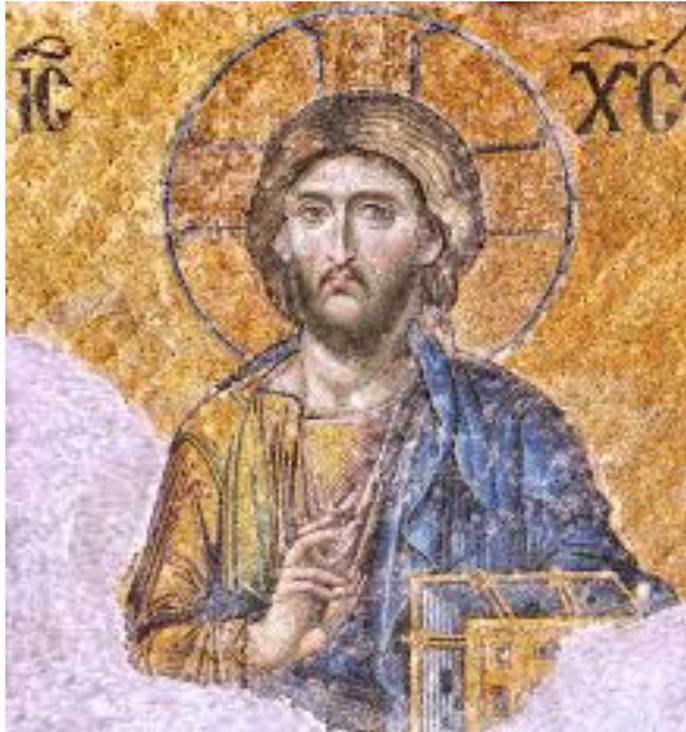




THE MYSTERY  
OF THE HOLY  
TRINITY:  
IMPLICATIONS  
FOR EVERYDAY  
LIVING

Philip Kariatlis

# DOGMAS



- Dogmas – what are they?
- Are dogmas unbending principles devoid of any relevance for everyday living?
- What is 'systematic theology'?
- 'pointers' for salvation; 'pointers' for life

## **Psalm 19:7-10:**

“... are right, rejoicing the heart... and lightning the eyes... more to be desired a day than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and rippings of the honeycomb.”

## INNER COHERENCY OF THE CREED

■ Trinitarian Theology



■ Christology



■ Pneumatology



■ Ecclesiology



■ Eschatology



■ Sacramental Theology

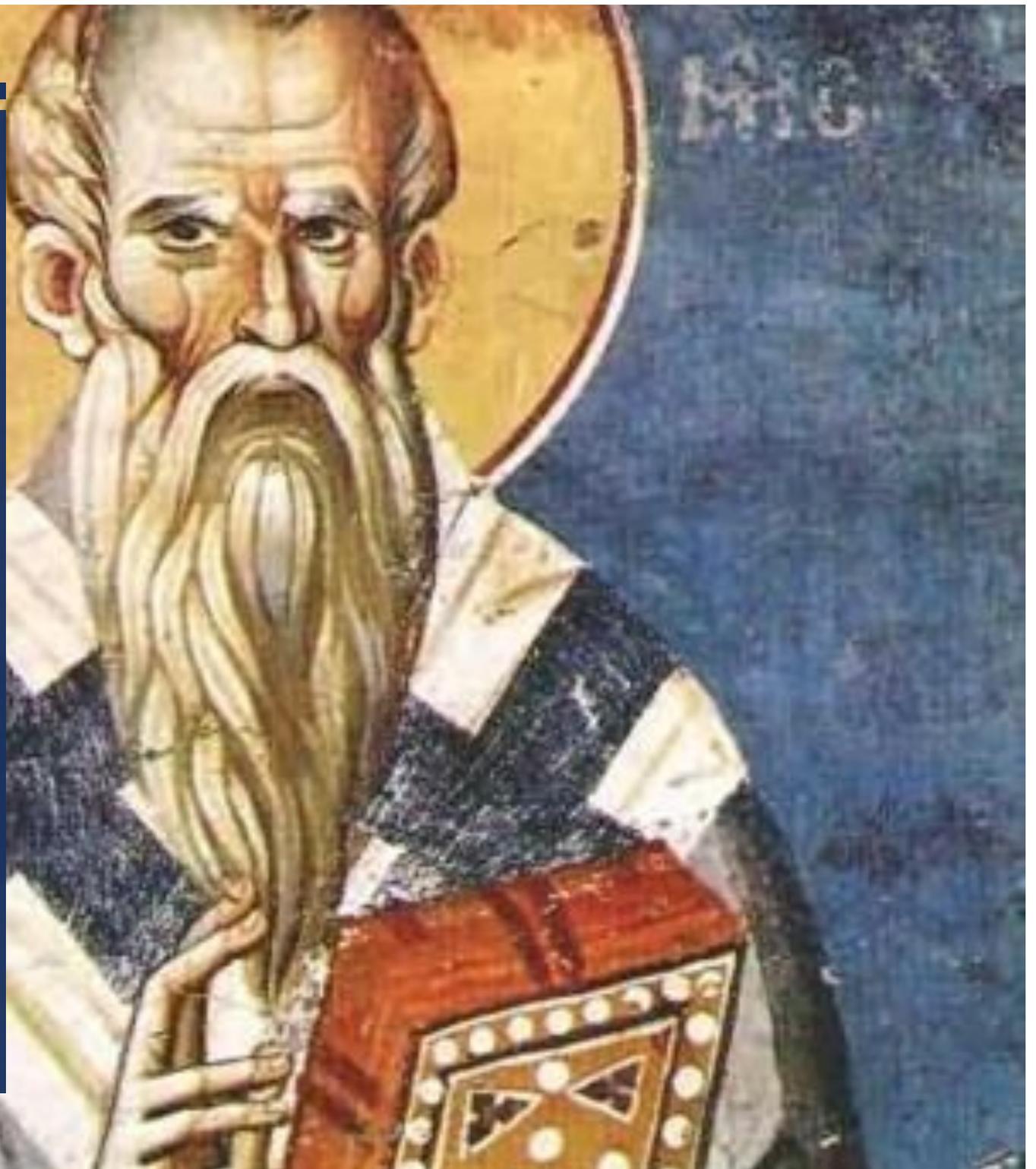
not a list of disparate doctrines unrelated to each other



