

NAME AS SACRAMENT

A Sequel to *Apologiya Very*

Soon after Russia entered World War I in 1914 Fr. Antony successfully petitioned to serve the front-line troops as a priest of the Red Cross, and so most of the war he spent at the front under conditions which precluded his continuing to write books and articles. Nevertheless he kept up his theological defense of the divinity of God's name during occasional breaks which he would spend with his sister in Petersburg. Some of those were necessitated by the recurrence of a lifelong eye ailment that made it nearly impossible for him to bear any light at all, so he would do his typing in a darkened room.⁵⁹ His sister Mary Orbeliani remembers that "the whole night was this tap-tap-tap-tap, the whole night. And the room was next to my son's room ... He wrote, wrote, wrote, wrote, wrote, wrote ... hours and hours and hours." (Tape 9) Her son, who apparently learned how to sleep to the clatter of a typewriter, recalls:

When I knew Bulatovich, my uncle, during 1915-16 in Petersburg ... he was living with us in a dark room because of his eyes. He was typing endless letters and pamphlets about his imyaborchestvo. He was typing blind in the darkness and typing well, with very few errors. (Letter dated Jan. 29, 1977)

From these numerous works one series of articles remains as important a theological monument as his original *Apologiya*, particularly as published in book form under the title

⁵⁹Katsnelson says there are reports that he not only performed priestly functions but also was awarded a medal for valor in rescuing a wounded soldier under enemy fire and even for leading an attack. However his sister does not believe that could be true, because as a monk he would not have done so, because she would have heard about it, and because the very eye ailment that forced him occasionally to go on leave precluded military activities. See По неизведанным 189 and Orbeliani Tape 8.

Opravdaniye Very v Nepobedimoye, Nepostizhimoye, Bozhestvennoye Imya Gospoda Nashego Iisusa Khrista (A Justification of Faith in the Invincible, Incomprehensible, Divine Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ). Remarkably, these articles found publication in one of the more influential independent religious publications of Russia -- Vladimir Skvortsov's *Missionerskoye Obozreniye* (Missionary Review). Skvortsov, of all people! He whose publications had rivaled Abp. Antony's for virulence in attacking the imyaslavtsy made an abrupt about face some time during 1915 and adopted their point of view. Specifically how this came about is not known, but it serves as yet another indication that when people began to listen to the imyaslavtsy themselves as well as to their opponents, it was the former who benefited. And with the forum offered by *Missionerskoye Obozreniye* many more had an opportunity to do that listening.

While the new work covers many of the same themes found in *Apologiya*, one can see a shift in emphasis. Where the earlier one focused on the name as divinely revealed truth, i.e. as knowledge of God, the new work focuses more on the name as act of naming, as confession of faith. Ironically, Fr. Antony found extensive support for his position in St. Gregory of Nyssa -- drawing primarily upon extracts quoted by Troitsky himself. St. Gregory sums up his own attitude toward God's names in one key passage where he describes the difference between himself and Eunomius, who had said that the "sacrament of piety" (το της ευσεβειας μυστηριον) consists in "accuracy of dogmas":

But we, having learned from the holy voice that "If one is not born again through water and spirit, he will not enter into the kingdom of God" and that "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood, that person will live forever," are convinced that the sacrament of piety is established (κυροῦσθαι) by the confession of the divine names, I mean of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; and salvation is confirmed (κρατυεσθαι) by communion of the mystical rites and symbols. (PG 45:880B)

While the imyabortsy constantly called the names of God nothing more than a means for calling on him and in the sacraments considered it to be merely one among many "conditions" which needed to be fulfilled, St. Gregory thus spoke of confessing God's names as the very foundation of Christian life. Fr. Antony notes that in response to Eunomius' lumping names, symbols, and rites together to denigrate the importance of all of them, St. Gregory separated confession of names

from use of rites and symbols, spoke first of the former, and used a stronger word to express its importance.

