is the message also for man striving for union with God through the inner prayer. And when Jesus' "hour has come", one does not know when, since nobody knows the will of God except the God himself, the miracle is being performed in one's heart. Jesus asked servants to fill six jars, used only for ritual purification, with water – this symbolize the imperfection of man, all his members, previously used just as a part of ritual, are to be involved into the unceasing prayer. Once it is done, the Jesus asked to "*draw some out and take it to the steward*", who (the steward) did not know where is this wine from. It is when the prayer become unceasing, the body prays, the higher power of man, the intellect ("the steward"), recognizes the gift of unceasing prayer only through the bodily activity ("*only the servants who had drawn water knew it*"). Body performs the prayer and the reason recognizes the body praying, and presents it to the will ("*he called the bridegroom*") as a real good. It is the body, who informs the higher powers about unceasing prayer, about the "better wine". Now it is no more the prayer as is usually known, causing some kind of pleasure at the beginning but not lasting "*till the end*", but this kind of prayer "of a better wine" is served till the end.

3.2 John 2:13-17 Jesus clears the temple

"The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers at their business. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all, with the sheep and oxen, out of the temple; and he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; you shall not make my Father's house a house of trade." His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for thy house will consume me."⁹⁷

3.2.1 Symbols

Again as in previous section, we are proceeding to the interpretation of symbols that are found in this passage of Gospel of John. These symbols are: the actors which are the sellers,

97 John 2:13-17 Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (RSVCE)

money-changers, which symbolize man's heart occupied by worldly things that are symbolized by oxen, sheep, pigeons; Jesus – acting in the heart of man; which is symbolized as the temple, the Father's house. The whip of cords is a symbol of prayer rope which is used during Jesus' prayer.

3.2.2 Interpretation

The interpretation of this passage is straightforward and points directly to the improper prayer. As the fathers emphasized, the pure heart is a necessary condition for pure prayer. Man, who does not know how to pray, enters his heart with many businesses he has to do, with many worldly things he experienced during his day and his mind – his intellect is permanently made busy by them. In such condition it is impossible to pray correctly. This can be compared to St. Simeon's first and the second method of prayer. Now the Jesus enters, and by His own authority He expel these things, it is in the name of Jesus itself that the demons are expelled from one's heart. The interesting is the tool He made – the “*whip of cords*”. It symbolizes the prayer rope, which permanently reminds one wearing it to pray the Jesus prayer, and it helps one to focus on the prayer itself. One can not make the perfect union with God unless he cleanse his heart from all the distractions by calling Jesus name. It is not in man's possibilities, only Christ has this power and authority to perform it.

3.3 John 4:5-30 Jesus and the Samaritan woman

This long passage will be not quoted here⁹⁸

3.3.1 Symbols

There are two main actors Jesus, Samaritan woman, who represents a man actively searching for new life. The place “near the Jacob's well, symbolizes the old habits of man, they are good in themselves, but they can be the obstacles to reach something higher, the

98 *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*, Catholic Biblical Association (San Francisco: Ignatius press, 1966), John 4:5-30.

better life. The time when the woman came to the well is the time, when other people are not around, the time of silence without distractions from others. Jesus ask woman about her husbands, they symbolize five bodily senses, that can not fulfill man desire for eternal happiness, and the sixth husband symbolize the incompleteness of man, following five senses man is still incomplete⁹⁹. The number 6 includes also number 5, it encapsulated the human weakness including previously mentioned five husbands. The water the woman came for symbolizes life, the water from the Jacob's well is the old life, which source is from the earth, but the water offered by Christ is the new life from above, which source is in heaven. When woman ran into her town, she forgot her water jar, the mean she tried to reach the water from the well, it symbolizes the old fashion, manners left when the newness is found.

3.3.2 Interpretation

This interpretation is similar to the interpretation of the Wedding in Cana. There is a woman, which represents a man not satisfied with his life, longing and actively looking for something better that will fulfill his life. This dissatisfaction with earthly rest is symbolized by the time when she went to the well at “*about the noon*”. It was not a time when other peoples were going to the well. This woman desires the solitude and quietness from distractions. This is like the second method of prayer described by St. Simeon, when the intellect tries to escape and fights against “the enemies”, but it can not find the desired rest in prayer. Now the woman meets Christ on the place she thought will provide her desired rest and stillness, the place of her old habits of prayer. The discussion is started by Jesus asking her for a water. He asks every man, who seeks him, to scrutinize his previous life of prayer, if it can satisfy his desire for union with God. And on the turn, Christ offers the living water – the new life, but He conditioned it with self knowledge - “*go call your husband and come*

99 Augustine of Hippo, “Lectures or Tractates on the Gospel according to St. John,” in St. Augustin: Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homilies on the First Epistle of John, Soliloquies, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. John Gibb and James Innes, vol. 7, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1888), 104.