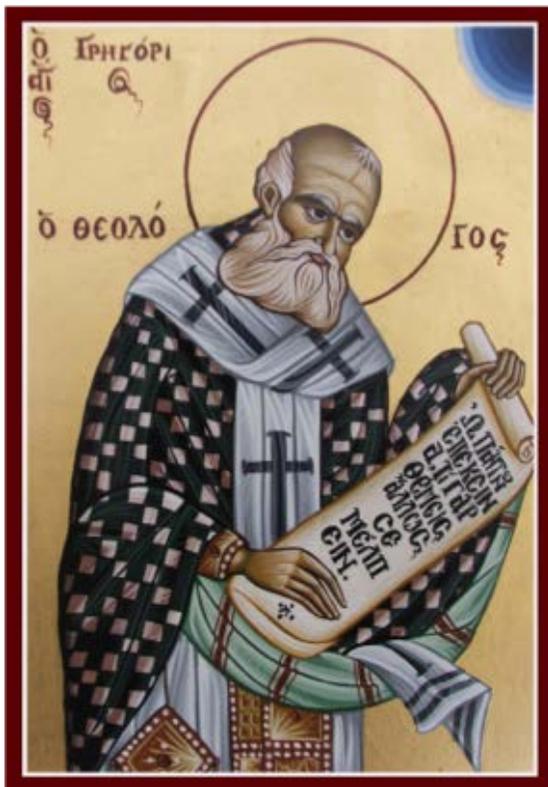
Systematic Theology [σύστημα = σύν + ἵστημι] is the theological discipline where doctrines are placed together side by side so as to discern their inherent unity and coherency

# INNER COHERENCY OF THE CREED

- Mention of the Church in the Creed is to draw our attention to the fact that the Church is inextricably linked to God
- **“where the Spirit is, there is the Church. Where the Church is there is the Spirit”** (St Irenaeus)



# TRINITARIAN FAITH



- Heart of the Christian faith
- Doctrine of all doctrines
- *Differentia specifica*
- “Paradox of unity in diversity; diversity in unity [μονάς ἐν Τριάδι και Τριάς ἐν Μονάδι]”
- “No sooner do I conceive the unity than the Trinity bathes me in its splendour. And when I think of the Trinity, again the unity seizes me and my eyes are filled, and the greater part of what I am thinking escapes me.” *Oration*, 40. 41, PG 36:417.

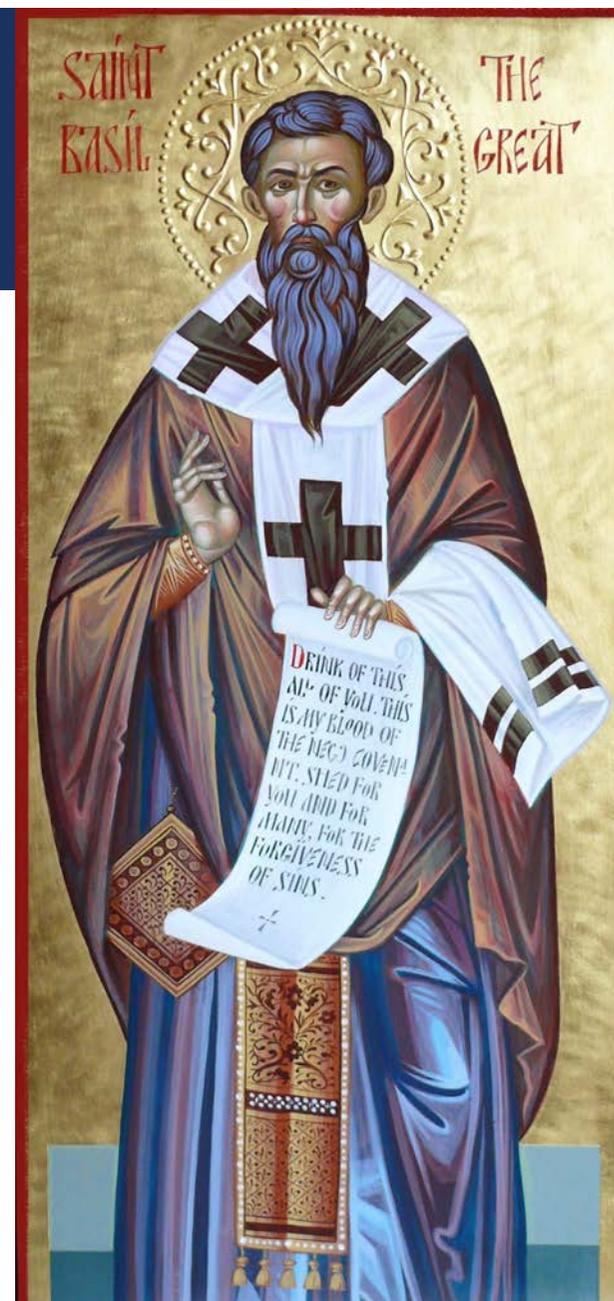
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# A MYSTERY PAR EXCELLENCE

