

**PERSONHOOD, HUMAN BROKENNESS AND THE THERAPEUTIC
CALLING OF THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH:
A PASTORAL APPROACH TO MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND
DISABILITY**

by

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ABSTRACT

After many years of practical experience working alongside people with disabilities and mental health issues, I posed the question how should the Orthodox faith, to which I ascribe, influence and affect my professional practice? How does the Eastern Orthodox faith understand the human person, brokenness, suffering and in particular disability and mental health issues? How does the theology of a Triune God and humanity created in the divine image apply to human brokenness? What does the Orthodox Tradition say about person centred practice, about wholeness and healing, and the practical application of this faith?

While this thesis is based primarily on the teachings of the Eastern Orthodox faith using Scripture, Tradition, patristic authors and some more contemporary Orthodox and western writers, it has also used the synthesis of practical and pastoral practice throughout to highlight the practical nature of the Orthodox Tradition. By way of introduction some experiences of personhood in relation to disability and mental health issues are explored.

In relation to day to day experiences of disability, mental health and personhood, what does the Orthodox faith say about personhood? The Orthodox Tradition, since the early Church, in its unbroken history of ecclesial practice and theology, has revealed a synergy between the Triune God and humanity created in the divine image. Orthodoxy not only means right belief and the way of expressing this through liturgical action in loving communion (*koinonia*) as the body of Christ (*ecclesia*), but right glory (to God), i.e. doxology. It is through this beautifully and

inextricably bound relationship between glory to God, theology and the belief and practices of the Orthodox Church that the questions about personhood, suffering and brokenness are truly, uniquely and prophetically addressed. This synergy, which is a creative, loving and healing relationship between God and humanity, is brought forth by the very nature of God in Trinity.

This relationship, a communion of love (*koinonia*), can be entered into, by grace, through the ecclesial praxis of the Orthodox faith. In fact the very language used by the Orthodox Church in relation to its praxis is based on that of therapy and healing in the tradition of the divine-human physician, Jesus Christ.

The therapeutic language of the Eastern Orthodox Church cannot be underestimated with regard to its mission potential and its ability to connect with a world searching for holistic healing. Furthermore, this language speaks pastorally to a humanity which has been broken since the Fall of Adam, and in particular to those who experience disability and mental health issues. This subject is more fully explored where a petition is made to Orthodox Christians to acknowledge and re-discover the unique therapeutic calling of the Orthodox Church.

This thesis makes a contribution which examines and exhorts the very real possibilities of a practical and professional experience of working with people with disabilities and mental health issues in relationship to the Eastern Orthodox faith. The importance and central notion of the ontology of personhood in the Orthodox Tradition is demonstrated to be that which is experienced through loving relationships (*koinonia*) with others and with God through the Church. This is based on the Orthodox experience, theology and doxology of the Triune God, in whom there are

three unique persons, united but distinct only by virtue of their loving relationship with each other. This is in stark contrast to our individualistic, contemporary society. As such, the potential for full personhood, despite our human brokenness, disability or mental health issues, is at the very heart of Orthodoxy, something which God desires for us out of His abundant love for His creation.

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All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us.

Lord, be merciful to our sins.

Master, forgive our transgressions.

Holy One, visit us and heal our infirmities, for your name's sake.

Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; Both now and ever and to the
ages of ages. Amen. (*From the Trisagion Prayers*)

On completion of this thesis I pay tribute to the following:

To my dear husband who I met on this journey home to Orthodoxy and who
encouraged me to begin this project and complete it!

To my family, who gave me the gift of life and raised me in the Christian faith.

Especially to my father, Stephen. It is because of this gift, and through the grace of
God, that I have been inspired to own my own faith.

To my Father confessor, Father John, who has helped me to 'know' the Holy Trinity,
not with my western head but with my heart, through the experience of the Church.

To all of my brothers and sisters in Christ who are my family also, may this thesis help us understand our calling to true personhood in communion with each other and may we be inspired to philanthropic endeavours through an Orthodox worldview.

And finally, but certainly not least, to all of the wonderful people with whom I have had the privilege of working alongside over the past fourteen years. Your endurance through true suffering I cannot begin to comprehend.

To God be the glory!

EXPLANATORY NOTES

- The style guide that has been used throughout this theses is ‘A style manual: for the presentation of papers and theses in religion and theology’, compiled by Lawrence D. McIntosh, 1995; except for the formatting of line spacing which is recommended by MCD to be double spaced apart from long quotations which are to be single-spaced. The style ‘Chicago 14th A’ was recommended by MCD for End-note referencing and the bibliography.
- ‘Mental health issues’ is the term which will be used throughout this thesis to refer to ‘mental illness’. A further explanation of this can be read in chapter one.
- Please note that God has been referred to as masculine throughout, not for the purposes of avoiding inclusive language or for attributing gender to God, but because the male pronoun is used consistently within the Orthodox Tradition. The same applies to the use of ‘man’ or ‘men’ in some translations of Orthodox prayers – these terms actually refer to humankind/ humanity/ people.
- Certain words in the Orthodox faith, such as ‘Tradition’ ‘Church’, etc., are routinely capitalised. This convention will be used throughout this thesis.
- *The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)* of the Bible is used throughout for all New Testament quotations. *A new English translation of the Septuagint* will be used for all Old Testament quotations.

ABBREVIATIONS

Biblical references

Gen	Genesis
Matt	Matthew
Rom	Romans
Cor	Corinthians
Thess	Thessalonians
Rev	Revelation

VICSERV	Psychiatric Disability Services of Victoria
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INTRODUCTION

When one spends a considerable amount of time with people who experience a disability or a mental health issue, discussions, questions or thoughts inevitably arise regarding suffering. For example ‘why do these things happen?’ and ‘why would God let this happen?’ As a worker in this field, how does one respond to these questions from a client? After many years of practical experience of working alongside people with disabilities and mental health issues, I posed the question how should the Orthodox faith, to which I ascribe, influence and affect my professional practice? How does the Eastern Orthodox faith understand the human person, brokenness, suffering and in particular disability and mental health issues? How does the theology of a Triune God and humanity created in the divine image apply to human brokenness, especially in the context of disability or mental health issues? What does the Orthodox Tradition say about person centred practice, about wholeness and healing and the practical application of this faith?

The Eastern Orthodox faith has much to say about the Triune God, although it cannot exhaust the mystery of God, and of humanity created in the divine image. It also has much to say about suffering and the broken or fallen nature of humanity. However, much less is written with specific regard to the issues of disability and mental health. This thesis attempts to research the teachings of the Eastern Orthodox faith using Scripture, Tradition, patristic authors and some more contemporary Orthodox and western writers in order to draw some practical and pastoral conclusions to the questions posed above. The thesis also attempts a synthesis of faith and experience, highlighting the unity of theology and praxis in the Orthodox Tradition. By way of

introduction some practical experiences of personhood in relation to disability and mental health issues are explored in chapter one.

Chapter two then proceeds to explore what the Orthodox faith has to say about personhood. In order to explore the understanding of personhood in the Orthodox faith, the understanding of God must firstly be explored, and in particular the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. It is from this starting point that issues of creation, the human experience of brokenness, healing and the salvation of humanity can be understood. It will be demonstrated that the Orthodox Tradition, since the early Church, in its unbroken history of ecclesial experience, doxology (glory to God) and theology has revealed a synergy between the Triune God and humanity created in the divine image. This synergy or communion of love (*koinonia*), which is a creative and healing relationship between God and humanity, is brought forth by the very nature of God in Trinity as is demonstrated in chapter two.

In chapter three it will be shown that the very language used by the Orthodox Church in relation to its praxis and doxology is based on a language of therapy and healing in the Tradition of the divine-human physician, Jesus Christ. It is posited that the therapeutic language of the Eastern Orthodox Church cannot be underestimated in regards to its mission potential and its ability to connect with a world searching for holistic healing. Furthermore, this language speaks pastorally to a humanity which has been broken since the Fall of Adam, and in particular to those who experience disability and mental health issues. This is more fully explored in chapter four where a petition is made to Orthodox Christians to acknowledge and re-discover the unique therapeutic call of the Orthodox Church.

This thesis exhorts the very real possibilities of a practical and professional experience of working with people with disabilities and mental health issues in relationship to the Eastern Orthodox faith. It demonstrates the importance and central notion of the ontology of personhood (a way of understanding the essence or being of personhood) in the Orthodox Tradition, experienced by loving relationships (*koinonia*) with others and with God through the Church; rather than as individuals, as our contemporary society encourages. This ontology is based on the Orthodox experience, theology and doxology of the Triune God, in whom there are three unique persons, united but distinct only by virtue of their loving relationship with each other. As such, the potential for full personhood; despite our human brokenness, disability or mental health issues, is at the very heart of Orthodoxy, something which God desires for us out of His abundant love for His creation.

CHAPTER 1. PERSONHOOD AND HUMAN BROKENNESS

1.1 WHY DISABILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES?

For fourteen years I have worked alongside people with disabilities and mental health issues as a ‘carer’, ‘assistant’, ‘personal care attendant’, ‘support worker’, ‘community access worker’ and as a ‘case manager’ or whatever name is variously attributed to this kind of activity. Personal care can include attention to the person’s hygiene, administration of rectal suppositories, insertion of urinary catheters and other matters related to bladder and bowel movements. It can mean being present at the most intimate points of the person’s daily activities; it can involve being confronted with the person’s complete nakedness. Often this person has to adapt to a complete stranger becoming involved in these very personal activities. In such circumstances, all notions of dignity, privacy and independence are compromised and subsequently limited. This extends to most areas of life, from the person’s own living space, to finances, eating, shopping, intimacy and sexuality, medication, physical movement and accessing the community. This description may sound very functional, or even reductionist; however, in the all too pragmatic daily realities of this work, the human person at the centre can be overlooked or even lost.

The reality of a human person becoming ‘lost’ is outlined in the following example which concerned a woman who had a physical disability but who had full cognition (brain function).

Mary¹ was made redundant by her service provider of ten years because of their inability to provide staff to support her. Without any direct communication or discussion with Mary, a meeting was set up to 'inform her' of the decision that had been made without her involvement. This decision had significant and negative impacts upon her day to day existence. A government agency that supports people with intellectual disabilities as opposed to those with physical disabilities took over her care, noting again that Mary's physical disability did not compromise her cognition. Initially there was no direct communication with her unless she sought it out herself and no firsthand information was provided to her about what was actually happening, again unless she sought it out herself.

This is the same government department that approved the legislation that states:

People with disabilities have the right to –

- a) respect for their human worth and dignity as individuals...
- d) participate actively in the decisions that affect their lives, including the development of disability policies, programs and services; and
- e) any necessary support, and access to information, to enable them to participate in decisions that affect their lives; and
- f) receive services in a way that results in the minimum restriction of their rights and opportunities...²

Mary, knowing exactly what her rights were, reported her anxiety, anger and her intense feelings of being a 'non-person' and 'invisible'.

Feeling like a non-person is a common problem in our society, especially amongst minority groups such as persons with disabilities or mental health issues. This is often despite the rhetoric, such as the legislation quoted above, that is supposed to limit such dehumanising attitudes. Associate Professor Rosalie Hudson attributes some of this to the cultural shift to individualisation.³ In her nursing research she found that databases had no search entry for 'person'; references to 'individual' had superseded all references to 'person'.⁴

¹ Client's name and all identifiable details have been changed.

² *Queensland disability services act*, 7.

³ Rosalie Hudson, "Dementia and personhood: a living death or alive in God?" *The Australian and New Zealand Theological Review: Colloquium* 36, no. 2 (2004), 128.

⁴ *Ibid*, 128.

As stated above, feeling like a non person is something that is often experienced by people with mental health issues; ‘a condition characterised by a clinically significant disturbance of thought, mood, perception or memory’.⁵ Hudson, in her paper on personhood and dementia, considers the connection between rationality and personhood, ‘Does our ability to think really constitute who we are?’⁶ My experience of mental health issues ranges from having a good friend with schizophrenia and one with clinical depression, to having been a pastoral carer at a women’s hostel where many of the women presented with underlying mental health issues. I have also been a case manager and team leader for a ten-bed long term community for women who have been homeless and who have mental health issues and/or substance abuse issues. I am currently a co-ordinator for another accommodation and support program for people with high level mental health issues whose other options would either be homelessness or inpatient admission to a psychiatric ward. Two parishes I have been involved in have also had contact with many people with mental health issues. In my experience, what may be viewed clinically as irrational thought certainly has no impact upon personhood. I would therefore disagree with Singer who argues that ‘rational capacity is essential to personhood’⁷, and this thesis will continue to assert a different view. Over the years I have had some of the most colourful and compelling theological discussions with persons who have mental health issues; quite often they have been the ones to teach me something about God, faith, selflessness and the spirit of Christian love and acceptance. One cannot ignore the prevalence of references to spirituality that are made by people with mental health issues. Nor can one ignore the increasing prevalence of mental health issues in our society today. Beyond Blue, the leading

⁵ *Queensland mental health act*. 2000, 36.

⁶ Hudson, "Dementia and personhood: a living death or alive in God?", 136.

⁷ Singer cited in *Ibid*.

initiative for depression in Australia, states, for example, that one in five people will suffer from depression at some time in their life.⁸

⁸ *Beyond blue: the national depression initiative* [Internet Site] (2008 cited 22/04/08); available from http://www.beyondblue.org.au/index.aspx?link_id=89.

1.2 WHAT ARE DISABILITIES AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES?

It is not the purpose of this thesis to examine in detail what constitutes disability or mental health issues. However, in using these terms as generic for the purpose of theological reflection, it is important to note some distinctions and definitions. A brief definition of a mental health issue was given in the previous section, stating that it is ‘a condition characterised by a clinically significant disturbance of thought, mood, perception or memory’.⁹ The legal definition of disability is given in the Queensland Disability Services Act of 1992 which states:

- (1) This Act applies to a person with a disability —
 - (a) that is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment or a combinations of impairments; and
 - (b) that results in — a substantial reduction of the person’s capacity for communication, social interaction, learning or mobility; and the person needing support.
- (2) The disability must be permanent or likely to be permanent.
- (3) The disability may be, or may not be, of a chronic episodic nature.¹⁰

There is a long history of semantics, human rights activism, and ongoing ethical and moral debate over definitions and terms to describe persons who are deemed to be somehow impaired. Eiesland in her book *Human disability and the service of God*, argues that the disabilities people have span a wide spectrum of medical conditions that produce diverse effects in terms of appearance and function and that this makes defining people with disabilities almost impossible.¹¹ Eiesland, a woman with a disability herself, points out that naming something gives power to the namer over

⁹ *Queensland mental health act*. 2000, 36.

¹⁰ *Queensland disability services act*. 1992, 5.

¹¹ Nancy L. Eiesland, *Human disability and the service of God* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998).

the named and this has long been the case by people who ‘denied our full personhood’.¹² Terms such as ‘handicapped’, ‘disabled’ and ‘crippled’ are no longer endorsed.¹³ The most common acceptable terms or phrases are ‘person with a disability’ and ‘mental health issue’ because they emphasise the fact that the person’s disability is only one of many personal characteristics, ‘rather than being synonymous or coextensive with that person’s self’.¹⁴ The term ‘mental health issue’ rather than ‘mental illness’ has been used throughout this thesis. There is a significant move within Australian Mental Health/Psychiatric Services to use this term, which again takes away the labelling of a person as sick and puts the person first, which as will be shown throughout this thesis is completely congruent with Christian Orthodox principles.

¹² Nancy L. Eisland, *The disabled God: toward a liberatory theology of disability* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 25.

¹³ *Ibid*, 26.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 27.

1.3 EXPERIENCES OF DISABILITY, MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES, SUFFERING AND GOD

Over the years there has been a shift in attitudes towards people with disabilities and mental health issues, as seen by the use of language noted above, and with the restructuring of institutional style care to community based integration and independent living. This has not been without its problems however; for example, the de-institutionalisation of psychiatric hospitals in major cities has added considerable numbers to those homeless because of the lack of infrastructure in the community for their integration into society.¹⁵ The example provided at the beginning of this thesis of the woman displaced by her service provider, also serves to illustrate the strain on resources (usually funding and staffing) to support people with mental health issues or disabilities. In attempts to give people rights and freedoms, often times they have become more isolated, marginalised and invisible. This focus on rights and freedom appears to be significantly influenced by twenty-first century western individualism.¹⁶ It is also a common experience in this field of work where an emphasis is placed on throughput, transitional housing and independent living. Agencies that provide long-term housing and stability 'with support' are uncommon. Government funding is channelled mainly to transitional housing programs and independent units; these often being the very places in which

¹⁵ '(perhaps as high as 40% of the total) have a mental illness of some sort or another. Many of them will have been discharged from an institution in the past without being given sufficient support to acquire the necessary life skills.' John McCulloch, *Homeless people in Brisbane: what happens if you are not one?* [Article accessed via website] (2000 cited 10/10/2004); available from <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=1488>.

The experience of homelessness as a result of the closing of psychiatric hospitals was also reported by a number of nurses who work with persons who are 'homeless' in Brisbane. This information was collected during a field assignment for the 'Mission of the Church' (Brisbane College of Theology), November 2003.

¹⁶ Hudson, "Dementia and personhood: a living death or alive in God?", 128.

people in isolation reach the depths of their depression and/or substance abuse due to the isolation and inability to cope on their own. As a result, many of them soon re-enter the cycle of psychiatric care, crime and abuse.

This shift to so-called ‘community integrated’ care has been a move from what Eisland describes as care that was historically provided by the religious ideal of charity followed by the medical disability model.¹⁷ During an earlier era (1700 – 1800 in America), religious organisations often had primary authority over interpreting disability within the culture and care was often provided by ‘religious’.¹⁸ ‘The moral meaning of disability was primarily in its representation of divine favour or disfavour’.¹⁹ Eisland, in her own experience as a person with a disability and growing up in a church environment, is one of many who have written on this issue. She reports her experiences in the 1970s and 80s and of comments made to her such as:

‘You are special in God’s eyes. That’s why you were given this disability’; ‘Don’t worry about your pain and suffering now, in heaven you will be made whole’; and ‘Thank God, it isn’t worse’. I was told that God gave me a disability to develop my character. But at age 6 or 7, I was convinced that I had enough character to last a lifetime. My family frequented faith healers with me in tow. I was never healed. People asked me about my hidden sins, but they must have been so well hidden that they were even displaced by me.²⁰

In speaking with a chaplain who worked at a residential psychiatric hospital about his experiences of people with mental health issues and disabilities, he commented that for many of the clients, sin and guilt were often spoken of as the perceived source of disability. He said most of these beliefs came from mainstream Christian teaching,

¹⁷ Eisland, *Human disability and the service of God*, 216.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 216-217.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 216.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 218.

for example Sunday school experiences. The Orthodox response to the relationship between sin and human brokenness will be explored in greater detail in chapter two. As a practitioner working alongside people with disabilities or mental health issues questions invariably arise such as ‘why has this happened to me?’ The question of how to respond is a pertinent one and one that every worker in the field of welfare should examine for themselves. The very nature of who I am as a person is just as much of an issue for someone with a disability or a mental health issue as it is for anyone else. Who I am in relation to the universe, to God and death is an age old musing of the heart and should not be denied to anyone. However the individualistic tendencies of the twenty-first century that help diminish the value of personhood, even in the welfare sector as already noted, can, if we are not careful, creep into our professional practice. As a practitioner with an Orthodox faith, it is important for me to understand what Orthodoxy says about personhood, about human brokenness, about disability and mental health issues. The following chapters will explore these issues.

CHAPTER 2. PERSONHOOD AND THE HOLY TRINITY

2.1 THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

2.1.1 Personhood and the Orthodox understanding of God

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth... Then God said, “Let us make humankind according to our image and according to likeness...”. And God made humankind; according to divine image he made it; male and female he made them (Gen 1:1, 26, 27).

In these opening verses of the Bible the underpinning value of the human person as created in the divine image is introduced. This has a significant impact on subsequent explorations into what it means to be a human person as it is directly and inextricably connected to the Orthodox understanding of God. In other words, how one understands God affects how one understands human personhood.

Due to this deeply rooted connection between the nature of God and the human person it is important therefore to highlight how different theological perspectives can affect one’s concept of personhood and its subsequent application to persons with a disability or mental health issue. It is particularly important as a practitioner to understand that the Christian tradition²¹ from which a client has come will influence their own understanding of personhood. For this reason, this chapter on

²¹ Clients may also be from Christian ‘traditions’ with no Trinitarian formulations of the nature of God, other religious traditions or sects, or from no formal religious tradition or belief. This will inevitably affect their view of personhood. It will also affect the way in which a practitioner must work respectfully in response to specific beliefs or unbelief. However, for the purposes of this paper only the Christian tradition is being examined.

‘Personhood and the Holy Trinity’ uses some comparisons between the Eastern Orthodox Trinitarian understanding of God and some western theological examples²².

²² The concept of proselytising and its inappropriateness in relation to working with clients outside of the Church (a definition of which is provided in footnote twenty-seven and chapter three) is implicit throughout the discussion of this thesis.

