

L'INSTITUT DE THÉOLOGIE ORTHODOXE DE MONTREAL



MONTREAL INSTITUTE OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY



BULLETIN

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Vœux pour Pâques / Paschal Greeting	2
Mot du président / From the President	3
Communication du doyen 2019	5
Organigramme de l'Institut / Organizational Structure of the Institute	6
Le programme académique • Academic Programme	
Certificat de 1 ^{er} cycle en théologie orthodoxe / Undergraduate Certificate in Orthodox Theology	7
Diplôme de deuxième cycle en théologie orthodoxe / Graduate Diploma in Orthodox Theology	8
Le Programme académique • 2019-2020 • Academic Programme	9
Cours offerts automne 2019 • Courses offered Fall 2019	
THL-1239 – Introduction to the Old Testament	9
THL 6208 – Themes particuliers de théologie orthodoxe : PHILOKALIA	9
A Note About Peter Bouteneff, this year's Colloquium speaker	9
Peter Bouteneff: How to Be a Sinner, 4: Reflections on the Self	10
Self-Knowledge	10
The Power of Naming	11
Identifying My Self – or Selves?	14
Epilogue	16
Profil d'étudiants diplômés • Diploma Student Profiles:	
Paul Pasarivakis	17
In his own words	17
Understanding the justice of God in the light of suffering	17
The significance of work	18
Why should I go to Church?	18
Avis / Notices	
Avis de convocation à l'assemblée générale / Notice of Annual General Assembly Meeting	19
Vos commentaires sont importants! / Your Feedback Is Important!	19
Appel de fonds / Funding Appeal	19
Site web du ITOM • MIOT Website	22
Avis de publication / Publication Notices	19–21, 23
Le Colloque annuel de l'ITOM 2018 / The MIOT Annual Colloquium 2018	26
Le colloque pour cette année (2019) / This Year's Colloquium (2019)	26
Lauréats (2018) / Award Recipients (2018)	26

PEINTURE: carte de vœux de Pascha, peint à la main par SCHEMANUN MARYAM (McCLUNEY). **PAINTING:** Pascha greeting card, hand painted by SCHEMANUN MARYAM (McCLUNEY).



LA RÉSURRECTION, SAINT MONASTÈRE DE DAPHNI, ATHÈNES, 11^{ÈME} SIÈCLE
THE RESURRECTION, HOLY MONASTERY OF DAPHNI, ATHENS, 11TH CENTURY



L'INSTITUT DE
THÉOLOGIE
ORTHODOXE DE
MONTRÉAL
MONTREAL
INSTITUTE
OF ORTHODOX
THEOLOGY

NOUS VOUS SOUHAITONS
UN JOYEUX RENOUVEAU
DANS LE SEIGNEUR
RESSUSCITÉ

WISHING YOU A
JOYOUS RENEWAL
IN THE RISEN LORD

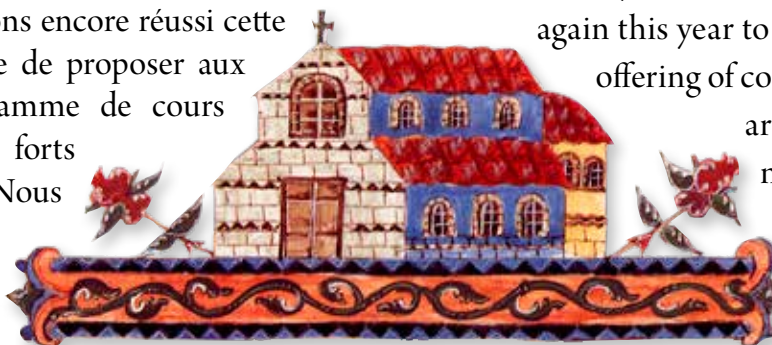
MOT DU PRÉSIDENT

Chers membres et amis,

C'EST AVEC PLAISIR que je vous propose la neuvième édition de notre Bulletin. Cette année, nous fêtons 21 ans d'offre de cours universitaires en théologie orthodoxe au Québec. En 1998, nous avons entrepris cet exploit unique avec le soutien de l'ancienne Faculté de Théologie de l'Université de Sherbrooke. L'Institut lui-même a été fondé en 2010 en tant qu'organisme juridique indépendant. Et depuis 2015, nous sommes affiliés à la prestigieuse Faculté de Théologie de l'Université Laval à Québec. Ce fut un voyage merveilleux, rempli de rencontres bienheureuses avec des centaines d'étudiants et d'amis au fil du temps.

Ce Bulletin de cette année est consacré au thème de notre colloque, « Le premier parmi les pécheurs : une exploration de l'identité du pécheur ». La reconnaissance de nous-mêmes en tant que pécheurs est une première étape indispensable dans le défi de nous libérer de nous-mêmes et du péché. Nous sommes heureux de pouvoir fournir un extrait du livre du Dr Peter Bouteneff, le conférencier principal du colloque de cette année.

Dans d'autres nouvelles, nous sommes contents de vous annoncer que le site internet est enfin fonctionnel. Et nous avons encore réussi cette année d'être en mesure de proposer aux étudiants toute une gamme de cours portants sur des sujets forts intéressants et variés. Nous anticipons un nouveau commencement avec des cours à distance



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear members and friends,

IT IS MY PLEASURE TO INTRODUCE the ninth edition of our annual Bulletin. This year, we celebrate 21 years of offering university level courses in Orthodox theology in Quebec. In 1998, we started this unique exploit with the support of the now defunct Theology Faculty at the University of Sherbrooke. The Institute itself was founded in 2010 as an independent legal entity. And since 2015, we have been affiliated with the esteemed Faculty of Theology at the University of Laval in Quebec City. It has been a wonderful journey, full of blessed encounters with hundreds of students and supporters along the way.

This Bulletin is dedicated to the theme of our Colloquium, “Chief Among Sinners: The Sinner identity.” The acknowledgment of ourselves as sinners is a fundamental first step in the challenge to free ourselves from both ourselves and from sin. We are pleased to provide an extract from the book of Dr. Peter Bouteneff, the main speaker at this year’s Colloquium.

In other news, we are happy to report that the website is finally online. And we have also managed again this year to provide a rich and varied offering of courses to our students. We are also working on offering new distance courses on line, as well as setting up a special school in iconography.



en ligne et probablement une école spéciale sur l'iconographie.

Avec votre soutien et vos prières continus, nous souhaitons que notre Institut continue à jouer un rôle significatif dans la vie des fidèles pour des années à venir. ✚

With your continued support and prayers, we hope that our Institute will continue to play a meaningful role in the life of the faithful for many years to come. ✚

Dans le Christ / In Christ,

John Hadjinicolaou
John Hadjinicolaou



Voilà quatre ans, en mai 2015 : la signature de l'Entente entre l'Université Laval et l'Institut de théologie orthodoxe de Montréal. — Gilles Routhier, doyen, Faculté de théologie et de sciences religieuses sur la gauche et le Dr John Hadjinicolaou sur la droite.

Concepteur / Designer : Fr. Athanasios Giocas; Mise en page / Layout : Atelier Analogion

COMMUNICATION DU DOYEN 2019

DES RÉALISATIONS, DES RÊVES, DES PROJETS ET DES SOUHAITS

DÉPUIS MAINTENANT QUATRE ANS, l'Institut de théologie orthodoxe chemine avec la Faculté de théologie et de sciences religieuses de l'Université Laval afin d'offrir ensemble des programmes de théologie orthodoxe dans la région de Montréal.

Nous pouvons être fiers de cette réalisation et la célébrer. Cela ne nous empêche pas de caresser des rêves pour l'avenir et d'échafauder des projets. En effet, ces programmes pourraient être fréquentés par un plus grand nombre d'étudiants. Aussi, il revient à chaque personne qui nous lit d'inviter quelqu'un à s'y inscrire. C'est une opportunité exceptionnelle de pouvoir offrir ces programmes; il faut veiller à ce que ces formations profitent au plus grand nombre.

La tradition orthodoxe enrichit le paysage religieux au Québec depuis des décennies. Son apport est important, dans les domaines de la liturgie, de la spiritualité, de l'ecclésiologie et de la théologie. Elle mérite d'être mieux connue et mieux appréciée. C'est pourquoi nous caressons le projet de monter un premier cours à distance, si possible au cours de la prochaine année académique.



Nous le souhaitons et nous travaillons en ce sens. Puisse notre vœu être exaucé. Ce serait bien si un cours d'introduction à l'orthodoxie pouvait être offert partout au Québec et favoriser la connaissance de l'orthodoxie.

La tradition orthodoxe se distingue également par la culture de l'icône. Il s'agit là d'une belle porte d'entrée à l'orthodoxie. Il nous faut favoriser la connaissance de l'orthodoxie en imaginant éventuellement une école d'été sur l'icône.