- 
- Not known intellectually, but lived experientially, ‘approached’ in humility, reverence and thanksgiving
  - **St Gregory the Theologian:** “Oh You who are beyond everything, what else can be sung about You? [*Ὡ πάντων ἐπέκεινα, τί γὰρ θέμεις ἄλλο σοι μέλπειν*]”  
*Dogmatic Poetry, I, I, 29*
  - **St Basil the Great:** “let all things which cannot be comprehended be honoured with silence”

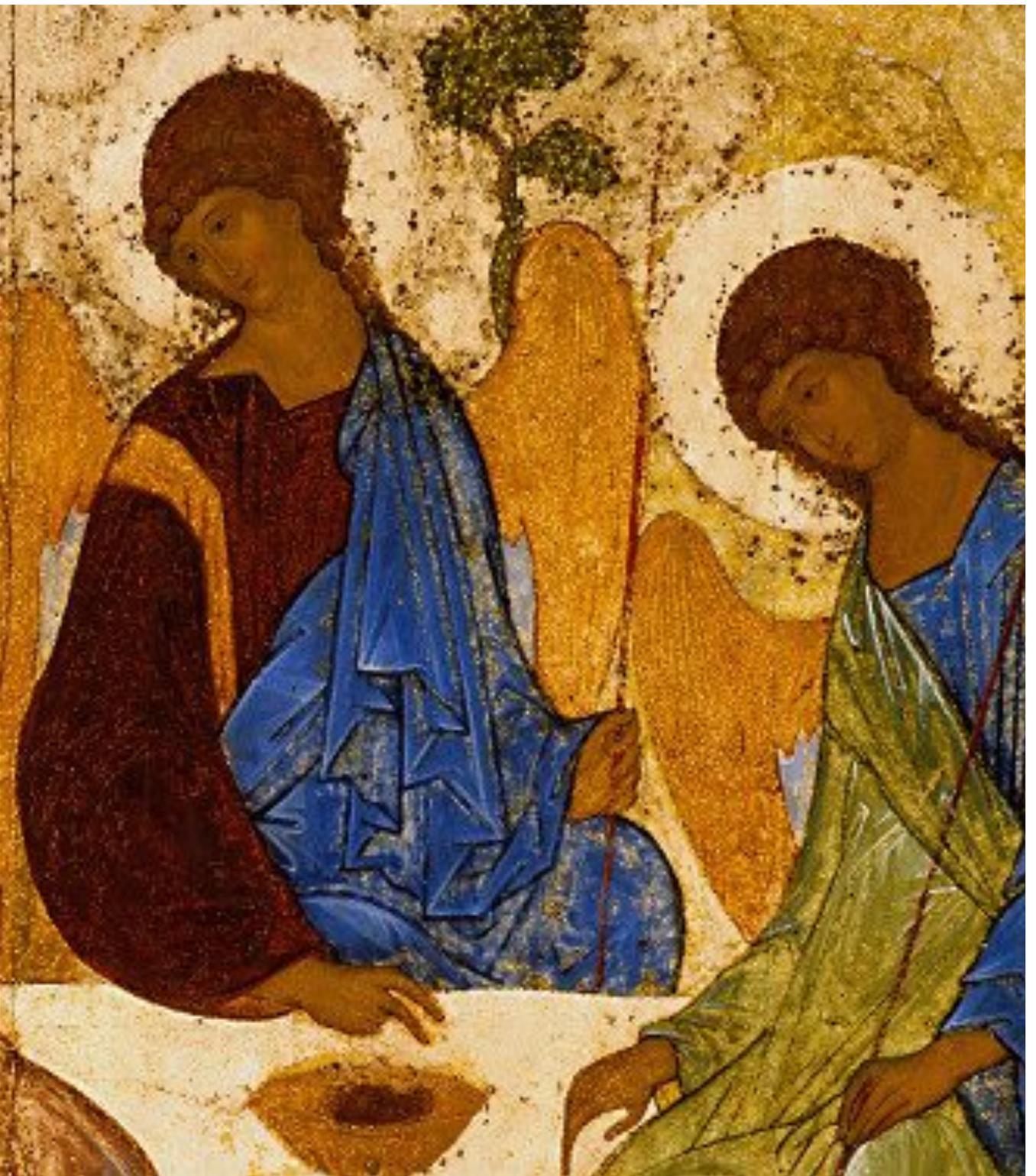
## A MYSTERY PAR EXCELLENCE

- “He has made know to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that He set forth in Christ.” (Eph 1:9)
- “We know the greatness of God, his power, his wisdom, his goodness, his providence over us and the justness of his judgements; but not his essence... We know our God from his operations, but do not undertake to approach near his essence. His operations come down to us, but his essence remains beyond our reach.”
- We have access to the Trinitarian mystery thought Jesus Christ