2.1.2 The mystery of God - God in God's self

The Eastern Orthodox doctrine of God has its roots in the earliest christological and trinitarian formulations of the post-Apostolic writings and Ecumenical councils, which were often apologetics and responses to heresies, especially the contribution made by the Cappadocian Fathers in the fourth century. The doctrine of the Triune God in the Orthodox faith includes universally accepted statements of faith such as the Nicene Creed (see Appendix A) and formulas related to the God - man in Jesus Christ from the Council of Chalcedon in 451 (which will be explored in section 3.3). These formulations bear witness to Biblical revelation and the experiences (liturgical, sacramental and spiritual) of the early Church in response to the crucified and risen Christ and of pneumatology (experience of the Spirit).

In order to explore further the Orthodox understanding of the Triune God it is important to note that theology, in the Orthodox Tradition, is not simply an academic or intellectual exercise. Theology in the Orthodox Church is something which is lived out, as explained by the following; Orthodox means right belief as opposed to heresy, heresy being the motivating factor for many of the patristic authors as mentioned in the previous paragraph. However, Orthodoxy means much more than this. It also means right glorification or rather 'right glorification encompassing right belief and a right way of expressing it'.²³ As such, doxology (the word about glory to God), theology, and Orthodoxy are used by the Fathers of the Church

²³ C. Scouteris, "Doxology, the language of Orthodoxy," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 38, no. 1-4 (1993), 155.

interchangeably.²⁴ The practice of the Church, particularly its liturgical action, cannot be separated from the beliefs of the Church, about God and the glory ascribed to Him. ‘It is within the worshipping community, and in the light of the community’s liturgical life that doctrine becomes “a field of vision where in all things on earth are seen in their relation to the things of heaven”’.²⁵ This is an important point to note when understanding how Orthodox theological doctrines developed, but more importantly, as this discussion will show, how the Orthodox Church, with its ontology of personhood is the therapeutic remedy for humankind’s brokenness.

Within eastern and western understandings of the Triune God there developed some significant distinctions in the concepts of God within God’s self (*theologia*, essence, immanent)²⁶ and God in His economy (*oikonomia*, energies, economic) of salvation or self-revelation.²⁷ This is clearly defined in western terms by the twentieth century theologian Rahner who stated ‘the “economic” Trinity is the “immanent” Trinity and vice versa’.²⁸ In this theological framework we know entirely what God is in God’s self through God’s self-revelation in the human experience of history. The eastern understanding is different. While it upholds that the economic is also the immanent, the immanent is not exhausted by the economic. According to the Orthodox Tradition God in God’s self is an unknowable, ineffable and impassible mystery.²⁹ St Gregory of Nazianzus states, ‘No one has yet discovered and ever shall discover

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid, 155.

²⁶ Catherine M. LaCugna, *God for us: the Trinity and Christian life* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 2-3 and Bobrinskoy, *The mystery of the Trinity: trinitarian experience and vision in the Biblical and Patristic Tradition*, 2.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Rahner cited in Duncan Reid, *Energies of the Spirit: trinitarian models in Eastern Orthodox and western theology* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1997), 31.

²⁹ Boris Bobrinskoy, *The mystery of the Trinity: trinitarian experience and vision in the Biblical and Patristic Tradition*, trans. Anthony P. Gythiel (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Press, 1999), 2-3.

what God is in his nature and essence'.³⁰ This will be explored further in section 2.1.3.

While the Cappadocian Fathers made some concrete explanations about the Orthodox understanding of God, one of the emphases they continued to maintain was the impassibility and mystery of God. The impassibility of God was a theological concern of the Patristic period, often in response to heresies and questions such as the relationship between the human sufferings of the Son and the Son's divine nature?³¹ According to the Orthodox Bishop Kallistos Ware, strictly interpreted, the impassibility of God in the Orthodox tradition means that God within Himself does not suffer, but God-made-man can and does.³² Bishop Ware stresses however that God is a God of love and 'does not remain indifferent to the sorrows of this fallen world'.³³

A western perspective is given by Weinandy, a Catholic scholar who argues in his *Does God suffer?*, that impassibility does not disallow God to be all good, loving and merciful. Weinandy in his thesis states that being ineffable and impassible is not to deny love and compassion; rather it is to be unchangeably perfect within God's self.³⁴

The whole Biblical tradition reveals God to be loving, compassionate and merciful and in fact Weinandy asserts that mercy and grief are a part of love, not suffering.

³⁰ Gregory of Nazianzus, *On God and Christ: the five theological orations and two letters to Cledonius*, trans. Frederick Williams and Lionel Wickham (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Press, 2002), 49-50.

³¹ John O'Keffe, "Impassible suffering? Divine passion and fifth-century christology," *Theological studies* 58 (1997), 2.

³² Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox way*, Rev. edn. (Crestwood, St Vladimir's Press: [1979] 2001), 63.

³³ *Ibid.*, 64.

³⁴ Thomas Weinandy, *Does God suffer?* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000).

Weinandy rightly argues that suffering in itself is not ‘good’ like love, and therefore the absence of suffering in God does not imply the absence or inability of love in and from the Godhead.³⁵ ‘Actually, since God does not suffer, His love becomes absolutely free in its expression and supremely pure in its purpose’.³⁶ For example, a woman I know with clinical depression says, ‘in my darkness, it is the light of Christ that I hold onto’.

Human love, however, is lived out in situations where suffering is present due to sin and evil³⁷, which we have been exposed to since the Fall (to be discussed in section 2.2.3). However, God is the source of all creation. ‘He is not like changeable and passible creatures because He is perfect in His eternal goodness and love’.³⁸ If God was not perfect and eternally good and loving, then God would be enmeshed in the effects of sin and evil.³⁹ God would therefore not hold the power to redeem creation.

Weinandy suggests that in many human situations it is the prospect of suffering that hinders the full development and expression of love because of the potential sacrifices involved.⁴⁰ Steele, as a parent of a child with a disability, speaks not only of the daily commitment to his child’s care but of its ‘apparent futility. The net result of carrying out the routines of good care sometimes seems to be nothing more than buying ourselves one more day of hassles’.⁴¹ In this example the futility or suffering of the parents is the ultimate expression of sacrifice and love. Human suffering

³⁵ Weinandy, *Does God suffer?*, 159-160.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 160.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Richard Steele, "Unremitting compassion: the moral psychology of parenting children with genetic disorders," *Theology Today* 57 (2000):161-174.

therefore is at the heart of redemption and within that mystery (and absurdity) it is transformed and a new significance is granted.⁴²

Returning specifically to the Orthodox understanding of the impassibility of God, it is referred to as an object of apophatic theology. Apophatic theology is ‘our refusal to exhaust knowledge of the truth in its formulation’.⁴³ This is a direct contrast to Rahner’s immanent Trinity equalling the economic. How can we, with the limits of our language and even our capacity to comprehend, know the ‘incomprehensible mystery of the Divinity, the unfathomable truth of the divine Essence’?⁴⁴ Yannaras explains how it is necessary to have doctrinal formulations in order to define the truth of the faith. However, when it comes to the mystery of God it is necessary not to exhaust this knowledge which remains ‘experiential and practical’.⁴⁵

It is important to note that while there is a belief in the impassibility and mystery of God within God’s self, God is also fully relational, experiential and deeply connected to who we are as human beings. This is the central point that connects the understanding of the essence of God which cannot be known, with a deep, relational way of understanding God that is directly entwined in our understanding of personhood. While we cannot know God in His essence, we do know the mode of His existence through three specific personal existences, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, of whom the Church has direct historical experience.⁴⁶ The next section shall explore these three personal existences of God and how this directly impacts upon our understanding of personhood.

⁴² Weinandy, *Does God suffer?*, 172.

⁴³ Christos Yannaras, *Elements of faith - an introduction to Orthodox theology*, trans. Keith Schram (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 17.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 29.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 17.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

2.1.3 God is the Lord who has revealed Himself to us ⁴⁷

Unlike western theological perspectives, the Orthodox Tradition draws a distinction between the essence of God and His energies or ‘operations or acts of power’.⁴⁸

However when one speaks of the energies of God in the Orthodox Tradition one does not refer to something God gives to humanity like a gift but rather these ‘energies’ are God ‘himself in his activity and self-manifestation’.⁴⁹ St Basil states, ‘We know the essence through the energy...No one has ever seen the essence of God but we believe in the essence because we experience the energy’.⁵⁰

While the notion of essence and energy was used by the earlier Fathers such as St Basil, its use culminated in the writings of St Gregory Palamas in the fourteenth century, and means that the transcendence of God remains transcendent, as He also communicates Himself to the world.⁵¹ St Gregory Palamas, while maintaining the notion of an impassible God, argued that the mystical experience of the vision of God was possible because in Christ, God enters into communion with the world.⁵² But man’s communion with Him is not with ‘created grace’ only but God Himself⁵³. This clearly demonstrates the distinction between essence and energies and as St Gregory Palamas states, ‘the essence and energy of God are not identical’.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ From the Orthodox Service of Orthros (Matins)

⁴⁸ Ware, *The Orthodox way*, 22

⁴⁹ Ibid, 22

⁵⁰ St Basil cited in Ibid, 22

⁵¹ Jarsoslav Pelikan cited in Gregory of Palamas, *The triads*, ed. John Meyendorff (New York: Paulist Press, 1983).

⁵² Jarsoslav Pelikan cited in Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid, 22.

⁵⁴ Gregory of Palamas, *The triads*, 97.

This distinction between essence and energies has direct implications for the understanding of our human personhood. There is the potential of a direct, transformative, mystical and deeply relational experience with God without the pantheistic notion of man becoming part of God.⁵⁵ Humanity has the potential for union with God; this union is neither fusion or confusion; nor is the unique human person ‘swallowed up or annihilated’.⁵⁶ There continues an “I-Thou” relationship of person to person’.⁵⁷ ‘When a man knows or participates in the divine energies, he truly knows or participates in God himself, so far as this is possible for a created being’.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Ware, *The Orthodox way*, 124-126.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 23.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 23.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 22.

2.1.4 The Cappadocian contribution – personhood and the primacy of person

It has been established that (see previous, 2.1.2) the essence of God is “‘Being beyond all being’”⁵⁹, however we do experience God through His energies. The Cappadocian Fathers, who were considerable contributors to the Trinitarian formulations, endorsed the notion that the Trinity, as revealed to the Church, were distinguished by three unique persons (*hypostases*) in one nature, i.e. not divided in their substance (*ousia*).⁶⁰ This language of early Trinitarian doctrine was clarified by the Cappadocian Fathers in response to heresies that used terms from the First Ecumenical Council in incorrect ways for example where *hypostasis* equalled *ousia* or a God who presents Himself with different masks.⁶¹ The Synodical letter of Constantinople 382 clarifies this distinction.⁶²

The clarification of language by the Cappadocian Fathers challenged the philosophical notions of the time. They also illustrated the importance of person within the unity of God.⁶³ St Basil states:

The distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* is the same as the distinction between the general and the particular...Therefore in respect of the godhead we acknowledge one *ousia*, so as not to give a different account of being; but we also confess the particular *hypostasis* so that we

⁵⁹ Yannaras, *Elements of faith - an introduction to Orthodox theology*, 27.

⁶⁰ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian theology: an introduction*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, [1988] 2001), 330.

⁶¹ Metropolitan of Nafpaktos Hierotheos, *The person in the Orthodox Tradition*, trans. Esther Williams (Levadia-Hellas: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 2002), 191-198.

⁶² *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the undivided Church: their canons and dogmatic decrees*, ed. Phillip Schaff, Henry Wace, and Henry Pervical, vol. 14, *A select library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church (Second Series)* (Michigan: W.M.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, [1899] 1979).

⁶³ Hierotheos, *The person in the Orthodox Tradition*, 195-198.

may have an unconfused and clear conception of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.⁶⁴

Despite the Cappadocian Fathers' culturally revolutionary beliefs in regards to the use of language, they always upheld the notions of equality and unity within the Trinity despite their emphasis on persons⁶⁵ and, as Zizioulas reports, individualism is inconceivable because of the unbreakable communion or *koinonia*.⁶⁶ Bishop Ware says so cogently,

a "person" is not the same as an "individual". Isolated, self-dependent, none of us is an authentic person but merely an individual, a bare unit as recorded in the census. Egocentricity is the death of true personhood. Each becomes a real person only through entering into relation with other persons, through living for them and in them.⁶⁷

This Eastern Orthodox doctrine of the Holy Trinity, that is distinction in personhood through unity and relationship with each other, is one of the central notions of this thesis which impacts upon the understanding of human personhood. If we are created in the divine image then we are called to live out that image in us and to discover our unique personhood through *koinonia*. This doctrine of the Holy Trinity with its emphasis upon the primacy of person rather than on the unity of substance also has a considerable contribution to make to persons who feel like 'non-persons' because of their disability and/or mental health issues.

The following example from St Augustine of Hippo demonstrates how a simple change in the nuance of this doctrine can deeply effect how one in turn views personhood and its implications. St Augustine of Hippo upheld the notion of the

⁶⁴ Basil of Caesarea in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St. Cyril of Jerusalem to St. Leo the Great*, 78.

⁶⁵ John D. Zizioulas, "The doctrine of the Holy Trinity: the significance of the Cappadocian contribution," in *Trinitarian Theology Today: essays on divine being and act*, ed. C. Schwobel (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), 47-49.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ware, *The Orthodox way*, 28.

unity of God where the primary principle is found in the substance and not the person, as opposed to the Cappadocian understanding of unity from relationship not substance.⁶⁸ Moltmann notes that St Augustine's theological notion encourages individualism because of the emphasis on a 'monarchical theism' as opposed to a community of human persons.⁶⁹ Given the prevailing individualistic tendencies of the twenty-first century culture, this notion certainly needs no subtle encouragement from the world of theological discussion.

An emphasis on the primacy of person as opposed to the primacy of substance of the Trinity has implications not only for our sociality but also the potential of each person. This makes a significant contribution to our understanding of personhood and how we should view persons with a disability or mental health issues. People with mental health issues or a disability should be understood as unique 'persons' first and foremost, united to all humankind by virtue of our common humanity. An important distinction is however that this uniqueness and united-ness is by virtue of a common humanity; *not* by virtue of a common disability or mental health issue into which society so often tries to box and label such groups. Former consumer and psychologist, Patricia Deegan, speaking on the topic of 'there's a person in here' from VICSERV training literature on Psychosocial Rehabilitation states,

...individually and collectively we have refused to succumb to the images of despair that are so often associated with mental illness... We are refusing to reduce people to mental illnesses. We recognise that within each one of us there is a person and that, as people, we share a

⁶⁸ Zizioulas, "The doctrine of the Holy Trinity: the significance of the Cappadocian contribution." and John D. Zizioulas, *Being as communion: studies in personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 58-59.

⁶⁹ Jurgen Moltmann, *History and the Triune God: contributions to trinitarian theology*, trans. J. Bowden (London: SCM press, 1981), 61.

common humanity with those who have been diagnosed with mental illness.⁷⁰

As a person who works in the area of mental health and disability, I find it encouraging that the rhetoric of training and development in this field, exemplified in the quote above, is focusing more and more on the importance and value of personhood which transcends the disability itself. Thus, the significance of personhood as an Eastern Orthodox theological principal is being emphasised throughout this thesis.

⁷⁰ Patricia Deegan cited in Susan Pepper, ed., *Towards recovery*, 5 vols., vol. 1, *Psychosocial rehabilitation: working with people with a psychiatric disability* (Melbourne: New Paradigm Press, 2003), 13.

2.1.5 Trinitarian distinctions of personhood – Father, Son and Holy Spirit

The Eastern Orthodox doctrine of the Trinity has been shown to comprise ‘three persons in one essence’.⁷¹ Each person of the Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit; is fully and completely God, not possessing one third of the Godhead but the ‘entire Godhead in its totality’⁷², yet each one within this Godhead has its own distinct and personal way of being, which has been revealed to us in Scripture, the Apostolic Tradition and in the experience of the saints.⁷³

St Gregory of Nazianzus explains the difference of the three persons of the Trinity in regards to their hypostatical features ‘coming into being’.⁷⁴ The first person of the Trinity is God the Father, the source and fountain of the Godhead.⁷⁵ The Father is ingenerate⁷⁶ and He is the cause of the other two persons of the Trinity.⁷⁷ As such, the second person of the Trinity is the Son or *Logos* who is ‘begotten’⁷⁸ of the Father. The second person of the Holy Trinity, the Son, will be discussed in section three (The divine-human physician) of this chapter.

The third person is the Holy Spirit who ‘proceeds’⁷⁹ from the Father alone, not from both the Father and Son as the filioque (an unauthorised Latin addition to the Creed

⁷¹ Ware, *The Orthodox way*, 30.

⁷² Gregory of Nazianzus in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St.Cyril of Jerusalem to St.Leo the Great*, 114.

⁷³ Ware, *The Orthodox way*, 31.

⁷⁴ Gregory of Nazianzus in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St.Cyril of Jerusalem to St.Leo the Great*, 114.

⁷⁵ Ware, *The Orthodox way*, 32.

⁷⁶ Gregory of Nazianzus in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St.Cyril of Jerusalem to St.Leo the Great*, 114.

⁷⁷ Ware, *The Orthodox way*, 32.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

from the point of view of Orthodox Tradition) states. The filioque runs the risk of confusing the ‘distinctive characteristics of the persons’⁸⁰, which would then have direct implications on the understanding of unique personhood. Another distinct clarification made by St Basil was that the ‘Holy Spirit was of the same nature as the Father and the Son’⁸¹ and that his powers (or energies) are proven in Scripture; for example in creation, in baptism and in the resurrection of the dead.⁸² The emphasis is on the Spirit’s power of transformation so that we may have the ‘power to abide in God, to become like God, and, highest of all ends to which we can aspire, to become divine’.⁸³

Again the Fathers of the Church remind us that, paradoxically, while God can be experienced, He ‘lies beyond words and understanding’.⁸⁴ As human beings we may ask when did all this take place, the begottenness and procession from the Father? St Gregory of Nazianzus states, ‘they are not subject to time, since time originates from them’.⁸⁵ Rather, there was no time when the Father was not, as with the Son and the Spirit; for despite their begottenness and procession from the unbegotten Father, ‘they are simultaneous with’ Him.⁸⁶

Again, highlighted above is the deep relational communion or *koinonia* that exists between the persons of the Holy Trinity. Because of this, the three distinct persons of the Holy Trinity always work together in every creative and sanctifying act of our salvific history. Voulgaris and Bishop Ware remind us that the creation of the world,

⁸⁰ Ibid, 32.

⁸¹ St Basil of Caesarea in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St.Cyril of Jerusalem to St.Leo the Great*, 73.

⁸² St Basil of Caesarea in Ibid., 72.

⁸³ St Basil of Caesarea in Ibid., 71-72.

⁸⁴ Ware, *The Orthodox way*, 31.

⁸⁵ Gregory of Nazianzus in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St.Cyril of Jerusalem to St.Leo the Great*, 117.

⁸⁶ Gregory of Nazianzus in Ibid, 117.

the incarnation, baptism and transfiguration of Christ were all the work of the Holy Trinity as distinct persons but in unity without separation (for example John 1:3 and Gen 1:2).⁸⁷ St Irenaeus speaks of the Son and the Holy Spirit as the ‘two hands’ of God the Father⁸⁸, the creative and sanctifying energies of God.

⁸⁷ Christos S. Voulgaris, "The Holy Trinity in creation and incarnation," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 42 (1997) and Ware, *The Orthodox way*, 35-36.

⁸⁸ St Irenaeus cited in Ware, *The Orthodox way*, 35.

2.2 CREATED IN THE IMAGE

2.2.1 The Divine Will

It is by virtue of the *koinonia* of the three distinct persons of the Holy Trinity and its creative and sanctifying energies that the created order, including humanity, has come into being and it is because of this relationship that a synergy between God and humanity exists. St Gregory of Nyssa writes that creation was brought into being by the Divine Will⁸⁹, not through any necessity to create but rather because of a superabundance of love and so as to share in the good things of God.⁹⁰ Bishop Ware reinforces the teaching of St Gregory of Nyssa; the Trinity creates out of itself, a love which does not remain enclosed.⁹¹ God, as Trinity, overflows to the point that this font of love can potentially become our eschatological future.⁹²

⁸⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Select writings and letters of Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa*, ed. Phillip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. William Moore and Henry Wilson, vol. 5, *A select library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church (Second Series)* (Michigan: W.M.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, [1892] 1979).

⁹⁰ Gregory of Nyssa in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St. Cyril of Jerusalem to St. Leo the Great*, 129.

⁹¹ Ware, *The Orthodox way*, 32.

⁹² Gregory of Nyssa, *Select writings and letters of Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa*.

2.2.2 'According to our image' (Gen 1: 26) – personhood and wholeness

Part two of this thesis began with the underpinning Scriptural text that humanity is created 'according to our image and according to our likeness' (Gen 1:26). Because God has created us out of His superabundant love, in the divine image, an image that has been revealed as upholding distinct and unique personhood in perfect relationship and unity, this too has the potential to become our eschatological future.

Yannaras identifies the passage from Genesis as the first revelation from God as Trinity.⁹³ St Gregory of Nyssa asserts that this biblical statement is a revelation of the Trinity because the 'our' (Gen 1:26) supports the notion of one *ousia* in the three *hypostases*.⁹⁴ However, whilst humanity is created in the divine image, this creative act was not an outpouring of the divine uncreated nature of God.⁹⁵ This means that there is a difference between the uncreated nature of God and the created nature of the cosmos and humankind.⁹⁶ However the creation of humanity and the cosmos was 'good'⁹⁷, even if it is not of divine nature.

