

Reflections on the infallibility of European Man - Part II (Saint Justin Popovich)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



5. According to the mystical interpreter Saint John of Damascus, in the human world the God-man, Christ, is «the only thing new under the sun.»² Indeed, this eternal news applies not only to His Theanthropic Presence but also to His Theanthropic Work and His Theanthropic Body, the Church. And man also is always new, eternally new, («a new creation») in his theanthro-pic newness, in all his theanthropic experiences on the road to salvation, to sanctification, to transfiguration, to theosis, to becoming like the God-man. In this terrestrial world everything ages and everything dies.



St. Justin Popovich (right) together with Elder Cleopa of Romania – Chelije Monastery, 1977

Only the person who has embodied himself in the God-man and is becoming like the God-man (*ubogocoveceni i obogocove-ci*), who shares the body of Christ, who

under the God-man has been embodied in the Church and has become part of the Church (*ucrkvenjen i ocrkvenjen*), does not age and does not die, because he has become a living, organic part of the holy and eternal Theanthropic body of Christ, the Church, in which one's humanity develops and continuously «grows with the nurturing of God» (Col. 2: 19)-acquiring «the fullness of humanity as measured by the stature of the fullness of Christ» (Eph. 4:13). This means that one is growing and developing continuously and without limit toward unity with God in the Divine infinity with which the Thrice-brilliant Lord endowed humanity when he created man in the image and likeness of God.

The God-man Christ is so extraordinarily new and unique that in reality the «Truth» came from Him (John 1: 17), and through Him remained in our human world. Before Him and without Him-now and forever-Truth does not exist. Verily, it does not exist because only the Hypostasis of the God-man is Truth. «I am the Truth» (John 14: 6). And since man does not exist independent-ly of the God-man there can be no truth for him inde-pendently of the God-man.

All is new in the God-man and because of Him. He Himself is first, followed by salvation, the teaching regarding salvation, and the means of salvation. And the God-man's message for the human race is uniquely new: Let us separate sin from the sinner, let us hate sin but love the sinner, let us kill sin yet save the sinner. Do not equate the sinner with the sin. Do not put the sinner to death because of sin. Save him from sin! A striking example of this is the woman found entangled in adultery. The all-merciful Savior separated her sin from her existence in the image and likeness of God. He condemned the sin but had mercy on the sinner. «I do not condemn; go and sin no more» (John 8: 11). This is the Orthodox method of recovery, established as dogma, in the task of saving the sinner from sin. This method of Holy Tradition, developed in accordance with the wisdom of God and established in the Orthodox Church by the Holy Fathers, has been expressed in accordance with the Spirit of God by St. Symeon the New Theolo-gian: «The good is not good when no good results.»³

In the light of this sacred, evangelical Orthodox Tradition it is an atrocity, contrary to the Gospel and anti-Christ, to kill a sinner because he has sinned. Accordingly, there is no «holy inquisition» that can be proclaimed as holy. In the final analysis all humanisms kill the sinner because of sin, exterminating the sinner along with the sin. They do not want the God-man, who is the only salvation of man from sin, from death, and from the devil. He who is not for the God-man is, as a consequence, against man, is in this way an assassin of man, and furthermore, is also committing suicide. He leaves man under the total domination by sin, of death and of the devil,

from which only the God-man is able to save him, for no one else beneath the heavens can. By using the methods of sinners himself, the humanist inevitably commits suicide. He murders his own soul, he gives himself up to hell, to an eternal association with the devil, the man-killer from time immemorial. (John 8: 44).

6. What is it that the God-man gives to man which no one else is capable of giving? It is victory over death, over sin, and over the devil, Eternal Life, Eternal Truth, Eternal Justice, Eternal Virtue, Eternal Love, Eternal Joy: the entire fullness of the Godhead and of Divine Perfection. As the Apostle tells us: the God-man gives to men «those things which God has prepared for those who love Him, which no eye has seen, which no ear has heard, and which have not entered the heart of man» (1 Cor. 2: 9).

In fact only He, the wondrous God-man, is the «one thing that is needed» (cf. Luke 10: 42) by man in all his worlds and in his every life. Therefore, only the God-man is justified in asking of us that which no one else has ever dared ask: that we love Him more than we love parents, siblings, children, friends, the earth, the angels, anyone and everyone in all the worlds, visible and invisible (Matth. 10: 37-39; Luke 14: 26, Rom. 8: 31-39).

