

The Antiochian House of Studies (TAHOS) MTh in Pastoral Care and Counseling (PCC)

In 2014, as AHOS neared its 25th Anniversary, three new tutors were recruited to build a graduate program in pastoral counseling, with a specific focus on training clergy and lay volunteers to care for individuals, families, and communities in acute crisis from a uniquely Orthodox foundation. Primarily, its curriculum was developed from the theological and anthropological teachings of Archimandrite Sophrony of Essex, and although a number of ideas from the fields of psychology and social work are explored in the program, it remains essentially dedicated to theologically-founded pastoral care. Professor Renos Papadopoulos, Director of the Centre for Trauma, Asylum & Refugee Care at the University of Essex and a long-time spiritual child of Father Sophrony, serves as the program's senior advisor.

The Master of Theology in Pastoral Counseling degree is granted in partnership with **the University of Balamand in Lebanon**, and is internationally accredited by the **Commission for Higher Learning of the Republic of Lebanon**. Our program is also in the late stages of accreditation by the **Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS)**, and we are professionally accredited as an independent pastoral counseling training entity (the **Antiochian Orthodox Institute for Pastoral Counseling**) by the **American Association of Pastoral Counselors**.

Applied Orthodoxy in Our Daily Lives as a Way to Navigate Stressful Times

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PCA5377 TAHOS PCC Program

Retreat Series Objectives:

- Session-1: To introduce the role of the Church as hospital restoring man to his natural state of health. November 18, 2020
- Session-2: To introduce St. Sophrony's "Three Stages of Spiritual Life". December 2, 2020
- Session-3: To introduce St. Siluonan's understanding of "Keep Thy Mind in Thy Heart" supported by Orthodox practices. December 9, 2020
- Session-4: To introduce Prof. Renos' *Adversity Grid* as a reflection tool in the face of stress and adversity. December 16, 2020

Learning Objectives: The Church as a Hospital

Session-1

- To introduce the Fathers' description of man in his natural state (Larchet)
- To introduce Muse's description of the Soul
- To introduce the impact of *The Fall* on the faculties of man (Larchet)
- To understand the Church as a spiritual hospital

Larchet Chapter 1: Man's Original Health (p.15)

- The Fathers associate man's health with the state of perfection intended for him *by nature*.
- Perfection means *deification*.
 - Deification is within man's nature to become god by Grace. *Theosis*
- God gave man the possibility of being completely like Him by inscribing His Image and His Likeness into man's very being.
 - St. Gregory Nazianzen writes "When the immortal Son created man, He gave man the aim of himself becoming god."
- At his creation, man possessed a certain perfection of his faculties
 - Man's intellect → an imitation of God's and capable of making his Creator known to him
 - Man's free will → created in the image of God's will and enabling him to direct his whole being towards God
 - Man's desirous and loving powers, traits of divine compassion reproduced in man, allowing man to be united to God

On the one hand, the perfection of these faculties results from being created by God in the *image* of His own faculties and therefore can unite to God

On the other hand, this perfection *arises* on condition that these faculties not turn away from God merely because they are free. The *likeness* of God grows in man when they open themselves up to His Grace.

Image and Likeness

Man is created in the image of God.

Man's Intellect

Man's Free Will

Man's desirous and loving powers

The Fathers emphasize that man is created *with* the virtues but those virtues are not fully developed.

The virtues belong to man's nature as a goal to be realized, insofar as the virtues constitute the fulfillment and perfection of this nature (p.16)

The virtues are not added to man. He is created with the seedlings of virtue that need to be grown in man



Re the Likeness:

Larchet quotes St Maximus the Confessor (p.16):

- Adam was created already realizing to some degree the likeness of God¹, and his task was to achieve its completion.
- From the beginning, he was turned toward God, and in his very nature— created in the image of God— possessed all the virtues.

St Dorotheus of Gaza “God made man in his image, that is to say...clad with every virtue.”

St. John of Damascus “God made man...adorned with every virtue and rich in every good.”