According to LeMasters, Orthodox anthropology (study of the human person) is essentially Trinitarian; the human person is destined for communion with the three persons of the Trinity.⁹⁸ God has imprinted the potential for personal existence on

⁹³ Yannaras, *Elements of faith - an introduction to Orthodox theology*, 20.

⁹⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, *Select writings and letters of Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa*, 392.

⁹⁵ Matthew G. Chapmen, "Notes on the nature of God, the cosmos, and *Novus Homo*: an Eastern Orthodox perspective," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 21 (1976): 252.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Gregory of Nyssa in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St. Cyril of Jerusalem to St. Leo the Great*, 151 and Gen 1: 26-31.

⁹⁸ Phillip LeMasters, "The practice of medicine as theosis," *Theology Today* 61 (2004), 173-186.

humankind by virtue of the 'triadic Divinity'.⁹⁹ 'Consequently, man can realise his existence as eternity and incorruptibility, just as the divine life of triadic co-inherence and communion is eternal and incorruptible'.¹⁰⁰

Aghiorgoussis¹⁰¹ in his paper examines what St Basil meant by the image of God in relation to the *hypostases* of the Holy Trinity. Divine attributes such as immortality, reason, freedom, will, love, perfection and holiness, are energies of God, common to all three persons of the Trinity according to St Basil.¹⁰² In the Orthodox Tradition these energies of the Holy Trinity dwell in us given that we are created in the image of God¹⁰³ and because God created us according to the divine image out of His love for us,

he wishes that all that exists participate in this fullness, that every existing thing be an expression of divine life, a participation in the community of love which constitutes the mode of existence of God, the Being of God.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Yannaras, *Elements of faith - an introduction to Orthodox theology*, 59.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 59.

¹⁰¹ Maximos Aghiorgoussis, "Applications of the theme 'eikon Theou' (image of God) according to Saint Basil the Great," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 21 (1976) 265-288.

¹⁰² Ibid, 270.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Yannaras, *Elements of faith - an introduction to Orthodox theology*, 47.

2.2.3 Free will and the Fall - becoming sick or losing health

Whilst humanity was created according to the divine image we are not yet in the likeness, and as such are called to become perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect¹⁰⁵. The consequences of the Fall, which will be explored in the following section, are the result of the superabundant love of God through the granting of free will to humankind and its subsequent misuse. St Gregory of Nyssa states:

He who made man for participation in his own unique good and equipped his nature with the capacity for all kinds of excellence...would never have deprived him of that noblest and precious of goods; I mean the gift of freedom and self-determination.¹⁰⁶

Equipped with free will, humanity, by the actions of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, fell, through the ‘malice of the devil’, and became conscious of sin and death.¹⁰⁷ According to St Gregory of Nyssa evil is the estrangement from that which is good.¹⁰⁸ This understanding of evil has therapeutic value in relation to understanding sin and suffering as it realigns responsibility to humankind as opposed to God and also gives us the power to control and change our own fallen nature. As St Basil asserts ‘it was in our power to abstain from evil and therefore suffer no harm; but we were enticed to sin by pleasure’.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ John Breck, *The sacred gift of life: Orthodox Christianity and bioethics* (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 222-224.

¹⁰⁶ Gregory of Nyssa in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St. Cyril of Jerusalem to St. Leo the Great*, 130.

¹⁰⁷ Gregory of Nazianzus in *Ibid*, 102.

¹⁰⁸ Gregory of Nyssa in *Ibid*, 133.

¹⁰⁹ Basil of Caesarea in *Ibid*, 60.

‘The consequences of the Fall were not products of what man had lost, but of what he had chosen’.¹¹⁰ This very event is at the centre of the Orthodox understanding of why suffering exists but also how it is to be transformed. St Gregory of Sinai states, ‘If we do not know what we were like when God made us we shall not realise what sin has turned us into’.¹¹¹

The question still arises however, *why* did God permit evil and suffering? St Gregory of Nyssa states, ‘It is not God who is responsible for the present evils, since he has constituted your nature so as to be uncontrolled and free. The responsibility is with the perverse will which has chosen the worse rather than the better’.¹¹² St Basil similarly asserts, ‘God made the body; he did not create disease: he made the soul; he did not create sin. The soul deteriorated when it was perverted from its natural state’.¹¹³ Again the Fathers indicate to us that God did not create suffering but rather it is something that is a consequence.

The tarnishing of the divine image in humanity at the Fall is at the centre of all Orthodox anthropology. In fact the Fathers of the Orthodox Tradition use the therapeutic language of healing to indicate that which is needed by humankind as a result of that which it inflicted upon itself. For example, St Gregory of Nyssa states:

It belongs to God to give life to men, to uphold by His providence all things that exist. It belongs to God to bestow meat and drink on those who in the flesh have received from Him the boon of life, to benefit the needy, to bring back to itself, by means of renewed health the nature that has been perverted by sickness.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Chapmen, "Notes on the nature of God, the cosmos, and *Novus Homo*: an Eastern Orthodox perspective.": 257.

¹¹¹ St Gregory of Sinai cited in Hierotheos, *The person in the Orthodox Tradition*, 91-92.

¹¹² Gregory of Nyssa in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St. Cyril of Jerusalem to St. Leo the Great*, 131.

¹¹³ Basil of Caesarea in *Ibid*, 61.

¹¹⁴ St Gregory of Nyssa in 'Chapter XII', *Gregory of Nyssa: dogmatic treatises, etc.* [Public domain website] (Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1892, 1892 cited 28/09/06); available from <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf205.toc.html>, Chapter XII, 1.

Suffering, disease, imperfections or brokenness in our human state, illness, disability, mental health issues and pain can all be seen as the result of our fallen nature. It is to be noted however, that our sins are not the direct cause of illness or human suffering, as was the understanding of the mental health chaplain's client in the example given in chapter one, section three; rather human brokenness is a sign that we share individually in the consequences of 'humankind's estrangement from God as a whole'.¹¹⁵ St Basil asserts, 'God is not the author of evils...living things were made with the natural equipment appropriate to them; they came into existence fitted with the physical parts which life required'.¹¹⁶

Part of the natural equipment of the divine image in humankind in the Orthodox Tradition is considered to be an intricate connection between the soul, mind and body. 'Since the soul is all through the body, both the whole man and the body itself can be regarded as in the image of God'.¹¹⁷ Unfortunately all that makes up humankind was corrupted by the Fall and the death that comes as a result.¹¹⁸ What this means in regards to the understanding of personhood is that who we are as whole persons, as body, mind and soul, cannot be separated and this has particular implications for wholeness and healing. Unfortunately, a tendency has arisen, not only in theory but in the practice of medicine for example, particularly since the 'Enlightenment beginning in the 1600's'¹¹⁹, if not earlier, to make distinct separations between the body, mind and soul. Interestingly, modern trends in healing

¹¹⁵ LeMasters, "The practice of medicine as theosis.", 175 and Ware, *The Orthodox way*, 60.

¹¹⁶ Basil the Great cited in "Divine providence and human suffering," in *Message of the Fathers of the Church*, ed. James Walsh and P.G. Walsh (Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1985), 23.

¹¹⁷ Metropolitan of Nafpaktos Hierotheos, *Orthodox psychotherapy (the science of the Fathers)*, trans. Esther Williams (Levadia-Hellas: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 2002), 118.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Peter Bistolarides, *Has the Byzantine holistic approach to healing come the full circle?* [Article accessed via website] (2005 cited 08/10/2005 2005); available from <http://www.ocamp.org/ByzantineApproach.asp>, 1.

therapies, including medicine, are seeing a return to ‘holistic’¹²⁰ modes of treatment.

However, the argument of this thesis concurs with Fr Bistolarides’ assertion:

I see the attempt at a ‘holistic’ approach in the Western sense of the word as a more belated attempt to ‘reconstruct’ the human person, who has been deconstructed by increasing use of technology, scientific knowledge, and a devaluation of the spiritual life that we have witnessed in the past century.¹²¹

The Orthodox Tradition from the first coming of Christ, has always understood the necessity for the healing of body and soul and their intrinsic connection. The following teaching by St John Chrysostom on the healing of the Paralytic illustrates clearly the call of Christ to be ‘made whole’ (John 5: 6) through the healing of body and soul, ‘the Lord came “to seek and to save that which was lost.” Now it was not the body merely, but the whole man, compacted of soul and body, that was lost’.¹²²

The following example, again written by St John Chrysostom, in a letter to a deaconess named Olympias advising her about her ills, clearly exhorts this understanding of the interconnectedness of soul and body. It is noteworthy that St John Chrysostom gives merit to that which may be a pure physical ailment and the ability for medication to work upon this.¹²³ He also speaks about the connection

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² St John Chrysostom in ‘He expounds the passage of the Gospel’, *Saint Chrysostom: homilies on the Gospel of St. John and the Epistle to the Hebrews* [Public domain website] (T&T Clark, (1819-1893) cited 28/09/05); available from <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/scaff/npnf114.titlepage.html>, XXXVI.

¹²³ ‘Wherefore I beseech you, dear lady, to employ various and skilled physicians, and to take medicines which avail to correct these conditions. For a few days ago when I suffered from a tendency to vomiting, owing to the state of the atmosphere, I had recourse amongst other remedies to the drug which was sent me by my most discreet mistress Syncretion, and I found that no more than three days’ application of it cured my infirmity... but by a practical proof, inasmuch as you lately affirmed that it was nothing but despondency which caused this sickness of yours. Since then you have yourself made this confession I shall not believe that you have got rid of your despondency unless you have got rid of your bodily infirmity. For if it is the former which causes your disorder, as you say in your letter, it is obvious that when that has been dispersed the other will be removed at the same time, and when the root has been plucked up, the branches perish with it;—and if the branches continue flowering and flourishing, and producing an unnatural amount of fruit I cannot believe that you have been set free from the root of your distress’. St John Chrysostom in ‘To Olympias’, *St. Chrysostom: On the Priesthood; ascetic treatises; select homilies and letters; homilies on the statutes* [Public domain

between ‘despondency’ and ‘bodily infirmity’ and the relationship these two elements can sometimes have.

The Fathers often refer to the illnesses of the mind and soul as despondency (broken soul/heart), something akin to that spoken of by the Psalmist David especially Psalm 42.¹²⁴ Archimandrite Spyridon Logothetis in his book on depression states that feelings such as sorrow, anxiety, fear, remorse, anger and fatigue are often masked by bodily symptoms. He states that these feelings, or illnesses of the soul, also affect the body, as described by the Fathers of the Orthodox Church.¹²⁵ Thus, the connection between body, mind and soul in the Orthodox Tradition is reinforced. The Orthodox Tradition does not deny organic and clinical sources for many mental health issues, however it is important to note the following theological reflection from an Orthodox perspective.

Where do these feelings of sorrow, anxiety, fear, remorse and anger come from? The Fathers nominate a number of sources. Firstly, by very virtue of the Fall and our resultant sinful nature, humankind moves away from God, in whose divine image we are created. The human soul by its nature needs God. St Gregory of Nyssa writes: If therefore man came into being for this purpose, to share in the good things of God, he must inevitably be created with the capacity for enjoying those goods . . . in the same way it is necessary that a certain affinity with the divine should be mingled with the nature of man, so that by means of this correspondence it might have an

website] (Christian Literature Publishing Co, 1886 cited 28/09/06); available from <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf109.xvii.iv.html?highlight=skilled,physicians#highlight,1>.

¹²⁴ Archimandrite Spyridon Logothetis, *Depression: a spiritual guide* (Nafpaktos: Brotherhood of the Transfiguration of our Saviour Jesus Christ, 2004), 24.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 15-30

impulse towards what is congenial to it.¹²⁶ When estranged from this source, our lives become meaningless and humankind becomes dissatisfied, despondent and despaired.¹²⁷ Elder Nectarius of Optina states:

By making an idol out of life man sooner or later ceases to understand why he lives, and therefore he comes to a state of depressing confusion. He keeps dragging this load of despondency like a horse and, finally, all of a sudden a certain element of stupor traps him. One must know the purpose of life to be free.¹²⁸

When estranged from God the soul is distorted and this results in ‘passions’¹²⁹.

According to Metropolitan of Nafpaktos Hierotheos, passions are natural powers of the soul that are corrupted by sin or our withdrawal from God¹³⁰. For example the passions are often described as greed, jealousy, envy, laziness, wealth and power, gluttony, anger, selfishness, pride and guilt.¹³¹ It is believed that these passions are an unnatural movement of the soul and result in ‘sickness’¹³².

Archimandrite Spyridon Logothetis also identifies Satan and the demons as a ‘source and “carrier” of this illness’, e.g. depression.¹³³ In the opening chapter of St Mark’s Gospel (1:23-28), as in many other Gospel accounts of His ministry, Jesus casts out an unclean spirit. However to speak of the devil or possession and their relationship to humankind and in particular to mental health issues or illness is not something that is common place and is somewhat of a taboo subject in modern life and clinical practice. Yet particularly in the case of schizophrenia there are often delusions or paranoia directly related to the spiritual realm. The recent mainstream movie ‘The

¹²⁶ Gregory of Nyssa in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St. Cyril of Jerusalem to St. Leo the Great*, 129.

¹²⁷ Abbot Herman in *Wisdom from God-illuminated teachers on conquering depression*, 7-9.

¹²⁸ Elder Nectarius of Optina in *Ibid*, 39.

¹²⁹ Hierotheos, *Orthodox psychotherapy (the science of the Fathers)*, 252.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*.

¹³¹ Logothetis, *Depression: a spiritual guide*, 36.

¹³² Hierotheos, *Orthodox psychotherapy (the science of the Fathers)*, 252

¹³³ Logothetis, *Depression: a spiritual guide*, 30.

Exorcism of Emily Rose' was highly controversial, especially because of the discussion it created around the legal prosecution of the Catholic priest who was involved in the girl's spiritual care, yet it also highlights that episodes of this nature still exist to this day, as the following example from my own professional practice illustrates.

One of my clients believed her room to be possessed by the devil and during that episode we had to explore together meaningful ways for that client to feel safe in that room. She was a Catholic client and so wanted a priest to bless her room. I assisted her by contacting an appropriate priest to come and visit her. She also put a crucifix and an icon near her bed and would cross herself when entering her room. These actions assisted the client during her very frightening episode.

Each practitioner will have their own understanding of what they believe in relation to the realm of the devil and its power and the extent to which they would be involved in the expulsion of demons. As illustrated above, the Orthodox understanding, however, is that the realm of the devil can potentially be associated with a person's illness. While contemporary society does not readily welcome such a possibility, Orthodoxy accepts that the influence of the devil is something we need to take seriously. Archimandrite Aleksiev for example talks about the devil's influence in suffering and states 'the devil has entangled them in his nets and will hold them fast until they break free from his claws by force.'¹³⁴ If, for example, as an Orthodox practitioner one suspects the possibility of this type of illness then we should seek out the appropriate form of action. This would include gaining an understanding of the client's religious background and, if relevant and with their consent, engage the assistance of an appropriate spiritual leader, just as one would consult a psychologist, or a dietician or other health professional. Again, this type of consultation would not be seen in isolation from other health professional assistance

¹³⁴ Archimandrite Seraphim Aleksiev, *The meaning of suffering and strife and reconciliation* (Wildwood, CA: St Xenia Skete, 1994), 36.

but as a part of holistic care. With the increased rhetoric of the importance of the spiritual element of the human person in the secular welfare sector, this needs to be taken seriously in practice as a very real and valuable option in a client's care planning and case management. It needs, of course, to be thoughtfully considered in the light of the individual client's beliefs.

This is not, however, to deny or understate the clinical factors that may be fully or partly responsible for someone's mental health issue. The Orthodox Tradition does emphasise the fact that there may be clinical reasons for illnesses that need to be responded to by medication and/or professional clinical help. However, the Orthodox Tradition also maintains that oftentimes the life of the whole person needs to be examined in order to establish healing or the management of a condition. Archbishop Chrysostomos, a psychologist, in his book 'Orthodoxy and Psychology', like St John Chrysostom, exhorts the need for chemical intervention where there are organic rather than psychological causes, such as in manic depression. However, holistic balance is important.

In the Orthodox Church, we teach that mental and physical health are balanced against spiritual health. All three elements interact, moreover, in a very harmonious manner. Even if a disease like manic depression, then, has biological roots, the activities of the mind and spiritual exercise can bring to bear curative forces on the body itself.¹³⁵

The importance of the spiritual life in this holistic balance will be discussed in greater depth later in this thesis. However, referring again to St John Chrysostom's letter to Olympias, he gives her encouragement to endure her suffering of both soul and body just as the biblical greats (Job, Lazarus, Timothy and Paul) did and in doing

¹³⁵ Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna, *Orthodoxy and psychology: a collection of reflections on Orthodox theological and pastoral issues from a psychological perspective* (Etna, California: Centre for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2004), 115.

so potentially discovering the benefits of physical trial and holding one's peace.

Similarly, St Basil calls upon the patient to rely on the strength given to endure physical suffering, sourced through spiritual reliance:

He will sooth the pains of your body and strengthen its capacity to endure; and even if your body is covered with festering wounds, you will be able to retain your mental composure, and balance, with the help of our Lord Jesus Christ....¹³⁶

The following example from practical experience highlights this call to endurance through spiritual reliance:

A number of years ago I worked with a young man, John¹³⁷, who suffered from a fatal degenerative disease of the muscular system. He had an extremely strong Christian faith and participated as much as he could in his local parish church. He relied on this faith to give him strength and peace of heart and mind. His two siblings also had the same debilitating disease; one a twin and both self-declared atheists. His younger brother died at the age of 28, consumed by his anger. His twin sister also died a few years later. John outlived both of them by quite a few years with a determined and peaceful heart, strong in the faith he had with an understanding of what his disability meant in the scheme of this life.

The determination and faith that John lived by is that spoken about in Romans (4:18),

‘For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us’. This is emphasised by the patristic authors; for example, St Basil says of suffering that we are not to blame God but to look for the glory of God.¹³⁸ Fr Seraphim Rose urges something similar, ‘In suffering, something goes on which helps the heart to receive God’s revelation’.¹³⁹

According to Bishop Ware, one’s response to being a fallen, sinful creation does not

¹³⁶ St Basil the Great, *Gateway to Paradise - Basil the Great*, ed. Oliver Davies, trans. Tim Witherow (London: New City, 1991), 50.

¹³⁷ Client’s name and all identifiable details have been changed.

¹³⁸ ‘Do not, my friends feel pain at your physical afflictions, but be strong and thankful for whatever the Lord sends. For your body racked with every sort of pain, do not be depressed, allowing your spirit to become broken, and do not feel driven to cry out against God; but instead you should call to mind the example of Job who surpassed all others by his patience. Remember what he said: “As God chooses so it will be done, may his name be praised.”’ St Basil, *Gateway to Paradise - Basil the Great*, 41.

¹³⁹ Fr Seraphim Rose in *Wisdom from God-illuminated teachers on conquering depression*, ed., (St Paisius Abbey: St Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1995), 37.

only take will but endurance.¹⁴⁰ This means we need to be continually renewing our relationship with God by taking up the cross of Christ every day so as to share daily in the resurrection and transfiguration of the Lord¹⁴¹; ‘as dying, and see—we are alive...as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything’ (2 Cor 6: 9-10). The great paradox of Christianity!

As a practitioner, I strongly believe that having an understanding and faith in this Eastern Orthodox experience of God, suffering and holistic approach to personhood helps all levels of communication with my clients. For example, I may not be able to help the client directly in coping with their own physical pain, but by having a holistic structure of faith that makes sense of it, I am less likely to be overwhelmed or even surprised by the conditions of humankind. I am therefore, through the grace of God, granted the strength to keep assisting those who need it.

One needs to be very clear that these beliefs about the Fall of humankind and its relationship to disability, illness and mental health issues are not understood as moralistic. A moralistic theology might assert ‘I am a sinner therefore I suffer, through my disability/illness’. Rather, what is being discussed here is that the Orthodox Tradition has a belief which underpins all things about our purpose for being. Again I can hear responses from my experience in professional practice which suggests that the Fall was a punishment from God for the sin of humankind. To reiterate, the patristic understanding of suffering is not viewed as a punishment but as a consequence of humanity’s fallen nature. When St Basil speaks of illness

¹⁴⁰ Ware, *The Orthodox way*, 59-64.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, 80-84.

and physical punishment as ‘imposed on us by the wise and good Lord for our benefit’, what is meant is that in God giving us free will and having been enticed to sin, the pain/suffering is brought upon us for our own good. For example, a pain in the body will cause us to go to the doctor so we can be cured of that pain but the doctor has not caused the pain in the first place. So too God has not been the cause of our sin but offers a way in which we can become aware of it through pain and suffering.¹⁴² As such,

. . . the life of fulfilment should be a life growing into the fulfilment of our human nature and our understanding of what it means to be a human being before the Lord. Our true nature is not what we encounter in ourselves after the Fall; it is the nature of humankind continually growing in the likeness of God, as Adam and Eve would have, had they not sinned.¹⁴³

Archbishop Chrysostomos states however, ‘How, indeed, can one learn patience, humility, and passionless-ness from a society which demands instant gratification, ego development (a euphemism for pride), and the glorification of the most frightful passions?’¹⁴⁴ We live in a world that ascribes to the notions of greed, popularity, instant gratification, all the very things that Orthodox theology are telling us lead to the illness of our soul. Falling more and more away from the divine image is therefore identified with that which makes us sick; the wholeness of mind, soul and body is directly challenged by our modern society. The journey to wholeness and healing through an Orthodox perspective is explored in the following discussion.