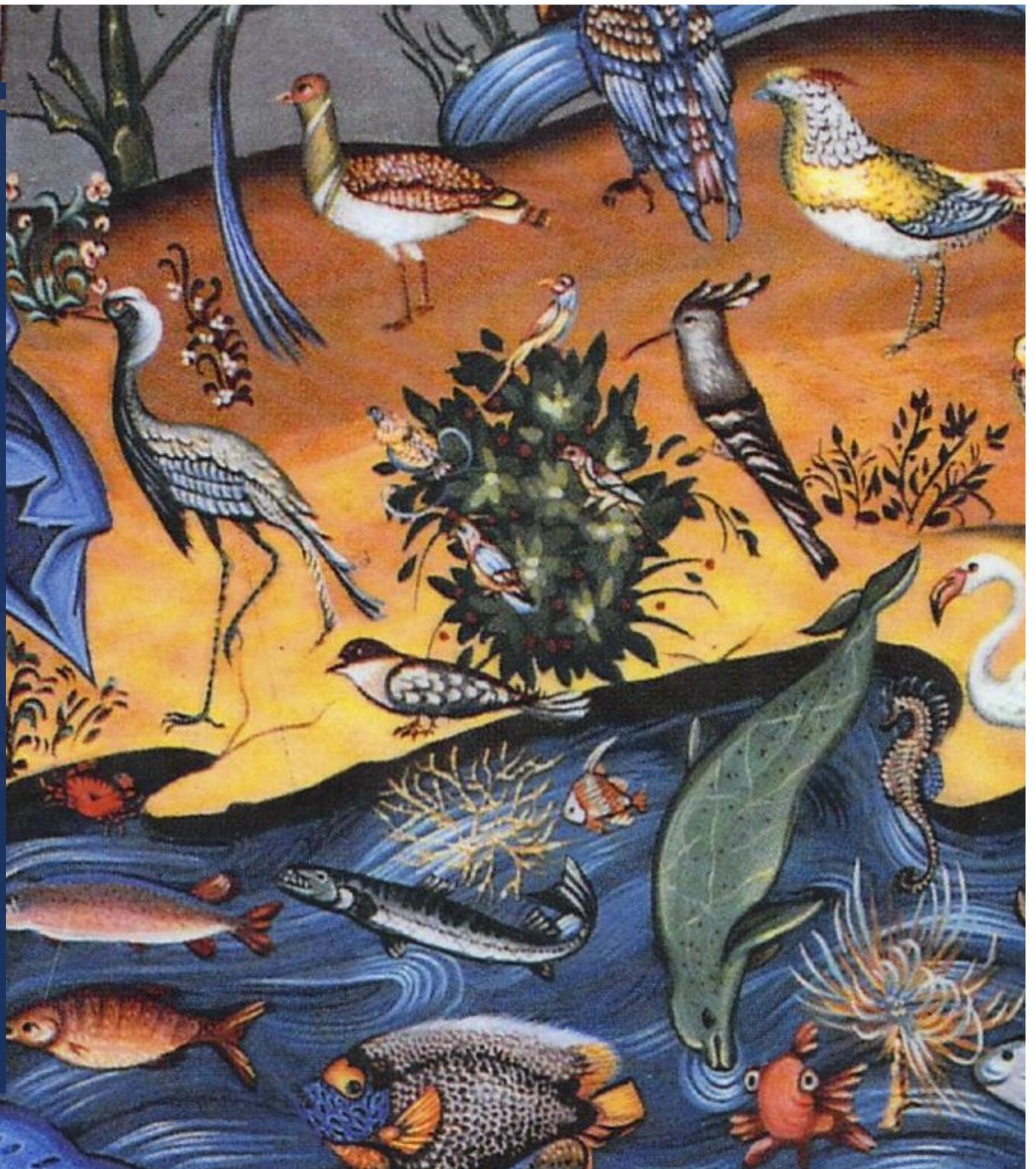
# ONE GOD FATHER ALMIGHTY

- God is not some abstract concept, the 'uncaused cause' of the Greek philosophers
- The Christian idea of God is that He is **Father**
- 'Sole principle' of the Godhead: "the Father is greater than I" (Jn 14:28)
- God is the unbegotten Father which implies He eternally begets a Son
- **We are God's children**