*back here*¹⁰⁰. This means again to look at one's own way of prayer, and Jesus knows, that the prayer as was performed before, or the life as lived before, is not the right, that man's bodily senses (5 husbands) can not be the head – the leader of one's prayer life, that one can not follow the imperfect leader – symbolized by the sixth husband, but has to follow the perfection that is offered by God himself. Leaving the imperfect sensual level of prayer (first method of prayer) and cling to the Jesus himself, gives the desired rest. Once this rest is found in the inner heart, in the place without distractions, all of the outside matters or means (the woman jar) are left and no more considered as valuable for drinking the living water (the union with God). The place of worship does not matter anymore – “*will not be on this mountain or in Jerusalem*”, it is the heart of man, where the deification begins and takes place at first. After experiencing this, one can bring the message to other people by giving the example of himself being transformed into Christ, not by convincing or by explaining. Such is a prayer of the heart, transforming man by giving him the living water from within his heart, the prayer that does not stand on sensuality or rituals, but on Christ being present in one's heart.

3.4 John 4:46-54 Jesus cures the son of an official

“So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Caper'na-um there was an official whose son was ill. When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Jesus therefore said to him, “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.” The official said to him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” Jesus said to him, “Go; your son will live.” The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went his way. As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was living. So he asked them the hour when he began to mend, and they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.” The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live”; and he himself believed, and all his household. This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee”

3.4.1 Symbols

In this part the main actors are Jesus and the official, who symbolizes man's intellect. The

100 John 4:16

ill son of the official symbolizes the spiritual soul of man, the illness is the sin and man is about to die spiritually because of it. Then there are the servants meeting the official on his way home, they symbolize the lower powers of man. And upon believing of the official, his whole household believed, where the household is the whole man, intellectual and sensible part. There are two towns mentioned – in Cana, where the meeting happens, and Capharnaum whereof the official is from and where his ill son is lying sick. Capharnaum is placed below Cana, which symbolize the depth where man because of fallen human nature. To pass from Cana to Capharnaum means to descend. To pass from Capharnaum to Cana means to ascend.

3.4.2 Interpretation

There is a man, an official from Capharnaum, who sees his son being ill to death, who is the symbol of man's soul ill by sins, close to spiritual death, who needs the living water to stay alive¹⁰¹. He had heard that Jesus came to Cane, so he went to ask him for help. His way from Capharnaum to Cane is a cry of prayer, as the psalmists says, “*Out of the depth I cry out to you, oh Lord! Lord, hear my voice!*” (Ps 130:1). Capharnaum is the depth, Cane is the place of miracle, the place above. It is a cry of man's reason, who sees the sins that brings death to the soul, and it realizes that only God can help him, “*went and begged him to come down and heal his son*”. The official did not cease to cry for Lord's help after first attempt, but kept asking Jesus to come down, to enter his heart which is in the depths of darkness, without the true Light. Now Jesus sent the official back home with the assurance that his son is alive. The official believed and went back home only with his faith that the miracle performed by Christ really happened. Just on his way back the servants met him and announced the good news about good health of his son. It is the man's intellect going back to the inner place of his heart, with the faith in God's mercy. Again we see, as in the first miracle at Cana, that the servants brought the good news to their master – to the reason. The reason is notified by the lower powers of body, that the new life is present – the new way of prayer.

¹⁰¹ The first miracle in Cana was about giving the new life – wine.

After it happened the whole household began to believe - now the whole body prays the Lord, it is no more just an action of the official (of the reason only), but whole man worships God.

Thus, we can see that the Gospel as the whole calls man to the union with God, and when one takes detailed look, the message for him is the same. Details build the whole and the whole is the same as details are. In the chosen passages of Gospel of John, we have discovered the new message about the power of prayer. This discovery was based on the better and deeper understanding of prayer as the mean for man's deification provided in previous chapters. In all the chosen passages we could see man seeking rest – the happiness and his insufficiency to attain it without the help of God. Man incompleteness is changed to completeness by Jesus entering man's heart, which can happen through the prayer of the heart. All these knowledges about the prayer, methods of prayer, and the interpretation of the Scripture build together the spirituality of the prayer of the heart as taught by the hesychasts.