Depuis que l'Institut de théologie orthodoxe de Montréal est devenu partenaire de la FTSR, un colloque est organisé chaque année. Ne serait-il pas temps d'associer des professeurs de la FTSR à cet événement afin que nous progressions dans la conversation, les uns avec les autres, sur une question

théologique et que nous avancions dans la connaissance les uns des autres. C'est là mon souhait. Si nous voulons que ce partenariat s'approfondisse, il nous faut nourrir les échanges et favoriser la connaissance de l'orthodoxie par un plus grand nombre. En somme, il ne faut pas se contenter de vivre en parallèle, mais se donner des occasions de connaissance, d'échange et de rencontre. ✚



Gilles Routhier

Gilles Routhier
Doyen

Faculté de théologie et de sciences religieuses, Université Laval

ORGANIGRAMME DE L'INSTITUT

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE INSTITUTE

Board of Directors / Conseil d'administration

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Evthymios Katsikas

Dr. Thomas Kolivakis

Olmedo Foncesa

Paul Pasarivakis

Nicholas Pantelopoulos

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Rev. Dr. Athanasios Giocas *Secretary / Secrétaire*

Director of Communications and Public Relations Officer / Directeur des communications et responsable des relations publiques

Paul Pasarivakis *Treasurer / Trésorier*

M^e Stuart Iversen *Strategic Planning / Planification stratégique*

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Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I / Patriarche Œcuménique Bartholomée I *Patriarcat œcuménique Ecumenical Patriarchate*

Metropolitan / Métropolitain Sotirios *Métropole grecque orthodoxe de Toronto (Canada), Ecumenical Patriarchate / Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada), Patriarcat œcuménique*

Metropolitan / Métropolitain Kallistos Ware of / de Diokleia *Patriarcat Œcuménique / Ecumenical Patriarchate*

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Bishop / Évêque Jean Cassian *Archidiocèse orthodoxe roumain des deux Amériques / Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas*

Archbishop / Archevêque Irénée *Archidiocèse du Canada, Église Orthodoxe en Amérique / Archdiocese of Canada, Orthodox Church in America*

Dean / Doyen Gilles Routhier *Faculté de théologie et sciences religieuses, Université Laval*

Affiliated Theologians / Théologiens affiliés

(In Alphabetical Order / Par ordre alphabétique)

Dr. Andreas Andreopoulos

Fr. / P. George Dragas

Dr. Athanasios Papathanasiou

Fr. / P. Vasileios Thermos

Affiliation or Cooperation Requested / Affiliation ou coopération demandée *(In Alphabetical Order / Par ordre alphabétique)*

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

Friends of Mount Athos

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology

Institut de Théologie Orthodoxe Saint-Serge

Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies

Moscow Patriarchate

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Saint Andrew's College in Winnipeg

Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary

Service Orthodoxe de Presse

St. Stephen's Course in Orthodox Theology

St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary

Toronto Orthodox Theological Academy

University of Munich

University of Winchester

Voix Orthodoxes (Radio Ville-Marie)

Internal Committees of the Institute / Comités internes de l'Institut

Committee of Studies / Comité d'études

Students Committee / Comité des étudiants

Communications and Research Committee / Comité des communications et de la recherche

Iconography Committee / Comité en iconographie

Byzantine Music Committee / Comité de musique byzantine

Medicine and Science Committee / Comité en médecine et science

Annual Colloquium Committee / Comité du colloque annuel

LE PROGRAMME ACADÉMIQUE + ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

CERTIFICAT DE 1^{ER} CYCLE EN THÉOLOGIE ORTHODOXE (30 CRÉDITS)

Le certificat vise à former des personnes capables de lire les fondements théologiques et culturels des communautés chrétiennes orthodoxes. Il permettra également de mieux comprendre la contribution religieuse et culturelle des orthodoxes dans une société multiculturelle.

À l'aide de cours bien structurés, les enseignants guident les étudiantes et étudiants dans leurs apprentissages des éléments fondamentaux de l'orthodoxie, et dans l'analyse et interprétation de la théologie, de la spiritualité et des pratiques liturgiques de la tradition chrétienne orthodoxe. En les exposant aux principaux courants théologiques et auteurs orthodoxes, leur esprit critique est développé. Les étudiantes et étudiants sont également introduits à se servir des outils et de la documentation disponible.

Objectifs du programme

Le programme vise à permettre aux étudiants et étudiantes :

- ✦ de mieux connaître la tradition orthodoxe;
- ✦ de situer l'orthodoxie relativement aux autres confessions chrétiennes; et
- ✦ d'enrichir ses connaissances théologiques, spirituels et liturgiques, et d'élargir sa culture générale.

Structure du programme

Les cours sont offerts sous sept grands thèmes :

- ✦ Histoire de l'Église
- ✦ Théologie dogmatique
- ✦ Spiritualité
- ✦ Théologie liturgique
- ✦ Études bibliques
- ✦ Théologie patristique
- ✦ Questions particulières de théologie orthodoxe

UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN ORTHODOX THEOLOGY (30 CREDITS)

The Certificate programme is designed to familiarize students with the theological and cultural foundations of the Orthodox Christian tradition. Students also acquire a better understanding of the unique religious and cultural contributions Orthodox Christian communities make in a multicultural society.

Through well-structured courses, students are introduced to the study of the basic elements of Orthodoxy, and are guided through the analysis and interpretation of Orthodox Christian theology, spirituality and liturgical practices. The main theological currents and authors within Orthodox theology provide the context for the development of critical thinking skills. In addition, students are introduced to the available resources for theological research.

Programme Objectives

The Programme aims to enable its students to:

- ✦ Learn more about the Orthodox tradition;
- ✦ Compare Orthodox Christianity to other Christian groups; and
- ✦ Enrich their knowledge of theology, spirituality and liturgy in the Orthodox tradition, and broaden their general knowledge base.

Programme Structure

Courses are offered according to seven major themes:

- ✦ Church History
- ✦ Dogmatic Theology
- ✦ Spirituality
- ✦ Liturgical Theology
- ✦ Biblical Studies
- ✦ Patristic Theology
- ✦ Specific Topics in Orthodox Theology



LE PROGRAMME ACADÉMIQUE + ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

DIPLÔME DE DEUXIÈME CYCLE EN THÉOLOGIE ORTHODOXE (30 CRÉDITS)

Le diplôme de deuxième cycle offre un savoir spécialisé des aspects clés de la tradition orthodoxe et du destin de l'orthodoxie au 21^e siècle. Bien ancré dans la tradition millénaire de l'orthodoxie, le programme initie les étudiants et étudiantes aux grands auteurs anciens et contemporains de l'Église orthodoxe, leur procurant ainsi une connaissance accrue des grands défis actuels de l'orthodoxie.

Objectifs de formation

Le programme vise à permettre aux étudiantes et étudiants de :

- ✦ se construire un portrait actuel de l'orthodoxie dans le monde;
- ✦ acquérir les connaissances sur les problèmes et défis contemporains de l'orthodoxie;
- ✦ se familiariser avec les textes fondateurs de l'Église orthodoxe;
- ✦ mieux comprendre l'histoire et la théologie de la tradition orthodoxe;
- ✦ réfléchir sur les grands thèmes de la spiritualité et des pratiques liturgiques orthodoxes; et
- ✦ élaborer un projet de recherche en théologie orthodoxe.

Structure du programme

Le programme est structuré selon quatre modules : cours obligatoires; textes fondateurs de l'orthodoxie; aspects historiques et théologie de la tradition orthodoxe; et culture et spiritualité orthodoxe.

Perspectives d'études avancées

Les étudiants qui complètent le Diplôme de 2^e cycle en théologie orthodoxe peuvent avoir leurs crédits reconnus envers une Maîtrise en théologie de l'Université Laval. Les exigences supplémentaires pour l'obtention d'une Maîtrise comprennent la rédaction d'une thèse supervisée. Il est également possible de poursuivre un Doctorat en théologie dans un domaine lié à la théologie orthodoxe. Pour de plus amples renseignements sur les possibilités d'études supérieures, veuillez communiquer avec l'Institut de théologie orthodoxe de Montréal.

GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN ORTHODOX THEOLOGY (30 CREDITS)

The Graduate Diploma provides more specialized knowledge of key aspects of the Orthodox tradition, and aims to engender a broad reflection on the destiny of Orthodox Christianity in the 21st century. Strongly rooted in the age-old tradition of the Orthodox Church, the programme initiates students to both ancient and modern-day authors in order to provide a solid basis for understanding the major contemporary challenges facing Orthodoxy.

Programme Objectives

Through the use of well-structured seminars and lectures, the programme aims to enable students to:

- ✦ Assess the current status of the Orthodox Christian world;
- ✦ Learn about contemporary issues and challenges faced by the Orthodox Church;
- ✦ Familiarize themselves with the founding texts of the Orthodox tradition;
- ✦ Improve their understanding of the history and theology of the Orthodox Church;
- ✦ Reflect on major themes of Orthodox spirituality and liturgical practice; and
- ✦ Develop a research project in Orthodox theology.

Programme Structure

The programme is structured according to four modules: Required Courses; Foundational Texts of the Orthodox Church; Historical Aspects and Theology of the Orthodox Tradition; and Orthodox Culture and Spirituality.

Advancement Perspectives

Students who complete the Graduate Diploma in Orthodox Theology can obtain credit towards a Master's Degree in Theology from Université Laval. Additional requirements for a Master's Degree include a supervised thesis. It is also possible to pursue a Doctorate in theology in an area related to Orthodox theology. For more information concerning the possibilities of advanced graduate studies, please contact the Montreal Institute of Orthodox Theology.