7. The Second Vatican Council resulted in the rebirth of all European humanisms, the rebirth of cadavers. Since Christ the God-man is present in this terrestrial world, each and every humanism is a cadaver. Matters reached this stage because the Council persisted in maintaining the dogma concerning the infallibility of the pope (= the man). Examined from the vantage point of the eternally living God-man, the historic Lord Jesus, all humanisms resemble criminal utopias to a greater or lesser extent. In the name of man they find various ways to murder man, to exterminate him as a spiritual and physical entity. All the humanisms arrive at one tragic, irrational result: they strain at a gnat and they swallow a camel. In the matter of papal infallibility, the notion has been elevated to dogma. And it is a horror, a horror in the extreme. Why? It is because the very dogma regarding the infallibility of man is nothing other than the shuddering funeral of every humanism, from the ideas that the Vatican has established as dogma to the satanic humanism of Sartre. In the humanistic pantheon of Europe all the gods are dead, with European Zeus at the forefront. Dead, until such time as there arises in their withered hearts a complete, self-denying repentance, accompanied by the lightning and thunder of Golgotha, with its resurrectional earthquakes and transformations, and with its richly yielding storms and ascensions. And then? Then, their doxologies to the living, eternal, wondrous God-man, the only lover of mankind in all the worlds, will be unending.

8. What is at the core of the dogma regarding papal (= *man's*) infallibility? It is the de-theanthropization of man. This is sought by all humanisms, even the religious ones. All return man to idolatry, to polytheism, to the dual death, spiritual as well as physical. Distancing itself from the God-man, every humanism by degrees becomes nihilism. This reveals the simultaneous bankruptcy of all humanisms, led by that of the papacy which, directly or indirectly, voluntarily or involuntarily, is the father of all European humanisms. The resulting bankruptcy, the disastrous bankruptcy of the papacy, lies in the dogma of papal infallibility. It is precisely this dogma of nihilism that is uppermost. For this, European man in a doctrinaire and determined manner has proclaimed the dogma of self-sufficiency, and in this way has asserted that the God-man is not needed. There is no place for Him on earth. He has been completely replaced by the representative of Christ-Vicarius Christi. Truly, this is the dogma by which all European humanisms live, which they follow, and which they persistently proclaim.

All European humanisms in their essence are nothing other than an unending revolution against the God-man Christ. Using all possible methods they achieve *Umwert-ung aller Werte* (the overthrow of all values). The God-man is everywhere

replaced by man. On all European thrones European humanists are seated. As a result there is not a single Vicarius Christi but innumerable ones in various costumes. In the final analysis the dogma concerning infallibility of the pope has led to the proclamation of the general infallibility of man. And from this followed the innumerable popes of all Europe-an cultures, of the Vatican, and of Protestantism. Among them, however, there are no essential differences be-cause, in the thinking of Khomiakov the visionary of Truth, the papacy is the first Protestantism.

9. Infallibility is a natural theanthropic characteristic and a natural theanthropic function of the church which is the theanthropic Body of Christ, and whose eternal leader is the Truth, the All-Encompassing Truth, the Second Hypostasis of the All-Holy Trinity, our Lord Jesus Christ the God-man. With respect to the dogma concerning papal infallibility, as a practical matter the pope has been proclaimed to be the Church, and the pope-a man-has usurped the place of the God-man. That is the ultimate triumph of humanism and simulta-neously «the second death» (Rev. 20: 14, 21: 8) of the papacy, and through it and after it the death of every humanism. However, the dogma of papal infallibility is not only a heresy but the greatest heresy against the True Church of Christ, which has existed in our terres-trial world as a theanthropic body ever since the appearance of the God-man. No other heresy has revolted so violently and so completely against the God-man Christ and His Church as has the papacy with the dogma of the pope-man's infallibility. There is no doubt about it. This dogma is the heresy of heresies, a revolt without precedent against the God-man Christ on this earth, a new betrayal of Christ, a new crucifixion of the Lord, this time not on wood but on the golden cross of papal humanism. And these things are hell, damnation for the wretched earthly being called man.

10. Is there a way out of these innumerable human-istic hells? Is there resurrection from these innumerable European graves? Is there a remedy for those innumera-ble deadly sicknesses? There is, there certainly is: repentance. That is the eternal message of the Gospel of the God-Man: «Repentance so that you may know the truth» (2 Tim. 2: 25). Otherwise it is not possible for anyone to believe in the all-saving Gospel of the God-man. «Repent and believe in the Gospel» (Mark 1: 15). Repentance before the God-Man is the only medicine for sin, the unique medicine for all sins, even for the greatest of sins. There is no doubt. Repentance is the medicine even for this, the greatest sin of the papacy, centered in the arrogant dogma of papal infallibility, as it is also for everyone of its sins, every humanism individually, and all humanisms together. Yes, yes, yes. From his beloved great sin of infallibility, European «infallible» man, European humanistic

man, can only be saved through whole-hearted and all-transforming repentance before the wondrous, all-merciful, all-virtuous Lord Jesus Christ the God-man, the only Savior of the human race from all sins, from each evil, from each hell, from each devil, from each humanistic rationalism, from any of the sins which the human imagination is able to conceive.