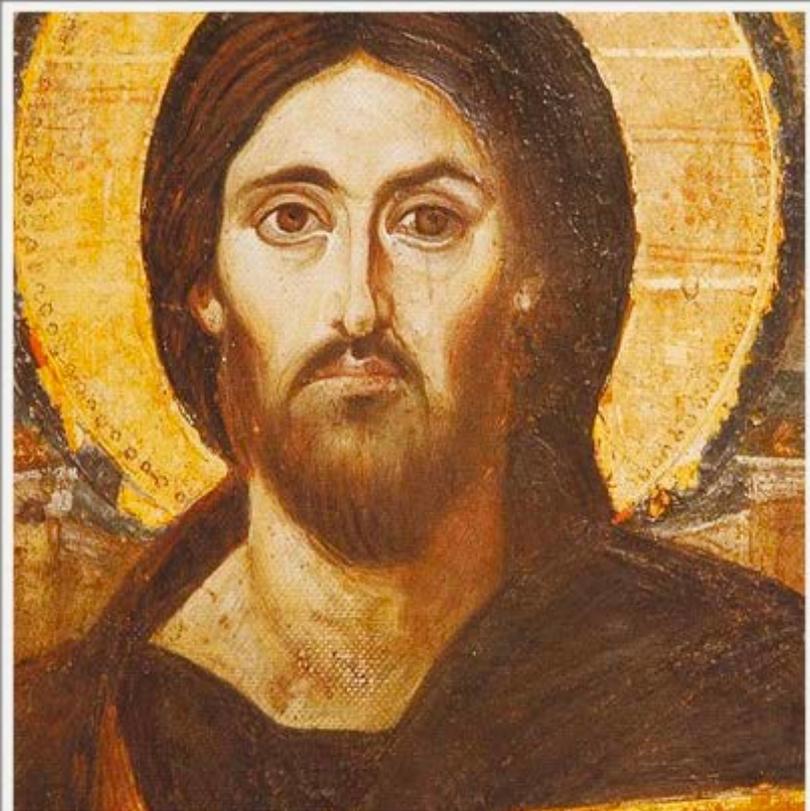


... MAKER OF HEAVEN  
AND EARTH AND OF  
ALL THINGS VISIBLE  
AND INVISIBLE

- Creation of both the heavenly realm and the world is a free act of God
- The world is therefore **sacred**; we are its **stewards** who have the responsibility of caring and looking after the world

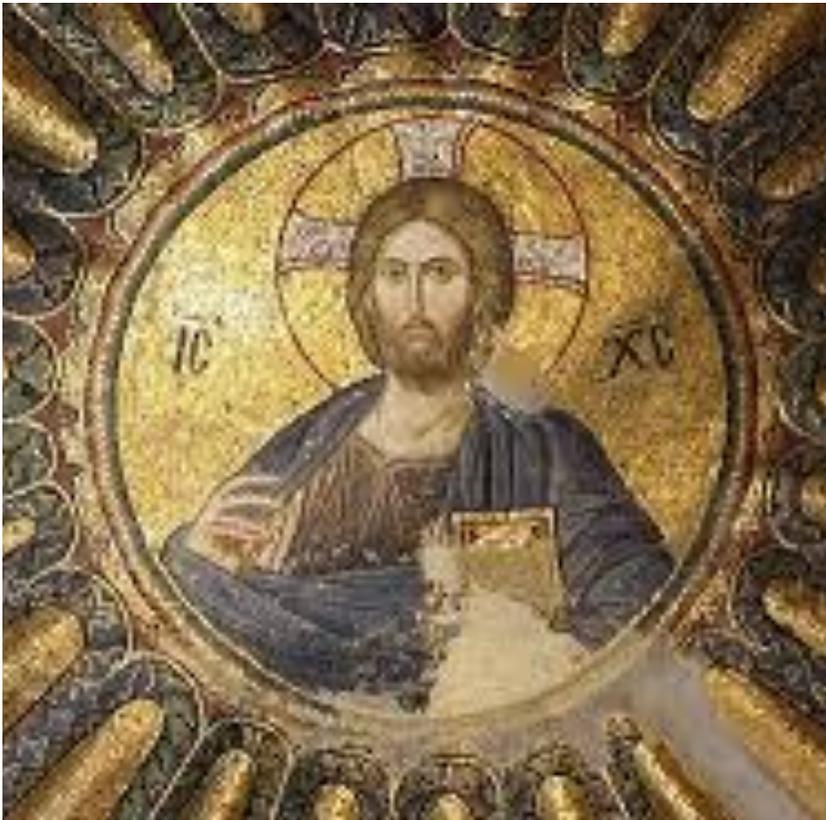


# THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD



- **Ontological Christology**  
Texts dealing with the Son's relationship to the Father
  - ... and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages...
- **Functional Christology**  
Texts dealing with the Son's relationship to the world
  - ... who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became human

