

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

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November 2020

PCA5377 TAHOS PCC Program

Session-2

Three Stages of Spiritual Life and Discourse on Suffering

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 “Three Stages of Spiritual Life” and discourse on suffering. 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

Session-2: Learning Objectives

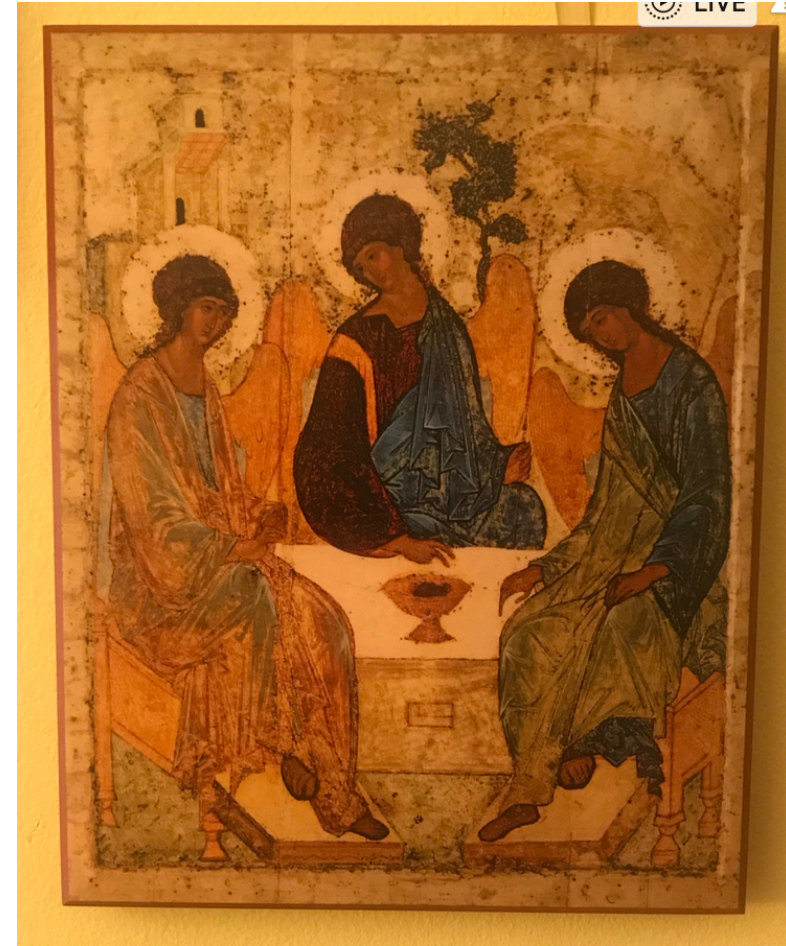
- To understand *why* God gave man freedom
- To introduce the term *Kenosis* as the basis for *Humility*
- To introduce *Three Stages of Spiritual Life* (St. Sophrony & St. Theophan)
- To introduce the process of sanctification through suffering and repentance (Siluoan)

God is LOVE

Perfect Communion & Perfect Love within the Trinity

We are invited to this banquet

It is up to us to use our freedom to turn towards God
& to submit our human will to His Divine Will



The Fathers on God-Given Freedom (Larchet Ch.3 p.89-97)

Point 1: Freedom is a characteristic of the divine nature which means man's freedom is in the image of God

Point 2: Man was created free, given the free will and power to make decisions for himself

Point 3: Freedom is in fact a quality of the mind

Point 4: In response to those who might feel God should not have made man free so that man could not fall into evil

Kenosis (κένωσις)- The Emptying of Oneself

St. Siluoan the Athonite reminds us:

“Approach to the divine mysteries lies through humility and the kind of kenosis that we see in Christ, Who ‘made himself of no reputation’ (2).”