For these reasons all the holy God-bearing and God-minded Fathers, including those of the seven holy Oecumenical Synods, refer all problems in the Church of Christ to the problem of the Personhood of Christ the God-man, until that which is the greatest, the only, the most precious value to all human beings is found, not on this earth or on any other, but in the dominion of God. The Christological problem is their entire problem, fully and completely. For them Christ the God-man is the unique value of the Church of Christ in all the worlds. Their unending and eternal message is: Give up everything for Christ; do not give Christ up for any-thing! And around this holy signal echoes their ever-resounding message of joy: Not humanism but God-humanism! Not man but the God-man! Christ before all and above all!

11. How does an Orthodox Christian feel in the presence of Christ the God-man? He feels totally and completely sinful. That is his feeling, his attitude, his manner, his mindset, his speech, his conscience, his confession, his entire being. That feeling of total personal sinfulness in the presence of the Most Sweet Lord is the soul of his soul and the heart of his heart. Briefly examine the prayers of repentance, the odes, the hymns, the *stichera* in the *Parakletike* of Monday and even of Tuesday, and you will immediately verify that this sentiment constitutes a sacred duty and a prayerful reality for every Orthodox Christian without exception. This path has been explored by our immortal teachers, the Holy Fathers, who continuously direct us. Let us remember at least two of them, St. John of Damascus and St. Symeon the New Theologian. Their saintliness is cherubic beyond any doubt. Their prayer is assuredly seraphic. Nevertheless, they themselves express a feeling and consciousness of utter personal sinfulness and simultaneously a deeply-felt attitude of repentance. That is the existential contradiction (antinomy) in our Orthodox, evangelical, apostolic faith, and our humility in this faith.

The infallible man and his opposite, the utterly sinful man, humility on the one hand and pride on the other. The incomparable nightingale of the Gospel of the God-man, St. John Chrysostom evangelizes: «The foundation of everyone of our philosophies is humility.»⁴ Humility is the foundation of our philosophy concerning life and the world, concerning time and eternity, concerning the God-man and the Church. On the one hand, the foundation of every humanism, including even that

which has been established as dogma, is pride, faith in man's reasoning, in his mind, and in his rationality. Pride transformed even the radiant Lucifer into a devil. Pride is the incurable mental sickness of the devil. Within it are found and from it emanate all the other diabolical evils. On the other hand, humility teaches us to commit our hope to and to have the utmost trust in the holy, catholic, theanthropic mind of the Church, «the mind of Christ.» «We have the mind of Christ» (1 Cor. 2: 16). We in the theanthropic body of Christ, the Orthodox Church, have Christ the God-man as everything: head, body, life, truth, love, righteousness, time, and eternity, and also through faith in Him and in our life in Him (Eph. 4:11-21). This is because «all things were created through him and for him, he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body of the church, that in everything he might be preemi-nent» (Col. 1: 16-18). He the God-man and not a man, whomsoever he may be.

12. I humbly ask forgiveness because I, a worthless sinner, truly a worthless sinner, dared to stammer these few words regarding the Second Vatican Council. It was done in obedience. It was requested of me, the insignifi-cant and worthless sinner. I carried out my task in obedience, honestly, conscientiously, with a heavy heart, with many sighs, and relying on the support of the first and foremost of the Holy Apostles, St. Peter (cf. 1 Peter 3: 15). If any reader of these reflections feels injured, I beg forgiveness. It is because of my sinfulness that I have been unable to better express the truth that flows from the Eternal Truth. And I further plead that you beseech the Sweet Lord Jesus, who has compassion and is ever compassionate toward every repentant sinner, to forgive me the many sins of my youth as well as my more recent sins. For I believe, with all my heart I believe, that the prayer of a righteous person has enormous value (James 5: 16), even in the case of a worthless sinner as I am in all my being.

* * *

Translator's Note: Obviously, as the author uses them, «Europe» and «European» are not simply geographic terms, but refer to a way of life that has developed in Christian Europe, which today is advocated as the regulator par excellence of matters of the world and of the life of man in general. This is the source of what the author identifies as «European humanism» and «Ecume-nism.» In the contemporary church Ecumenism is partially accepted and various aspects of this position have penetrated into and are applied to all aspects of human life, giving it ecumenical or universal characteris-tics. Only one who is able to recognize the frightful dimensions of this phenomenon and its results, and who simultaneously understands what the Church truly is, will be able to appreciate the need for the

«hardness» of thought exhibited by the author toward «European civilization» and its «Ecumenism.» At this point personal responsibility transfers to the cross of universal responsibility, where the responsibility of everyone is for everything, according to the author, «the characteristic attribute of every Christian feeling.»

²Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, Footnote 3, P.G. 94,Col. 984.

³Footnote 4, Homilies 18 and 68 Zogaraïos edition,Smyrna 1886, pp. 105 and 364.

⁴ PG, 51, 312.

Source: Justin Popovic, *Orthodox faith and life in Christ*,Belmont: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, c1994.