ANNÉE ACADÉMIQUE • 2019-2020 • ACADEMIC YEAR

OFFRE DES COURS • 2019-2020 • COURSES OFFERED

AUTOMNE / FALL 2019

THL 1239 Introduction to the Old Testament
Prof. David Goodin (CERT.)

THL 6208 Thèmes particuliers de la
théologie orthodoxe PHILOKALIA
Prof. John Hadjinicolaou (DIPL.)

HIVER / WINTER 2020

THL 2232 Bible and Liturgy: Focus on the
Triodion, Great Lent and Holy Week

Prof. Fr. Athanasios Giocas (CERT.)

THL 6207 Doctrine de la foi dans le
perspective orthodoxe / Doctrine of the
Faith in an Orthodox Perspective
Prof. Paul Ladouceur (DIPL.)

ETE / SUMMER 2020

THL 1242 et/and THL 6225 The Art of the
Icon / Iconology and Religious Art

Prof. John Hadjinicolaou (DIPL. ET/AND CERT.)

COURS OFFERTS AUTOMNE 2019 • COURSES OFFERED FALL 2019

Certificat de théologie orthodoxe Certificate in Orthodox Theology

THL-1239 – Introduction to the Old Testament

Professor Dr. David K. Goodin

Contact: david.goodin@mcgill.ca

Montreal Institute of Orthodox Theology at Université Laval
Thursdays, 7 – 10 PM (subject to change)

550 Sherbrooke West, 3rd Floor Classroom (Downtown Montreal Campus)

This course examines the history and the theology of the Old Testament from an Orthodox Christian perspective.

The course aims to offer students an easily approachable introduction to the history and theology of the Old Testament, with the goal of enhancing their own experience of Orthodoxy and providing an objective foundation to guide future studies.

This is to be accomplished through classroom lectures, in-class discussion, weekly quizzes, and a final paper. Themes to be covered include the history, canonicity, diversity, and unity of the Old Testament as it has been received by the Orthodox Church. We will also explore the reception and interpretation of the many canonical and non-canonical books that have influenced Orthodox tradition, particularly with respect to patristic exegesis and liturgical expression.

Our course will guide students through the theology of the Old Testament as it is revealed in the New Testament, the Liturgy, and in Orthodox theology and tradition.

New students, and students of all education levels and faith backgrounds are welcome!

No prerequisites required

Continuing education and non-degree seeking students are welcome to enroll

To enroll, contact: Director Dr. John Hadjinicolaou (johnhadjinicolaou26@gmail.com)

Diplôme de théologie Diploma in Orthodox Theology

THL 6208 – Themes particuliers de théologie
orthodoxe : PHILOKALIA

Professor : Dr. John Hadjinicolaou

johnhadjinicolaou26@gmail.com

Montreal Institute of Orthodox Theology at Université Laval

Mondays starting September 09, 2019, from 7-10 p.m

550 Sherbrooke West, 3rd Floor Classroom (Downtown Montreal Campus)

PHILOKALIA is an anthology of neptic texts of the eastern orthodox church and tradition compiled by St Nicodemos the Hagiorite and St Makarios of Corinth from the 4th to the 14th century which articulate a particular spiritual ethos - the love of beauty - which has been the blessing and quintessence of the eastern spirituality.

A series of well structured seminars will address the historical roots and envelopments of the Philokalia from the desert fathers to our present days. We will study the lives and works of a number of spiritual masters and their struggles towards deification from St Antony the Great, Evagrius of Pontus, Mark the Ascetic, St Diadochos of Photiki, St Maximos the Confessor, St John of Damascus, Peter of Damascus, Nicetas Stethatos, St Symeon the New Theologian, St Gregory Palamas, Kallistos and Ignatios Xanthopoulos, and Kallistos Telikoudis.

A separate section of the course will deal with a number of philokalic themes ased on the writings of these fathers like pure prayer, love, contemplation, desire, hesychia, intelligence, thoughts, salvation, deification, humility, mercy, spiritual father, discernment, ascesis, impassivity, certainty.

This exploration will show the tangible and untangible effects of the Philokalic enewal of the 18th century and its ramifications to our times and for the years to come. A particular world view which will endorse and underline Dostoyevsky's insightful cry "that beauty will save the world".

A NOTE ABOUT PETER BOUTENEFF, THIS YEAR'S COLLOQUIUM SPEAKER

PETER BOUTENEFF teaches courses in ancient and modern theology, spirituality, and the arts, at St Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary, where he is Professor of Systematic Theology. After taking a degree in music in 1983 he lived and worked in Japan, and traveled widely in Asia and Greece. He has an M.Div. from St Vladimir's Seminary and a doctorate from Oxford University, where he studied under Kallistos Ware. He has worked for many years in theological dialogue, at the World Council of Churches, and has written extensively on Orthodox relations with other churches. He has broad interests in theology ancient and modern, but as a great fan of music and cinema, and as a practicing musician, he is also committed to exploring the connections between theology and culture.

He conceived of and edits the widely popular "Foundations" series

for SVS Press, to which he has contributed *Sweeter than Honey: Orthodox Thinking on Dogma and Truth*. In 2008 he authored a study, *Beginnings: Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narratives*, of how early Christians read the Genesis creation accounts.

Professor Bouteneff directs the *Arvo Pärt Project* at St. Vladimir's Seminary, an in-depth endeavor involving concerts, lectures, and publications. He is author of *Arvo Pärt: Out of Silence*, which has been hailed "a must-read for any listener or performer of Pärt's music." He is now director of the SVS Sacred Arts Initiative. His most recent book is *How to Be a Sinner*, which offers compassionate reflections on the benefits (and the pitfalls) of understanding ourselves as "sinners." He directs the choir at his parish, Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, in Yonkers, N.Y. ✚

PETER BOUTENEFF: HOW TO BE A SINNER

4: Reflections on the Self¹

"Take pains to enter your innermost chamber and you will see the chamber of heaven, for they are one and the same, and in entering one you behold them both."

Tito Colliander²

"My testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going."

John 8.14

"Enter into yourself, dwell within your heart, for God is there."

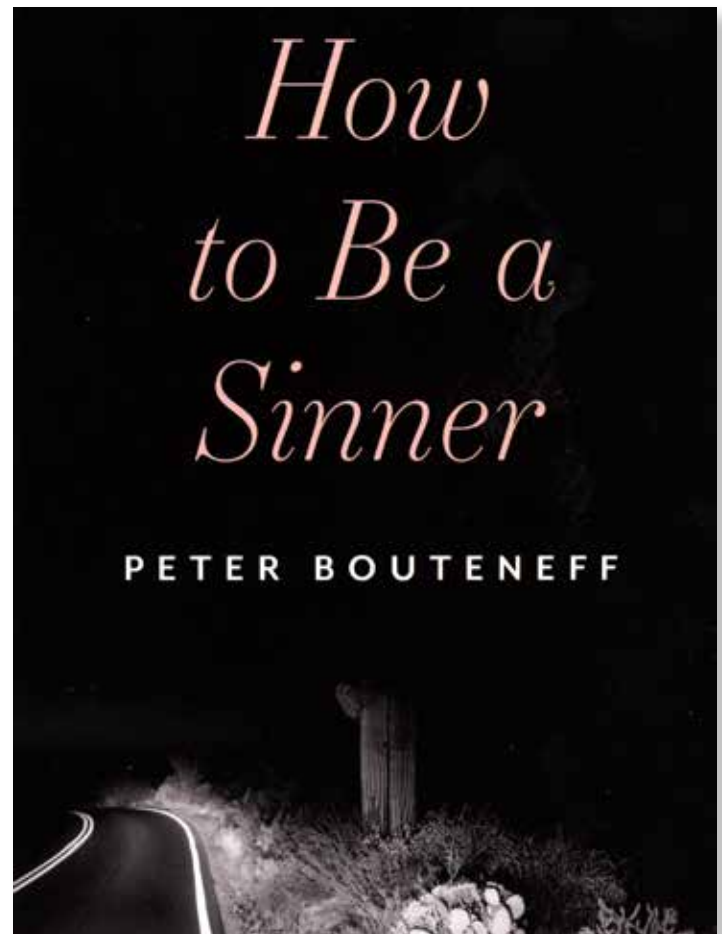
Ephrem the Syrian³

We've been discussing recognizing ourselves as sinners, seeing this as a gift that God gives for our enlightenment and our emancipation. This recognition is a process, perpetually growing in understanding ourselves and how we relate to God and the world. We now need to look more comprehensively at the implications of the discovery of self. Self-knowledge has long been considered a virtue. In the sixth century BC, "Know thyself" was inscribed on the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, in Greece. But our conception of "the self" has changed over the centuries. In this chapter, we will talk about coming to know it as we define it today, naming it, and wrestling with it.

Self-Knowledge

There has been a great deal of attention paid to the self at all levels of contemporary society. The advent of psychoanalysis in the 20th century spawned a new interest in and respect for the practice of a person's internal exploration, something that has evolved through diverse schools of psychology and psychiatry.

