What Is My Life?

Ξένες γλώσσες / In English / Ορθόδοξη πίστη

I have written often on the subject of "personhood," drawing to a large extent on the writings of the Elder Sophrony, and to a lesser extent on the theology of Met. John Zizioulas. The heart of their thought is to direct us to the reality that to exist as "persons" is precisely the same thing (or similar) when we speak of the "persons" of the Holy Trinity. And further, that this is true existence for human beings.

In our popular speech, we use the word person in a manner that is interchangeable with individual. This is to equate personhood with a word that stand for its near opposite.

We are used to thinking of ourselves in individual terms – terms which emphasize our role as active, choosing agents. A collection of individuals is especially a collection of unique and competing wills. Thus it is always possible that the competing wills with whom I associate will be in direct competition with myself.

Their good and my good may not be at all the same thing.

Thus we wind up with various versions of the social contract, in which we agree by various means, to give as much room to other competing wills as possible, while allowing sufficient attention to our own. It is like belonging to a merchant's organization.

These social contracts exist primarily to keep us from killing each other and to help maximize one another's profits, whether they be profits of the material kind or otherwise. It is so strong a force in our culture that even Christians, within the "mega church" movement, speak of their "target" congregation as a "market." We are defined by the market to which we belong. We are the consumers of religious product. This has a way of working and even of prospering, in that a market approach tends to separate Christians from one another before they become "competing agents." A congregation that is a statistical slice of our culture would argue over music, sermon, reason for existence, etc. [(περισσότερα…)](#)