St. Maximus “The virtues are inherent in the soul from creation”.

St. Isaac the Syrian “Virtue is naturally in the soul”

Man is Virtuous by Nature

Larchet explains “Adam was created already realizing to some degree the likeness of God, and his task was to achieve its completion”. (p.16)

- St. Dorotheus of Gaza “By nature do we possess the virtues, which are given to us by God. God placed them in man when He created him”

Virtues inherent in man’s nature but are not given to man completely fulfilled.

Virtues are given to man as a seed that needs to be cultivated.

Virtues are realized by man’s active participation in God’s plan, the cooperation of all man’s faculties with the divine will, and the free opening up of his entire being to God’s grace. (p.17)

The normal destiny of man’s nature is to develop the likeness in the image (p.18).

- “Be holy, as I am holy”- Leviticus 20:26

However, this destiny does not come easily. Unlike the easy and unconstrained growth of the trees in the forest, St. Theophan the Recluse points out that the virtues do not simply grow without pruning. For the Christian, “it is a battle with oneself involving much labor, intense and sorrowful” (2, p.14).



What are the Virtues?

Vices/Passions	Virtues
Self-Love, Vainglory & Pride	Humility
Gluttony	Temperance
Lust	Continence and Chastity
Sadness/Despair	Joy
Acedia, laziness, slothfulness	the fervor of the Spirit, un-slothful striving, ¹ diligent service
Anger	Gentleness and Patience
Fear	The Fear of God, Trust, Obedience to God

The attaining of the virtues is to grow into the likeness of God. Sanctification. Theosis.

References:

1. Larchet
2. St. Theophan the Recluse “Raising Them Right”
3. St. Paul 1 Thess: 5:19 “not lagging in diligence, [be] fervent in spirit, serving the Lord”

St. Theophan the Recluse expresses it this way:

“Finally, after long labors and exertions, the Christian principles appear victorious, reigning without opposition; they penetrate the whole composition of human nature, dislodging from it demands and inclinations hostile to themselves, and place it in a state of passionless-ness and purity, making it worthy of the blessedness of the pure in heart – to see God in themselves in sincerest communion with Him.” (2, p.14)



