



Living in Relational Wholeness

Coalesce Podcast

Episode 020 – Our Objective Identity in God

Note, terms, scripture, practice



patristic (Latin and Greek *pater*) – father

Hellenistic and Roman periods (310 BC – AD 330)

Origen (AD 184-254) the first Christian theologian

Apocatastasis - “universal restoration”

Council of Chalcedon (AD 451)

Cappadocian (what is now Turkey)

Doctrine on the Trinity

Basil the Great (330-379)

Gregory of Nyssa (c. 332-395)

Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389)

[Colossians 1](#), [Ephesians 1](#), [John 1](#)

Bonaventure and Duns Scotus in the 13th century

Teilhard de Chardin in the 20th century

[Romans 5:5](#)

[John 14:17](#)

Trinitarian mystery, the quality of the relationships between them, *which is where all the power and meaning lies!*

[John 14:3](#)

Trinity invites us to interactively experience God as transpersonal (“Father”), personal (“Christ”), and impersonal (“Holy Spirit”)

Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173)

*for God to be truth, God had to be one;
for God to be love, God had to be two; and
for God to be joy, God had to be three!*

Niels Bohr, “not only stranger than we think, but stranger than we can think.”

Theosis refers to the shared deification or divinization of creation, particularly with the human soul where it can happen consciously and lovingly.

St. Gregory of Nazianzus (330-390)

...we do objectively participate in God’s nature.

We are created with *an objective identity in God that we can always call upon and return to without fail.*

Athanasius of Alexandria (296-373)

Maximus the Confessor (580-662)

Olivier Clement (1921-2009)

J. A. McGuckin

Heaven - universal belonging and universal connecting

Dante’s *Divine Comedy*—great poetry, but not good theology

[Acts 3:21](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:28](#)

[Genesis 1:26](#)

[John 6:37-39](#)

[Luke 20:38](#)

[Matthew 25:46](#)

[Matthew 6:24](#)

[Matthew 19:24](#)

[Matthew 25](#)

...humans will almost always compromise on issues of *justice, money, and inclusion*

Gehenna (Jerusalem’s smoldering dump)

Sheol (the place of the dead, with no intimation of punishment)

Pope John Paul II said that heaven and hell were not geographical places, but primarily states of consciousness—which are in themselves very real and lasting.

We might do well to follow the Eastern Orthodox Saint Silouan's advice:

"I remember a conversation between Staretz Silouan and a certain hermit, who declared with evident satisfaction, 'God will punish all atheists. They will burn in everlasting fire.'

"Obviously upset, the Staretz said, 'Tell me, supposing you went to paradise, and there looked down and saw somebody burning in hell-fire—would you feel happy?'

"'It can't be helped. It would be their own fault,' said the hermit.

"The Staretz answered him with a sorrowful countenance:

"'Love could not bear that,' he said. 'We must pray for all.'"

Practice: Hesychasm, Sweet Repose

Hesychasm, a contemplative prayer of rest, has its roots in the desert fathers and mothers as well as the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Bishop Kallistos Ware, drawing from John Climacus (AD 525-606) writes: "The hesychast, in the true sense of the word, is not someone who has journeyed outwardly into the desert, but someone who has embarked upon the journey inwards into his own heart; not someone who cuts himself off physically from others, shutting the door of his cell, but someone who 'returns into himself,' shutting the door of his mind."

The Eastern Orthodox teachers of hesychasm suggest using the Jesus Prayer as a way to enter into contemplation: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." You might also choose the "replacement therapy" of Centering Prayer, selecting a word or short phrase to return to whenever you are distracted. Repeat each word slowly, softly, and flowing from one to the next. Gradually, with practice, the repetitive rhythm of the words moves into long periods of continuous, uninterrupted prayer.

The hesychast "is called to become conscious of the actual presence of Jesus in the interior of his own being, a presence given full and existential reality by the life of the sacraments."

"The hesychast ceases from his own activity, not in order to be idle, but in order to enter into the activity of God. His silence is not vacant and negative—a blank pause between words, a short rest before resuming speech—but intensely positive: an attitude of alert attention, of vigilance, and above all of listening."

"The principal thing is to stand with the mind in the heart before God, and to go on standing before [God] unceasingly day and night, until the end of life."