The key word here is "confession." The imyaslavtsy had never emphasized the saving effectiveness of simply "knowing" God's names as had Eunomius, nor had they stressed mere "pronunciation." They did assert that pronunciation of God's name was itself significant, but this was precisely because to some degree it implies a confession of faith, just as prayer in general implies faith insofar as one would not pray if one did not have some faith that someone is listening. And it is in this act of prayer/confession of faith that the very essence of Christian life -- of salvation -- consists. Saint Paul wrote: "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart is believed unto righteousness, but with the mouth is confessed unto salvation." (Rom 10:9, 10)

The imyabortsy spoke about prayer to "God himself" and about confession of "God himself" outside of or without God's names, but this is in fact impossible physically and epistemologically. Insofar as one speaks of confession with the lips, human words are required. And insofar as one speaks of prayer of mind and heart, human thought is required. Fr. Antony challenges: "... if the imyabortsy consider prayer 'in the name' of the Lord 'stupidity,' and find it possible to pray to God directly, passing by his name, then let them show us an object to call up in our mind during prayer that would not be his name ..." (200)

Confessing God's name is thus the ultimate "sacramental" act upon which all others depend. And here is a radical difference between imyaslavtsy and imyabortsy: the latter understood "the sacraments" to be a few special acts *by their very nature* different from prayer and the rest of Christian life, the *only* absolutely reliable sources of divine grace. Fr. Antony, on the other hand, affirms that not only is naming the Lord *the* fundamental sacramental act, it is the very act by which the "sacraments" themselves are made effective. As he had done before in his *Apologiya*, he again here stresses that the foundation for the reliability of the sacraments' effectiveness is in fact to be found in the Lord's promises concerning his name. These include Old Testament promises such as "all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Jl 2:32/3:5), but for Christians the promises made by the Lord Jesus Christ himself are most important: "Truly, truly I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you" (Jn 16:23; see also 14:13 and 15:16). This is the reason for the numerous commandments to have faith "in the name

of Jesus Christ" (e.g. 1 Jn 3:23), to have life "in his name" (Jn 20:31), and to find salvation itself "in his name." (Acts 4:12, 2:21) And this is why St. Paul spoke of the divine name and the Holy Spirit as being equally the effective agents in baptism: "... but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor 6:11)⁶⁰

If then we do not hesitate to say that baptism "is" the rebirth of which the Lord spoke, not merely a means toward that end; and participation in the Eucharist "is" communion with God, not merely a means toward that end; dare we speak in less exalted terms about the use of God's name in prayer and in confessions of faith? Indeed, is not one reason for speaking as we do of those "sacraments" the belief that they absolutely reliably accomplish the thing for which they are the means -- so that means and end ultimately cannot be separated? The same must then be said of prayer, which consists essentially of pronouncing God's names -- whether verbally or mentally.

As for the cries of "magic," Fr. Antony observes that "Of course, the name of Jesus cannot save the one who, although calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, boldly transgresses God's commandments; just as communion of the body and blood does not justify the unrepentant sinner." (77) Nor does a belief in prayer's consistent effectiveness imply that this occurs without reference to God's will -- rather, of his own good will he made certain promises and his promises are absolutely and consistently reliable. Troitsky's error was in applying those promises only to a few particular rites from which he excluded prayer and confession of faith in God's name. Yet it is precisely to the latter that the promises are expressly made. That is why our faith is truly "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." And it is why the "faith of the Church" cited by the Synod's May 18 epistle as the basis for the sacraments is ultimately the name of God. One may draw a direct parallel to God's reason for acting in the Old Testament. Just as he saved the Israelites not for the sake of their own goodness and worthiness but "*for my holy name's sake*" (see Ez 36:22-3) -- so too now he saves Christians not because of their personal holiness but for his name's sake, specifically for the sake of his name Jesus -- the Savior.

⁶⁰Cf. the priest's words in the Orthodox rite of baptism and chrismation: "you are baptized. You are illumined. You have received anointment with the holy chrism. You are sanctified. You are washed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

This certainly does not mean, however, that the individual's faith is irrelevant; what is objectively offered must be, and might not be, subjectively received. Neither factor is independent from the other, as is shown in Peter's words about the lame man who was miraculously healed: "And on account of faith in His name, His name strengthened this man whom you see and know, and the faith which is through it gave him this health ..." (Acts 3:16) Here the name is clearly not just a "means" but is God's very power or grace. "One wonders, what more indisputable witness about the divine power of the name of Jesus Christ need we search out in scripture?" questions Fr. Antony. (88) Yet there is a balance in this text between "name" and "faith," and it is that balance which the imyabortsy have abandoned:

But so that no one would think that this name is some kind of magical power, which by a mere combination of letters and by the power of mere pronunciation must work miracles, Peter added "and faith, which is for His sake, gave him complete healing." Our opponents ignore the power of the first half of the text and concentrate only on the second; seizing upon these words they say, "There, you see, not the name of the Lord healed the lame man, but faith in him himself." However, to the degree that it would be unorthodox to affirm that only the power of Peter's pronouncing the name of Jesus Christ without any co-action of his faith healed the lame man, to the same degree it would be unorthodox to affirm that it was not the power of the name of Jesus Christ that co-worked this miracle, and reject the words "His name strengthened him."

But our opponents object to us: "In the world there is only one power of God, what other power have you found in his name?" Of course, in the world there is only one power -- of God; as also in man -- only one power of his essence. However, as in man we distinguish the powers of his members, so also in the world we distinguish various gifts and powers of God which are all various energies of him; and insofar as it would be foolish to deny the right to say about a person that he did something by the power of his right hand or left, likewise it would be foolish to deny the right to say that some or other miracle was co-worked by the power of God's name. But it is in this that the difference between our understanding of the name of God and the understanding of our opponents consists: while we see in God's name as it were his living hand, our opponents want to see in it some kind of inanimate instrument, not consubstantial with him and having no power in itself. (88)

In its prayers the church constantly sings of the power of the cross -- "O invincible, incomprehensible, divine power of the honorable and life-creating cross, do not forsake us

sinner." (Compline) "By the power of your cross preserve us, O Lord"; "By the power of your cross save us, O Lord." (Matins) Now in fact the cross's power is the power of the name insofar as it is a graphic depiction of the name of the crucified Jesus:

But if the powers of both cross and name are identical, then are not the cross and the name identical by essence? By their external side the name of Jesus and the cross are identical symbols, as the Catechesis says, ... repeating the words of St. Chrysostom "that the name pronounced *by the motion of the lips* is the same as the sign of the cross," symbolically depicted by the movement of the hand. And so, by its external side the name of the Lord Jesus is a symbol of sound, calling to mind the very same truth as does the symbol of the cross. But are both identical also by their internal side? Of course not, for how can the cross be identical with the name when the cross by its essence has no internal side in itself, but the name does have? The cross by its essence is either material, or writing in lines and colors, or writing in the air by the motion of the hand; but a name *by its essence is thought*, which can be expressed symbolically, but can be thought also without external sound-symbols. Therefore if about the power of the cross one can say it is God himself, nevertheless to say this about the cross itself is inadmissible, and therefore the saints, calling the name of Jesus "Light," "God," "Master"; calling religious-moral truths "God," calling the Jesus prayer "God," calling the gospel word "God" (see Sts. Simeon, Hesychios, Gregory, Makarius, Theofilakt, Justin) -- nowhere permit themselves so to name the cross. (141-2)

And so the two understandings of "God's name" are essentially inseparable: by its "objective" side the name is truly divine power, "energy" in Palamite terminology; while by its "subjective" side it is our experience or knowledge or understanding of that divine power. To consider either apart from the other is literally impossible, and this is why scripture, the saints, and church services use the word "name" in both meanings interchangeably.

Dare we consider such usage happenstance? Fr. Antony objects to all attempts at attributing it merely to poetic turns of phrase or meaningless quirks of the Hebrew language: "... such an equating of church truth to worldly poetry, which for the sake of adornment permits every distortion and exaggeration, we consider completely inadmissible, for the hymns of our Church were written by Saints who for the sake of poetic adornment would absolutely not dare to trample upon dogmatic truth." (7)

The same could be said of scripture itself, and here Fr. Antony could have developed the thought farther than he did. To say that one understands the Bible as speaking truthfully and realistically does not necessarily mean "literally" -- but it does mean that the way it expresses the

truth remains the best way. One can take "anthropomorphic" expressions like those referring to the eyes and ears of the Lord as an example: these are not to be understood in exactly the same sense as when applied to humans -- yet they serve to express important truths about God, and the Christian is bound to reject as untrue any statement that God "in no way/absolutely does not" have eyes and ears.⁶¹ We can attempt to describe what such phrases mean, but the phrases themselves remain the last word and final authority. The same is true of the eucharist. Over the centuries there have been countless attempts at explaining what the words "This is my body, this is my blood" mean -- and such attempts are not without value -- but ultimately one can only understand the eucharist by experiencing it, i.e., by partaking of the sacrament. The very word "sacrament" means "mystery" -- that which we do not fully comprehend -- and it applies equally well to the very words of scripture. And so the very fact that scripture does use "God's name" as a synonym for "God" indicates that in some sense God's name truly is God himself. If we do not understand how this can be, or cannot explain how, then this is not necessary. The only way to understand is the way of experience -- the way of calling upon God's name in prayer.