References in Larchet's work

St. Augustine

St. Isaiah of Scetis

St. Athanasius of Alexandria

St. Gregory of Nyssa

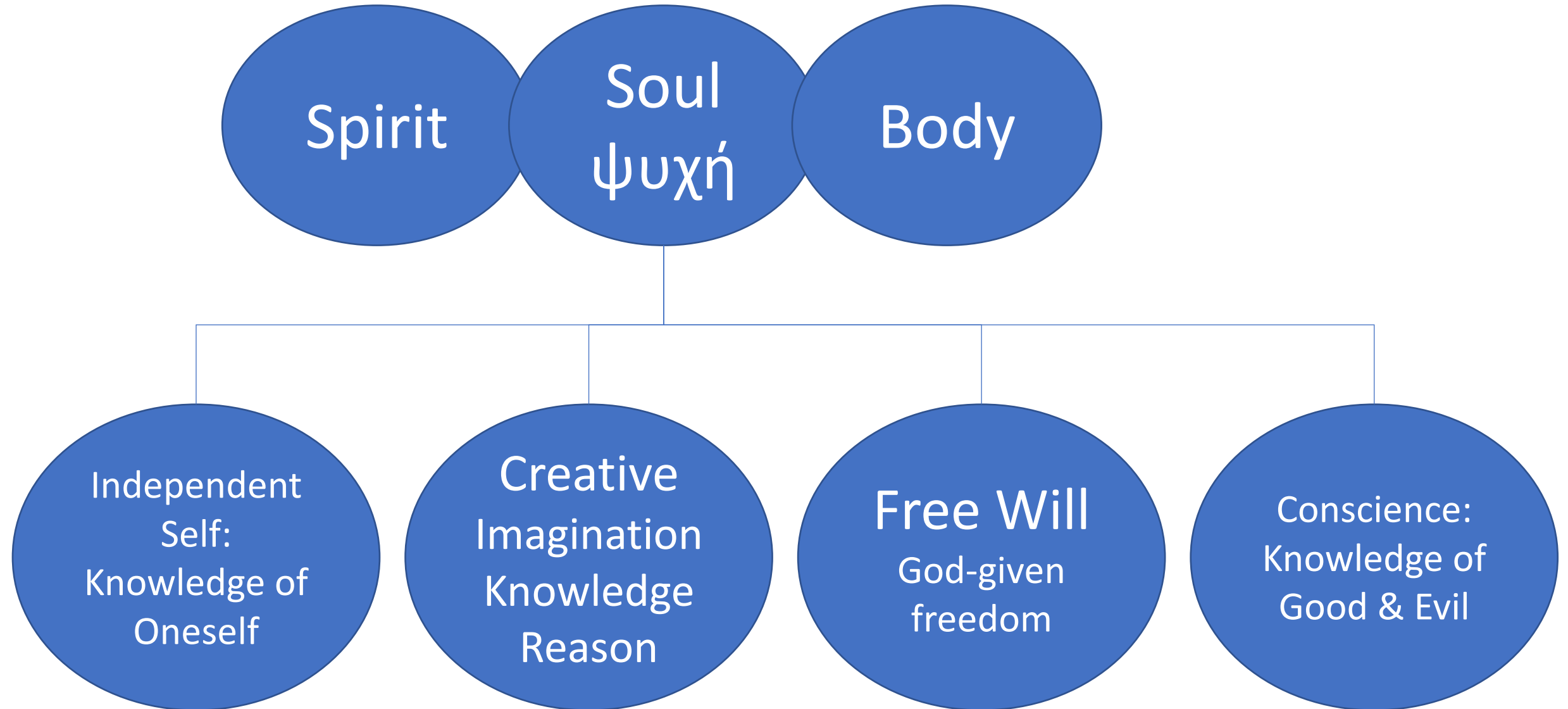
St. John Damascene

St. Dorotheus of Gaza

Larchet: Man's Natural State p.19-21

- Adam lived in the permanent contemplation of God and prayed continually to God
- He praised and glorified his Creator ceaselessly in accordance with God's will
- He cultivated *divine thoughts* with his soul and was nourished by them
- He recognized the presence of divine energies in himself and in creation
- He walked with God and spoke to Him daily in Paradise
- Adam's 'passions' were turned *towards God* (πρὸς τὸν θεόν) and were *properly ordered*
- Adam used his freedom to collaborate with God to grow into the likeness
- Adam was unified in himself, with others like him, with all creation; peace reigned
- His natural state was that of health: no illness in his flesh; serenity in his soul
- Fever, impulse, irrational madness and gluttony did not exist
- His life was without pain or sadness or worry; Adam lived without anxiety
- As long as he remained in permanent union with God, Adam possessed the integrity of all his faculties