As a part of self-exploration, the 20th century also got people thinking in new ways about collective identities, such as those related to nationality, gender, race, socioeconomics, and others. What does it mean to be a man or a woman? A



member of the middle class in North America? How does the color of your skin affect your place in the world? The matrix of all these different sub-distinctions has led to the idea that identity itself is a cultural construct. That is, identity as such doesn't biologically exist. We ourselves, and those in our surroundings (either with us or against us) invent and shape it. So we can speak of a "self," but the characteristics by which that self is known are arbitrary and therefore malleable.

The fundamental insight that we play a role in constructing our identity can be helpful in our exploration of self. Putting a stop to the habitual negatives we may bombard ourselves with that help form our sense of ourselves ("I stink at math," "I'm too fat") can release us from artificial limitations. But beware of concluding that the self or identity does not exist. Christian tradition has it that God has bestowed on each of us a unique self, an identity, a name. That is one reason that our forebears in the Church place such great stock on the knowledge of the self.

¹ Peter Bouteneff, *How to Be a Sinner: Finding Yourself in the Language of Repentance* (Yonkers, N.Y.: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2018), Chapter 4: pp 65–89

² Tito Colliander, *The Way of the Ascetics* (Yonkers, N.Y.: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985 [1960]), p 8

³ Synaxarion for St Ephrem, see online at oca.org/saints/lives/2017/01/28/100328-venerable-ephraim-the-syrian.

Take St Basil the Great, the fourth-century spiritual giant from Caesarea in Asia Minor. The “self” in his day wasn’t considered a construct. In a homily called “Take Heed to Yourself,”⁴ St Basil doesn’t tell people to “think of themselves in new ways.” He doesn’t tell them to “transcend stereotypes about class and gender.” Instead he describes the practical benefits and spiritual importance of self-knowledge. Those benefits include healthier relationships and a right life, he writes, but true knowledge of self leads to something far greater: access to the knowledge of God.

So, we may ask, how do you come to know your inner self? St Basil is realistic about the limits of what we can learn. A significant part of his career as a theologian was devoted to arguing against people who believed that God was perfectly comprehensible. His theological insight had shown that idea to be outrageous. Aetius of Antioch, a follower of the Arian heresy, had written: “I know God with such perfect clarity and I understand and know him to such a degree, that I understand God better than I understand myself.”⁵ To which St Basil replied, “I do not even know myself! How can I presume to know the unknowable God?” Both viewpoints suggest that knowing ourselves is somehow related to knowing God. St Basil, however, rightly sees that we can attain only partial apprehension of *either*.

How, then, do we come to an even partial knowledge of God? By his “energies,” says St Basil (or “activities,” from the Greek *energeia*).⁶ In other words, we know who God is by what God does. We can apply the same principle to ourselves. By which I mean that knowing ourselves is likewise achieved partly through perceiving our own “energies”: we learn about ourselves by observing what we do, what we want – from our actions, our deeds, our will.


What does that mean practically? In many ways, knowing yourself is like knowing anything. A lot of it comes naturally, just by living an increasing number of days. Some might be deliberate and cultivated, in the sense that you might make a conscious decision to study your inner patterns and tendencies. Some might involve discussing your impressions with a

trusted adviser. Different kinds of insights, perhaps overlapping, may come from intentional (and possibly confessional) conversations with a friend, a spiritual father/mother, a psychologist, a psychiatrist, or even a child. I wouldn’t necessarily place these all on a par with each other. But each in its way has the potential to yield powerful insight. “Advisors” to avoid are those who claim spiritual or psychic powers, especially through Tarot, crystals, or other such means, as their insights may be deceitful, even demonic.

Here we should return to this book’s main theme. A searching reflection on ourselves will result in many observations, one of which, inevitably, is that we sin. We think, say, and do things that are contrary to the God whom we claim to know and love. We think and act contrary to God’s way and to his law. It is hard to imagine that we might emerge from a probing selfreflection saying, “You know, I’m actually sinless! I’ve fulfilled every commandment, and my heart is always set upon God, and I have never grieved anyone.” Narcissists are liable to think like this. One of Jesus’s inquirers, more likely naïve than narcissistic, tells Jesus that, yes he has fulfilled the commandments: “Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth” (Mk 10.20). How does Jesus react? He looks at him and loves him (v. 21). Then he raises the criteria substantially (and here I paraphrase): You think you are sinless because you didn’t kill anyone or sleep with your neighbor? That’s a good start. Now you have to detach yourself from your riches. You have to consider other people and even devote your life to them, especially the poor.

Virtually nobody with a healthy psyche can truthfully say, on reflection, “I have always done well by God and by neighbor.” Genuine self-examination will show how we sin and fall short of the glory of God. We are sinners. Naming that fact and owning that identity are indispensable to our spiritual journey. Now it is time to ask some legitimate questions about naming ourselves “sinners.” I may understand that “I am a sinner” is a true statement. But could it also potentially be harmful?

The Power of Naming

 ne question on that score has to do with the power of the name. There are many different ways of naming. There are common names we give people (Peter, Patricia, Michael,

⁴ The title of the homily was drawn from a phrase found twice in Exodus (10.28; 34.12) and also in I Timothy (4.16).

⁵ Quoted in Epiphanius, *Panarion* 76.4.2.

⁶ See Philip Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1994), 112f.

Elizabeth), as well as designations we bestow according to function (teacher, musician, plumber), to condition or state (cancer patient, alcoholic, army veteran) or to perceived behavior or status (savior, liar, fool, renaissance man). When we identify someone, in any of these different ways, we may be doing two things. On the one hand, we are identifying an evident reality – someone is a professional, a mother, a schizophrenic, maybe all these at once. But in many cases, we are *prescribing* a reality, for good or for ill. I recall how, once I started naming or identifying myself as a musician, I felt empowered to create music with greater purpose. But what about the kid whose parents constantly identified her as “bad at sports” and “good at math”? Perhaps these qualities were demonstrable by her grades, but as these became part of her identity, they would increasingly *shape* her reality. So what does it mean, in this context, for me to identify myself as a sinner? Would that – should that – contribute to the shaping of my reality? Recognizing myself as a “musician” licensed and encouraged me to flourish artistically, so would recognizing myself as a “sinner” license me to sin with greater purpose and élan?

Naming things is a way of expressing a certain authority over them. When God gives Adam the charge to name all the animals, he is also conferring on the human person the stewardship of the natural world (Gen 2.19). It is a powerful thing: when we name someone or something, we are helping to shape their destiny. Jesus names Peter to express his destiny of being the rock (*petros*) on which the Church would be built (Mt 16.18). God sees fit to change people’s names in order to reflect changes in their functions/destinies: Abram becomes Abraham, Saul becomes Paul. Jesus, which means “God saves” is “the name by which we are saved,”⁷ and each of the many appellations by which Jesus is known (Lord, Door, Redeemer, Peace) has a precise meaning, indicating aspects of his identity as savior.⁸

Think for a moment of how we name our children and the ways this might affect our perception of them. We might baptize our child after a saint, family member, or important friend. Some of us christen our children for significant historical or cultural figures; some may even tag them with aspirational qualities, such as Justice, Felicity, or Serena. But

how we name them will not only reflect but also affect our relationship with them.⁹

The capacity of personal names both to identify and to shape reality carries over into the other words that we use to describe ourselves. Such as “sinner.” What effect does that “name” have on me? Let’s imagine that during the formative years of my life, my family regularly referred to me as a mistake. What if my parents hit me or assaulted me and blamed me for their actions? What if I have been systematically degraded in my society because of my skin color, gender, or social status? If that is my context, then designating myself as a sinner (or one of its variants, such as “a wretch”) could potentially feed into harmful, self-destructive tendencies that I have already established. However, within the total context of the Church, and the deep-level healing and love it ideally embodies, the epithet “sinner” can play a crucial part in the healing of my memories of abuse and in my coming clean. This is complex stuff, and if you find yourself in this situation, it is imperative to seek out the guidance of a wise, compassionate, and experienced spiritual guide, as not every confessor is qualified to help.

But even for those who do not carry such painful associations, the wider question remains. If I dub myself a sinner, am I giving that word a power over myself? Am I in danger of letting “sinner” become entwined with my truest self? Does the identity entrap me into transgressive behavior by enshrining it?

These questions lead us to reflect further on the different kinds of power that names have. Because, despite all we’ve said thus far on the subject, labels do not necessarily determine us. Rather than dictating our behavior, the words we use to describe ourselves can instead be the basis of greater self-understanding and, therefore, of positive transformation. Using personality tests can help us find ways to describe our traits in ways that can be helpful. The Meyers-Briggs is one such. Like others of its type, it may not deliver a stunning epiphany – and remember that some call these kinds of tests into question – but many people have gained insights through them. Such tests are liable to tell you about tendencies in how you take decisions, think

⁷ Acts 2.21, Acts 4.12.

⁸ See Fr Thomas Hopko, *The Names of Jesus: Discovering the Person of Christ through Scripture* (Chesterton, Ind.: Ancient Faith Publishing, 2015).