<https://www.godvine.com/read/solar-eclipse-jesus-crucifixion-1723.html>

The *Father* emptied Himself in the Incarnation

- God became man so that man can become god

The *Son* emptied Himself

- By submitting His human will to the Father's Will

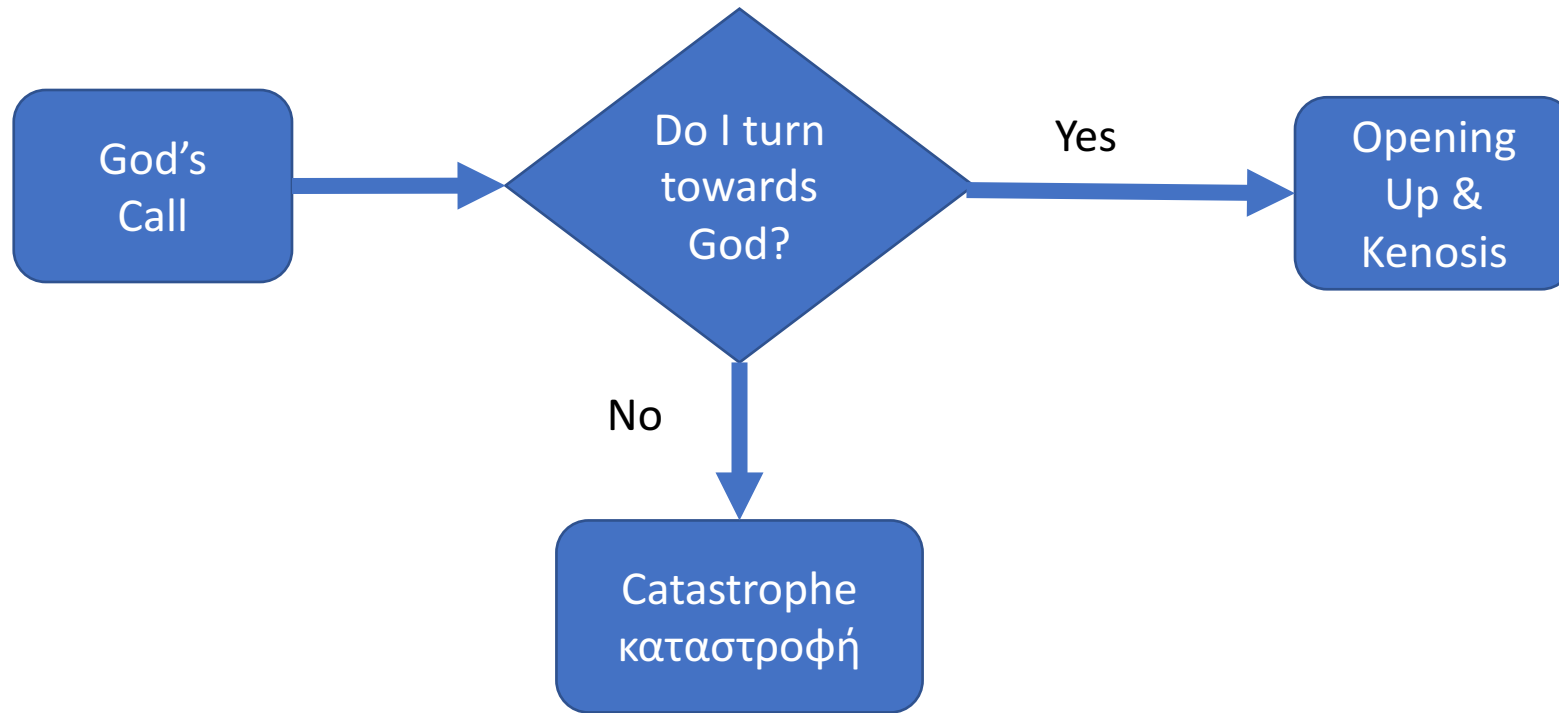
Kenosis and Humility

In Matthew 16: 24-25 KJV the Gospel says:

Then Jesus said unto to His disciples, “If any [man] will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.”