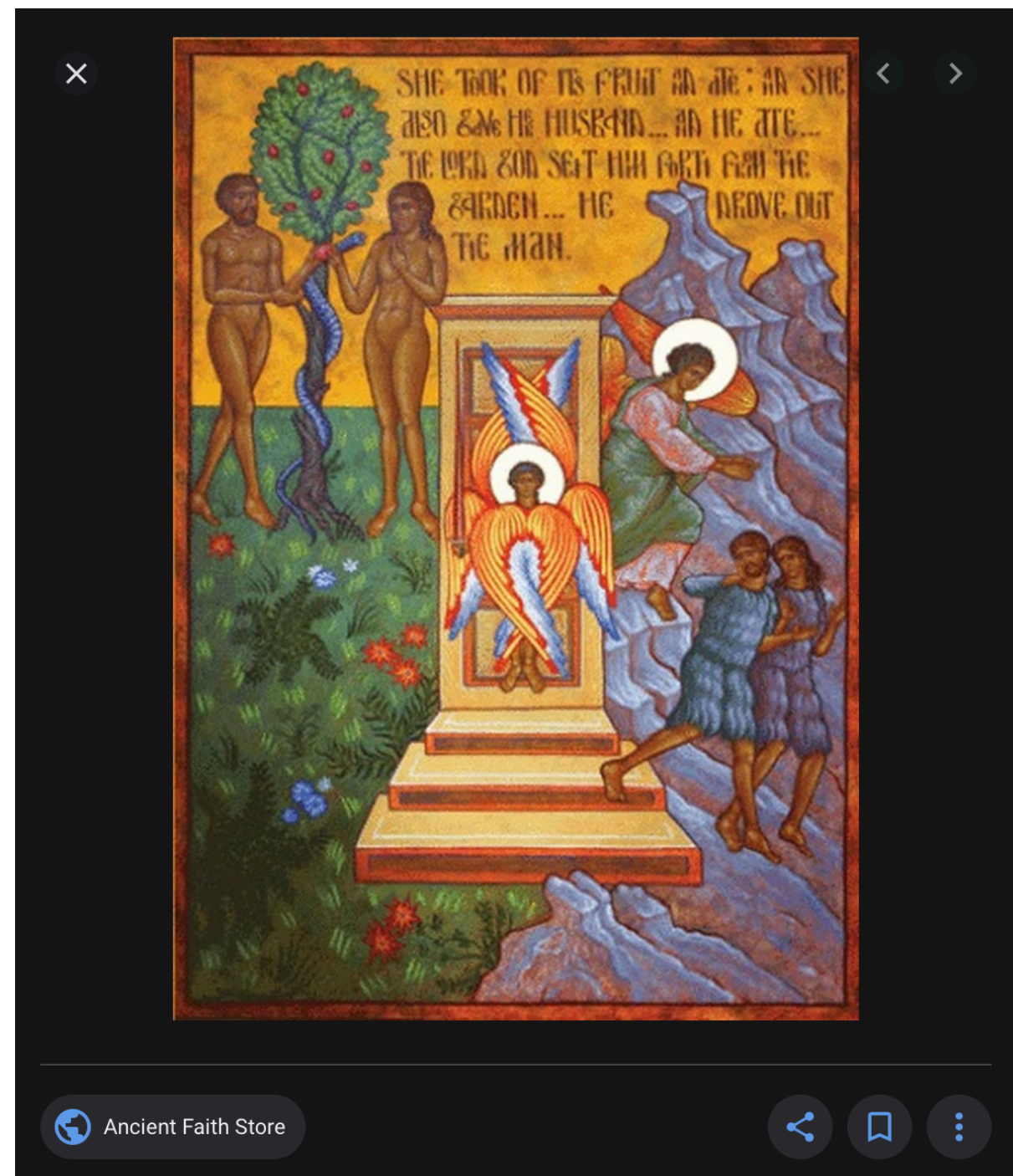
A Composition of the Soul (Larchet p.31 & Muse)



Pathologies in Fallen Man

- Pathology of knowledge
- Pathology of desire and pleasure
- Pathology of aggressiveness
- Pathology of freedom
- Pathology of memory
- Pathology of imagination
- Pathology of the senses and bodily functions

After the fall, St. John Chrysostom explains
“everything is turned upside down”