¹⁴² Basil of Caesarea in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St. Cyril of Jerusalem to St. Leo the Great*, 60 and St Basil cited in "Divine providence and human suffering.", 39.

¹⁴³ LeMasters, "The practice of medicine as theosis.": 177.

¹⁴⁴ Chrysostomos, *Orthodoxy and psychology: a collection of reflections on Orthodox theological and pastoral issues from a psychological perspective*, 112.

2.2.4 For us and for our salvation¹⁴⁵ - health and wholeness

How does the human person, according to Orthodox Tradition begin the journey to restored health, or rather grow into the likeness of the divine image, through the power of the Holy Trinity? While this question will be explored in chapter three, the presuppositions need to be explored here. For the Orthodox Christian there is a focus specifically on the restoration of a fallen, suffering humanity, deliverance from death, the consequences of sin and estrangement from God – the source of life.¹⁴⁶ As the Great Doxology, which is prayed at the end of matins and used in other Orthodox services, proclaims:

...Lord, you have been our refuge from generation to generation. I said: Lord have mercy on me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against you. Lord, to you have I fled for refuge; teach me to do your will, for you are my God. For in you is the source of life; in your light we shall see light.¹⁴⁷

This restoration of the divine image in each human person is enabled by the gift of deification. The Eastern Orthodox focus is on participation with the uncreated energies of God, which is the incarnation of Jesus Christ and presence of the Spirit through the Church. It is through this communion with God that there is the potential for human beings to be renewed into a divinised state of being.¹⁴⁸

Divinisation, deification or theosis is granted to the entirety of a human being and the whole person becomes ‘god by grace, seeing the Father through Christ in the

¹⁴⁵ Nicene Creed, see Appendix A.

¹⁴⁶ Aghiorgoussis, "Applications of the theme 'eikon Theou' (image of God) according to Saint Basil the Great.", 286-287.

¹⁴⁷ St John Chrysostom, *The Divine Liturgy of our Father among the Saints St John Chrysostom* (Sydney: St Andrew's Orthodox Press, 2005), 117.

¹⁴⁸ Chapman, "Notes on the nature of God, the cosmos, and *Novus Homo*: an Eastern Orthodox perspective.", 251-258.

Spirit'.¹⁴⁹ Whilst becoming 'god' those deified remain created beings even though they experience God in His personal existence.¹⁵⁰ Theosis should be the destiny of all the faithful and this is why, according to Protopresbyter Romanides, a Christian should 'move from glory to glory, i.e., the servant should become a hireling and, then, a son of God and a faithful member of Christ'.¹⁵¹

Departing from this restored image, enlightened by the Holy Spirit to see the image of the invisible God in His Son, man is led to the knowledge of God, his 'blessed end'. In this knowledge man is united with God; man is transformed by Him; he resembles Him; he arrives to divine filiation, to 'divine dignity,' to 'theosis,' and he becomes 'god'.¹⁵²

If one understands the destiny of humanity and therefore salvation in terms of theosis, then salvation as a personal life realised in God also means that salvation is identified with the realisation of personhood in humanity.¹⁵³ Salvation of the unique person is deeply connected to the understanding of healing and wholeness. In fact English translations often use the words save and heal interchangeably in the healing miracles of Jesus Christ in the Synoptic Gospels. *The theological dictionary of the New Testament* explains that the Greek words used for salvation and save in the Synoptic Gospels have the meaning 'to make healthy' or 'to make alive'.¹⁵⁴ It also emphasises that in the healing miracles of Jesus, it is always the whole person that Jesus attends to not just a single member of the body.¹⁵⁵ 'The choice of word leaves room for the view that the healing power of Jesus and the saving power of faith go

¹⁴⁹ Protopresbyter John Romanides, *An outline of Orthodox Patristic dogmatics*, ed. Protopresbyter George Dion Dragas, trans. Protopresbyter George Dion Dragas, Orthodox Theological Library 1 (Rollinsford: Orthodox Research Institute, 2004), 11.

¹⁵⁰ Zizioulas, *Being as communion: studies in personhood and the Church*, 50.

¹⁵¹ Romanides, *An outline of Orthodox Patristic dogmatic*, 79.

¹⁵² Aghiorgoussis, "Applications of the theme 'eikon Theou' (image of God) according to Saint Basil the Great.": 278. A point of clarification: as humans we do not actually become the uncreated God; theosis does not collapse God into the creature or the creature into God; both remain distinct in their interrelationships and *hypostases*.

¹⁵³ Zizioulas, *Being as communion: studies in personhood and the Church*, 46-50.

¹⁵⁴ *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. VII (Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), 990.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

beyond physical life'.¹⁵⁶ *The Theological Dictionary* highlights the importance of the phrase “thy faith saved thee”.¹⁵⁷ Growing into the likeness of the divine image is a permanent situation of choice for humanity¹⁵⁸, by the grace of God (the synergy between God and humankind), for each and every one of us, not just those with disabilities and mental health issues.

The central statement of faith, which is for each and every believer in the Orthodox Tradition, the Nicene Creed¹⁵⁹, clearly shows the anticipation Orthodox Christians place in salvation; that which is offered through the Trinitarian God to restore us from our fallen nature. What is important to note is that restoration or salvation occurs fully beyond this life, ‘11. I await for the resurrection of the dead, 12. And the life of the Ages to come’.¹⁶⁰ Therefore, as a result of the Fall we can only begin the journey of restoration in this life, if we so choose, by the grace of God; however, ultimately we will only be truly made whole, or rather have the full likeness of the divine image restored in us, in the life to come. Only the saints (see chapter three, section nine) who have achieved theosis attain the likeness of the divine image in their earthly life.

The point that we will only begin the journey to restoration in this life is an important contribution of this section of the thesis. Humanity, despite its suffering, pain, illness, brokenness, disability and mental illness, is nonetheless part of God’s good creation. And thus, we must not deny our human existence and participation in it as unique persons fully realised in *koinonia* with God and each other. However to do

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 990.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 990

¹⁵⁸ Vladimir Lossky, *The mystical theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Press, 1976), 112.

¹⁵⁹ see Appendix A.

¹⁶⁰ Nicene Creed, see Appendix A.

this we must continually remember that our true home and potentiality is not of this world.

I have personally heard criticisms about the Orthodox focus on the eschatological restoration of humankind. For example, it is seen as placing an emphasis on things other worldly and as such the sufferings of this life are ignored or played down. However, the eschatological emphasis is on hope. The point being emphasised throughout this thesis is how Orthodoxy calls people to not only understand suffering but how to endure and find healing from it. In particular it can grant hope to those who suffer deeply now, due to their physical disabilities and disfigurements, because the Orthodox belief is that not only will the soul be resurrected but so too will the body. However something that should offer great encouragement and strength to those with illness, disability or mental health issues, is that not only will each person retain their own identity, it will be perfected; as St Gregory of Nyssa describes, ‘the form that had been hidden by disease is once more by means of health restored to sight again with its own marks of identity’.¹⁶¹

The Fathers are careful to distinguish the restoration of the body from reincarnation. Each person will be clothed with his own body but it will be free from suffering and the characteristics of the fallen nature.¹⁶² Humanity will be ‘led to perfection by the power of the Holy Spirit that will transfigure and enliven’¹⁶³ through the ‘divine

¹⁶¹ St Gregory of Nyssa in ‘That it is possible, when the human body is dissolved...’ *Gregory of Nyssa: dogmatic treatises, etc*, XXVII, 1.

¹⁶² Jean-Claude Larchet, *The theology of illness*, trans. John Breck and Michael Breck (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Press, 2002), 126.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 130.

grace and splendour of beautifying glory'.¹⁶⁴ This notion is beautifully explicated by St Basil the Great when he states:

At present we have a human body but in the future we will have a celestial one, because there are human bodies and celestial bodies. There is a human splendour and a celestial splendour...have no doubt, my friend, that you will have a celestial body and do not think that just because your present body is covered in leprous sores or any other blemishes that you will be excluded from the splendour of heaven.¹⁶⁵

Here we see, as in Orthodox Trinitarian doctrine, unique personhood because we are created by and in the divine image. The restoration of our fallen souls and bodies in the resurrection is something extremely significant in relation to making sense of disability, illness and mental health issues, for we all have the potential, by the grace of God, to be perfected in our personhood. 'Through Christ, with Christ (1 Thess 4:14) and in Christ (1 Cor 15:22), through the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:11), God will bestow life upon the dead and raise their bodies. He will heal them from every ill'.¹⁶⁶

The focus therefore for all of us, including those affected by disability or mental health issues, becomes the restoration of health from our illness caused by the Fall. Whilst we can be confident in the expectation that the suffering and pain of this life will be healed, including that of our own personal physical bodies, in the life to come, there is much in this life that one can do through the Church to begin a participation in healing. This will be explored in detail in Chapter Three. St Theophan the Recluse in his writings on the spiritual life articulates the healing which is offered to us, including the role of the Holy Trinity in this restoration:

For the restoration of our spirit and its reunion with God, it is necessary that the Divine Spirit descend to it and revive it. In order to open the way

¹⁶⁴ St Maximus the Confessor cited in *Ibid*, 131.

¹⁶⁵ St Basil, *Gateway to Paradise - Basil the Great*, 46-47

¹⁶⁶ Larchet, *The theology of illness*, 129.

to the descent of the Divine Spirit, the Only-Begotten Son of God came to earth, was incarnated, suffered, died on the Cross, was resurrected, and ascended into heaven. It is in this respect that the Son of God Himself turned His work over to the Holy Spirit...it should not be supposed that Their restorative action within us is divided between Them. This action comes undivided from God, all-venerated in the Trinity.¹⁶⁷

The discussion now turns to the source of our restorative healing that is specifically Jesus Christ, the divine-human physician.

¹⁶⁷ St Theophan the Recluse, *The spiritual life and how to be attuned to it*, trans. Alexandra Dockham (Safford, Arizona: St. Paisius Serbian Orthodox Monastery, 2003), 95-97

2.3 THE DIVINE-HUMAN PHYSICIAN

Whilst it is acknowledged that all three persons of the Holy Trinity participate in the restorative action needed by humanity, as has been discussed in the previous section, the following discussion will focus on the significance of Christ, the ‘physician of our souls and bodies’.¹⁶⁸ Because the first Adam did not fulfil his vocation, this has been fulfilled by Christ, the second Adam. ‘The Word was made man in order that we might be made divine. He displayed himself through a body, that we might receive knowledge of the invisible Father’.¹⁶⁹ This famous statement was made by patristic authors, St Irenaeus of Lyon and Clement of Alexandria, and reiterated by St Gregory of Nazianzus: ‘What was not assumed was not healed’.¹⁷⁰

Stated above is the Orthodox belief that only by God becoming human can the divine image in humanity be restored. In order for this to be possible Orthodox doctrine maintains belief in the Chalcedon formulation of the two natures of Jesus Christ, without division or confusion – the *hypostatic* union. It is precisely because of this belief in the *hypostatic* union that the Orthodox notion of the impassible God is able to remain firm in its belief.¹⁷¹ As explained previously, this is the foundation upon which the Cappadocian Fathers are able to state that the second person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ, did suffer. For example St Gregory of Nazianzus claims that

¹⁶⁸St John Chrysostom, *The Divine Liturgy of our Father among the Saints St John Chrysostom.*, 89.

¹⁶⁹ Athanasius in Henry Bettenson, ed., *The early Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St.Clement of Rome to St.Athanasius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1956] 1974), 294.

¹⁷⁰ Gregory of Nazianzus in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St.Cyril of Jerusalem to St.Leo the Great*, 108.

¹⁷¹ Aghiorgoussis, "Applications of the theme 'eikon Theou' (image of God) according to Saint Basil the Great.", 265-266.

through the incarnation, Jesus Christ was passible; He did experience suffering.¹⁷²

Whilst we do uphold that Jesus Christ did experience suffering, within the mystery which is the incarnation, ‘We do not ascribe our salvation to a mere man; nor do we admit that the incorruptible divine nature is liable to suffering and death’.¹⁷³ This is the beauty of the Orthodox understanding of the God-man, the incarnation.

How is it that Orthodoxy can claim that which is stated above? The answer lies in the continuing mystery and paradox which is the *hypostatic* union. ‘We have been brought near and saved by the sufferings of the impassible one’.¹⁷⁴ In this sense the formula ‘one of the Holy Trinity suffered in the flesh’ clarifies the Chalcedonian formula, which simply asserted the union of the two natures ‘into one hypostasis’.¹⁷⁵ ‘On the one hand Chalcedon’s legacy is perfectly preserved: the natures, even after the union, are two, because the uncreated divine essence can never as such be partaken of in any other form by the created nature’.¹⁷⁶ Here we see the distinctions and uniqueness of each person of the Holy Trinity and at the same time their unity, played out in understanding the incarnation, the God-man. Christ’s humanity was fully deified: ‘...he assumed our flesh with its natural experiences, but “he did not sin”...the sinfulness was annulled by the righteousness which is in Christ Jesus; so that in the resurrection we receive back the flesh neither subject to death, nor liable to sin’.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷² Gregory of Nazianzus in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St.Cyril of Jerusalem to St.Leo the Great*, 136-137.

¹⁷³ St Gregory of Nyssa in *Ibid*, 139.

¹⁷⁴ Gregory of Nazianzus cited in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St.Cyril of Jerusalem to St.Leo the Great*, 104.

¹⁷⁵ John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian thought* (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Press, 1987), 78.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 78.

¹⁷⁷ Basil of Caesarea in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St.Cyril of Jerusalem to St.Leo the Great*, 69-70.

Whilst Christ's fully deified humanity was necessary for our restoration, Link asserts that the incarnation was God's intention from eternity.¹⁷⁸ This is so because the incarnation is part of God's eternal self-communication and imparting love.¹⁷⁹ St Gregory of Nazianzus beautifully describes this love and outpouring of God as human in Jesus Christ for our sake:

He made his appearance as God, with the assumption of human nature, a unity composed of two opposites, flesh and Spirit...He takes upon himself the poverty of my flesh. He who enriches becomes poor: he takes upon himself the poverty of my flesh so that I may receive the riches of divinity...I had my share in the divine image, and I did not preserve it. He shares in my flesh in order that he may rescue the image and confer immortality on the flesh.¹⁸⁰

And so the God-man, the second Adam, came so that we too may become deified or restored into the likeness of the divine image, healed of sin and death, the things that have diseased humankind since the Fall. The work of this divine-human physician is clearly articulated both by the Scripture and Tradition of the Church.

In regards to Scripture, a reflection by St John Chrysostom on the healing of the Paralytic in the Gospel of St John and of the connection between salvation and healing in Jesus' ministries has already been discussed. There are many accounts in the Gospels of the healing carried out by Christ during his earthly ministry, including the healing of paralysis (Mark 2:1-12, John 5:1-9), a withered hand (Mark 3:1-6), curvature of the spine (Luke 13:10-17), dropsy (Luke 14:1-6), excessive menstrual bleeding (Mark 5:24-34), fever (Mark 1:29-32), deafness (Mark 7:31-37), aphoria [dumbness] (Mark 9:32-34), blindness (Mark 8:22-26, 10:46-52, Matt 9:27-31, John

¹⁷⁸ Christian Link, "Incarnation and creation: interpreting the world through the theology of the Trinity," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 43 (1998), 329.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Gregory of Nazianzus in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St. Cyril of Jerusalem to St. Leo the Great*, 106.

9:1-12), psoriasis, leprosy (Mark 1:40-45), epilepsy, insanity and demons.¹⁸¹ As stated by St John Chrysostom, ‘the Great Physician came not to give thee over, but to heal thee—not to pass thee by when thou wert sick, but to rid thee entirely of disease.’¹⁸² According to Chirban, healing in the Gospels ‘followed different interventions, most of them related to the faith of seeking cures, intervening in the afflictions of body, mind and soul’.¹⁸³

The connection between the soul and body in the Orthodox Tradition is again emphasised. Because of this, Christ’s healing released humanity from sin and death and pointed to the kingdom of heaven, as stated in the following example from the Gospel of St Matthew. After the healing of palsy, the raising of a little girl, the healing of a woman with haemorrhaging of twelve years, the restoring of sight and the expelling of demons, ‘Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness’ (Matt 9:35). St Gregory of Nyssa describes it thus:

...By mingling with humanity, sharing all the distinctive features of our nature – birth, nurture, growth – and going right on to the experience of death, he effected all those aforementioned results, freeing man from wickedness and healing even the inventor of wickedness himself. For the purification of the disease, however painful, is the healing of infirmity.¹⁸⁴

The gift of healing which Jesus Christ revealed in His incarnation is accessible even now through His Church. The thesis now turns, in chapter three, to a fuller account of the Church’s therapeutic calling.

¹⁸¹ John Chirban, *Orthodox theological roots of holistic healing* [Article accessed via website] (2005 cited 08/10/2005); available from <http://www.ocampr.org/ChirbanHolistic.asp>, 2.

¹⁸² St John Chrysostom in ‘Book IV’, *St. Chrysostom: on the priesthood; ascetic treatises; select homilies and letters; homilies on the statutes*, IV, 62.

¹⁸³ Chirban, *Orthodox theological roots of holistic healing*, 2.

¹⁸⁴ Gregory of Nyssa in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St. Cyril of Jerusalem to St. Leo the Great*, 145.

CHAPTER 3. THE FULLNESS OF PERSONHOOD – THE THERAPEUTIC CALLING OF THE CHURCH

3.1 THE CHURCH AS HOSPITAL

In the previous section, belief in Jesus Christ, the divine-human physician, has been discussed. According to the Orthodox faith, that which heals is the power of the divine-human physician who we meet in the Church; theologically articulated as an experience of the energies of God as revealed by Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition.¹⁸⁵ Remembering the point that Orthodoxy inextricably encompasses right belief and glorification to God (doxology) through action, mostly liturgical, it is therefore by examining these actions that we can come to understand the Church's therapeutic calling. There is a belief in the Orthodox faith that the Church is the hospital.¹⁸⁶ Like the language used throughout this paper such as healing, the divine-human physician and sin as disease, so too does the Orthodox Church and its Tradition exhort a prescription of therapies. These are for the healing of the human person from sin, death and suffering, and to lead us into the likeness of the divine image according to whose image we were created, through the power of the Holy Trinity.

¹⁸⁵ Logothetis, *Depression: a spiritual guide*, 127.

¹⁸⁶ Metropolitan of Nafpaktos Hierotheos, *The illness and cure of the soul in the Orthodox Tradition*, trans. Effie Mavromichali (Levadia: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 1997), 86.

Without an extensive treatise ‘on what the Church is’ as this is not the focus of this thesis, the Orthodox Tradition views the Church as the place of sanctification, re-creation and an experience of the new heaven for those who are united with and in Christ.¹⁸⁷ The Church is that which follows the Holy Scripture and Tradition of the Holy Fathers, as outlined in the first Seven Ecumenical Councils.¹⁸⁸ It is considered to be Catholic, Holy and Apostolic, ‘being the body of Christ and one in relation to her one Head, and consisting of the totality of believers in the Son of God, Jesus Christ...’¹⁸⁹ According to Yannaris the Church or ‘Ecclesia’¹⁹⁰ was the name given to the first community of Christ’s disciples. This community was a radical transformation of individuals as ‘detached units, into a single body, the Church’.¹⁹¹ This communion, *koinonia*, experienced by the early Christians with the incarnate God and each other, has become the unique and distinct characteristic of the Orthodox Church which continues today. The Church is the place of transformation where the wholeness of personhood can be discovered, through relationship with God and others. The Church is a ‘Divine - human Organism’.¹⁹²

The following discussion will demonstrate how the therapies of the Church influence the understanding of personhood in the Orthodox faith and how, like the Trinitarian formulation, they have their own unique characteristics and yet cannot be separated from each other. It was not intended that they should be separated and then prescribed for the purposes of healing but together make up a way of life and

¹⁸⁷ Gregory of Nyssa, *From glory to glory: texts from Gregory of Nyssa*, trans. Herbert Mursurillo (London: John Murray, 1962), 273.

¹⁸⁸ *Divine prayers and services of the Catholic Orthodox Church of Christ*, ed. Seraphim Nassar (New York: Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of New York and All North America, 1961), 1027-1044.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 1042.

¹⁹⁰ Yannaras, *Elements of faith - an introduction to Orthodox theology*, 121

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, 121

¹⁹² Metropolitan of Nafpaktos Hierotheos, *The mind of the Orthodox Church*, trans. Esther Williams (Levadia-Hellas: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 2000), 41.

healing, and way of understanding life, death and the world. This may be a challenging comment for those who are not part of the Orthodox Tradition and one that I hold in tension every day as an Orthodox Christian, a presbytera (a wife of an Orthodox priest) and someone who works full-time with people who experience disabilities and mental health issues. Within myself I know the ongoing transformation and healing I receive as a result of my participation in the Orthodox faith and yet I am aware of my professional boundaries and the inappropriateness of proselytising. Part of the intention for this thesis was to reflect personally on how my Tradition can and does speak to the world of disability and mental illness and how that belief impacts upon my professional life.

The question therefore arises, how are we healed today by the power of the divine-human physician within His Church, which is a spiritual hospital? How do we come in contact with the transforming energies of the Holy Trinity in order to be set free from sin and corruption, to be made whole, and grow into the likeness of the divine image?