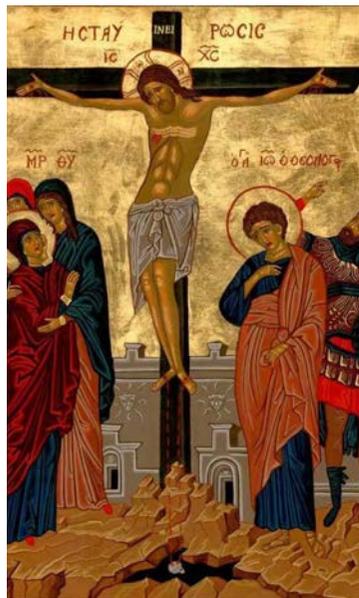
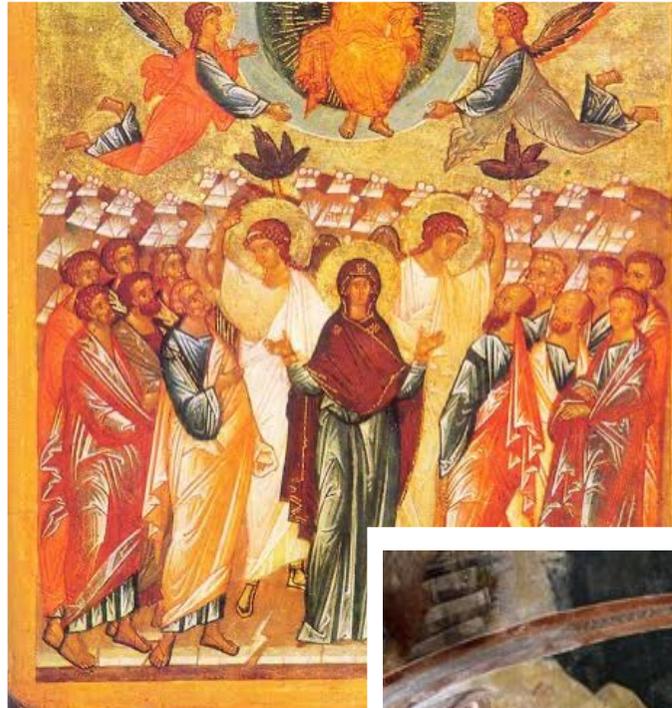
# THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD



- **homoousion**  
this term basically affirms the full and absolute deity of Jesus Christ and his co-eternity with the Father; namely, God is not an ‘offspring’ of ‘creature’ of God
- **begotten**  
this term affirms Jesus’ distinct *personal* uniqueness; gives prominence to the fact that He is the 2nd person of the Holy Trinity