⁹ We can experience this with pets, too, although we generally name them more whimsically than we do our children. I know of an owner with a large, highly aggressive dog that had been given the name Cujo as a puppy after the rabid St Bernard in a Stephen King horror novel. The moniker became a semi-prophetic, partly because it affected the way people treated the animal. Naming a cat “Princess,” or for that matter, “Cruella Deville,” will not only reflect your own attitudes toward her but will play a part in how she lives out her life.

through problems, react to the company of others, and interact with the world. “Naming” such things can help us to treat other people – and ourselves – in a more realistic and perhaps more forgiving way. They helped me understand some basic things about myself, such as the fact that engaging in small talk can make my skin crawl isn’t because I hate other people but because I’m something of an introvert. I can now observe myself more dispassionately in these circumstances, knowing that this is part of how I’m wired. And I can work with that wiring to find ways of adapting my thoughts and behavior that are realistic and compassionate but still create the spiritual and other changes that I hope for.

Whatever the diagnostic methods we use, we must beware of feeling trapped by our newly discovered identity markers: sensitive or intuitive, judging or perceptive, a “thinking” or “feeling” decision-maker. We can draw insight from such tests as appropriate. They point to tendencies that we can live with or transcend. But to work with them in your journey requires first identifying them.

The necessity of naming a condition is all the more important when it is a malady. In order to heal a sickness, you have to diagnose it, so that you can understand it in its context. In order to transcend a condition, you have to recognize it. That principle very much applies to the condition that we name as sinner. Transcending sin begins with identifying it. Name the sin: claim it. Now, work on it: confess it. Repent. Surrender it to God on your own as well as in community with other transgressors.

One place that you can see these recommendations carried out is within the world of addiction. It’s not that addiction is a sin in itself. Rather, it is a powerful example of the importance of naming a condition in order to help heal it. For example, in the 12-step world one of the first steps in the treatment of addiction involves openly calling yourself an addict. As you begin your recovery, and at every subsequent meeting, you stand up to say, “I am an alcoholic.” “I am a drug addict.” “I have a gambling problem.” You might wonder are they giving such identities too much power, letting them shape their behavior? As in, “If I’m an alcoholic, then drinking is what I do, so . . . pour me a drink!”

Yes, an alcoholic or any other addict in these circumstances is surrendering to that as part of his or her identity. But the right kind of surrender is a powerful step toward

recovery. Meletios Webber, an Orthodox author, weighs in on this aspect of the 12 steps:

The statement “I am an alcoholic,” is packed with meaning.... It means, “I admit I have a problem.” Any alcoholic who can say that is separated from the countless numbers of alcoholics who go to their graves rather than admit they have a problem.¹⁰

Substitute “I am a sinner” and you can see that it, too, means “I have a problem.” It does not define the totality of who you are. You are admitting that you are not whole. That you have a problem. Webber continues:

The statement “I am an alcoholic” means, “I am not God,” or even, “I am not God, [and therefore] someone else must be.” In turn, since someone else is God, the drinker is free to let [God] do his job. The alcoholic is then free to be himself, and to find and settle into whatever the real God may have in store for him.

Likewise, “I am a sinner” means that you have lost command of yourself and you on your own cannot regain it. You must submit to God, who is in control. Understood this way, saying “I am a sinner” means, “God, your will be done.” Lastly, Webber writes, “The title ‘alcoholic’ is worn as a badge of honor, and it gives the bearer a sense of belonging in a group where everyone bears that title.” Translating that into the language of “sinner,” we understand ourselves as sinners-in-community, being redeemed in the communion of the Church.

If we take the 12-step model as our guide, then, we can say that calling ourselves “sinners” is part of acknowledging the problem, submitting to God, and our badge as a member of the Church, the hospital for transgressors. All of us in the Church are. We have to accomplish both by ourselves and together with each other our way forward in Christ toward freedom from sin.

So “sinner” is not a trap but a surrender and therefore – paradoxically – a liberation. It admits brokenness and yields power to God. It signals membership in a community that is the Body of Christ even as it is also constantly becoming that Body through healing faults, mending brokenness, and restoring the divine image. The community comprises broken persons who know that their wholeness rests entirely in Christ and

¹⁰ Meletios Webber, *Steps of Transformation: An Orthodox Priest Explores the Twelve Steps* (Ben Lomond, Calif.: Conciliar Press), 58.

depends entirely on God. I mentioned earlier that recovering addicts (especially those in recovery programs), churchgoers or not, often understand the whole “forgiven sinner” dynamic so well, precisely because they acutely recognize their brokenness and powerlessness, so they surrender those to their Higher Power even as they continue to work on themselves. They are in the business of learning about and being honest with themselves, each other, and their Higher Power. They get it, much better than many of us righteous church-folk.

So if naming is power, it isn’t absolute power. I noted above the importance of God’s assigning Adam to name the animals. It spoke to human stewardship and authority over the animal world. Properly understood, that authority is realized and exercised in humility. The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof belongs to God (Ps 24.1). Ultimately, nothing is mine to own and abuse. Creation exists to praise and serve God. I have to exercise and direct my stewardship with that in mind in order to bring the animals into creation’s praise of the Lord. I can treat my passions likewise. I can name them, take responsibility for them, and strive to direct them according to God’s will. So it is with my transgression. I recognize it for what it is and submit so my weakness can be brought to his service.

Once I have managed to do that, calling myself “sinner” can turn into an immense relief. I begin to feel the weight being lifted from my chest. I have begun my surrender to God. I have surrendered a control that I could not realistically hope to maintain. I am allowing God to be God, giving him space to do his work, in me. I am doing so through the Church, the community of other sinners being healed in Christ. It is a consolation and a relief to know that sin has been defeated and will ultimately be forgiven by the merciful God.

So let’s name ourselves sinners, together, remembering that our brokenness may be the key to bringing God into our lives.

Identifying My Self – or Selves?

The purpose of understanding and even naming myself as a sinner is twofold. It lets me tell the truth about myself in relationship to God and others. It also frees me to acknowledge my need for healing and my surrender to God, as I continue to pursue purity and holiness.

But having established the benefits of acknowledging ourselves as sinners, we need to ask again: Does “sinner”

define the totality of who I am? Is my particular self innately depraved? If it is, is that why the ascetical literature recommends fleeing self-love or despising myself?

At the very least, I have to reconcile those questions and that advice with the conviction that this very substance of mine is made in God’s image. Should I not then consider myself truly good and beautiful? If so, should I not rather love and rejoice in myself?

Or is it that I am somehow composed of two selves, a sinful one to be denied and hated, and a God’s-image-bearing self that needs to be encouraged and loved? Are there parts of myself to love, cherish, and be true to, and parts to be ignored, denied, hated . . . even died to? Further, are these my only two components, or are there more? In which case, *how many people am I?* (The hackneyed advice to “be yourself” was challenged in the Pixar film *The Incredibles*, where a frustrated fanboy named Buddy addresses his hero: “You always say ‘Be true to yourself.’ But you never say which part of yourself to be true to!” The personality, as Buddy realizes, is not a simple monolith.)

St Paul also faced the conundrum of conflicting parts of himself in a stirring confession in his Epistle to the Romans:

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. . . . But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

Virtually all of us can empathize with his inner conflict. Who of us hasn’t said, “I know the right thing to do, but I don’t do it. It almost feels like there’s something foreign living in me.” St Paul continues his lament:

I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

He sees sin as a force, sort of the way we view a virus. In pursuing the idea, he recognizes a pattern in his thoughts and actions:

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

Crucially, even as he admits that his actions betray him, he professes that he has an *inner most self* that is still capable of delight in the divine commandments. Brothers and sisters, all is not lost! Like St Paul, our inmost self also delights in God and his statutes. Our inmost self is good and true. We are not totally depraved. But we are deeply confused. And sin is there to confuse us.

Finally, we see that although St Paul is exasperated with himself, he never doubts his salvation through the Messiah:

*Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? [What is the solution?] Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! . . . There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.*¹¹

Christ has set us free! It is finished. It is consummated. As fraught as this inner wrestling can be, Christ enters this whole broken dynamic, taking it to its furthest point, all the way to *death*, and he transcends and transforms it so that it no longer has the grip on us that it once had. How vital this is to recall, and how easy it is to forget!

So it is important to grasp that Christ has set me free. But I must remember that I nevertheless remain confused. I must keep both of these realities in mind concurrently. As St Silouan of Mount Athos learned from the Lord: “Keep your mind in hell” – recalling your state of degradation – but at the same time “Despair not,”¹² for you know that Christ has won this victory for you, for us all. Because of Christ, we are not enslaved to sin.

But let's return to consider St Paul's “innermost self.” We all have one, our most true self. It is good and delights in God who made it in his image. The 19th century presbyter St John of Kronstadt once wrote:

*Never confuse the person, formed in the image of God, with the evil that is in him, because evil is but a chance misfortune, illness, a devilish reverie. But the very essence of the person is the image of God, and this remains in him despite every disfigurement.*¹³

In the 20th century, in a sermon on the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee, St Nikolai (Velimirovich) of Zhicha preached about a person's inner essence contrasted with the wrong kind of self-love – or the love of “the wrong self,” as it were.