Firstly, the concept of the ‘healing waters of baptism’ followed by the ‘medicine of immortality’ shall be explored, along with other characteristics of the Orthodox faith which are involved in the healing of both soul and body. It is important to note however, the following about the nature of healing. Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh in his homily on healing (delivered as an introduction to the Akathist Prayers to the Mother of God for the healing of cancer) describes how we hear many accounts in the Gospel of people being healed from illnesses, but that it is important

to note that Christ did not heal everyone.¹⁹³ We each need healing, whether it be physical or of the soul, but ‘only few are healed. Why is this?’¹⁹⁴ Metropolitan Anthony states that in order to receive the action of the grace of God ‘unto the healing of body or soul, or both – we must open ourselves to God. Not to healing, but to God.’¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ *Akathist to the Mother of God - healer of cancer*, ed. Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh (Stafford, Arizona: St. Paisius Serbian Orthodox Monastery, 2002), 9.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 9.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 9.

3.2 THE HEALING WATERS OF BAPTISM

In the quotation from Metropolitan Anthony at the end of the previous section we see the invitation of love that God gives to humanity through the granting of free will; the same free will given to humankind before the Fall. Opening ourselves up to God for healing is something to which we are given a choice and for which we pray for the grace of God; it is a synergy between God and humanity, as was also mentioned in chapter two, section two, part D. Similarly, participation in the sacramental life of the Church is something we can choose to be a part of. Meyendorff states:

[T]he Kingdom of God, an anticipation of the eschatological fulfilment, is already accessible in the Body of Christ; this possibility of ‘being in Christ’ of ‘participating’ in the divine life – the ‘natural’ state of humanity is...manifested in the sacraments, or *mysteria*, of the Church...in which God shares the divine life with humanity, redeeming man from sin and death and bestowing on him the glory of immortality.¹⁹⁶

Participation with the Holy Trinity is experienced by the Church through sacramental communion in God, Christ and the Spirit.¹⁹⁷ The first *mysteria* or therapy of the Church which will be discussed is that of baptism. Baptism is a shared experience amongst the ecclesia, the gathering of believers. In fact it is by baptism that a human person becomes a citizen of the kingdom God.¹⁹⁸ The hymnology (doxology) of the baptismal service clearly highlights the need for humankind to be healed and restored and how this is achieved through the power of the Holy Trinity. Appendix C contains a prayer from the baptismal liturgy which describes how humanity was

¹⁹⁶ John Meyendorff, *Byzantine theology: historical trends and doctrinal themes* (Oxford: Mowbrays, 1974), 191.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ John Meyendorff, *Marriage: An Orthodox perspective*, Third revised edition ed. (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), 10.

created according to the likeness of God, yet has fallen away. The prayer also explains how God does not abandon us but provides a way through baptism to salvation, a way to expel all impurity, to put off the old person and be clothed with the new and renew the divine image in which we were created. It is important to note that in the Orthodox baptismal liturgy the initiate is baptised naked, clothed in our fallen human skin and after the baptism is dressed again symbolizing the ‘new man...renewed after the image of Him who created him’.¹⁹⁹

The person baptised is anointed with holy chrism and sealed with the cross and immersed three times into the water in the name of the Holy Trinity.^{200 201} The following prayer reads: ‘Thou art baptized. Thou art illumined. Thou hast received anointment with Holy chrism. Thou art sanctified. Thou art washed; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen’.²⁰² The prayer is followed by ‘As many have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ, Alleluia’²⁰³ (Gal 3:27), a beautiful hymn which is also said repeatedly during Pascha (Easter). For just as Christ endured death for three days, for our sake and our salvation, and after the third day was raised to life, so too ‘every one who is linked to him in virtue of his bodily nature and fixes his eyes on the same victory...has water poured upon him,

¹⁹⁹ *Service book of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church according to the use of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America*, 11th ed. (New York: Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of New York and all North America, 2002), 155-156.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ The following exhortation from St Gregory of Nyssa explains why the faithful are baptised in the name of the Holy Trinity: ‘What says the Lord’s command? Baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost (Matt 28:19). How in the Name of the Father? Because He is the primal cause of all things. How in the Name of the Son? Because He is the Maker of the Creation. How in the Name of the Holy Ghost? Because He is the power perfecting all. We bow ourselves therefore before the Father, that we may be sanctified: before the Son also we bow, that the same end may be fulfilled: we bow also before the Holy Ghost, that we may be made what He is in fact and in Name.’ St Gregory of Nyssa cited in *Gregory of Nyssa: dogmatic treatises, etc.* in ‘On the baptism of Christ’, 176.

²⁰² *Service book of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church according to the use of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America*, 161.

²⁰³ Ibid, 163.

instead of earth, and thus, by submitting to this element three times, represents the grace of resurrection attained after three days'.²⁰⁴

St Gregory of Nyssa also explains how this salvation is necessary in relation to the healing of both body and soul:

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3: 3). Why are both named, and why is not the Spirit alone accounted sufficient for the completion of Baptism? Man, as we know full well, is compound, not simple: and therefore the cognate and similar medicines are assigned for healing to him who is two fold and conglomerate:—for his visible body, water, the sensible element,—for his soul, which we cannot see, the Spirit invisible, invoked by faith, present unspeakably.²⁰⁵

An important part of this theological discussion and its related praxis has been expounded by Zizioulas in his work *Being as Communion*. Zizioulas' profound comments contribute to the understanding of person, especially in relation to those with disabilities and/or mental health issues. Zizioulas asserts that humanity is born with the hypostasis of biological existence.²⁰⁶ This biological hypostasis needs relationship to move from being an individual to a person.²⁰⁷ Through baptism man is born into an ecclesial *hypostasis* and by participating in the Eucharist, an assembly of community and is transformed from the biological *hypostasis*.²⁰⁸ Humanity does not cease to be a biological *hypostasis*, so the new category that expresses the relationship between the two is a sacramental *hypostasis*.²⁰⁹ Again it is made very clear that in Orthodox theology the human person has the potential to move into the fulfilment of personhood, beyond any experience of the brokenness of

²⁰⁴ Gregory of Nyssa in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St. Cyril of Jerusalem to St. Leo the Great*, 159.

²⁰⁵ Gregory of Nyssa: *dogmatic treatises, etc.*, in *On the baptism of Christ*, 175..

²⁰⁶ Zizioulas, *Being as communion: studies in personhood and the Church*, 50.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 53-55.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 55-65. .

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

our biological beings. This is possible through participation in the relational experience of the Church and with Christ its head, the second Adam in whose divine image we were created and whose likeness we hope to attain, and through the sacraments of this Church in which the energies of the Triune God²¹⁰ transform and heal.

Myendorff articulates the notion that when a person is baptised they become “one body” with Christ in the Eucharist²¹¹ and they in fact become more fully themselves. This is because they experience a truer relationship, not only with God but with their fellow human beings. Because God is the highest form of goodness, beauty and love and He Himself loves humankind, so much so that He is a ‘Person to meet’.²¹²

Particularly within the sacraments of the Church, the human person who participates in these also has the potential to return to the world with all the ‘God-given and limitless potential of creativity, of service and of love’.²¹³

St Theophan the Recluse explains that the grace that is bestowed upon us by virtue of our baptism works secretly within us but needs to be constantly renewed by the Holy Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ.²¹⁴ However, St Gregory of Nyssa makes

²¹⁰ The presence and invocation of the Holy Trinity in the sacrament of Baptism is also illustrated in the Baptism of Christ himself. In the Gospel of Mark (1: 9-11) one sees the descending of the Spirit and the presence of the Father affirming His Son, ‘thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’. The Orthodox Tradition also celebrates the Baptism of the Lord every year at Theophany – the Greater Blessing of the Water. The following prayer illustrates why Christ came to baptism, He who was God incarnate, ‘Today the whole creation shines with light from on high... Today the Lord comes to baptism so that he may lift man up to the heights’ *Greater Blessing of the Water*, 1998. The actions of Jesus Christ were to sanctify and renew creation into the image of God. To honour this, during the celebration of Christ’s Baptism water is made holy by the Priest and given to the faithful. The prayer included in Appendix D illustrates the healing properties believed to be possible through the power of Christ’s actions at the Jordan.

²¹¹ Meyendorff, *Marriage: an Orthodox perspective*, 19.

²¹² Ibid, 19.

²¹³ Ibid, 19.

²¹⁴ St Theophan the Recluse, *The path to salvation: a manual of spiritual transformation*, trans. Fr Seraphim Rose (Forestville, California: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1998), 42.

it very clear; one must want this grace to work and must do the work necessary in order to be transformed and subsequently help transform the world around us:

If the life after initiation is of the same quality as the uninitiated life, then, though it may be bold to say, I will say it without flinching; in the case of such people the water is merely water, for the gift of the Holy Spirit in no way shows itself in what takes place...If then you have received God and have become a child of God, display the purpose of your life the God that is in you, display in yourself the Father who gave you birth.²¹⁵

Because we continue to sin and continually need healing, the Church offers other therapies by which this process can continue, as mentioned above by St Theophan. The following section will look at the role of the medicine of immortality, followed by Confession as healing therapies of the Church.

²¹⁵ St Gregory of Nyssa in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St. Cyril of Jerusalem to St. Leo the Great*, 160.

3.3 THE MEDICINE OF IMMORTALITY

The sacrament of the Eucharist has been called by St Ignatius the ‘medicine of immortality’.²¹⁶ St Basil speaks of the Eucharist as partaking in the word and wisdom of God.²¹⁷ Note the sense of partaking and participation in the above descriptions. In the Orthodox Tradition it is the praxis of theology that is the focus, participation in the energies of God, and this is what is potentially life giving and renewing to all human persons. As St Gregory of Nyssa maintains, in the Eucharist the soul receives an antidote to sin; that is, the immortal body of Christ.²¹⁸

The hymnology or doxology of the prayers of the Divine Liturgy (Eucharist), attributed to St John Chrysostom, clearly illustrate the healing context of the Divine Liturgy, of which the Eucharist is a central part for example, ‘Master...physician of sour souls and bodies’.²¹⁹ By participating in the Divine Liturgy and by partaking of the Eucharist we are potentially entering into the process of theosis, for example, ‘Priest: The lamb of God is broken and distributed, broken yet not divided, ever eaten yet never consumed, but sanctifying those who partake’.²²⁰ (Refer also to another prayer from the Divine Liturgy outlined in Appendix B).

²¹⁶ Ignatius in Bettenson, ed., *The early Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St.Clement of Rome to St.Athanasius*, 42.

²¹⁷ Basil of Caesarea in Bettenson, ed., *The later Christian Fathers: a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St.Cyril of Jerusalem to St.Leo the Great*, 88.

²¹⁸ Gregory of Nyssa cited in Ibid, 162.

²¹⁹ St John Chrysostom, *The Divine Liturgy of our Father among the Saints St John Chrysostom*, 89.

²²⁰ Ibid, 91.

Apendix B also provides three examples of the responses made by the participants of the Divine Liturgy and they too illustrate the hope placed in the ‘medicine of immortality’ for the healing of soul and body and for participation in the life redeeming Trinity. Importantly, participation in this ‘triadic mode of existence, a revelation of “true life”, of the Kingdom of God’²²¹ via the Eucharist is an ecclesial experience. The participation of the Eucharistic meal is in communion with our brothers and sisters and with God, through which ‘we agree to exist only by loving and being loved’.²²² In fact in the Orthodox Tradition, the Divine Liturgy, unlike the Catholic mass, cannot be celebrated by the priest alone. There must be at least one member of the faithful present for the sacrament to be celebrated, highlighting the importance of the communion of believers. Like our personhood, which is only fulfilled in relationship to others, our healing too can only be fully realised through an intimate relationship with God and our brothers and sisters in Christ. Meyendorff describes the Eucharist as,

the moment and the place when and where a Christian should realise what he truly is...the Church, being concretely a gathering of people, ceases to be a human organization and becomes truly the “Church of God”. Then Christ leads the assembly, and the assembly is transformed in to His body.²²³

²²¹ Yannaras, *Elements of faith - an introduction to Orthodox theology*, 125.

²²² *Ibid*, 125.

²²³ Meyendorff, *Marriage: An Orthodox perspective*, 10.

3.4 CONFESSION, REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS – THE PRIEST AS THERAPIST

Confession too, as will be explored below, is an ecclesial therapy. As previously mentioned, despite our baptism, participation in the Eucharist and our promises of good intentions to follow Christ we still continually fall into sin. Unfortunately we continue to separate ourselves from union with God and His love and keep moving away from the divine image in us. For this reason ‘repentance is the renewal of baptism. Repentance is a contract with God for a fresh start in life’.²²⁴

Therefore to keep our eyes and heart on growing into the likeness of the divine image and to be healed from suffering, sin and death, we need to keep repenting of the sin that leads us to suffering and death. Repentance gives rise to a person’s right state (sin being that which is unnatural), that which is life giving²²⁵. Metropolitan of Nafpaktos Hierotheos describes repentance as the first healing medicine.²²⁶

The sacrament of confession, the act of repentance within the Church²²⁷ is referred to as the ‘forgotten medicine’ by Archimandrite Aleksiev.²²⁸ Confession however has often been misinterpreted as a judgemental tool of a moralistic God and as such its practice is often ignored. The nature of repentance in the Orthodox Tradition however is not for the moralistic and juridical control of a person. Rather it is

²²⁴ Hierotheos, *Orthodox psychotherapy (the science of the Fathers)*, 177.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ John Chryssavgis, *Repentance and confession in the Orthodox Church* (Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1990), 3 & 11.

²²⁸ Archimandrite Seraphim Aleksiev, *The forgotten medicine: the mystery of repentance*, trans. Ralista Doynova (California: St. Xenia Skete Press, 1994), 23.

considered to be part of that which offers healing to the human person. St John Chrysostom asks, 'Have you committed a sin? Then enter the Church and repent of your sin ... For here is the Physician, not the judge; here one is not investigated but receives remission of sins'.²²⁹ It is the Father who welcomed his son home with open arms after he confessed of his sins, saying:

Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found! (Luke 15:22-24).

It is the Father who asked Peter, after he had denied Him three times but who had wept bitter tears in repentance, if he loved Him and then gave him the great commission of the Church of Christ (John 21:15-19). 'In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son...' (1 John: 4.10).

Based in God's love for us, repentance is viewed in the Orthodox Tradition as *metanoia*, a Greek word which means a 'change of mind', a reorientation, a fundamental transformation of outlook, of man's vision of the world and of himself, and a new way of loving others and God'.²³⁰ It is a passing over, a *Pascha* from death to life, a continual renewal of that life.²³¹ Repentance is a reorientation of the person towards God in whose divine image all persons are created. Throughout the New Testament the call to repent is clearly exhorted, for example Mark 1:15, Luke 15:7, John 3:1-5, Acts 2:38, Matt 3:2, Rev 3:19, Luke 13:13.

In the Orthodox Tradition, because of the therapeutic understanding of repentance, through the sacrament of confession, the priest is understood to be the therapist, the

²²⁹ St John Chrysostom cited in Chryssavgis, *Repentance and confession in the Orthodox Church*, 13.

²³⁰ Chryssavgis, *Repentance and confession in the Orthodox Church*, 5.

²³¹ Ibid.

facilitator of the healing sacraments. It is a common question however, ‘why do I need a priest to confess of my sins?’ In the Orthodox Tradition it is deemed important because the role of the priest has ‘enormous instructive meaning. It humbles us. It cures our pride’.²³² Metropolitan Hierotheos explains that the grace of God is not transmitted ‘magically or mechanically’ but rather ‘sacramentally’.²³³ While many people are satisfied with regular attendance to a formal confession or liturgy they are not fully engaging in the potential healing power of these sacraments.²³⁴ ‘[T]he priests, the spiritual Fathers, not only celebrate the Communion but they cure people. They have a sound knowledge of the path of healing from passions and they make it known to their spiritual children’.²³⁵

In the Orthodox Church the priest is seen as the ‘witness of repentance’²³⁶ whereby there is no declaration of ‘I absolve you, which is of later Latin origin.’²³⁷ Rather it is the grace of Christ and the Holy Spirit given within the Church.²³⁸ Therefore the priest must also seek healing for himself.²³⁹ St Gregory the Theologian states, ‘It is necessary first to be purified then to purify; to be made wise, then to make wise; to become light, then to enlighten; to approach God, then to bring others to him; to be sanctified, then sanctify...’²⁴⁰ For as Theodore of Mopsuestia states, ‘God has given us the remedy of confession, according to the discipline of the Church. This is the treatment of sins that God has entrusted to the priests of the Church’.²⁴¹

²³² Aleksiev, *The meaning of suffering and strife and reconciliation*, 35.

²³³ Hierotheos, *Orthodox psychotherapy (the science of the Fathers)*, 45.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid, 45.

²³⁶ Chrysavgis, *Repentance and confession in the Orthodox Church*, 13.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Hierotheos, *Orthodox psychotherapy (the science of the Fathers)*, 44.

²⁴⁰ St Gregory the Theologian cited in Ibid, 61.

²⁴¹ Theodore of Mopsuestia cited in Chrysavgis, *Repentance and confession in the Orthodox Church*, 30.

The Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Tradition understand repentance and confession to be a vehicle to heal and transform the passions.²⁴² Through the guidance of the priest as therapist, Thalassios in the *Philokalia 2* states “the forceful practice of self control and love, patience and stillness, will destroy the passions hidden within us”²⁴³. In chapter 2.2.3 it was discussed how the passions, for example anger, greed, jealousy, envy can manifest themselves in bodily suffering especially in relation to the Orthodox understanding of the body, mind and soul. Certain suffering and illness can be caused by the body and soul being out of alignment, exemplified in the following account. A psychologist at the University of Toronto, with her husband who is a Professor of Immunology, conducted a study on ninety couples who had recently been engaged in an argument.²⁴⁴ ‘The results were that during the first hours after the disagreement, their immune systems had all but collapsed’.²⁴⁵

Throughout this thesis the Orthodox understanding of the body, mind and soul has been referred to, especially in reference to repentance, healing and wholeness. Appendix E demonstrates a beautiful doxological summary from the prayer read at the end of the repentance canon²⁴⁶. It describes not only the healing of the passions, but the transformation of the body through the life giving body of Christ, and the sweetening of the soul through the Blood of Christ, all with the purpose of the renewal of the divine image.

Archimandrite Spyridon Logothetis states, ‘The frequent and regular recourse to the Mystery of Repentance, with the forgiving Grace of the Holy Spirit, does not allow

²⁴² Hierotheos, *Orthodox psychotherapy (the science of the Fathers)*, 274.

²⁴³ *Ibid*, 47.

²⁴⁴ Archimandrite Vassilios Bakoyannis, *Marriage: a spiritual arena* (Athens: Orthodox Book Centre, 2005), 47-48.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 47.

²⁴⁶ Orthodox prayer service.

the creation of the feelings of remorse and guilt which produce grief.²⁴⁷ He also refers to confession as a ‘preventative medicine’ that helps to keep remorse, dejection, depression and torment at bay.²⁴⁸ Elder Macarius of Optina states:

At the time of storm and uprisings of passions, strive not to give over to gloom and doom, but cling to self-reproach, humility and repentance. To God a humble sinner who is repenting is more pleasing than a righteous man who is proud and not repenting, but who thinks of justifying himself with righteousness.²⁴⁹

From a pastoral perspective, confession and repentance is not necessarily a physical cure from a disability or an illness. However in the Orthodox Tradition because God is our source and destination, separation from God also leads to suffering.²⁵⁰

Therefore it is important to note the need for healing and wholeness from the soul’s perspective even if physical health cannot be achieved.

When we are in trouble or despair or have lost hope, we should do what David did: pour out our hearts to God and tell Him of our needs and troubles, just as they are (cf. Ps. 141:2). It is because he can deal with us wisely that we confess to God: He can make our troubles easy to bear, if this is for our benefit, and can save us from the dejection which destroys and corrupts.²⁵¹

It has been shown that the bitterness people keep in their hearts because of things that happen to them can cause increased anger and depression. Therefore, encouraging the value of forgiveness and peace of heart and soul can be important in pastoral practice. In some instances, for those clients who are familiar with religious rites, it may be appropriate to suggest a formal confession from their own tradition. As a practitioner from the Orthodox faith it is integral for my own wellbeing and those

²⁴⁷ Logothetis, *Depression: a spiritual guide*, 72.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ *Wisdom from God-illuminated teachers on conquering depression*, ed., 75.

²⁵⁰ Aleksiev, *The meaning of suffering and strife and reconciliation*, 21.

²⁵¹ St Hesychius the Priest cited in *Wisdom from God-illuminated teachers on conquering depression*, ed., 57.

with whom I come into contact that I use the practice of confession to remain as centred and whole as I can.

Even the concept of *metanoia*, to have a change of mindset, can be an effective means of conversation with clients. I will often take the opportunity to explain to clients the concept of *metanoia* if we have identified the need for them to change a particular behaviour; for example, someone with an alcohol addiction who is having a 'binge'. Accompanying that explanation is the need for the practitioner to demonstrate unceasing forgiveness and a non-judgemental attitude that accepts the client just as the Father accepted the prodigal son (Luke 15: 22-24). It is this kind of relationship with clients that can facilitate long term healing particularly in the context of behaviour modification and addiction.

