



THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE  
FOR ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN STUDIES

CONTINUING EDUCATION

PROTOPRESBYTER DR DORU COSTACHE

THE ORTHODOX FAITH

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# WAYS OF KNOWING GOD

FIFTH LECTURE: TRADITION AND THE AUTHENTICATION OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

## RECAPITULATING THE RELEVANT INFORMATION

- ▶ A complex framework (Luke 24:30-32)
- ▶ The Spirit guides us towards the fullness of the truth (John 16)
- ▶ Testing the spirits (1 John 2:21-23; 4:1-2)
- ▶ The context in which God can be known: the Church (Ephesians 4)
- ▶ The liturgical space and the profession of the faith: doctrinal statements

## TRADITION AND THE AUTHENTICATION OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

- ▶ Lecture outlines
  - ▶ The validation of divine knowledge within the ecclesial framework or the assembly of the saints
  - ▶ The validation of divine knowledge within tradition
  - ▶ The charismatic validation of divine knowledge

## TRADITION AND THE AUTHENTICATION OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

- ▶ The validation of divine knowledge within the assembly of the saints
  - ▶ “When he [Jesus] was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; and he vanished out of their sight. They said to each other, ‘Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?’ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, who said, ‘The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!’ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.” (Luke 24:30-35)

## TRADITION AND THE AUTHENTICATION OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

- ▶ The validation of divine knowledge within the assembly of the saints
  - ▶ “he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.” (Ephesians 4:11-14)

## TRADITION AND THE AUTHENTICATION OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

- ▶ The validation of divine knowledge within the assembly of the saints
  - ▶ “run together in harmony with the mind of God. For also Jesus Christ ... is the Father’s mind, just as also the bishops who have been appointed throughout the world share the mind of Jesus Christ. For this reason it is fitting for you to run together in harmony with the mind of the bishop... Jesus Christ is sung in your harmony and symphonic love. And each of you should join the chorus, that by being symphonic in your harmony, taking up God’s pitch in unison, you may sing in one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father, that he may both hear and recognise you through the things you do well, since you are members of his Son. Therefore it is useful for you to be in flawless unison, that you may partake of God at all times as well.” (Saint Ignatius of Antioch, *Ephesians* 3.2-4.2)

## TRADITION AND THE AUTHENTICATION OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

- ▶ The validation of divine knowledge within the ecclesial framework or the assembly of the saints
  - ▶ Liturgical elements which secure the mutual validation of each other's faith/knowledge
    - ▶ "Let us love one another, that with one mind we may confess: Father, Son and Holy Spirit"
    - ▶ The Creed
    - ▶ The hymnographical standard (discussed in the previous lecture)

## TRADITION AND THE AUTHENTICATION OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

- ▶ The validation of divine knowledge within tradition
  - ▶ “The faith once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3)
  - ▶ “this is what the elders, the disciples of the apostles, have handed down to us...” (Irenaeus, *On the Apostolic Preaching* 1.1)
  - ▶ “following the Church fathers” (Council of Chalcedon 451)



## TRADITION AND THE AUTHENTICATION OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

- ▶ The validation of divine knowledge within tradition
  - ▶ The criteria of orthodoxy
    - ▶ Divinehumanity
    - ▶ Fellowship
    - ▶ Holiness

## TRADITION AND THE AUTHENTICATION OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

- ▶ The charismatic validation of divine knowledge
  - ▶ The experience of holiness
    - ▶ The supernatural witness of the ecstatic experience
    - ▶ The "sensed" or "conscious" experience of the grace
    - ▶ Deified beings as proofs of knowing God: clothed in glory, wonderworking

## TRADITION AND THE AUTHENTICATION OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

- ▶ The charismatic validation of divine knowledge
  - ▶ Charismatic validation
    - ▶ Always listen to your elder (Saint Antony the Great)
    - ▶ Gospel and Spirit (Saint Symeon the New Theologian)
    - ▶ The saints give life (Saint Gregory Palamas)
    - ▶ The testimony of Scripture and one's own experience (Saint Silouan the Athonite)

# TRADITION AND THE AUTHENTICATION OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

## ▶ Wisdom

- ▶ Knowing God is achievable directly and indirectly
- ▶ Any knowledge should be tested
- ▶ Orthodoxy is a framework where the testing of the acquired divine knowledge is both possible and authenticated
  - ▶ Community
  - ▶ Tradition
  - ▶ Holiness

## TRADITION AND THE AUTHENTICATION OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

- ▶ Next lecture: Cataphatic Expressions, the Icon and the Apophatic Reverence

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