On the other hand, Fr. Antony asks: if in Hebrew "in the name of" really is perfectly synonymous with "in," and that usage means absolutely nothing in itself, then why not translate it accordingly, everywhere replacing "in the name of the Lord" with "in the Lord" and so forth? As they are now, all such expressions in scripture and church prayers would have to be considered as mistranslations, all together constituting one massive anachronistic carryover from ancient Jewish idiomatic usage. But they are not. Rather, they express vital truths of the faith. And by linking God's name as his power and glory and as our knowledge of him to his name as symbols of sound produced by human lips they show us the way to direct access to this divine power and knowledge. The divine name itself is therefore the ultimate, the quintessential "sacrament," a real gift which has been offered by God and is accessible to all; through it every Christian has direct access to communion with God at every moment of his or her life.

Yet that is precisely what the imyabortsy denied. And in order to defend that denial they were forced not only to reinterpret but also to misquote texts whose authority they did not wish

⁶¹Of course, such anthropomorphic statements are true according to Christian theology even in a literal sense insofar as in Jesus Christ, God himself truly did become a human being.

to question. A good example is what Troitsky did with one text from Fr. John of Kronstadt. To prove that Fr. John considered God's name to be "just another symbol" he quoted the following:

Because of our bodily nature the Lord attaches, so to speak, his presence to some or other visible sign, he attaches his presence to the temple, to icons, to the cross, to the sign of the cross, *to his name* ... (Qtd. in Об Именах 156; Troitsky's emphasis)

However, the text really reads:

... to some or other visible sign; for instance: in the sacrament of communion, he himself wholly settles into the body and blood; in repentance, he acts through the visible face of the priest; in baptism -- through water; in the priesthood -- through the bishop; in marriage -- through the priest and the crowns He Himself crowns; in chrismation -- through the oil; he attaches his presence to the temple ... (Моя Жизнь 2:296)

Everything between "visible sign" and "he attaches" Troitsky omitted without even using an ellipsis to indicate its omission. Fr. Antony comments: "Now, one wonders: was such a corruption done deliberately or not deliberately? Obviously deliberately, for the body and blood are not those signs and symbols with which Mr. Troitsky wants to number God's name." (OV 162) Troitsky had to drop those words because he was trying to prove a radical difference between "visible sign" or "symbol" and "sacrament." However that radical difference did not exist in the mind of Fr. John of Kronstadt, it did not exist in other saints of the church, it does not exist in scripture, and in general it has never existed in the mind of the Church.

There is much room for theological development here, particularly in the direction of showing how every act of Christian life can be in some respect an act of faith. All of life, every human action, can and should ultimately be a confession of God's name -- and therefore truly a "sacrament" in the same sense in which we use the word to speak of acts like baptism and the eucharist. Fr. Antony himself, however, did not go far beyond basic explanations aimed mainly at defending the faith from those who "not only rejected these truths themselves, but by force tried to make us agree with their delusions and repudiate the primordial faith of the Church in the name of the Lord." It was his consciousness of those truths and the attacks against them that:

... did compel us and until now does compel us to defend with all our strength the things we have learned by the mercy of the All-good God and by the teaching of the holy fathers -- the divinity and power of the name of the Lord -- and to dare to step forward with a verbal defense of these truths, in spite of our admitted lack of skill in words and lack of expertise in theology. However, this consciousness compels us at the same time in no way to dare to present our deductions and conclusions as final and as inerrantly formulated church teaching. We only venture to present them to theologians more enlightened than we, only as certain "materials" for their further deductions and conclusions, hoping that the Lord will send defenders of the honor and power of his name more skillful than we, who will confirm our truth and correct our mistakes. (207-8)

Nevertheless Fr. Antony's works, particularly *Apologiya* and *Opravdaniye Very* are indeed foundational, and in the future any theologians who may wish to further explain the Orthodox Christian understanding of God's name will find in them an indispensable resource.