CONCLUSION

Prayer of the Heart is a real treasure of the eastern spirituality, despite of the fact that it is not well understood and accepted by the western scholasticism especially in the field of man's participation in the Divine light. Furthermore it is even not well understood and practiced by eastern Christians. As was shown in the previous chapters, the main points of misunderstanding or misuse of this prayer are to build one's spiritual life only on this prayer excluding the sacramental dimension of man deification, especially the Eucharist and baptism, and also omitting the moral dimension of deification based on our resemblance with God in charity and humility. These three elements i.e. sacraments, virtues, prayer, must be present together, since only in their union man can be elevated to the Divine. The hesychastic movement, in which the prayer of the heart has its foundation, emphasizes all these dimensions of man's divinization, but provides special teaching about prayer that involves whole body and makes it participate in the divine light. The purity of the prayer is based on the inner stillness and detachment from worldly matters as was described in methods of prayer by St. Simeon. In practicing this kind of prayer some misunderstandings can be seen – to see it as a psychosomatic exercise only, self-focused, not God-centered act, in which the mean of self-control become the aim itself, and the accidental pleasure that can one experience while praying become the purpose of prayer. All these points must rise right objections, not towards the prayer itself, but only towards the way how one uses it. The aspect of participation in divine light during the prayer was widely disputed between western scholastic tradition, presented by bishop Barlaam, and eastern tradition defended by St. George Palamas, and is still not fully accepted by western theology. Scholastic - western spirituality has solely the soul oriented approach to prayer, while the hesychasm sees the man as a whole, his soul and body, which acts actively during the prayer, and not just only in a passive way. Consequently the fruits of the prayer rising in the soul are distributed to the body and could be even seen by bodily senses. The body is deified along with the soul, it is

actually “illuminated” by the grace of God through the prayer, even during earthly life, which was experienced by many saints themselves. This fuller understanding is missing in many popular books, in the primary sources or in the texts about unceasing inner prayer. One, who incorrectly follows the way of prayer of the heart without full knowledge, can cause harm to his spiritual life.

The last chapter was to provide the fuller notion of spirituality of constant prayer based on the interpretations of the Scripture. Previous chapters about the prayer itself provided the key for the interpretation of Gospel in last chapter. This key was used on some part of the Gospel of John, and in its mystical level of interpretation the image of prayer of the heart was revealed. In the Gospel of John, it is Christ who acts, and similarly, it is Christ who act in our life through the inner prayer. This pattern of “God acting in man through prayer” is the same as is seen in the Scripture – “Jesus acting among men” in their needs and weaknesses. Thus both - prayer and the Scripture, are about the same, i.e. to save man, to bring him to the union with God, which means to deify him.

At the end the quotation from St. John Climacus should remind us that to know how to pray, is based only on experience from the prayer itself that is given by God:

“It is impossible to realize the beauty of prayer from the teaching of others. Prayer has a Teacher all its own – God – who teaches man knowledge, and grants the prayer of him who prays, and blesses the years of the just. Amen”¹⁰²

102 John Climacus. *The ladder of divine ascent*, Step 28, 258.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(in alphabetical order in each category)

Bible Source

The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition. Catholic Biblical Association.
San Francisco: Ignatius press, 1966.

Non-Christian Sacred Texts Sources

The Holy Qur'an. Translated by Abdulah Yusuf Ali. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 2000.

Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines. Edited by W.Y.Evans-Wentz. London: Oxford university press, 2000.

Christian Patristic Sources (1st – 8th century)

Augustin of Hippo. “De beata vita, Happy life” in *The Fathers of the Church, Saint Augustine.* Translated by Ludwig Schopp. New York: Cima publishing Co., 2008.

Augustine of Hippo. “Lectures or Tractates on the Gospel according to St. John,” in *St. Augustin: Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homilies on the First Epistle of John, Soliloquies.* Edited by Philip Schaff. Translated by John Gibb and James Innes, vol. 7. A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series. New York: Christian Literature Company, 1888.

Evargius Ponticus. *The praktikos, Chapters on Prayer.* Translated by J.E.Bamberger. Cistercian Publications: Messachusetts, 1970.