When a person loves only himself, he loves neither God nor his fellow-men. He does not even love the person that is in himself; he loves only his thoughts about himself, his illusions about himself. Were he to love the person in himself, he would love God's image in him, and would quickly become a lover of God and man, for he would be seeking man and God in other people, as objects of his love.¹⁴

The Pharisee openly praises himself, even “prays with himself” (cf. Lk 18.11). St Nikolai shows how the Pharisee's admiration of his own thoughts and illusions about himself set a loathsome example. If you were to follow suit, you would come to hate God and your fellow people. St Nikolai advises, instead, to love the actual person in ourselves so that we can come to love God and other people. That true inner person, or inmost self, is what St Paul calls “the inside” or “inner self” (2 Cor 4.16), as opposed to “the flesh.”

So it is that, at heart, I am a good and precious person. Even so, I apprehend that I am fallen and, as such, I can't be trusted. *I cannot be trusted.* Left to my own devices, my self-will, my passions, I would indeed be lost. I would be a danger to myself and to others and a shame before God.



Now, all of this still might sound as if we suffer from multiple personality disorder. Do we have two selves, an inner to love and an outer to hate? No – what we have is one innermost self that is broken by sin. That sin, these foibles and passions, are not a second self; they are the dirt on the mirror. The Orthodox funeral service reminds us of our real identity when we sing, “I am the image of your ineffable glory, though I bear the brands of transgressions.”

We are, in our true selves, mirrors of the divine. But the glass is dirty, even bent. Not surprisingly, this comes to the fore in church services in Great Lent. During the penitential Canon of St Andrew of Crete, which in many churches inaugurates the Lenten Fast, we sing:

¹¹ Rom 7.15-8.2.

¹² Sakharov, Archimandrite Sophrony, *Saint Silouan the Athonite* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1999 [1991]), 42, then see pp. 208ff.

¹³ From his spiritual autobiography, *My Life in Christ*, Part 2.

¹⁴ St Nikolai Velimirovich, Homily 27, in *Homilies: A Commentary on the Gospel Readings for Great Feasts and Sundays Throughout the Year*, Volume 2 (Birmingham, U.K.: Lazarica Press, 1998), 277.

*O Savior, I have defiled the garment of my flesh and polluted that which you fashioned within me according to your own image and likeness.*¹⁵

I have sullied that which resembles the Lord in me by my choices, the things I have allowed myself to think, say, and do. Because of sin that lives in me. Because of evil.

Generally we don't like to dwell on evil or the devil because, if we become obsessed with the devil, he wins. He also wins, however, if we try to ignore the power that evil has over us. All of us. Even St Paul, the great apostle, who was caught up to the third heaven (2 Cor 12.2), was subject to the force of immorality. Even though Christ has set us free from sin, it continues to exert powerful influence on us.

Who am I? This human being, made in the image and glory of God, greater even than the angels, is the same person who gives in to evil, defiling the universe with impure thoughts and shameful deeds. I am a single, beautiful-but-broken self. My freedom in Christ begins by acknowledging this very paradox.

Epilogue

St Paul's passage about his Jekyll-and-Hyde inner struggles ("For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do") closes with a clear sense of who and what his deepest self really is, in God's love. Which is also how he regards his audience. Toward the end of the same letter, he expresses his wishes for the community: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." He acknowledges their true inner selves: "I myself feel confident about you, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another."¹⁶ Paul is well aware of bickering and dissent within the churches. Many of his letters, after all, were written to quell their arguments. He knows what human beings are made of. He also knows the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit, and how they operate in the community. The final words of his letter to the

Romans, however, are not about sin, darkness, or delusion. That's because when people make themselves aware of their hold over us – and Christ's dominion over them – what's left is hope, joy, and peace.

+++

This chapter covered a lot of concepts. Essentially it was about knowing ourselves realistically and honestly. We saw that it's possible to identify ourselves in limiting ways ("I'm unattractive" or "I'm inept"). But a realistic naming of ourselves as sinners, as sufferers of particular passions and compulsions, is vital to being healed. Despite an apparent split between our good self and our bad self, what lies at our core is an essential goodness, patterned on ineffable divine goodness.

Self-knowledge arrives with time, with age. It comes by paying attention, seeking patterns, scrutinizing the inner impulses that lead to our thoughts, words, and actions. Though much of that work is interior, it also benefits from discussion, perhaps with an experienced counselor, a spiritual director, or a friend. It can happen especially fully and fruitfully within the context of the Church. To that end, it is good to be attentive to its penitential and festal rhythms, and to the texts of its prayers. But we must strive for balance, avoiding both vain self-obsession as well as merely skimming the surface. The key, really, is radical but realistic honesty with ourselves.

Since knowing yourself involves studying what you do, what you think, what you want, many of us find it helpful to keep a journal. The discipline of writing a daily chronicle of your actions, thoughts, and realizations – sometimes shorter, sometimes longer, sometimes insightful and sometimes totally banal – can be part of a program of mindfulness and self-understanding.

As with all of the endeavors within this book, self-knowledge is a gift as much as a process. Pray about it and for it:

O Lord, in your time and as you will, open to me the mystery of my innermost self, created in your Holy Image. Teach me too about the tendencies in me that distort that self. May my self-reflection be neither vain nor perfunctory. May it orient me all the more to your glory. +

¹⁵ See Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware, trans. *The Lenten Triodion* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1978), 200. Alternate translation.

¹⁶ Rom 15.13-14.

PROFILS D'ÉTUDIANTS DIPLÔMÉS • DIPLOMA STUDENT PROFILES

PAUL PASARIVAKIS

Paul was born in Montreal and lives with his family in the city of Laval, Quebec. He is father to three children, Olga, Evangelos, and Angelos-Athanasios. Paul with his wife, Eleni both work in the field of the Banking Industry, where Paul occupies a position in Personal Financial Counseling.

He has completed his studies at McGill University in Management, and has obtained diplomas in Financial Counseling and Certified Financial Planning.



From his early years, however, Paul was interested and pursued studies in Greek culture and the Orthodox faith. In 1983 he became a member of the Institute of Greek Studies and followed courses in history, religion and Greek philosophy. In 1987 he enrolled at the University of Sherbrooke's program of Orthodox Theology, where first he obtained a Certificate, and later on completed a bachelor's degree. Presently, Paul is in the process of obtaining his Master's degree in Orthodox Theology at the University of Laval.

IN HIS OWN WORDS

I thank God for all the blessings He bestows upon all human kind, and for having allowed and guided us to establish in this corner of Northern-East America the Montreal Institute of Orthodox Theology.

An Institute whose studies allow us to discover and discuss the numerous and manifold challenges facing the Orthodox Christian faith in today's society, In turn, this allows us to further comprehend the purpose and meaning of a living faith in Christ.

UNDERSTANDING THE JUSTICE OF GOD IN THE LIGHT OF SUFFERING

How do we understand the justice of God in the light of suffering? And how this is related to what Job says "I heard of You by hearing of the ear, but now my eye see you" (Job 42:5).

There are no easy answers, and this because no one knows the Mysteries of God.

We can only approach the mystery and may attempt to understand who was Job and what the fathers of the Church say about the justice to God in the light of human suffering of a righteous man in relation of God's testing.

For Christians, Job projects Christ who suffered as a servant, high Priest and intercessor on behalf of all.

Saint Gregory the Great writes that also Job is an image of the Church. When we worship in the divine liturgy we offer ourselves to Christ, because first Christ offers Himself for our sake, so we receive acceptance and forgiveness by Him.

Job was a true, blameless, righteous, and God fearing man, and he abstained from every evil thing. (Job 1:1) With the permission of God the devil caused hardship to Job, he lost his children, his property, and then his health. We learn from the life of Job that having faith means we have trust and hope in God.

The character of Job is a type of Christ who suffers unjustly and is rewarded for his godliness.

I will close with a quotation from Saint Chrysostom.

His sufferings were the occasion of great benefit His substance was doubled, his reward increased, his righteousness enlarged, his crown made more shining, his reward more glorious. He lost his children, but he received not those restored, but others in their place, and even those he still held in assurance unto the Resurrection.

Amen

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WORK

Dear fellow student,

What is the significance of work and how can we can perceive the words of Jesus when He answers to the Jews who wanted to kill Him for curing the sick on the day of the Sabbath, by saying to them:

“My Father has been working until now, and I have been working”. (John 5:17)

The significance of work for Christians is so important that we find this in many parts in both of the Old and New Testament. God blessed the work from the very beginning in creation, so that man would work in the creation and offer it back to the Creator. In Gen. 2:15 we read that God “took the man He formed and put him in the garden to tend and keep it”.

With the fall man became self-centered and wants to gather wealth only for himself, like in the parable of the rich man (Luke 12:16-21). God, however, continues to act in history as Creator.

Now, with the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the New Adam, the significance of work takes again its original purpose. The Living God comes freely and acts yesterday, today and tomorrow.

In every Divine Liturgy we call the Holy Spirit to

act freely “to make this bread the precious, Body of Your Christ, and that which is in this cup the precious Blood of Your Christ”.

Saint Athanasius, who lived in the fourth century, wrote “God became man that the human person can be made divine”, to attain deification, and with him may deifies his Living works as well.