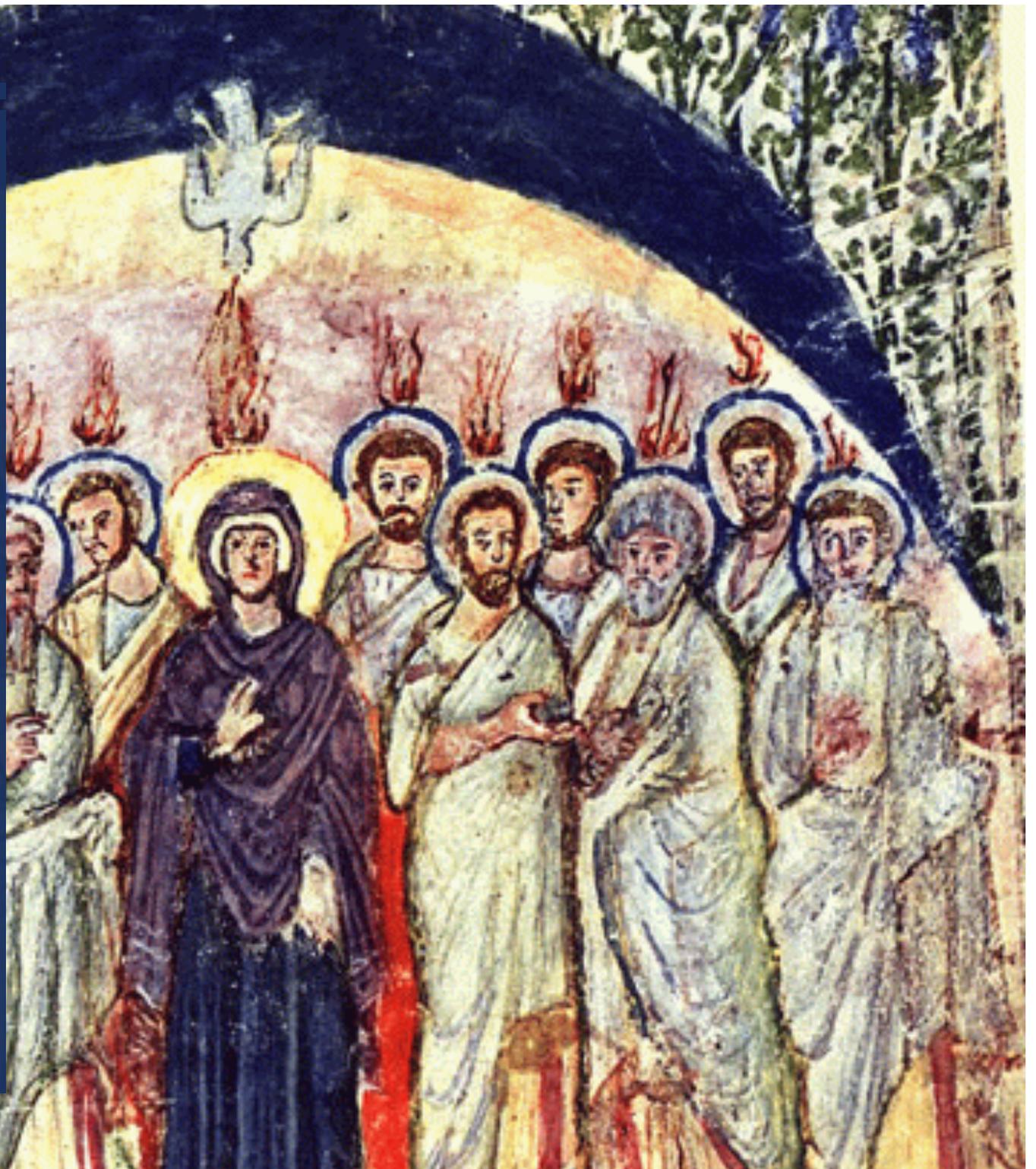
## ....WHO FOR US AND FOR OUR SALVATION

- Incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, return to glory must all be seen in light of salvation
- Purpose of our life is to become **Christ-like** (Χριστοποίησης)



## THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THE LORD AND GIVER OF LIFE

- The Creed defends the **divinity** of the Holy Spirit
- The Spirit is referred to as 'Lord', a reference specifically set aside for God in the
- "He is God, He is Lord and He appeared unto us, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (Ps 118:27)
- The Holy Spirit as Giver of life



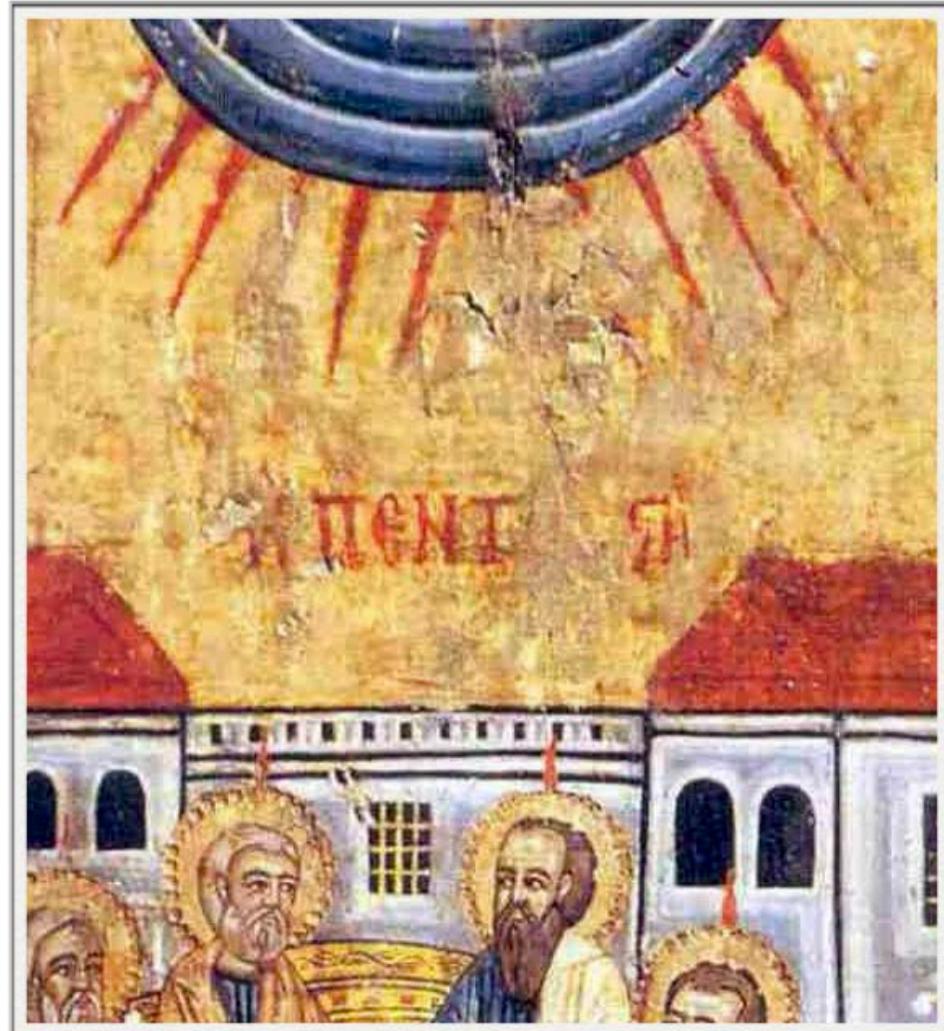
# THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THE LORD AND GIVER OF LIFE



- The Creed also defends **the indissoluble unity** of the Spirit with the Father and the Son
- “*who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified...*”
- τὸ σὺν Πατρὶ καὶ Ἰῶ **συνπροσκυνούμενον** καὶ **συνδοξαζόμενον**...
- **An ineffable and captivating reciprocal embrace of love**

## ... PROCEEDS FROM THE FATHER

- The Creed also defends the the concrete personal existence of the Holy Spirit
- “who **proceeds** from the Father...”
- ... τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς **ἐκπορευόμενον**
- The Eastern Orthodox tradition rejects the *filioque*



# PROCESSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



- “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send [ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω] to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father [ὁ παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται], he will testify on my behalf.” (Jn 15:26)

Note the **distinction** between the **eternal** procession and the **temporal** mission