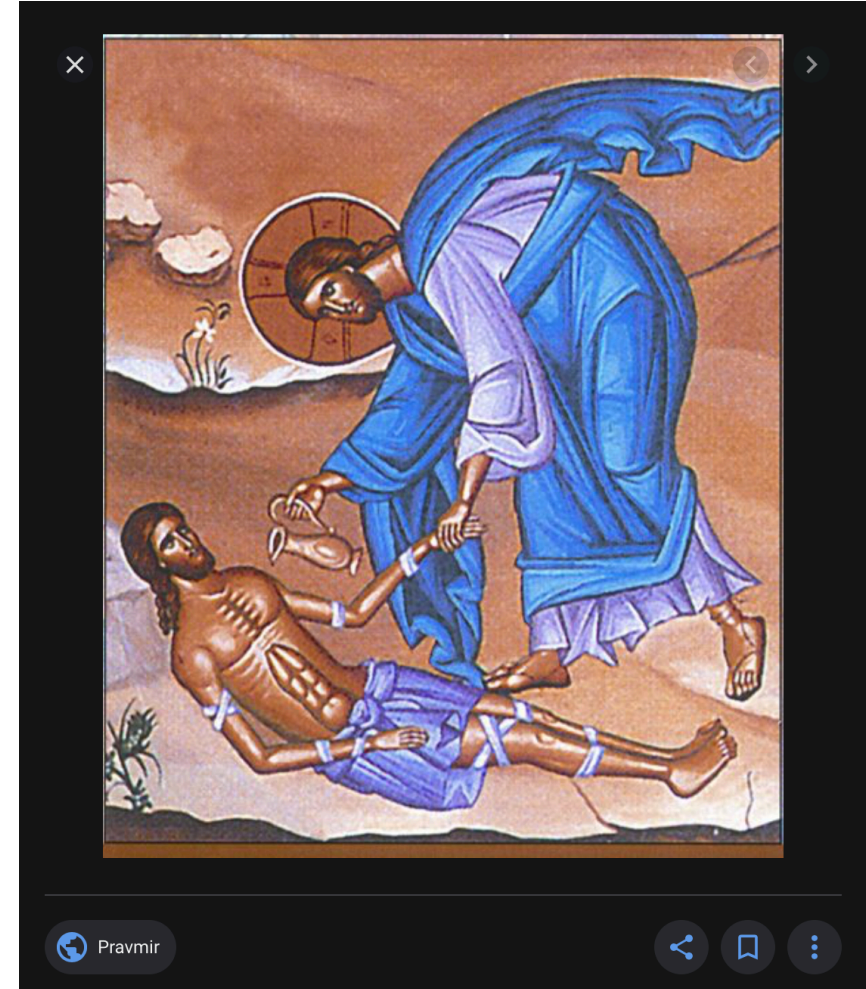


Larchet Ch. 3 Pathology of Fallen Man

- Man's faculties turned away from God (knowledge of good) and towards sensible realities (knowledge of evil). The eyes of the flesh were opened and in turn veiled the eyes of the spirit
 - Fallen man judges things based *appearances* and his knowledge which has become carnal.
 - The vices enter man along with forgetfulness and disregard for God
- The knowledge and organs of fallen man are ill
 - Man's cognitive faculties subordinate themselves to the senses and are guided by passionate desires that appear in the soul as a result of the ignorance of God
 - The intellect becomes heavy and thick and incapable of just discernment and of true knowledge that was in the natural state informed by the Spirit
- The intellect constructs its understanding from arbitrary principles that it defines itself, or on sensible intuitions which are based on man's distorted perceptions
 - Man constructs predictions of the future that he cannot actually see
- Man, in his substitutive forms of knowledge, is limited to classifying the appearances of things based on the fallen intellect of the observer.
 - The mind categorizes knowledge and experiences by linking it to other experiences in the past