Saint Paul uses the term work extensively in his letters, and he writes of the dead works and the Living works. We read about these works in the prayer of Saint Ephraim at the end of every service during the Great lent before Easter:

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk.

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant.

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. Amen.

Therefore, like Saint Paul tells the Corinthians “be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, Knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord”. (1 Cor 15:58)

Amen.

WHY SHOULD I GO TO CHURCH?

The question that many people ask is “why should I go to Church?”

As Christians we should worship our God, The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, at all times, according to Saint Paul, and everywhere we are, whether we are standing or working, we are at home or on the road.

Worshipping though our God in the Church, it is the very centre of the Christian faith.

According to Christian faith the Father blessed the Church, Jesus Christ, His Son founded, and the Holy Spirit protects and guides it.

Church which comes from the Greek word *Ekklisia* means people coming together. In other words, in the Church the faithful come together and participate and experience the Mystical Body of Christ.

There are many reasons why Christians go to the

Church. Some they go for fellowship, others for healing themselves, and then there are others that they go to participate in a divine banquet.

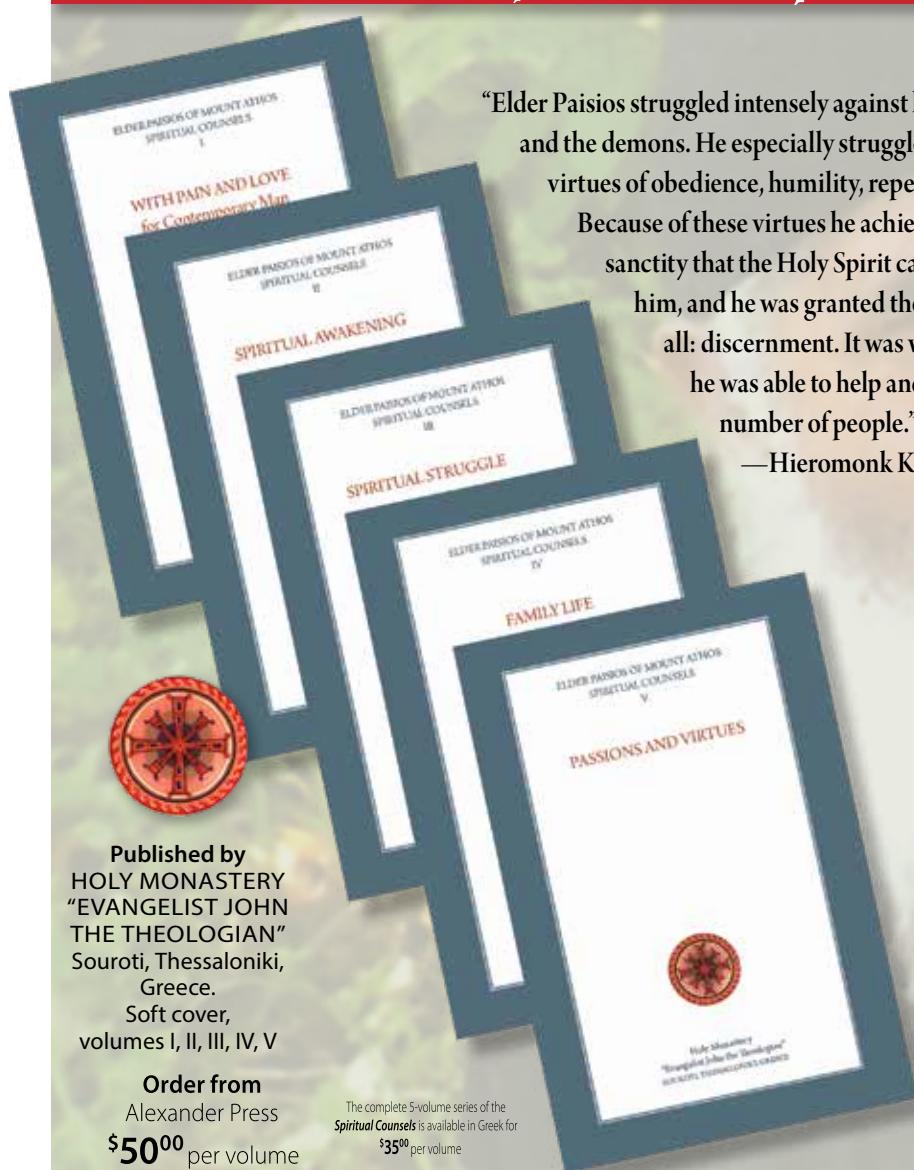
In the divine liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Basil, the priest pronounces: “Your own from your own”.

At the celebration of every divine liturgy, Christ comes in our world, is born in a horse's stable, preaches the Good News of the Kingdom, and performs miracles. He is then betrayed, scorned, sacrificed and finally resurrected.

Finally, when you go in the Church, Christ is among us! If we will not go to the Church, we will lose this opportunity that Christ provides us: to meet and hear Him, and experience His presence in our lives. Then, let us not miss the opportunity within the light of Resurrection.

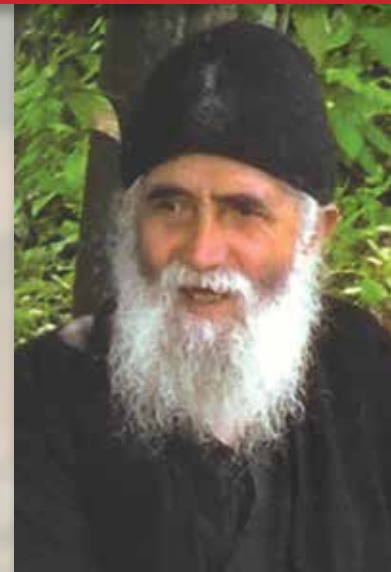
Amen. +

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“Elder Paisios struggled intensely against his own passions and the demons. He especially struggled to acquire the virtues of obedience, humility, repentance and love. Because of these virtues he achieved such great sanctity that the Holy Spirit came to dwell in him, and he was granted the greatest gift of all: discernment. It was with this gift that he was able to help and guide a great number of people.”

—Hieromonk Kosmas



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Avis de convocation à l'assemblée générale

L'Institut de théologie orthodoxe de Montréal (ITOM) invite tous les membres actuels à assister à la réunion annuelle de l'Association qui se tiendra au siège du ITOM le samedi, **8 juin 2019** à 19h00, 2875, avenue Douglas, Montréal (Québec), H3R 2C7. +

Notice of Annual General Assembly Meeting

The Montreal Institute of Orthodox Theology (MIOT) invites all current members to attend the Association's Annual Meeting, to be held at MIOT Head Office on Saturday, **June 8, 2019**, at 7:00 PM, 2875 Douglas Ave, Montreal, Quebec, H3R 2C7. +

Vos commentaires sont importants!

Pour des commentaires généraux ou d'autres questions, s'il vous plaît communiquez avec notre Directeur des communications et responsable des relations publiques, Fr. Athanasios Giocas (courriel : agiocas@gmail.com). +

Your Feedback Is Important!

For general feedback or other questions, please contact our Director of Communications and Public Relations Officer, Fr. Athanasios Giocas (info@montrealorthodoxinstitute.ca). +

Appel de fonds

Des sources stables de financement s'avèrent nécessaires pour permettre à l'Institut de mener ses objectifs à terme. L'Institut a été accordé le statut d'organisme de bienfaisance enregistré auprès des autorités compétentes. S'il vous plaît profitez du coupon de don fourni dans le Bulletin. +

Funding Appeal

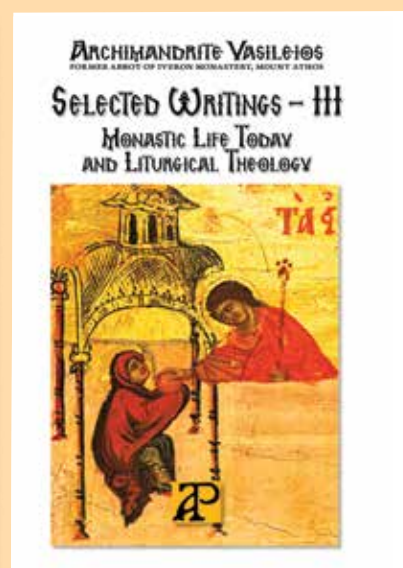
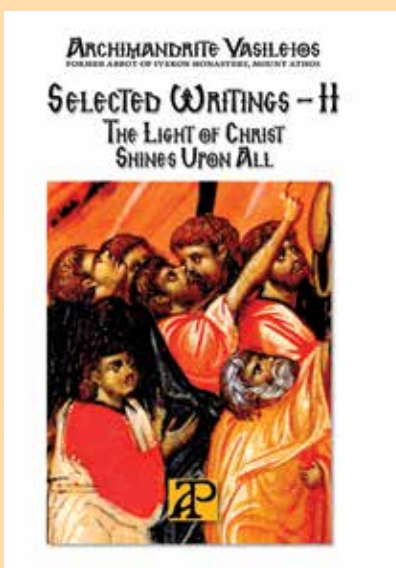
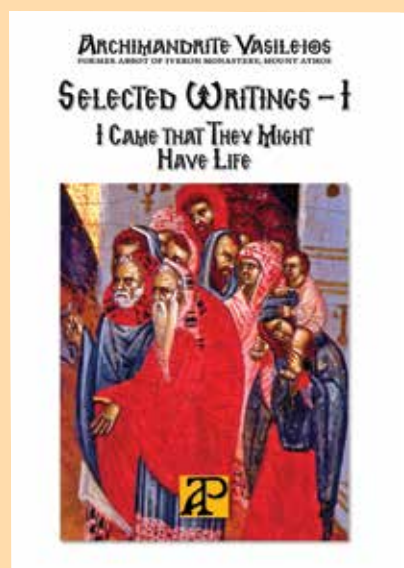
Stable sources of financing will enable the Institute to carry out its objectives. An application for registered charity status has been approved by the relevant government authorities. Please take advantage of the donation slip provided in this Bulletin. +

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ARCHIMANDRITE VASILEIOS

SELECTED WRITINGS

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WITH OTHER SELECTED TEXTS



Archimandrite Vasileios (Gondikakis), formerly Abbot of Iveron Monastery, Mount Athos, was born on Crete in 1936, and studied theology in Athens and in Lyon, France. Upon visiting Mount Athos, he felt “at home”, and decided to remain there. Initially, he stayed in a hermitage close to the Elder Paisios.