Gregory Palamas. *The Triads.* Translated by N. Gendle. New Jersey: Paulist Press, Inc, 1983.

John Climacus. *The ladder of divine ascent.* Translated by Colm Luibheid. Mahwah, USA: Paulist Press, 1982.

St. Athanasiu. *On the Incarnation.* Translated by Jon L. Berquist. Atlanta: Chalice Press, 1999.

St. Athanasius. “Contra arianos.” in Mersch Emile. *The Whole Christ.* Translated by Kelly J.R.. London: Dennis Dobson LTD, 1938.

St. Basil the Great. “On the Spirit,” in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers.* Edited by Philip Schaff, Henry Wace. Massachusetts: Hendricksons Publishers, 1995.

St. Cyril of Alexandria, “1st letter of Cyril of Alexandria to Succensus”, in Fr John A. McGuckin’s. *St. Cyril of Alexandria. The Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts.* New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2004.

St. Gregory of Sinai. “On stillness,” in *Philokalia.* Edited by Nicodemus the Hagiorite. Translated by G.E.H. Palmer, P. Sherrard and K. War. Vol. 4. 5 vols. London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1998.

St. Irenaeus. “Against Heresies,” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers.* Edited by Alexander Roberts,

James Donaldson. Massachusetts: Hendricksons Publishers, 1994.

St. John Chrisostom. "Mt. Hom. 50. P.G., Vol. 58, 509," in Mersch Emile. *The Whole Christ*, Translated by Kelly J.R.. London: Dennis Dobson LTD, 1938.

St. Maximos the Confessor. "Letter 22," in John Meyendorff. *St. Gregory Palamas and Orthodox spirituality*, New York: St. Vladimir's seminary press, 1974.

Christian Post-Patristic Sources

Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologica*. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. 5 vols. Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981.

St. Dimitry of Rostov. "The inner closed of the Heart," in St. Theophan the Recluse. *The path to Salvation*. Translated by S. Rose London UK: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1966.

St. John Paul II. *Angelus*. August 11th 1996.

St. Nikiphoros. "On Watchfulness," in *Philokalia*. Edited by Nicodemus the Hagiorite. Translated by G.E.H. Palmer, P. Sherrard and K War. Vol. 4. 5 vols. London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1998.

St. Siluan the Athonite. *Pisanija starca Siluana*, Translated by Tazlarova. Kostelni Vydri: Karmelitanske nakladatelstvi, 2010.

St. Simeon Metaphrastis. "Paraphrase of the homilies of St. Makarios of Egypt," in *Philokalia*. Edited by Nicodemus the Hagiorite. Translated by G.E.H. Palmer, P. Sherrard, and K War. Vol. 3. 5 vols. London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1986.

St. Simeon the New Theologian. "The Three Methods of Prayer," in *Philokalia*. Edited by Nicodemus the Hagiorite. Translated G.E.H. Palmer, P. Sherrard, and K. War. Vol. 4. 5 vols. London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1998.

Theophan the Recluse. *The path to salvation*. Translated by fr. Seraphim Rose. Platina USA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1996.

Secondary Literature

Charles George Herbermann et al., eds.. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol IV. 15 Vols. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 1967.

Code of Canon Law Latin-English edition. Washington: Canon Law Society of America, 1983.

George C. Papademetriou. *Introduction to St. Gregory Palamas*. Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2004.

Georgios I. Mantzaridis. *The Deification of man, St. Gregory Palamas and the Orthodox Tradition*. Translated by Sherrard Liadain. New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984.

Hilarion Alfejev. *The Spiritual World of Isaac the Syrian*. Kalamazoo Michigan: Cistercian

Publications, 2000.

Hilarion Alfeyev. *St. Symeon the New Theologian and orthodox tradition*. New York: Oxford University press, 2005.

John Meyendorff. *St. Gregory Palamas and orthodox spirituality*. Translated by Adele Fiske. New York: Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974.

N.A.Motovilov. *A Conversation of Saint Seraphim of Sarov with N. A. Motovilov; A Wonderful Revelation to the World*. Translated by Jordanville Press. Jordanville, New York: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1962.

The HarperCollins encyclopedia of Catholicism. Edited by Richard P. McBriend. New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1995.

The Way of a Pilgrim. Translated by Nina A. Toumanova. New York: Dover publications, Inc., 2008.