3.5 PRAYER

Deeply connected to the call of repentance is prayer. In the Orthodox Tradition prayer is something that becomes part of one's way of life if one takes up the New Testament command to 'watch and pray' (Matt 26:41) and to 'pray without ceasing' (1 Thess 5:17). Through prayer and worship, we grow closer in our union with God.²⁵² The following quote from an Orthodox Prayer and Worship book explains how through prayer this union with God is a 'healing' process,

[B]y prayer therefore we discharge our debt to the Creator (Ps. 42:8), receiving in exchange absolution of our sins (Numbers 21:7), deliverance from distress and calamities (Acts 10:2, 4), with the healing of our bodies and the Salvation of our souls, as in the Holy Bible, 'My son, in thy sickness be not negligent: but pray unto the Lord, and he will make thee whole' (Sirach 38:9). And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up: And if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him (St Ja. 5: 13, 15).²⁵³

The commentary continues by explaining that if someone is not healed through prayer, then they will be granted God's favour to help them bear their ills through patience and endurance.²⁵⁴ It also explains that if sickness is incurable, then they will have God's mercy to obtain time for repentance and preparation for death.²⁵⁵

The notion of patience and endurance has been referred to previously in this thesis.

What makes the Orthodox Tradition so practical and prophetic is its holistic understanding of God's involvement in our personal suffering and its transformation.

²⁵² *Divine prayers and services of the Catholic Orthodox Church of Christ*, 1045-1047.

²⁵³ *Ibid*, 1046.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid*.

Asceticism leads to salvation—the transfiguration of man—body, mind and spirit.²⁵⁶

Fr Joanta explains that traditional forms of asceticism include,

personal prayer, continence and chastity, charity toward the poor, justice and mercy. Confession of sins and Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ are also vigorously recommended. All asceticism leads to the love of God and the contemplation of his Face.²⁵⁷

In relation to prayer, Orthodox asceticism must live alongside the sacraments (other prescribed therapies), within the Church.²⁵⁸ Prayer is essentially what the heart does and as a result this has everything to do with becoming a person, that is the *hypostatic* path, or being born anew despite and in spite of any suffering.²⁵⁹

When man discovers his heart by the Grace of God, then he is truly and really a person. This way in which the place of the heart, the core of man's existence – that which can be characterized as person – is discovered, is called hesychasm. It is the only method by which man is reborn spiritually.²⁶⁰

Hesychastic prayer and ascetical practice is upheld as preparation for receiving the deifying gift, through the guidance of a spiritual Father. In order to receive this deifying gift, the grace of the transformation, the human person needs a state of 'receptivity' to the Holy Spirit.²⁶¹ In the Orthodox Tradition the charisma of hesychastic prayer (the unceasing prayer 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me a sinner') helps the person become receptive to the grace of God. Hesychia 'is the true and unerring mode of life in God, as handed down to us by the Fathers'.²⁶² It is a dwelling in God, an inner silence that leads to a transformation of the passions.²⁶³ St

²⁵⁶ Bishop Seraphim Joanta, *Romania: its Hesychast tradition and culture* (Wildwood, CA: St Xenia Skete, 1992), 93.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 93-94.

²⁵⁸ Hierotheos, *The person in the Orthodox Tradition*, 48-55.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 87.

²⁶¹ Chapmen, "Notes on the nature of God, the cosmos, and *Novus Homo*: an Eastern Orthodox perspective.": 262.

²⁶² Hierotheos, *Orthodox psychotherapy (the science of the Fathers)*, 336-337.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

Gregory Theologian (St Gregory of Nazianzus) states ‘it is necessary to keep silence in order to come to pure contact with God and minimise any delusion of the soul’.²⁶⁴

It is through this prayer of the heart (a charisma as opposed to wholeheartedly), not reason or intellect, that ‘not only do we “go away” from sin, but also sin “flees” from us’.²⁶⁵ Prayer of the heart is also important for those whose mind or cognition may be affected by illness or disability. Because we believe that prayer comes from the heart we cannot underestimate the power of prayer no matter how a person is affected cognitively. Prayer is also essential for Orthodox Christians in their work practice. In regards to welfare work, sometimes the only effective thing one can do for someone else, especially a client, is hold them in prayer.

Hesychastic prayer and the ascetical way of life is that which the Church believes leads to deification or theosis. It is the prayer which is usually undertaken by the monastics of the Tradition and those who perfect it are illumined with eyes of the heart that see divine and human things, revelations of the kingdom and a knowledge of God.²⁶⁶

The spiritual life is such a fundamental part of the Orthodox worldview and while most of us will not perfect the divine image in this life, we are still called to imbue every part of our life with our heart focused upon God, prayer being one of the main prescriptions for doing this. The Church has many forms of prayer to keep humanity focused on this intent. There are daily Offices that can be prayed to shape one’s day (see the following section seven) and there are many prayers given by the Church to

²⁶⁴ St Gregory the Theologian cited in Ibid, 336-337.

²⁶⁵ Hierotheos, *The illness and cure of the soul in the Orthodox Tradition*, 153.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

guide us into the way of likeness according to the divine image. This also raises the point that individual prayer is still an ecclesial practice, something which is shared by the members of the body of Christ, through the various prayers given by the Church. This emphasises too that the doxology, the glory given to God, in Orthodox prayers and hymns are poetry which is the theology of the Tradition. Experience, theology and doxology are intertwined.

The constant saying of the Jesus Prayer is also paramount in Orthodox prayer. As stated by St John Climacus, ‘flog the foes with the name of Jesus; since there is no stronger weapon against them either in heaven or on earth’.²⁶⁷ I have taught the Jesus Prayer to overtly Christian clients a number of times for this very reason, when they have been in particular distress, for example highly anxious, unable to sleep, paranoid or delusional. Some have stated that it has helped them feel safer and less anxious.

In a number of other situations where I have known the client and their religious beliefs very well I have suggested they sign themselves with the sign of the cross when they have been afraid or anxious, for example the client reported earlier who was afraid of demons in her room during a psychotic episode. For this woman it helped her go into a room she otherwise refused to enter. In the Orthodox Tradition there are many references, including present day examples, of the efficacy of this sign, for example saints and martyrs that have been delivered from wild beasts and demonic attack.

²⁶⁷ St John Climacus in *Wisdom from God-illuminated teachers on conquering depression*, ed., 92.

St Meletius established the custom of making the sign of the cross, while refuting the Arians about the creation of the Son.²⁶⁸ This sign is now used by the faithful in drawing a shape across their bodies. It not only affirms faith in Christ's sacrifice in the cross at Golgotha, but confirms a belief in the Holy Trinity, 'in the name of the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit'; also symbolised by the formation of the first three fingers, with the two natures of Christ symbolised by the ring and little finger touching the palm.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ *Divine prayers and services of the Catholic Orthodox Church of Christ*, 1066.

²⁶⁹ *A dictionary of Orthodox terminology*. [Public domain website]. (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, 2008 cited 08/05/08); available from <http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith/ourfaith9152>, under 'S'.

3.6 FASTING

During one of Jesus' healing miracles He said, 'This kind can come out only through prayer...([and] other ancient authorities add) fasting' (Mark 9: 29). Fasting was used by Jesus Christ, for example when He victoriously faced the temptations of the devil in the wilderness for forty days through prayer and fasting (Matt 4:11).²⁷⁰ Jesus also encouraged His followers to use fasting as an important spiritual weapon to achieve spiritual victories (Mark 9:29; Luke 2:37) and the example of the Lord was then followed by His disciples (Acts 14:23; 27:9; 1 Cor 7:5; 2 Cor 6:5, 11:27).²⁷¹ The Orthodox Tradition maintains that fasting too is an important therapy of the Church.

St John Chrysostom states:

Fasting is a medicine, but a medicine, though it be never so profitable, becomes frequently useless owing to the unskilfulness of him who employs it. For it is necessary to know, moreover, the time when it should be applied, and the requisite quantity of it; and the temperament of body that admits it; and the nature of the country, and the season of the year; and the corresponding diet; as well as various other particulars; any of which, if one overlooks, he will mar all the rest that have been named.²⁷²

Here we see clearly from St John Chrysostom fasting being referred to as a 'medicine' but one that also needs to be applied correctly. The Orthodox Tradition has a prescription for fasting; when it is to be implemented, what is to

²⁷⁰ Rev. George Mastrantonis, *Fasting from iniquities and foods* [Article accessed via website] (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, 2005, cited 08/10/07); available from <http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith/ourfaith8125>, 1. .

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² St John Chrysostom in 'Homily Three', *St. Chrysostom: on the Priesthood; ascetic treatises; select homilies and letters; homilies on the statutes*, 358.

be eaten, what is to be abstained from and what else to become involved in, for example, charitable works.²⁷³ However, this practice should also be monitored by one's spiritual Father just like the practice of confession, so that the practice is appropriate for each person's needs and so that a false humility is not developed, which undermines the purpose of fasting.

Similarly, fasting is an ecclesial practice, like prayer, a discipline enmeshed in the Tradition of the Church. While the discipline, hunger and reliance on God is experienced on one's own through the grace of God, like the other therapies of the faith, fasting is done ecclesially and therefore someone fasting knows the encouragement of their brothers and sisters in Christ on the same journey.

Fasting is not to be seen in isolation; it makes up part of the prescribed therapies of the Church and its grace works in unison with the holistic life of the Church.

Archimandrite Ware warns that fasting, divorced from prayer and from the reception of the Holy sacraments and unaccompanied by acts of compassion, becomes pharisaical or even demonic.²⁷⁴ 'It leads, not to contrition and joyfulness, but to pride, inward tension and irritability'.²⁷⁵ The rules about eating and drinking must never be treated as an end in themselves, for fasting has an inward and unseen purpose.²⁷⁶ 'Man is a unity of body and soul, "a living creature fashioned from natures visible and invisible"'.²⁷⁷ As such, fasting should embrace both the natures of soul and body. This means that any overly legalistic, external rules about fasting

²⁷³ Mastrantonis, *Fasting from iniquities and foods*, 1.

²⁷⁴ Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, "The meaning of the Great Fast," in *The Lenten Triodion* (South Canaan, Pennsylvania: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1978), 18.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 18.

²⁷⁶ Metropolitan Maximos, *On fasting*. [Article accessed via website]. (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, 2005, cited 08/10/07); available from <http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith/ourfaith8124>, 1..

²⁷⁷ *Ibid*.

can impair the proper balance intended between soul and body.²⁷⁸ Many contemporary Christians have lost the true vision of humankind as an integral unity of the visible and the invisible, neglecting the positive role played by the body in the spiritual life, forgetting St Paul's affirmation, 'Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you...therefore glorify God in your body' (1 Cor 6: 19-20).²⁷⁹ Within the Orthodox Tradition these therapies are not perceived as *spiritual* practices divorced from the physical body.

'Fasting is an advocate of repentance'.²⁸⁰ As Metropolitan Maximos explains, Adam and Eve disobeyed God; they chose not to fast from the fruit God forbade them to eat.²⁸¹ 'They became slaves of their own desires'.²⁸² However, now through fasting and through obedience to the therapies of the Church, we can return to the life in Paradise, a life of communion with God.²⁸³ 'Thus, fasting is a means of Salvation, this Salvation being a life we live in accordance with the Divine will, in communion with God'.²⁸⁴

Archimandrite Ware highlights that the primary aim of fasting is to makes us 'conscious of our dependence upon God'.²⁸⁵ He explains it should involve a considerable measure of real hunger, and also a feeling of tiredness and physical exhaustion as the purpose of this is to lead us to a sense of inward brokenness and contrition; 'to bring us to the point where we appreciate the full force of Christ's

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ware, "The meaning of the Great Fast.", 15.

²⁸⁰ Maximos, *On fasting*, 1.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ware, "The meaning of the Great Fast.", 16.

statement, "Without me you can do nothing' (John 15: 5)".²⁸⁶ With this however comes a great sense of lightness, wakefulness, freedom and joy.²⁸⁷

Fasting as a discipline does not stand on its own; its purpose is to point beyond ourselves. St John Chrysostom states:

It is possible for one who fasts not to be rewarded for his fasting. How? When indeed we abstain from foods, but do not abstain from iniquities - when we do not eat meat, but gnaw to pieces the homes of the poor - when we do not become drunkards with wine, but we become drunkards with evil pleasures; when we abstain all the day, but all the night we spend in unchastened shows. Then what is the benefit of abstention from foods, when on the one hand you deprive your body of a selected food, but on the other offer yourself unlawful food?²⁸⁸

The prayers of the Lenten Triodion²⁸⁹ supports this teaching also.²⁹⁰

Like all the therapies mentioned so far, the use of these in my own personal life strengthen my personhood, through the grace of God, so that I can work to the best of my ability in the welfare field. Fasting too is a part of this. In communal settings where eating with clients is a part of the work experience, sometimes I have eaten different things on the fasting days of Wednesday and Friday, or during Lent for example. Without making an exhibition of this, if I am asked, which I have been, why I was not eating meat or dairy I do openly explain our practice of fasting. This has been an interesting discussion point on

²⁸⁶ Ibid, 16.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ St John Chrysostom cited in Mastrantonis, *Fasting from iniquities and foods*.

²⁸⁹ A Liturgical Book of the Church.

²⁹⁰ While fasting with the body, brethren, let us also fast in spirit.

Let us loose every bond of iniquity;

Let us undo the knots of every contract made by violence;

Let us tear up all unjust agreements;

Let us give bread to the hungry

And welcome to our house the poor who have no roof to cover them,

That we may receive great mercy from Christ our God. Lenten Triodion Prayers cited in Ware, "The meaning of the Great Fast.", 20.

many occasions with both fellow staff and clients alike. The place of prayer in my professional practice will be explored in the next section.

3.7 OTHER PRAYERS AND SERVICES

The prayer from the Lenten Triodion noted at the end of the previous section is only one of a large number of prayers and services used by the Orthodox Church in its doxology, its teaching and instruction. Again this highlights the notion that what is proclaimed and experienced in Orthodoxy ascribes both glory to God and articulates what is believed, together with an ontology of personhood which is the therapeutic remedy for humankind's brokenness.

With reference (in the previous section) to the unceasing prayer of the heart and a lifestyle permeated by the grace of the Holy Trinity, the Orthodox Tradition has many prayers and cycles of worship within the liturgical year which help to shape this pattern of prayer. For lay people, like that of the monastic, each day should be shaped by the prayers of the Church.

Many prayers of the Orthodox Church begin with the Trisagion prayers, which in part invoke the Holy Trinity, for example 'All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, be merciful to our sins. Master, forgive our transgressions. Holy One, visit us and heal our infirmities, for your name's sake'.²⁹¹ The Trisagion prayers also include the main Trisagion prayer 'Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy immortal: have mercy on us (x3)', the Lord's Prayer and the linking prayer 'Glory to the Father and to the Son

²⁹¹ *Book of prayers a selection for Orthodox Christians*, (Sydney: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, 2005), 5.

and to the Holy Spirit; Both now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.²⁹², which ends most Orthodox prayers.

For Morning Prayer, the Trisagion prayers are followed by a Troparion²⁹³ and a prayer to the Holy Trinity, again showing the significance of the Holy Trinity in the Orthodox Tradition in the shaping and renewal of one's life each day. Evening Prayer also begins with the Trisagion prayers, including a prayer calling upon God for mercy from sin and the sanctification of soul and body (see Appendix F).

I have found both Morning and Evening Prayer and/or Compline²⁹⁴ invaluable not only to my whole wellbeing but also to my work. One of the prayers I find especially helpful is the Morning prayer which calls us to be mindful of the coming day, and to seek strength of mind and body (see Appendix G). This prayer is a daily reminder of the way in which one understands life from an Orthodox perspective. It is inevitable that one becomes affected by the stresses and challenges of daily life. However, this prayer, along with Orthodox hymnology, serves as a reminder of where one goes for strength, meaning and healing.

There are so many prayers and hymns of the Orthodox Church that only a small number can be used in this thesis to illustrate the focus of the Tradition as permeating one's life with prayers that describe who we are, why we are, the healing power of the Church, and how we are called to grow into the divine image. (See especially Appendix H from the Liturgy of St Basil.). The following, from the Office of Holy

²⁹² Ibid, 5.

²⁹³ Hymn of the Church

²⁹⁴ Prayer service before bed

Uction, also clearly articulates this same point. After an invocation of the Holy Spirit to sanctify oil the Priest prays:

O Holy Father, Physician of souls and bodies, Who sent Your only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to heal every sickness and to deliver from death: Heal Your servant(s) from the ills of body and soul which hinder them and enliven them, by the Grace of Christ...to You do we ascribe glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.²⁹⁵

Other examples from the Office of Holy Uction, Matins of Lazarus Sunday, Pascha and the Sunday of the Paralytic can be seen in Appendix I and J.

Healing, like that outlined in the prayers of the Church, is not something that only happened to other people at the time of Christ. The following Kontakion²⁹⁶ for the Sunday of the Paralytic shows how this Gospel relates to each of us and the healing that is offered to all. The prayers of the Orthodox Tradition speak to each person through the grace of God, by virtue of a personal relationship with God and through His whole body the Church:

Arouse, O Lord, with thy divine providence my soul, sorely paralytic with diverse sins and unseemly deeds, as thou didst raise the paralytic of old, that being saved, I may cry, saying Glory to thy might, O compassionate Christ.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ The Office of Holy Uction - Part One, 2004, 7.

²⁹⁶ Orthodox hymn

²⁹⁷ *Divine prayers and services of the Catholic Orthodox Church of Christ*, 655.

3.8 ICONOGRAPHY

Almost all of the theological points that have been made throughout this thesis, including the previously mentioned healing of the paralytic, are also communicated in the life of the Orthodox Church through iconography (Appendix K). Other examples include the Holy Trinity / hospitality of Abraham / Eucharist (Appendix L), the creation and Fall of Adam (Appendix M), Christ Pantokrator – God-man (Appendix N), the Theophany of our Lord (Appendix O), the prodigal son (Appendix P), the raising of Lazarus (Appendix Q), the bodily raising of Adam and Eve (the harrowing of hades) (Appendix R), the Council of Nicea (Appendix S), St Basil (Appendix T) and Sts Cosmas and Damien (Appendix U). A visitor to any Orthodox Church will note the beautiful iconography illustrating the life of Christ and the saints that fills its walls.

St John of Damascus, a great saint of the Orthodox Church, wrote three treatises ‘On the Divine Images’ as a defence of the veneration of icons during the iconoclastic controversy of the eighth century.²⁹⁸ He explains his belief and adoration of the Holy Trinity and how because God became visible, ‘partaking of flesh and blood’²⁹⁹ he is therefore able to draw an image.

Icons play a pivotal role in Orthodox life. They are windows to the next world and serve and teach us about the spiritual life. In the words of St Basil ‘any honour given

²⁹⁸ St John of Damascus, *On the divine images: three apologies against those who attack the divine images*, trans. David Anderson (New York: St Vladimir's Press, 1980).

²⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 15-16.

to an image is transferred to its prototype'.³⁰⁰ They help create the place where heaven and earth meet, where angels and saints join us in worshipping the creator God, the Holy Trinity. St John of Damascus states:

You see what strength and divine power is given to him who accepts the images of the Saints with faith and a pure conscience. Therefore, brethren, let us stand on the rock of faith and on the tradition of the Church not removing the ancient landmarks which our holy Fathers have set.³⁰¹

In the Orthodox Tradition, icons are not understood merely to be beautiful art or pictures; they themselves are deemed to be therapeutic, bestowing healing. St John of Damascus further explains that the icons give honour to the prototype, that which they represent, that is the apostles and saints who have been appointed 'rulers over all the earth'³⁰² and 'have received power over all demons and diseases, and reign with Christ over an incorruptible and eternal kingdom'.³⁰³ Therefore the icons have the power to expel demons and disease even by their shadows: 'Would not a shadow be reckoned weaker and less honourable than an icon?'³⁰⁴

The following example from my professional experience illustrates a connection between icons and daily life.

I worked for a community with an overt Christian reference in its title. In my office I had an icon of the corresponding biblical scene. I had the privilege of this being inoffensive to the organisation I worked for and I believe that this kept me focused and reminded of who I am, what I do and through Whose power I do it. I have also given icons to clients when it has been appropriate, for example I gave an icon of the Theotokos (Mother of God) to one client who often spoke of her faith, especially in

³⁰⁰ St Basil cited in Ibid, 89.

³⁰¹ Ibid, 88-89.

³⁰² Ibid, 89.

³⁰³ Ibid, 89.

³⁰⁴ Ibid, 89.

relation to the Mother of God. She gratefully took it with her when she went away to a long term rehabilitation program for alcohol addiction.

3.9 THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS – PERFECTING THE IMAGE

The Orthodox Church believes that we live as the body of Christ and this ‘body’ includes that which is earthly, angels, the saints and the divine-human head; a glimpse of the eschatological kingdom of God.³⁰⁵ The Holy icons portray a taste of this kingdom through the lives of the saints, who are often depicted in them.

Whilst the subject of saintliness and holiness deserves a much more expanded commentary than can be provided here, such discussion would include reference to the Philokalic fathers. Briefly however, who are the saints of the Orthodox Tradition? They are human persons who are upheld by the Holy Tradition as those advanced in theosis³⁰⁶ and who have had the will to endure much suffering or pain. Quite commonly saints have not been immune to bodily infirmities.³⁰⁷ The martyrs are those who ‘endured pain for any of God’s purposes’.³⁰⁸ Sometimes referred to as fools for Christ, sainthood and martyrdom represented a choice made to follow a difficult path. The saints were often prepared to die rather than betray God’s commandments for they considered the temporary suffering of this life to be insignificant.³⁰⁹ In their worldly life the saints experience ‘paradisical joys through their closeness to God’³¹⁰ by resisting the passions such as anger and revenge through the help of God’s guiding grace. The saints consider in each moment how to

³⁰⁵ Meyendorff, *Byzantine theology: historical trends and doctrinal themes*, 79.