Pathology of Fallen Man Continued

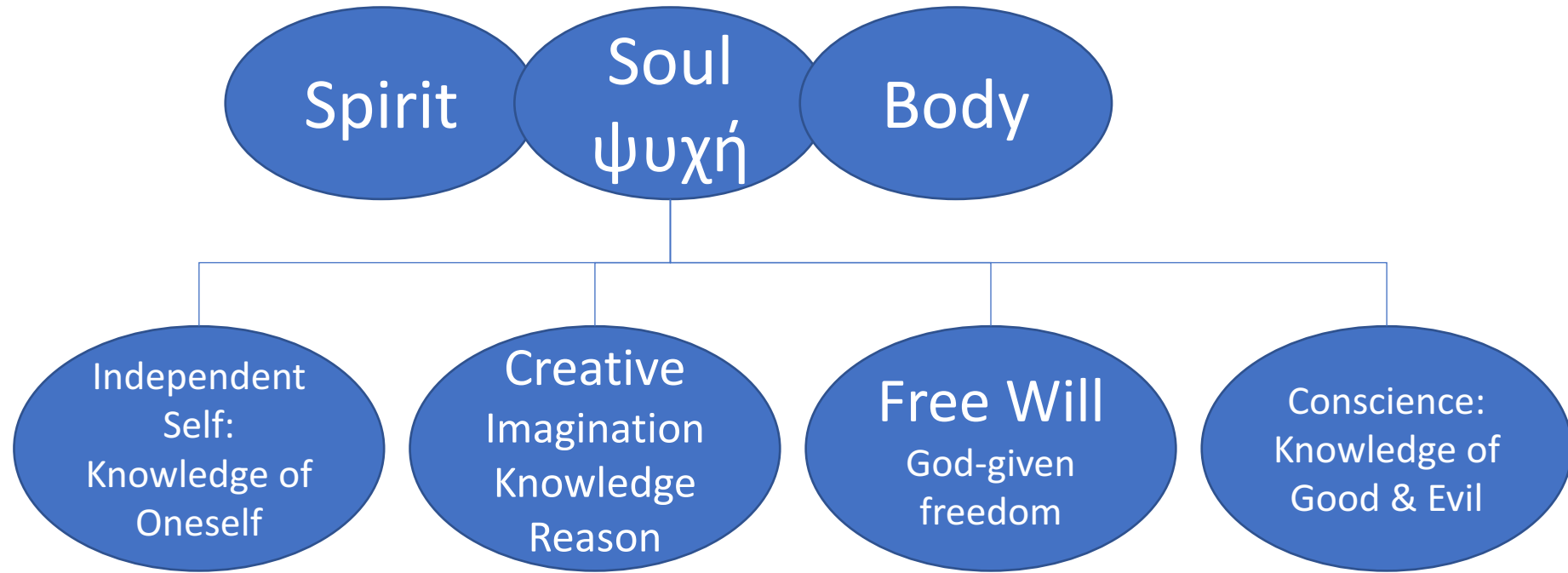
- Man ceases to see God in beings and beings in God
- Man's mind separates from his heart
 - Man becomes fragmented.
 - *His mind separates from his heart* rendering man exterior to himself and to God (p.53-54)
 - His mind comes to know what the Fathers call the “captivity of thoughts” (p.53)
- Man turned away from God and became captivated by a carnal love for himself. The Fathers call this Self-Love (φιλαυτία) and consider it to be the worst of the passions
- The passions appear as man's invention to respond to his new needs not satisfied by knowledge of God (p.68)
- Man devotes his existence to sensual pleasure and elevates the objects of his desire as false gods.
- His soul is always searching and moves from one passion to another



Pathology of Fallen Man Continued

- Man experiences physical pain
- Man experiences mental and emotional suffering in the form of sorrow
- Man's natural desire for God became divided into multiple carnal desires (p.77)
- Man's intellect no longer exercises its natural function of knowledge, contemplation, discernment, and oversight of the desiderative power.
- The intellect places itself under the service of his desires seeking first to obtain and satisfy the sensual pleasures it covets.
- Man deludes himself into believing pursuit of sensual pleasures will satisfy his need and longing for knowledge and union with God (p.81)
- Man confuses evil for good

A Composition of the Soul (Larchet p.31 & Muse)



St. Irenaeus of Lyon expresses that God
“has laid in the soul the necessities of virtue:
Judgment, knowledge, reason, faith, love
and all the other gifts which are images of the Spirit”

“Therapy of Spiritual Illnesses” - Larchet

The Church is a Spiritual Hospital:

Helps man to know Christ

Helps man to unite himself to Christ

Helps man to re-member his natural state

- Orthodox Ascetic Practices
- Repentance
- Prayer
- Fasting
- Participating in the Sacramental life of the Church



Matthew 16:18 KJV:

And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock **I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**

End Lecture 1

Questions