Sergius Bulgakov's Contribution

That work was to begin at the All-Russian Church Council which finally took place in 1917 and which established a special commission to discuss the matter of the Athonite monks "named imyabozhniki." Although this derogatory title was still used, the choice of people for the commission reflected a change in attitude on the part of church authorities by then: it was to be headed by Bp. Theofan, and Sergius Bulgakov was to present an in-depth report on the theological issues. Political events brought the council to a premature end and kept this special commission from completing its work, but given the people serving on it there can be little doubt that its conclusions would have been quite different from those set forth in the Holy Synod's decision of May 18, 1913.

Mr. Bulgakov did write the assigned report but was never able to present it. He was apparently disinclined to publish it himself, but it appeared posthumously in 1953 under the title *Philosophiya Imeni* (A Philosophy of Name). In general he takes in this book a position virtually identical to that of Fr. Antony and the imyaslavtsy.

Bulgakov argues that God's names are not merely particular symbols of sound but are in fact every known quality of God:

Every judgment is naming, and every judgment is -- more precisely, potentially is -- a name, can become one. Every predicate which we ascribe to Divinity is at the same time a naming of God: Provider, Creator,

Good One, Eternal One, Blessed One, Holy One, etc. ... The ineffable, mystical, unknown, transcendent essence of God reveals itself to man in its characteristics; these characteristics are predicates to the divine Essence; and as predicates they, when they become subjects, so to speak, *pars pro toto*⁶² become names of God -- in the plural. (178-9)

So every revelation of God is a new divine name; man does not name God, but God names himself through man; the act of naming is in fact an act *of* God *in* man. And the imyabortsy are wrong in presuming that an "energy" can be separated from its "result" or "fruit":

... divine energy itself speaks about itself in man, reveals itself in word; and the word, the naming of God, becomes as it were its [i.e., the energy's] humanization, its human incarnation. "And the Word became flesh" here receives a wider interpretation: the incarnation of the Word occurs not only in the divine incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, but also in namings, which are performed by man in answer to the action of God. Already by this alone the names of God cannot be viewed as purely human creations, as symbols (клички) invented by man. To suppose that this is so simultaneously indicates not only a misunderstanding of the nature of the name, but also the greatest blasphemy. And to the highest degree characteristic is the helplessness with which the imyabortsy try to reconcile their psychological understanding of the nature of word and name with that reverence before the name of God to which the orthodox feeling of church reality, or at least outward correctness, compels them. (180-1)

Hence the forerunners of the modern imyabortsy are in fact the iconoclasts, and it is significant that the latter were actually called ονοματομαχοι, the Greek equivalent of imyabortsy, by Patriarch Nicephorus. (See 182)

The views of the modern imyabortsy carried to their logically inevitable conclusions can only result in pantheism (the very charge they leveled against the imyaslavtsy):

And so the names of God are verbal icons of Divinity, the incarnation of divine energies, theophanies; they carry with themselves the seal of divine revelation. Here are united inseparably and unconfusedly, as in the icon, divine energy and human power of speech: the person speaks, he names, but that which he names is given to him and is revealed. It is this human side in naming which gives cause to skeptical imyaborchestvo to consider the name of God as a human creation, a label (кличка) or something like an algebraic sign (and in this sense "a symbol"). But in order to be consistent in this point of view, one must bring it to the end and acknowledge that also the content of word-naming is wholly a human affair, an act of human knowing,

⁶²"The part for the whole."

completely immanent to him [i.e., to the human]. Therefore, this will mean that God is completely immanent to the world and to man, in other words, that the world and man are god -- the pathos of buddhism and contemporary monism, [which are] hostile to Christianity with its faith in a transcendent Divinity who reveals itself. (186)

That the views of the imyabortsy are foreign to scripture is shown by their reinterpretations of it, of which they have no right:

For every reverent or even simply attentive and well-intentioned reader of the Old Testament it must be clear that the expression "the name of God" occupies here a completely special independent place. To say that this is only a means for expressing the idea "God" means to say nothing, to manifest only a blasphemously light-minded attitude to the biblical text, reaching even to a direct distortion of it. ... And above all there are those striking instances where the expression "name of God" in no way can be interpreted simply as a synonym, a descriptive expression replacing "God," but designates a special means of God's presence, of the power of his name in his name. (194)