³⁰⁶ LeMasters, "The practice of medicine as theosis.", 173-186.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ St John Chryostom in "Divine providence and human suffering.", 131.

³⁰⁹ Aleksiev, *The meaning of suffering and strife and reconciliation*, 24.

³¹⁰ Ibid, 28.

fulfil the will of God and at the same time are given the grace to experience marvellous peace despite the temptations of this world.³¹¹

While there are thousands of examples of extraordinary persons who have become saints, the example of St Seraphim of Sarov who was attacked and beaten by thieves is significant as it demonstrates an individual's potential to overcome the infliction of suffering and physical disability. St Seraphim was attacked and beaten so badly that he barely survived.³¹² From then on, however, despite his suffering and walking bent over for the rest of his life, he did not stray from God and even persisted to implore the authorities not to punish the thieves.³¹³

The lives of the saints give us real, tangible examples of human beings who have grown into the likeness of the divine image, despite the world around them. No-one is born a saint; human beings become saints. Any Orthodox Church, with its iconography of the communion of saints gives a glimpse of our eschatological hope; which puts in perspective our earthly suffering and that of the world around us.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid.

3.10 ORTHODOX CENTRES OF HEALING

While the healing ministry of Jesus Christ the divine-human healer is usually well known, the same ministry of His apostles and saints is less well known. There are many saints who were physicians and performed healing ministries within the life of the early Church, for example Sts Kyros and John, St Julianos, St Mokios and St Panteleimon.³¹⁴ Others include Sts Cosmas and Damien, physicians of the body, also known as the unmercenary physicians and wonderworkers.³¹⁵ They were Romans from the third century who showed gifts of healing and encouraged people to live the Christian life. They were persecuted and when Emperor Galerius asked them to deny Christ; instead they healed the Emperor of ills and he converted to Christianity.³¹⁶ Eventually they were stoned to death by a jealous physician.³¹⁷

Although this thesis does not have the capacity to explore in detail the historical roots of healing in the Christian era after the earthly life of Jesus Christ, the divine-human physician, a brief excursus will be made into some of the contexts in which it developed. The Cappadocian Fathers, who have been extensively quoted throughout this thesis, particularly in relation to the development of Trinitarian doctrine, had close ties to physicians and the medical discipline of their time.³¹⁸ The Byzantine understanding of the human person did not separate spiritual experience from

³¹⁴ Georgia Hronas, *The holy unmercenary doctors: the Saints Anargyroi physicians and healers of the Orthodox Church* (Minnesota: Light and Life, 1999), 15, 37, 40, 67.

³¹⁵ George Morelli, *Christian spirituality and psychotherapy* [Article accessed via website] (2005 cited 08/10/2005); available from http://ocampr.org/CC_Course.asp, 4.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

³¹⁸ Timothy S. Miller, *The birth of the hospital in the Byzantine empire* (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 57.

everyday life.³¹⁹ In fact their ancestors, the ancient Greeks, had described medicine as the ‘most philanthropic of the sciences’.³²⁰ Both faith and medicine were gifts of divine origin.³²¹ Charity was supreme and caring for the sick was one of the manifestations of love.³²²

Not only did other Greek ecclesiastics practice medicine, those developing doctrines of the faith often used metaphors derived from medicine to express spiritual realities³²³, as has been shown in earlier sections of this thesis. According to Miller, medicine became a keystone in the Orthodox worldview as Orthodox Christians did not only accept Greek medicine, they gave it a central place in theology.³²⁴

The role of healing did not merely remain in the realm of theology; Orthodox theology also has its roots in praxis. St Basil and St John Chrysostom played significant roles in the early years of Christian hospitals. According to Chirban, by the fourth century the Greek Fathers exalted care of the sick.³²⁵ No one has claimed ownership over the first hospital, however the emergence of *xenodocheia* or *xenones* from AD 350, have been understood as early hospitals for strangers or migrants with the development of monasticism’s charitable works.³²⁶ A cluster of philanthropic foundations were established by St Basil around 370.³²⁷ Miller, in his extensive research on *The Birth of the Hospital in the Byzantine Empire*, states that

³¹⁹ Chirban, *Orthodox theological roots of holistic healing*, 4.

³²⁰ Ibid, 1.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Miller, *The birth of the hospital in the Byzantine empire*, 56-61.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Chirban, *Orthodox theological roots of holistic healing*, 102.

³²⁶ Miller, *The birth of the hospital in the Byzantine empire*, 61-62.

³²⁷ Ibid.

‘Christianity created the hospitals of the Byzantine Empire’ as expressions of Christian charity.³²⁸

Miller reports that these centres for healing demonstrated a development of medicine and spiritual healing that went hand in hand. There is evidence that physicians were in many cases priests or monastics, that philanthropic institutions were often in the immediate vicinity of churches and chapels and that attendance to the Divine Liturgy and the hearing of confessions was often part of the patient’s prescription for healing.³²⁹ This meant that ‘fulfilling and loving relationships with God and the community are [were] considered to be the ingredients for physical, mental, and spiritual health’.³³⁰ The two great commandments, to love God and to love your neighbour (Mark 12: 29-31) constituted the relationship preserved by Byzantine welfare agencies.³³¹ Miller reports that when these organisations swayed from their original intention the ‘overriding standard of philanthropia - a concept which included not simply kindness, but also a self-sacrifice for man in the image of Christ’s sacrifice — surely inspired some of the hospital employees’.³³²

In the examples of Byzantine centres for healing we are reminded of the ‘ontological approach to healing’³³³. And so, Fr Bistolarides rightly reminds us again:

Hope is based not only on the present, but also on the eschatological hope of the restoration of human personhood in all its elements, its union with God, and the restoration of all creation to God along with it. But in a modern world where everything is viewed in a utilitarian light and the focus is urgency or efficiency, a failure to obtain a cure when one prays for it—to receive the miracle on demand—either shakes

³²⁸ Ibid, 50.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Chirban, *Orthodox theological roots of holistic healing*, 5.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Miller, *The birth of the hospital in the Byzantine empire*, 208.

³³³ Chirban, *Orthodox theological roots of holistic healing*, 4.

one's faith or conforms an already held notion that spirituality plays no role in healing and hence has no value.³³⁴

Developed throughout this thesis is the notion that we are created in the divine image and yet, because of our fallen nature, we need healing of soul and body, beginning in this life and continuing in the next. Fr Bistolarides reiterates this with his comment that the contemporary world still so often fails to value the whole person, its true purpose and destination. Fr Bistolarides argues that society today expects a good outcome on every occasion; a point reinforced by the 'throughput and outcome' model of much of our healthcare system, tied more to the efficiencies of economic rationalism than the human person. For someone with a permanent disability, what is a good outcome? A perfect body with full mobility and a long life; is this the expectation we put on ourselves? Fr Bistolarides makes a profound statement about Byzantine society. He believes they were attuned to a transcendent God; that while hoping for healing and cures they were accepting of whatever life brought them, what they perceived to be the decisions of God.³³⁵ Fr Bistolarides believes that we need to rediscover a faith in God no matter what comes our way in life. In relation to our understanding of healing he argues that we need to adopt a unified rational and spiritual approach centred on the Holy Trinity.³³⁶

³³⁴ Bistolarides, *Has the Byzantine holistic approach to healing come the full circle?*, 3.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Ibid.

CHAPTER 4. THE CALL TO BE LIVING ICONS IN KOINONIA – THE TRIUNE GOD AND PERSONHOOD CALLED FORTH IN PASTORAL PRACTICE

Throughout this thesis references to applications of pastoral practice have been made. First and foremost I believe we are called to be practitioners who believe wholeheartedly in the person we serve – rather than believing in the disability or illness *per se*. As the discussion on the Holy Trinity has shown, it is the centrality of the ‘person’ that is paramount and the divine image in each and every human person. It is encouraging to see, albeit from a secular perspective, an emphasis now on ‘person first’ practice and holistic therapy (focus on body, mind and spirit), exemplified in the VICSERV literature quoted earlier. This notion is also evident in the following scenario:

Jane³³⁷ came to me to tell me that she was ‘proud of herself’. This was a major achievement in itself due to her incredibly low self-esteem. When speaking with her about how she had come to the place within herself to say that she was ‘proud of herself’, she reported to me that it was because since she had been living at the community she ‘felt like a person for the first time’ in her life and one that actually mattered rather than just being a ‘mad woman’.

I wholeheartedly hope and pray this is the experience for other clients also.

What is integral to the final part of this discussion in regards to expectations about life, as raised in the previous section, is the need to recognise the call of the human person to challenge a superficial and hypocritical society. In other words, to come to the realisation that full human and cosmic potentiality is not just of this world, nor

³³⁷ Client’s name and all identifiable details have been changed.

will it necessarily be a path free from suffering or brokenness. True personhood is our calling despite our particular brokenness; be it disability, mental health issues or simply the incompleteness of our own fragile and fallen human nature. ‘As persons destined to participate in the eternal life of the Trinity, our hope extends beyond the biological integrity of our bodies in this life’.³³⁸ As St John Chrysostom asserts, our bodies may suffer but that may not harm our wisdom and virtue.³³⁹

Within the western ‘cult of perfection’, there is a need to consider an ecclesial way of life that emphasises spiritual wholeness and communal interdependence.³⁴⁰ This, as discussed earlier, is exemplified by a life in *koinonia*. Fr John Chryssavgis asks the question, should all be healed?³⁴¹, a notion also raised earlier. Fr Chryssavgis’ response is that the Lord, in His economy, did not heal everyone and that there is healing not only in a political, social, community sense but also a spiritual sense where persons should accept and be accepted as they are.³⁴² On this point, Steele, as a parent of a child with a disability, asserts that it is the responsibility of parents with children who have a disability to show the wider community that human potential does not need to depend on ‘perfect health’ or the ‘body beautiful’.³⁴³ When asked if there was any hope for his daughter to be ‘happy’, after she was declared to have an incurable disability, he said ‘yes’ provided her happiness did not depend upon ideals dictated by Madison Avenue or the economics of Wall St.³⁴⁴ The Gospel says

³³⁸ LeMasters, "The practice of medicine as theosis.": 180.

³³⁹ St John Chrysostom in "Divine providence and human suffering.", 121-122.

³⁴⁰ John Chryssavgis, "Ministry, disability and brokenness: Orthodox insights into the authority of the Priesthood," *Pacifica* 12 (1999) : 174.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Steele, "Unremitting compassion: the moral psychology of parenting children with genetic disorders.": 176.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

happiness is right relationship with God and neighbour and that it is only sin, not suffering, that prevents this.³⁴⁵ This is our hope.³⁴⁶

None of us are whole; we are all broken and we are all affected to some degree by suffering. This is a painful reality for our western culture to accept, as it continues to place ultimate value on independence; declaring dependence as weak, something only for children, the elderly and unhealthy. Dependence signifies dis-ability and usually indicates dis-ease.³⁴⁷ But as it has been shown in this discussion, suffering stems from our fallen humanity, our estrangement from God. However, awareness and will can be the occasion for our return to Him.³⁴⁸ 'All human beings bear the image of God and all are persons in the Christian sense, because all are created and redeemed for communion with the Persons who are the Holy Trinity'.³⁴⁹

One of the most famous practical and lived out experiences of people with disabilities and mental health issues in Christian community is the worldwide movement of L'Arche; a community that speaks very strongly to the notions of communion and the Holy Trinity. Jean Vanier, founder of this community, states that 'communion is the apex of life'.³⁵⁰ Vanier comments on the 'desperate form of individualism' in our society and he argues that people cannot live in isolation.³⁵¹ According to Vanier *true* community is where men and women become people of prayer and compassion, open to others and the world especially the poor, oppressed,

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Chryssavgis, "Ministry, disability and brokenness: Orthodox insights into the authority of the Priesthood.", 172.

³⁴⁸ Ibid, 174.

³⁴⁹ LeMasters, "The practice of medicine as theosis.": 179.

³⁵⁰ Jean Vanier, "Invited to communion," *Letters of L'Arche* 2002.:16-17.

³⁵¹ Jean Vanier, *Community and growth* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, [1979] 1998), 2.

the lost and the vulnerable.³⁵² These communities need to be open to love, forgiveness and the Holy Spirit.³⁵³ Vanier is under no illusion that without the power of the Trinity, community cannot exist in its fullness. Vanier holds to the notion of the communion of the Trinity, ‘communion is constitutive of their very being’. Goethe wrote ‘in the beginning there was action’³⁵⁴; however, Vanier argues that ‘before all things was communion’.³⁵⁵ As such, communion precedes action; it is the source of all life.³⁵⁶

Vanier, who writes from his own experience of living in community with people who have disabilities, is also under no illusion as to how difficult this life can be. He comments on how difficult it is to live in community because it exposes our limitations, darkness and weaknesses and we realise just how incapable we are as human beings to love.³⁵⁷ However, Vanier too upholds the Christian notion of paradox and suggests that it is only in community that the power of the ego is revealed and then called to die so that people may become one body; ‘Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit’ (John 12:24).³⁵⁸

Henry Nouwen, the famous spiritual writer, who also spent many years living in the L’Arche community, tells of his experience of wanting to write a small book about what it was he believed. What did he believe when he said ‘I believe in Father, Son and Holy Spirit?’³⁵⁹ Living in community with people with disabilities and having

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Vanier, "Invited to communion.": 17.

³⁵⁵ Ibid, 17.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Vanier, *Community and growth.*, 47-48.

³⁵⁸ Ibid, 26-27.

³⁵⁹ Henri Nouwen, *Adam: God's beloved* (Victoria: Harper Collins Religious, 1997), 13.

left the academic life many years before, the task proved difficult for Nouwen.³⁶⁰ At this point Adam Arnett (the person Nouwen was assigned to care for) died.³⁶¹ He was the first person Nouwen had cared for in the community, and at the moment of seeing Adam's body laying in the casket he was 'struck by the mystery of this man's life and death'.³⁶² He knew that Adam had become the image of the living Christ, just as Jesus had been on earth.³⁶³ For Nouwen his death seemed to say to him, 'Now that I have left you, you can write about me and tell your friends and readers what I have taught you about the mystery of our wonderful God who came to dwell among us and who sent the Holy Spirit'.³⁶⁴ Nouwen wrote the book 'Adam'. Adam's story, through Nouwen's Christian lens and his personal experience of washing, feeding, and just sitting with Adam had fulfilled Nouwen's yearning of being in his own body, the body of community, the body of the church, in the body of God³⁶⁵. This book became the expression of Nouwen's creedal belief and a story of his own strengths and disabilities.³⁶⁶

The experiences of these two men not only provide an insight into a trinitarian connection to disability and mental health issues but also show a calling and way of participation. While we are called to active participation, for example caring practically for these persons through hospitality, washing and feeding, to become their hands and feet, there is also the calling to be silent as Nouwen noted. Returning to Steele's personal experience, he says that the help he can give does not alleviate

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Ibid, 15.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Ibid, 16.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

suffering; rather it is about refusal to abandon the sufferer.³⁶⁷ For those whose pain is irremediable or grief too deep for words,

. . . the most I may be able to do is to sit in silent vigil with them or to pray for them. But in such cases, what may appear to be a purely 'useless' ministry of quiet presence will really be a far more compassionate thing than a flurry of pointless activity or a barrage of distracting chatter.³⁶⁸

Returning to the experience of Hudson, a nurse practitioner and researcher for persons with dementia and a Christian from the Reformed tradition, she suggests that it is exactly the 'musical silence of doxology that confronts us with the paradox and mystery of our created existence. It is by this means that we can know one another as persons alive in God, rather than presuming to know one another by our deficits'.³⁶⁹ Perhaps we are called to sit with the mystery, the unknowable as Nouwen and Steele suggest in their personal experience. Perhaps as carers we are called to communicate a type of care which is informed by these ideas, primarily to the persons for whom we are given the charge of ministry; but also to all people, fragile and broken just like us. There has been many a time in my practice when the only appropriate thing to do has been to sit in silence with a client – by their bed, in the car, even in my office. In those times, one must not forget the power 'to pray without ceasing' and the transforming mystery of God.

This type of understanding can touch our professional and organisational experience. An organisational approach that promotes such an understanding of the human person is then also able to extend to its employees as well as its clients and can become ingrained in its ethos, policy and practice. For example the community that I

³⁶⁷ Steele, "Unremitting compassion: the moral psychology of parenting children with genetic disorders.", 166.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Hudson, 2004. "Dementia and personhood: a living death or alive in God?" *Colloquium*, Vol 36, No 2, 142.

have experienced demonstrates a slow turnover of staff and very little burnout which, by contrast, is rife in other parts of the welfare industry. I believe it is because the culture of the workplace takes into consideration the needs of each person and that culture flows into a strong sense of teamwork and community. Staff can rely on each other, for example if a staff member needs to leave early because of potential stress and tiredness. The reciprocal nature of this community means that employees are treated with fairness. The value of the person is upheld, for example I was granted study leave for this thesis by the organisation because they knew that it was important to me as a person and as such that will reflect in my professional practice. Too much of the modern world is caught up in productivity levels and what can be obtained from another human being rather than what we can do together, which in turn actually increases productivity.

It is interesting to note that the examples cited above, from the L'Arche community and of Henri Nouwen's personal experience, are philanthropic expressions of caring for those with disabilities and mental health issues from traditions outside the Orthodox Church. Despite the enormous wealth of Byzantine examples of Orthodox theology and practice I find it ironic that both my husband (an Orthodox Priest) and myself have worked for Catholic philanthropic organisations due to a lack of appropriate options for employment in Orthodox organisations. The Catholic organisations have shown us great hospitality in allowing us to work with them as Orthodox Christians. However, this research has highlighted the incompleteness of our respective ministries within the Orthodox Tradition, due to the limited number of similar therapeutic/welfare agencies within Orthodoxy. As I have noted throughout this discussion, there is certainly much that I bring from my Tradition to my work. However, I know that it is not the full prescription of that which is offered through

the Church and as such is potentially limiting the healing that could be experienced. By this I mean that which calls us forth to be transformed according to the likeness of Christ (the divine image made flesh); to become living icons now and in the age to come.

There are of course Orthodox philanthropic organisations, nursing homes, support groups and welfare/disability services but they are small in number, especially in Australia. In regards to disability one must mention the advocacy work and literature compiled by Fr John Chryssavgis who has been reminding the modern Orthodox Church of the need to be inclusive of people with disabilities, particularly in the Divine Liturgy, in our Church communities and practical ways in which this can be done. However, on reflection and by process of completing this thesis, it is at this moment that I pray for a resurgence of Orthodox philanthropic institutions, perhaps in the image of the *xenones* of the Byzantine era, true examples of the healing ministry of the Church.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to make a contribution which examines a practical and professional experience of working with people with disabilities and mental health issues in relationship to the Eastern Orthodox faith, an area of interest that to date has been somewhat limited. In doing so this thesis has demonstrated that Orthodoxy not only means right belief and way of expressing this through liturgical action in loving communion (*koinonia*) as the body of Christ (*ecclesia*), but right glory to God, i.e. doxology. This is the theology of the Orthodox Church. It is through this beautifully and inextricably bound relationship between glory to God, theology and the belief and practices of the Orthodox Church that the questions about personhood, suffering and brokenness are truly, uniquely and prophetically addressed.

The reason why the Orthodox Tradition is prophetic and unique in regard to personhood, suffering and human brokenness is because the Church's whole purpose is centred on the salvation or healing of the human person. It is through the Church and a belief in the Triune God, to whom we ascribe glory, that this is revealed. It is through the Church that the fact that humanity was created in love according to the divine image is revealed. It is because of the love God has for His creation that He gave us free will. As a result humanity chose to move away from God, away from the divine likeness, and fell into sin and death. Again, however, because of the love God has for His creation, He gave us a way to grow into the likeness of the divine image according to which we were created, to become like gods, through His Son the divine-human physician, the divine image made human. Out of love He instituted the Church, the *ecclesia*, the body of Christ, a glimpse of the kingdom to come; through which the energies of God are revealed to offer the therapeutic prescription

needed for humanity to be healed, to be saved, to become full, realised persons. This is the synergy, the intimate relationship, that exists between God and humankind.

This thesis has demonstrated the importance and central notion of the ontology of personhood in the Orthodox Tradition. This is based on the Orthodox experience, theology and doxology of the Holy Trinity, in which there are three unique persons, united but distinct only by virtue of their loving relationship (*koinonia*) with each other. As such the potential for personhood, despite our human brokenness, disability or mental health issues is something which God desires for us out of His abundant love for His creation; something which is not echoed by the individualistic tendencies of our twenty-first century.

Returning once more to Disability Standards, thankfully it is considered normative now to speak of the person first and the disability as only a part of what constitutes an individual's personhood. This is so because each disability despite their commonalities, Down's syndrome for example, is expressed through a unique ontological person. As the Orthodox Tradition has shown, John or Julie are persons first, uniquely John or Julie, created in the divine image, who happen to have a disability or a mental health issue, just as I, Presbytera Clare Cagnoni am first a person created in the image of God, uniquely Prebytera Clare, who also happens to be a sinner. This thesis has demonstrated that the Orthodox understanding of God as Trinity and of the human person created in the divine image offers a unique, prophetic and holistic approach to a deeper and more compassionate appreciation of what it means to be a person with a disability in the individualistic twenty-first century; of how we are called to respond pastorally and as practitioners, and in particular the therapeutic prescription offered by the Eastern Orthodox Church. The

hope expressed in this thesis is that the Orthodox Tradition may continue to respond prophetically to its unique therapeutic call to heal humanity through the gifts that God has instituted to it, particularly through more philanthropic endeavours connected to the Church, the true hospital.