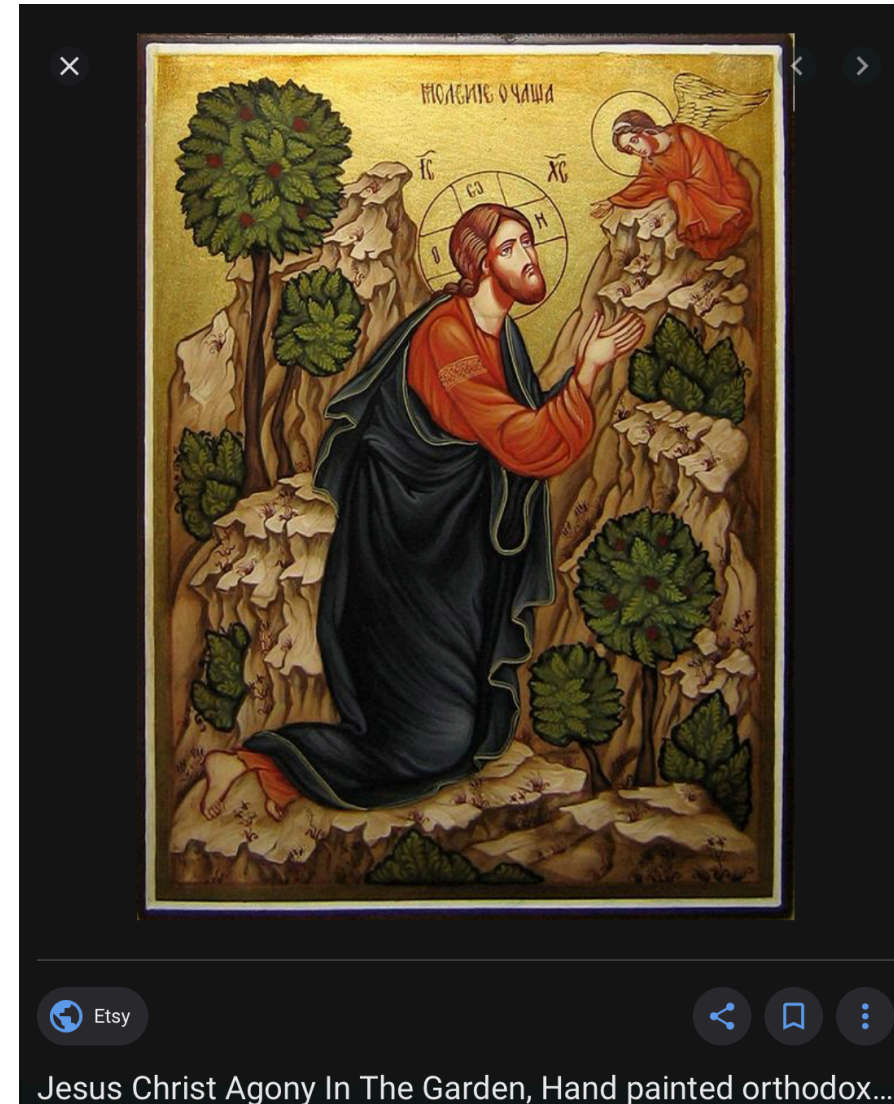
The Example of Christ & the Freedom of Man

Man is free to choose to *turn towards God...*



KJV Matthew 26:39

³⁹ And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.



...Just like Christ...

Two Perspectives on the Three Stages of Spiritual Life: St. Sophrony & St. Theophan the Recluse

Stage 1:

Abundant Grace ¹

Stage 2:

Hope Against Hope ¹

Stage 3:

Perfect Faith
Sonship ¹

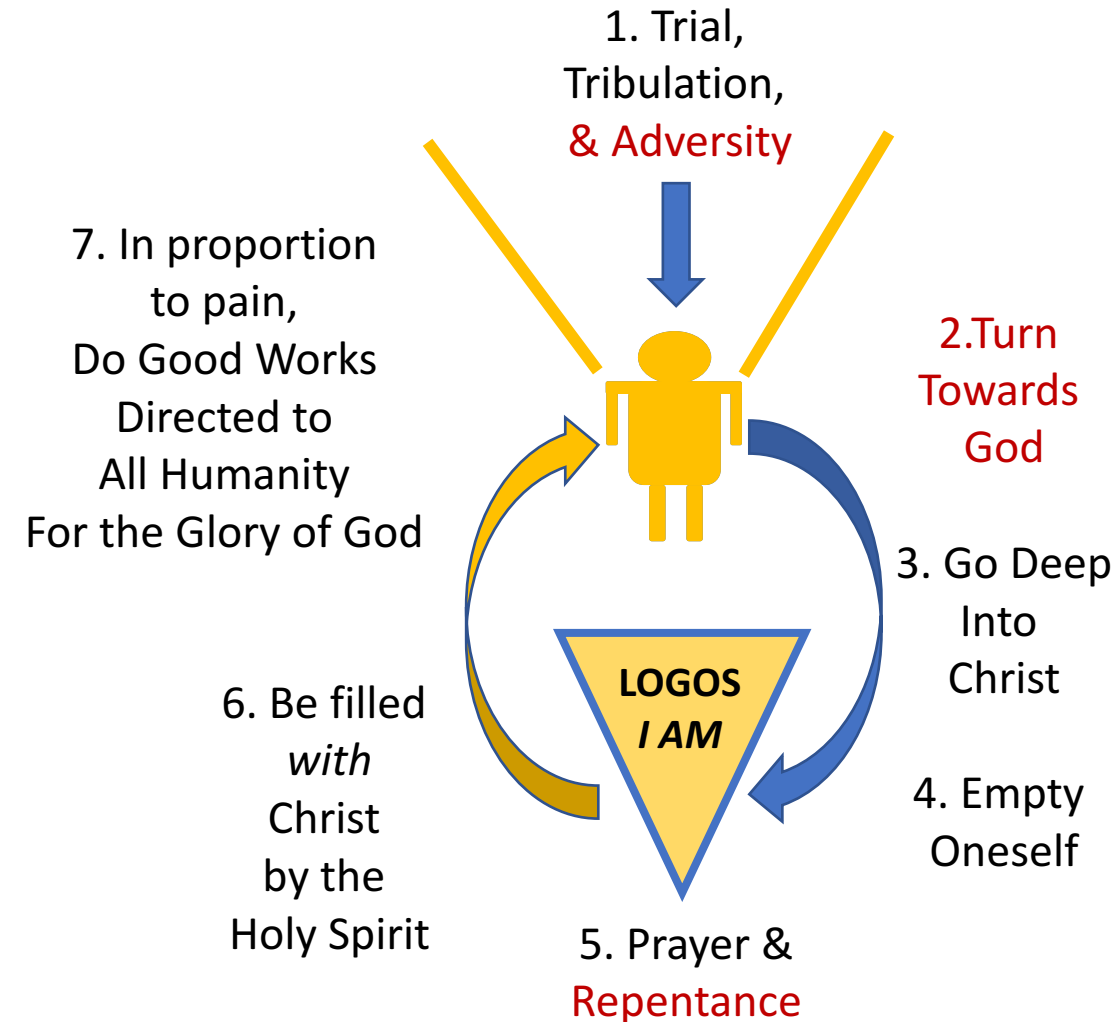
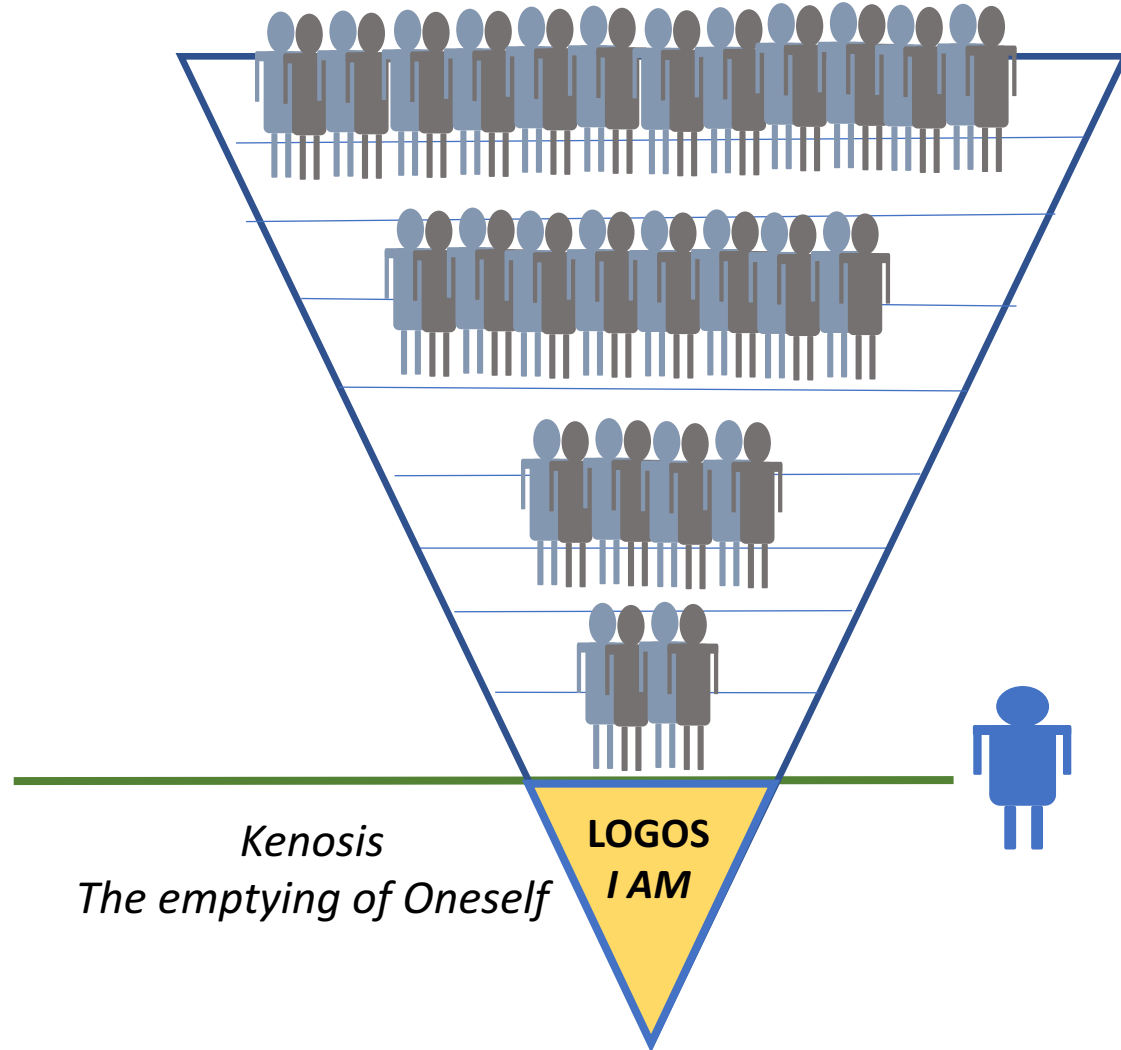
1. Fr. Zacharia Zacharou “The Three Stages of Spiritual Life: Lecture 4: The Merciful Chastening of the Lord”.
www.patristicnectar.org 2016

Turning to God ⁴

Trial & Testing
Purification ⁴

Sanctification ⁴

The Process of Sanctification Through Repentance



The Effect of Continuous Repentance on the Soul:



The practice of Repentance involves:

- The Individual
- The Priest or Pastor
- The Lord

Healing is Relational

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- Deny thyself carry thy cross and follow me
- Simon of Cyrene helped to carry the cross of Christ
- When 2 or 3 are gathered together in my name thou wilt grant their every request
- Pastoral care is to witness to the suffering and to see the suffering of another and to help carry the cross



End Lecture 2

Questions