Even where "the name of God" does seem to be simply a "substitute" for or synonym of "God" one must ask why such turns of phrase were chosen:

... but here too this word usage by itself demands and presupposes an explanation: why did the genius of language (in the present case Hebrew) -- and that through the divinely inspired writer -- permit such a replacement? Why specifically does "name" become such a substitute? An adequate answer for this question exists in the foregoing discussions, but here we can only add that specifically this plentiful word usage ... in no way witnesses in favor of imyaborchestvo but completely to the contrary; it speaks about the meaningfulness of the name, of its weightiness, of its substantiality. (200)

All of this leads to the same practical conclusions made by Fr. Antony concerning the name, or act of naming, as sacrament. Bulgakov too specifically compares it to the eucharist:

The religious lie (and not only misunderstanding) of imyaborchestvo consists in its "psychologism," in that here the effectiveness of God's name is connected exclusively with [one's] mood (настроение): let a person pray zealously and sincerely and he will feel the power of God's name, but in the reverse instance -- no. The conditions for the reception of grace and the character of this reception, connected with the subjective moment, with the personal mood, they transfer to the objective meaning of what happens here. [They are] just like their Protestant forerunners, [who] denied in essence the sacrament of the eucharist by attributing to it only subjective meaning, according to which, in dependence on mood, one person communes, but

another does not commune -- as if whatever the mood might be it could supply an absent sacrament, replace its power. In the same way the power of God's name, they think, is communicated by the mood of the person praying, thanks to which the prayer will either be heard or not heard; as if one must especially persuade and call upon God to listen to man. However, God hears everyone who calls upon him, but not every one who calls upon him turns to him with their heart and hears this hearing of God. And as the holy gifts are the body and blood of Christ identically for those who commune unto salvation, as for those who do so for judgment and condemnation, just so the name of God is the power of God, no matter how we approach it, reverently or blasphemously. To imagine that the gap between heaven and earth can be crossed just by human will is to inject psychologism, anthropomorphism, subjectivism, and finally -- anthropotheism into the very heart of religion, into its holy of holies. (212)

Ultimately the issue is truly the very nature of prayer:

As it is impossible to be saved just by human power, so it is impossible to pray to God just by human power, if God were not inclined to this prayer even before we opened our mouths, if he were not present in it by his power, included within his name. ... Therefore in its essence prayer *is*⁶³ the invoked name of God. But as the name of God includes within itself divine energy, gives God's presence, then practically, energetically, one can also say, though with great imprecision, that the name of God is God. More precisely, in it is present God's power, which is inseparable from God's essence, and it is in this sense God himself. Every prayer is also a miracle, if one calls "miracle" a rupture in the immanent, the penetration of it by the transcendent -- and this miracle is the name of God, which is Divinity. (212)

As for the formula "the name of God is God himself," even by its grammatical construction it does not imply the "imyabozhiye" at which the imyabortsy were so scandalized, insofar as predicate merely describes subject. The verb "is" is not like an algebraic equals sign designating absolute identity. Rather, these words express the divinity of God's name and ultimately its sacramental nature in prayer:

... this presence of Divinity in its name, which causes the reverent pray-er to exclaim, "The name of God is God himself," in no way introduces fetishism of the name, but reveals the eternal and incomprehensible sacrament of God's incarnation and condescension, the presence of God in his name, which is confirmed in the sacrament of prayer. (217)

⁶³Emphasis added to reflect implicit emphasis of "и есть".

Thus both Fr. Antony Bulatovich and Sergius Bulgakov reached essentially the same conclusion: their defense of the real divinity of God's name was ultimately a defense of the reality of man's communion with God as a reality which takes place not just in certain specific rites fundamentally different from the rest of life, but in prayer itself, in all prayer. They were defending the foundational Christian belief that to every believer -- ultimately to every human being -- is open the possibility of direct communion with God at each and every moment of life. This is precisely what Ilarion had meant, it is what John of Kronstadt had meant, and it is the fundamental truth of Christianity which is expressed in myriads of other ways throughout the Christian tradition.