In 1968, he was asked to become abbot of the Stavronikita Monastery. In his twenty-two years, 1968–1990, as abbot, a life-giving breeze of renewal and a particular intensity of stillness and watchfulness (hesychia and nepsis), that characterises Athonite spirituality, been treasured by thousands of visitors and pilgrims who, through their personal experience in a very simple and humble way, “taste and see that the Lord is good”. In 1990, Fr Vasileios assumed the leadership of the Iveron Monastery, becoming its abbot reintroducing its cenobitic life. He stepped down as abbot in 2005.

Fr Vasileios was first introduced to the English-public through his well-known work, Hymn of Entry in which he was described by Bishop Kallistos (Ware) as the pioneer of the striking revival and renewal of monastic life on the Holy Mountain, whose message is “a word of life not for Athos only, but for the Christian world as a whole”.

Over the last forty years, Fr Vasileios has spread this message beyond the borders of Mount Athos by participating in, and speaking at, theological meetings, youth conferences, and gatherings of the faithful. His words in this series, bring the English-speaking public more of that “fresh vision of theology, Church, and the world”.

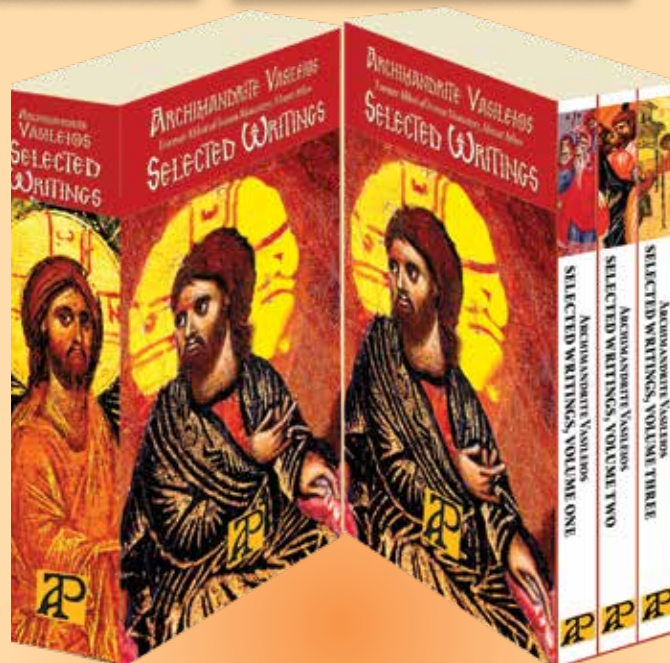
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L'INSTITUT DE THÉOLOGIE ORTHODOXE DE MONTRÉAL

MONTRÉAL INSTITUTE OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY

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Welcome to the Montreal Institute of Orthodox Theology

MIOT NEWS

The academic year 2017-2018 is currently under way. A course description for our Summer 2018 offering is available.

The 2018 Colloquium programme featuring leading iconographer George Kordis is now available. Please confirm your registration.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Stay tuned for our next annual general meeting scheduled for May 2018.

Orthodox News from Around the World:

- Acts of the Apostles 10:44-48; 11:1-10
Source: Online Chapel RSS | Published on 2018-05-04
- John 8:21-30
Source: Online Chapel RSS | Published on 2018-05-04

After several years of planning and organizing, the Institute's website is finally online. The website can be accessed at montrealorthodoxinstitute.ca or instituteorthodoxemontreal.ca. The development of the website was the work of several volunteers, especially Serguei Ploujnikov and Fr. Athanasios Giocas. The website is a work in progress and much information and many

documents remain to be uploaded. The website continues to be very popular, with over numerous unique visitors from the United States, Canada, Greece, Russia-the Ukraine, Brazil, China, Israel, Spain, and Colombia.

Suggestions from members are more than welcome and should be submitted to info@montrealorthodox-institute.ca. +



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1-896800-73-4
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"The people live next to the spring, but suffer from dehydration; they are next to Life and yet are dying. What a tragedy."

I visited some hermitages on various islands, where once the poverty of these places of asceticism pointed to another logic, and I found them now renovated by the secular authorities. The buildings had been restored in external ways using modern technological methods, but their inner beauty had been lost. From being places that expressed the inner nature of the ascetic life they were now simply visual stimuli that satisfied one's curiosity. The spiritual life is no longer a mother tongue in our country. Everything needs translating into the barren dialect of our spiritless and lifeless age.

If There is Life I Want to Live
100 questions and answers on matters of faith

DREAMING HOLINESS

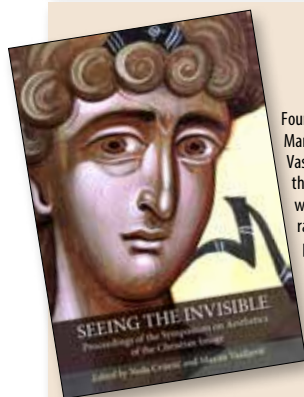
A juxtaposition of contrasts of Orthodox styles and languages – Russian polyphony and Byzantine chant, traditional and contemporary musical trends, male, female and mixed choirs, and different languages, East and West. Some aspects may initially come as a surprise, but the reward for listening is definitely worthwhile – a lively, understandable, modern hymnography. Here also are hymns to our beloved elder, our most holy, Saint Porphyrios, the Panagia, lyrics from the writings of "Kyr" Alexandros Papadiamandis.

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Four well-known professors – Archimandrite John Pantelimon Manoussakis, Cornelia Tsakiridou, George Kordis, and Bishop Maxim Vasiljevic – give us insights into Christian Orthodox Icons, their beauty, their meaning, and their future in the 21st century. For these authors, working within Tradition is not merely the repetition of old models, but rather the application of immutable principles to solving contemporary pictorial problems and a theological aesthetic in which God is to be reached through the senses, including the relationship between the person and the icon.

Published by
Sebastian Press,
Alhambra, California, 2016,
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ARCHIMANDRITE VASILEIOS
ARPROPOS OF THE GREAT COUNCIL OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

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The great and holy duty placed upon the Orthodox is not just to do something, but to manifest the riches of grace that we experience liturgically in the Church. This remains unmoved, though the earth be shaken and the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea.

The Orthodox Church has the consciousness of being the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. That is not simply an assertion, but rather a blessing that stems from the God-man's sacrifice on the Cross which culminates in the Resurrection.

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LE COLLOQUE ANNUEL DE L'ITOM + THE MIOT ANNUAL COLLOQUIUM

Le colloque de l'année dernière (2018)

Un colloque dédié au sujet des icônes a eu lieu le 12 mai 2018. George Kordis ainsi que les Pères Lambros Kamperides et Andreas Andreopoulos ont notamment exploré les fonctions et la théologie des icônes dans l'Église orthodoxe. ✚

Last Year's Colloquium (2018)

On May 12, 2018, a colloquium on the subject of iconography was held. George Kordis, as well as Frs. Lambros Kamperides et Andreas Andreopoulos, among other things the role and theology of icons in the Orthodox Church. ✚

Colloque 2018 / Colloquium 2018



Conférenciers et organisateurs du Colloque 2018 / Speakers and organizers of the Colloquium 2018

Lauréats (2018) / Award Recipients (2018)



Lesley Ann Judge receiving the Award from Dr. George Kordis.



Julie Lehoux receiving the Award from Dr. George Kordis.

Le colloque pour cette année (2019)

Prévu pour le 25 mai 2019, le colloque de cette année est dédié à l'exploration de l'identité du pécheur. Les conférenciers incluent le Dr Peter Bouteneff, le Père Athanase Giocas et le Dr John Hadjinicolaou. Pour plus d'information, consultez le programme du colloque. ✚

This Year's Colloquium (2019)

Scheduled for May 25, 2019, this year's Colloquium is dedicated to exploring the sinner identity. Speakers include Dr. Peter Bouteneff, Fr. Athanasios Giocas and Dr. John Hadjinicolaou. For more information, see the available Colloquium Program. ✚