Through our personhood, created in love according to the divine image, we are called to honour the mystery of God which draws us in so as to make whole our suffering and heal us, and all creation, through *koinonia* in the Church. This participation in the transforming energies of the Holy Trinity, through the therapeutic prescription offered by the Church, is the source of our healing, our salvation now and in the kingdom to come; despite our disability, mental health issue or our personal yet universal human brokenness. We are called in love to be the body of Christ, like that of the *koinonia* of the Holy Trinity. We are called in love, as the baptismal service prays, to ‘put away from him the old man...that he may be clothed with the new man and renewed after the image of Him who created him.’³⁷⁰

³⁷⁰ *Service book of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church according to the use of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America*, 155-156.

APPENDIX A

Nicene Creed

1. I believe in one God, Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, and of everything visible and invisible.
2. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father, before all Ages. Light of Light, true God of true god, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father, through Whom all things were made.
3. Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from Heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man.
4. And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate and suffered, and was buried.
5. And arose on the third day according to the Scriptures.
6. And ascended into Heaven, and is seated on the right hand of the Father.
7. And shall come again in glory, to judge the living and the dead, whose Kingdom shall have no end.
8. And in the Holy Spirit, the lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who together with the Son is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke through the Prophets.
9. In One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.
10. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.
11. I await for the resurrection of the dead,
12. And the life of the Ages to come. Amen.³⁷¹

³⁷¹ St John Chrysostom, *The Divine Liturgy of our Father among the Saints St John Chrysostom*, 331-332.

APPENDIX B

Prayers from the Divine Liturgy

Priest

With these blessed Powers, loving Master, we also cry out and say: Holy are you and all-holy, you and your only-begotten Son and your Holy Spirit. Holy are you and all-holy, and majestic is your glory. You so loved your world, that you gave your only-begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish, but have eternal life. He came and fulfilled all the divine plan for us, and on the night he was given up, or rather gave himself up, for the life of the world, he took bread in his holy, pure and blameless hands, gave thanks and blessed, sanctified, broke and gave it to his holy Disciples and Apostles saying: (Priest) Take, eat this is my body, which is broken for you, for the forgiveness of sins.³⁷²

The people

Loving Master, Lord Jesus Christ my God, let not these holy gifts be to me for the judgement through my unworthiness, but for the purification and sanctification of both soul and body, and as a pledge of the life and kingdom to come. For it is good for me to cling to God, and to place in the Lord the hope of my salvation.³⁷³

We have seen the true light, we have received the heavenly Spirit, we have found the true faith, worshiping the undivided Trinity, which has saved us.³⁷⁴

³⁷² Ibid, 73.

³⁷³ Ibid, 97.

³⁷⁴ Ibid, 101.

I thank you, Lord my God, for not rejecting me a sinner, but making me worthy to be a partaker of your holy things. I thank you for making me, who am unworthy, worthy to partake of your pure and heavenly gifts. But loving Master, who died for us and rose again and bestowed on us these your dread and life-giving mysteries, for the benefit and sanctification of our souls and bodies, grant that they may be to me for the healing of both soul and body, for the illumination of the eyes of my heart, for the peace of my spiritual powers, for faith unashamed, for love unfeigned, for the fullness of wisdom, for the observing of your commandments, for the increase of your divine grace, and the attainment of your kingdom; so that protected by them in your holiness I may always remember your grace and no longer live for myself, but for you our Master and benefactor. And so when I have departed this life in the hope of eternal life, may I attain to everlasting rest, where the sound of festival is unceasing, and the pleasure is endless of those who behold the indescribable beauty of your countenance. For you are that which is truly desired, and the inexpressible gladness of those who love you, Christ our God, and all creation praises you forever. Amen³⁷⁵

³⁷⁵ Ibid, 151-153.

APPENDIX C

Baptismal Prayers

O Lord the Master; thou who in verity existeth; who has created man in thine own likeness, and hast bestowed upon him the power of life eternal; who also despisest not those who have Fallen away through sin, but hast provided Salvation for the world through the Incarnation of thy Christ... (The Priest then breathes upon the mouth, brow and breast of the catechumen) ...Expel from him/her every evil and impure spirit which hideth and maketh its lair in his heart... call thy servant, N., to thy holy Illumination, and grant unto him/her that great grace of thy holy Baptism. Put off from him thy old man, and renew him unto life everlasting; and fill him with the power of thy Holy Spirit, in the unity of thy Christ; that he may be no more a child of the body, but a child of thy kingdom... that he may be clothed upon with the 'new man, and renewed after the image of Him who created him.'³⁷⁶

³⁷⁶ *Service book of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church according to the use of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America*, 147, 148 and 151.

APPENDIX D

From the Theophany of Our Lord Service

...and sanctify this water. Amen (3 times). And grant it the grace of redemption and the blessing of the Jordan. Make it a source of incorruption, a gift of sanctification, a remission of sins, a protection against disease, a destruction to demons, unapproachable by the adverse powers and filled with angelic strength; so that to all who drink therefrom and receive thereof it may be for the sanctification of their souls and bodies, for the healing of their passions, for the sanctification of their homes, and for every purpose that is expedient... You are our God who drowned sin in the Water at the time of Noah. You are our God who through the waters of the sea, at Moses' hand set free the Hebrew nation from the bondage of Pharaoh. You are our God who cleaved the rock in the wilderness, so that the waters gushed out and the streams overflowed and You have satisfied your thirsty people... Grant to all those who touch it and who are anointed by it and who drink from it, sanctification, blessing, cleansing and health.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁷ Greater blessing of the water, 13-14.

APPENDIX E

Prayer After the Cannon (of Repentance)

O Master Christ God, Who hast healed my passions through Thy Passion, and hast cured my wounds through Thy wounds: grant me, who have sinned greatly against Thee, tears of compunction. Transform my body with the fragrance of Thy life-giving Body, and sweeten my soul with Thy precious Blood from the bitterness with which the foe hath fed me. Lift up my downcast mind to Thee, and take it out of the abyss of perdition...But, O Sovereign Lord Jesus Christ, Treasury of good things, give me thorough repentance and a diligent heart to seek Thee; grant me Thy grace, and renew in me the likeness of Thine image. I have forsaken Thee – do not forsake me! Come out to seek me; lead me up to the sheep of Thy chosen flock. Nourish me with them on the grass of Thy Holy Mysteries, through the intercessions of Thy most pure Mother and all Thy Saints. Amen.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁸ *Prayer book*, Fourth Edition ed. (Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 2003), 329.

APPENDIX F

From Evening Prayer

Christ our God,
who are worshipped and glorified at all times and every hour,
in heaven and on earth;
long-suffering, merciful and compassionate,
loving the just and merciful to sinners,
calling everyone to salvation
through the promise of good things to come;
receive, Lord, our supplications at this time,
and direct our lives according to your commandments.
Sanctify our souls,
cleanse our bodies,
correct our thoughts,
purify our intentions,
and deliver us from all affliction, evil and distress.
Fortify us with your holy Angels,
so that guided and guarded by their forces
we may attain to the unity of the faith
and the knowledge of your unapproachable glory;
for blessed are you to the ages of ages. Amen.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁹ *Book of prayers A Selection for Orthodox Christians*, 40-41.

APPENDIX G

From Morning Prayer

O Lord, grant me to keep the coming day in peace. Help me in all things to rely upon Your holy will. In every hour of the day reveal Your will to me. Bless my dealings with all who surround me. Teach me to treat all that comes to me throughout the day with peace of soul and with the firm conviction that Your will governs all. In all my deeds and words, guide my thoughts and feelings. In unforeseen events, let me not forget that all are sent by You. Teach me to act firmly and wisely, without embittering and embarrassing others. Give me strength to bear the fatigue of the coming day with all that it shall bring. Direct my will, teach me to pray, and You, Yourself, pray in me. Amen.³⁸⁰

³⁸⁰ *Service book of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church according to the use of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America*, 9.

APPENDIX H

From the Liturgy of St Basil

Priest

With these blessed powers, master and lover of mankind, we sinners also cry out and say: truly You are holy, and all-holy; there is no bound to the majesty of Your holiness. You are holy in all Your works, for in righteousness and true judgement You have brought all things to pass for us. Taking clay from the earth, You shaped man, and honouring him, O God, with Your likeness You set him in a Paradise of delight, promising him immortality and the enjoyment of everlasting blessings in the keeping of Your commandments.

But once he disobeyed You, the true God who created him, and fell under the serpent's guile, becoming subject to death by his own transgression, in Your just judgement, O God, You exiled him from Paradise into this world, returning him to the earth from which he was first taken, yet planned for him salvation through rebirth in Your Christ.

For You did not turn away altogether from what You had fashioned, O gracious God, nor did You forget the work of Your hands. But in the depth of Your love You watched over him in many ways: You sent forth prophets; You worked mighty signs through Your Saints, who in each generation were pleasing to You. You spoke to us through the mouths of Your servants the prophets, announcing to us beforehand the salvation that was to come. You gave the Law as guide; You set angels as guardians. And when the fullness of time came, You spoke to us through Your very Son, through whom You created to ages.

For though He is the reflection of Your glory and the very likeness of Your person, sustaining all things by the power of His word, He did not count equality with [You, God and Father] a thing to be grasped. But though He was God before all time, He was seen on earth and lived among the people. And taking flesh from the holy Virgin, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of our lowly body, that He might changed [us] to be like His glorious body.

For since it was by man that sin entered the world, and death through sin, Your only-begotten Son, He who was in the bosom of God the Father, condescended to be born of woman, the Holy Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary; to be born under the Law, so as to condemn sin in the flesh, that those who die in Adam may be brought to life in Christ.

And having lived in this world, and having given precepts for salvation, turning us away from delusion of idolatry, He brought us to the knowledge of You, the true God and Father, redeeming us to Himself as a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and, when He had cleansed us in water and sanctified us with the Holy Spirit, He gave Himself up as a ransom to death, to which we were in bondage, sold under sin. He descended into Hades by way of the Cross, that He might fill all things in Himself and looses the pangs of death.

Rising on the third day, He prepared the way for the resurrection of all flesh from the dead, because it was not possible for Him [the Author of life] to be held by it. He thus became the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep, the first-born from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent. Ascending into heaven, He was enthroned at the right hand of Your majesty on high, whence He shall come to render

to each of us according to our deeds. But He left us remembrances of His saving Passion, these which we have set forth as He commanded. For as He was about to go forth to His voluntary and eternally memorable and life-giving death, on the night when He gave Himself up for the life of the world, taking bread in His holy spotless hands, and presenting it to You, God and Father, He gave thanks, blessed it, sanctified it and broke it, then...³⁸¹

³⁸¹ St Basil, *The Liturgy of St Basil*, ed. Reverend Dr. George Karahalios (Northbridge, CA.: Narthex Press, 2007), 21-23.

APPENDIX I

From the Office of Holy Unction

O You who are without beginning, eternal, Holy of Holies, You Who sent down Your only-begotten Son to heal every infirmity and every wound of our souls and bodies: Send down Your Holy Spirit, and sanctify this oil, and cause it to be for Your servants, who are about to be anointed therewith, unto complete remission of their sins, and unto inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven.³⁸²

O Holy Father, Physician of souls and bodies, Who sent Your only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to heal every sickness and to deliver from death: Heal Your servant(s) from the ills of body and soul which hinder them and enliven them, by the Grace of Christ...to You do we ascribe glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.³⁸³

Christ, You who are alone are quick to help, manifest Your speedy visitation from on high on your sick servants; deliver them from their infirmities and bitter pain, and raise them up again to sing praises to You, and to glorify You unceasingly; through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O You who alone love mankind.³⁸⁴

Blind of spiritual eyes, I come to You, O Christ, as did the man blind from his birth, and I cry to You in penitence: Have mercy on me O You who illumine with exceeding brightness those who are in darkness.³⁸⁵

³⁸² The Office of Holy Unction - Part One, 2004, 5.

³⁸³ Ibid, 7.

³⁸⁴ The Office of Holy Unction - Part Two, 2003, 20.

³⁸⁵ Ibid, 20.

By Your Divine intervention, O Lord, raise up my soul which is cruelly paralysed by all manner of sin and by unseemly deeds, as of old You raised the paralytic; that being saved, I may cry to You, Grant me healing, O compassionate Christ.³⁸⁶

Physician and Helper of the suffering, O redeemer and Saviour of the sick: do you the Master and Lord of all, grant healing to Your sick servant. Show compassion, have mercy on those who have grievously sinned, and deliver them, O Christ, from their iniquities, that they may glorify Your divine might.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁶ Ibid, 20.

³⁸⁷ Ibid, 9.

APPENDIX J

From Lazarus, Paschal and Sunday of the Paralytic Matins

Sunday of Lazarus

Wishing to grant thy Disciples signs of thy Godhead, O Christ, thou didst humble thyself before the crowds, desiring to hide it. Wherefore, since thou art God and hadst foreknowledge, thou didst foretell the death of Lazarus to the Apostles. But when thou didst come to Bethany in the presence of the people, thou didst ignore the tomb of thy friend, asking, as a Man, to know where it was. But he whom thou didst raise after four days, declared thy divine might. Wherefore, O Almighty God, glory to thee.³⁸⁸

Pascha

Glory to the holy, consubstantial, life-giving and undivided Trinity, now, and ever, and unto ages of ages. Christ is risen from the dead, by Death hath he trodden death, and upon those in the tomb, hath he bestowed life.³⁸⁹

Sunday of the Paralytic

The paralytic was not healed by the pool; but the word renewed him; nor was he hindered by his infirmity of many years; for the effect of thy voice was seen to be sharper than the infirmity. Wherefore, he cast down his heavy burden and carried the weight of his bed, a testimony to the abundance of thy compassion. Glory to thee.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁸ *Divine prayers and services of the Catholic Orthodox Church of Christ, 726-727.*

³⁸⁹ *Ibid, 921.*

³⁹⁰ *Ibid, 954.*

APPENDIX K

The healing of the Paralytic



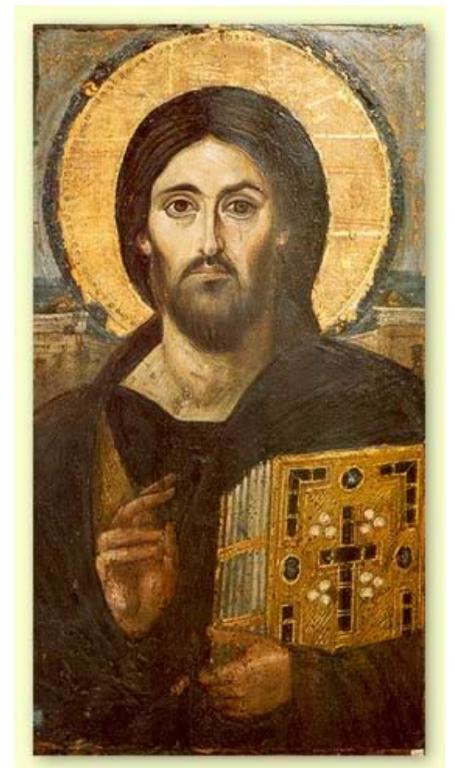
APPENDIX L

The Holy Trinity / hospitality of Abraham



APPENDIX N

Christ Pantokrator



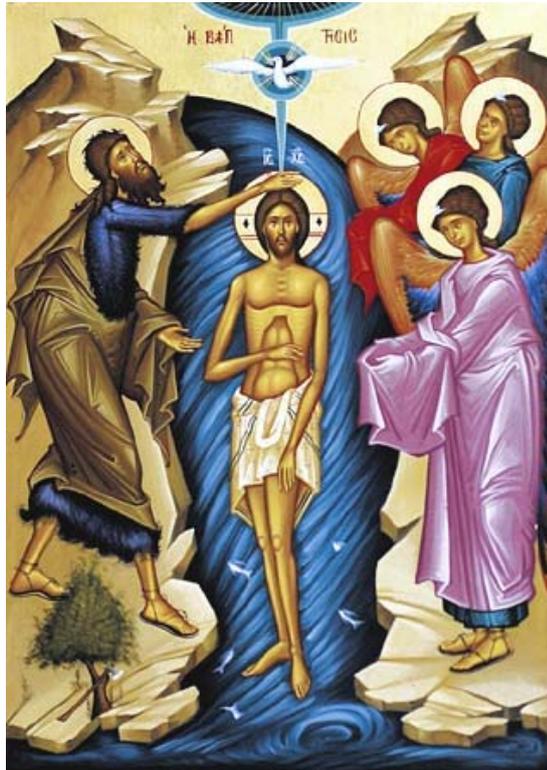
APPENDIX M

The Creation and Fall of Adam



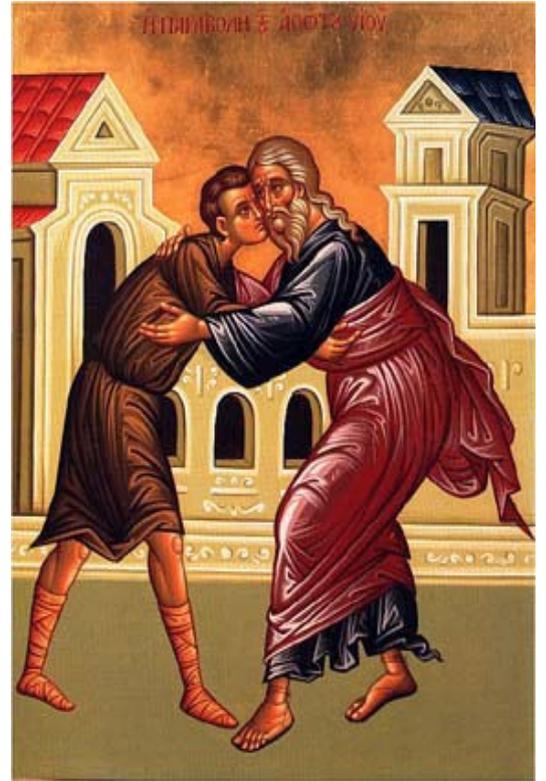
APPENDIX O

The Theophany of our Lord



APPENDIX P

The Prodigal Son



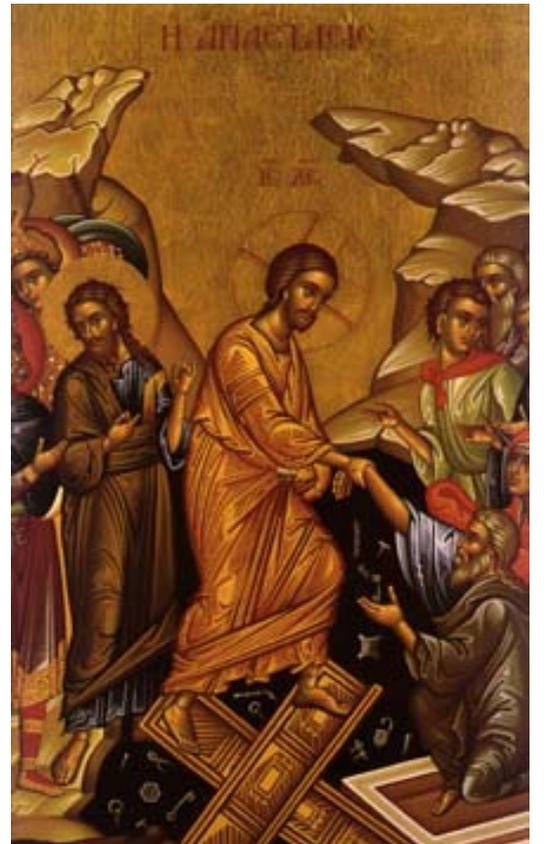
APPENDIX Q

The raising of Lazarus



APPENDIX R

The harrowing of hades



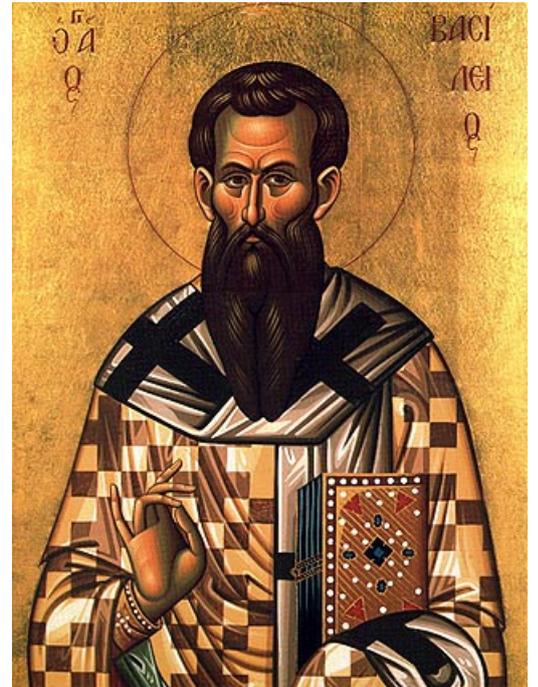
APPENDIX S

The Council of Nicea



APPENDIX T

St Basil



APPENDIX U

Sts Cosmas and Damien



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