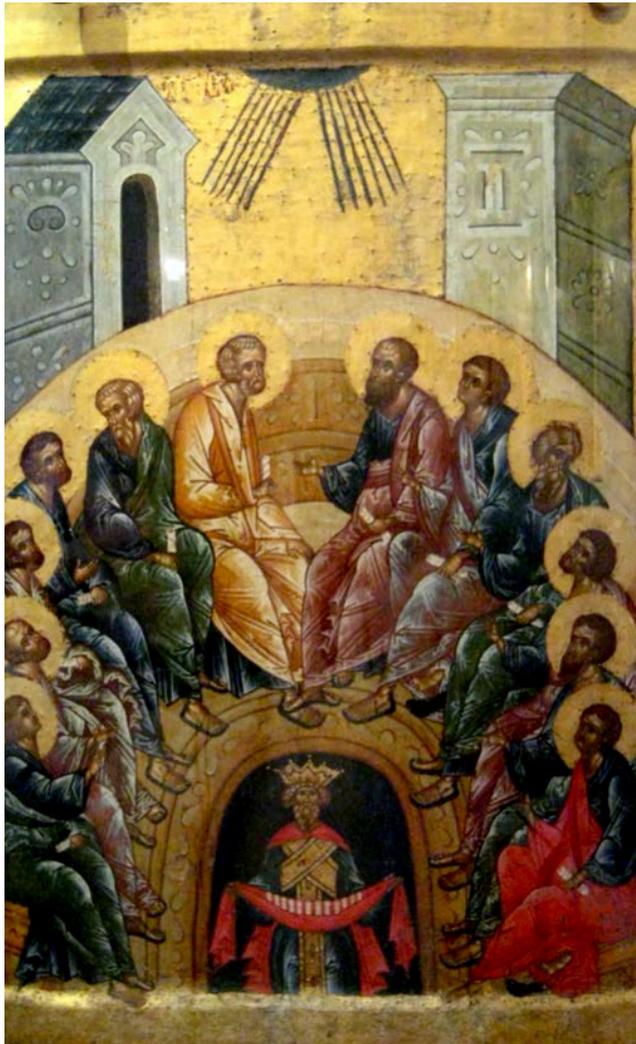
## ST JOHN OF DAMASCUS (7<sup>TH</sup> CENT.)

“Likewise, we believe also in one Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life: who proceeds from the Father, the Father being the only cause... proceeding from the Father and communicated through the Son. And participated in by all creation... And we speak likewise of the Holy Spirit as from the Father, and call him the Spirit of the Father. And we do not speak of the Spirit as from the Son... and we confess that He is manifested and imparted to us through the Son... But the Holy Spirit of the Father as proceeding from the Father, for there is no impulse without the Spirit. And we also speak of the Spirit of the Son, not as though proceeding from him, but proceeding through him from the Father. For the Father alone is the cause.”

*Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 1, 8, 12. P.G. 94. 821-833 and 849



# THE DOXASTIKON OF THE SUNDAY OF PENTECOST VESPERS



**“Come all you people, let us worship the Godhead of three hypostases: the Son in the Father, with the Holy Spirit; for the Father timelessly beget the Son, who is co-eternal and of one throne; and the Holy Spirit was in the Father, glorified with the Son; one might, one essence, one Godhead, which we all worship saying: Holy God who created all things through the Son, with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit; holy Mighty, through whom we have known the Father, and through whom the Holy Spirit came into the world; holy Immortal, the comforting Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and rests in the Son. O holy Trinity, glory be to you.”**

This hymn is attributed to Emperor Leo VI (886-912AD)

## ... RELEVANCE FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

- the doctrines of the Church do not merely *inform* us about God , but rather and more importantly *form* and ultimately *transform* us
- **‘pointers to salvation’** offering us here and now a taste of the life to come; a salvation *from* death and salvation *into* eternal life
- **‘pointers to life’** offering us a radically new way of life
  - a paradigm for true living



## ... RELEVANCE FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

- In the same way, for example, that the three divine Persons continually embrace one another in an interpenetrating communion of love, completely and continuously open to the other, where their uniqueness does not destroy their unity and communion but rather constitute it, so too are human beings called to embrace the 'uniqueness of others without this in any way necessarily leading to any division within a community of people.
- Trinitarian theology tells us that each of us was not created different *from* each other, but different *for* each other.



## THE INEFFABLE MYSTERY OF UNITY IN DIVERSITY AND DIVERSITY IN UNITY.



- Let us lift up our hearts (let us open our hearts to God's love) so as to be bathed by the splendor of God. In so doing, we will be enabled to live lovingly, namely selflessly orientated always towards the 'other' who ultimately is our nearest 'god'!

- Archbishop Makarios  
**“to surrender our soul and have our heart filled with the mystery of God”**

# IMPLICATIONS FOR EVERYDAY LIVING

- **Three Distinct Persons, yet One God**
  - 1. Diversity is constitutive of unity; namely difference need not lead to division
  - 2. diversity is upheld; not quashed
  - 3. Equality of all
  - 4. Our interdependence
  - 5. We discover our true personhood in relation to other people
    - πρόσωπον
  - 6. A movement way from an 'individualist-centred' self understanding