



THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE
FOR ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN STUDIES

CONTINUING EDUCATION

PROTOPRESBYTER DR DORU COSTACHE

THE ORTHODOX FAITH

WAYS OF KNOWING GOD

SECOND LECTURE: REVELATION THROUGH CREATION AND THE CONTEMPLATION OF GOD'S MARKS IN NATURE

RECAPITULATING THE RELEVANT INFORMATION

- ▶ God desires the salvation of all and that all know the truth (1 Tim. 2)
- ▶ Clement the Alexandrian: "the human being was made primarily to know God" (*Miscellanies* 6.8)
- ▶ God speaks through the harmony of the universe (Romans 1)
- ▶ Saint Maximus (*Difficulties* 33 & 10): the embodiment of the Logos in the principles of creation; the natural law
- ▶ Saint John Damascene (*On the Orthodox Faith* 1): God's revelation through creation
- ▶ Evagrius Ponticus (*The Practical Treatise* 1): "Christianity ... refers to natural contemplation"

REVELATION THROUGH CREATION AND THE CONTEMPLATION OF GOD'S MARKS IN NATURE

- ▶ Lecture outlines
 - ▶ God's revelation through creation
 - ▶ The contemplation of God's marks in nature

REVELATION THROUGH CREATION AND THE CONTEMPLATION OF GOD'S MARKS IN NATURE

- ▶ God's revelation through creation
 - ▶ Genesis 1 and Psalm 148:5 ("he commanded and they were created")
 - ▶ Creation through the Logos/Reason/Word => God speaks the universe into being => the universe is marked by God's signature

REVELATION THROUGH CREATION AND THE CONTEMPLATION OF GOD'S MARKS IN NATURE

- ▶ God's revelation through creation
 - ▶ Psalm 18:1-4
 - ▶ "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims the work of his hands. Day to day utters speech, and night to night proclaims knowledge. There are no speeches or words, in which their voices are not heard. Their voice is gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."

REVELATION THROUGH CREATION AND THE CONTEMPLATION OF GOD'S MARKS IN NATURE

- ▶ God's revelation through creation
 - ▶ Clement the Alexandrian, *Exhortation to the Gentiles* 1
 - ▶ Christ the Logos has sung the cosmos into existence and permeates it continuously => the universe is the song of the Logos as well as a polyphonic orchestra which interprets the song, singing praises to God

REVELATION THROUGH CREATION AND THE CONTEMPLATION OF GOD'S MARKS IN NATURE

- ▶ God's revelation through creation
 - ▶ Saint Athanasius, *Against the Gentiles* 34
 - ▶ "it is further possible to attain to the knowledge of God from the things which are seen, since creation, as though in written characters, declares in a loud voice, by its order and harmony, its own Lord and Creator."

REVELATION THROUGH CREATION AND THE CONTEMPLATION OF GOD'S MARKS IN NATURE

- ▶ If all is so obvious, why do people not see God's signature in the world?
- ▶ Remember the two causes
 - ▶ Unwillingness
 - ▶ Unworthiness
- ▶ One should be willing and one should become worthy to perceiving the divine signature in things

REVELATION THROUGH CREATION AND THE CONTEMPLATION OF GOD'S MARKS IN NATURE

- ▶ The contemplation of God's marks in nature
 - ▶ Back to Evagrius Ponticus
 - ▶ "Christianity is the teaching of our Saviour Christ which refers to ascetic practice, the contemplation of nature and theology" (*The Practical Treatise 1*)
 - ▶ Purification makes one more perceptive with reference to the nature of things; understanding the cosmos facilitates the knowledge of God

REVELATION THROUGH CREATION AND THE CONTEMPLATION OF GOD'S MARKS IN NATURE

- ▶ The contemplation of God's marks in nature
 - ▶ Saint Basil the Great, *Homilies on the Hexaemeron*: the world is a theological teaching-ground
 - ▶ Saint Maximus the Confessor, *The Book of Difficulties*: the saints see through things, reading the divine writing within them = the rationality of the universe, which leads them to its source, the divine Logos

REVELATION THROUGH CREATION AND THE CONTEMPLATION OF GOD'S MARKS IN NATURE

- ▶ The contemplation of God's marks in nature
- ▶ Ecstatic experiences in Adomnán of Iona, *Life of Saint Columba*, book 1
 - ▶ ch.1 "by some divine intuition, and through a wonderful expansion of his inner soul, he beheld the whole universe drawn together and laid open to his sight, as in one ray of the sun."
 - ▶ ch.35 "There are some, though very few, who are enabled by divine grace to see most clearly and distinctly the whole compass of the world, and to embrace within their own wondrously enlarged mental capacity the utmost limits of the heavens and the earth at the same moment, as if all were illumined by a single ray of the sun."

REVELATION THROUGH CREATION AND THE CONTEMPLATION OF GOD'S MARKS IN NATURE

▶ Wisdom

- ▶ Contemporary science has discovered the inner rationality of the universe, represented as a message, but the scientists as well as most people do not see its relation to God, the Sender of the message
- ▶ What could enable contemporary scientists to read the signature of God in the rationality of the cosmos?
- ▶ The same answers
 - ▶ Willingness
 - ▶ Worthiness

REVELATION THROUGH CREATION AND THE CONTEMPLATION OF GOD'S MARKS IN NATURE

- ▶ Next lecture: Historical Revelation, Theophany and Knowing God through Pondering the Scriptural Witness

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