



JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY  
FOR ORTHODOX CHURCH MUSIC

Vol. 9:1 (2025), Section I: Peer-reviewed Articles, pp. 33–51

ISSN 2342-1258

<https://doi.org/10.57050/jisocm.132050>

## EMBODIED LITURGICAL EXPERIENCE AS AN EXTENSION OF THE EUCHARIST<sup>1</sup>

KARIM GUIRGUIS

Trinity College, University of Toronto

[karim.guirguis@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:karim.guirguis@mail.utoronto.ca)

### ABSTRACT

Historically, Christianity has always emphasized the embodiment of liturgical experience. Liturgy is not merely a metaphysical phenomenon, but one that is lived out and is, in turn, formative of the human being. To this end, the liturgy encompasses the totality of human experience to completely immerse the human being within itself. This includes the senses of smell, hearing, vision, touch, and, ultimately, taste. This uniting thread that runs throughout the human senses is teleologically directed toward the Eucharist. The Eucharist, being the climax of liturgy, is not a disembodied magical occurrence, but is, most fundamentally, formative of the human being. As the perpetuation of the incarnation throughout human history, the Eucharist calls people to be, most authentically, human beings, re-forming them into the likeness of God—the likeness of he who is known in the Eucharist. This paper will attempt to answer the question: How can the physical stimuli presented throughout the liturgy be understood as ‘Eucharistic’? Through a Coptic Orthodox theological hermeneutic, but drawing from a wider range of patristic and modern authors, this paper will attempt to answer this question by looking at how created things are ‘Eucharistic’ insofar as they reveal God. The paper will look at the possibility of primary knowledge—that is knowledge through experience—and the necessity of this form of knowledge within the scope of the liturgy. Finally, it will be shown how the liturgy offers a way to embody a narrative, thus immersing the human being into a way through which they are formed and experience the liturgy as Eucharist.

### KEYWORDS

Liturgy, Phenomenology, Formation, Patristics, Practical Theology

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Kristeen Eshak for proofreading this paper and for her valuable comments and suggestions.

## INTRODUCTION

Coptic Orthodox Christian liturgical practice enacts theology. Oftentimes theology is mistakenly placed within the realm of the intellect, as an abstract disembodied philosophical system that is dissected from human activity. However, the very practice of liturgy challenges this perception. Theology that does not materialize into practice cannot be properly called “theology,” because, as Evagrius of Pontus, the fourth-century ascetic, would famously insist that “if you are a theologian, you will pray truly; and if you pray truly, you will be a theologian.”<sup>2</sup> Theology, therefore, implies—and necessitates—participation.

In this very same way, liturgy—both, as microcosmic, ritual liturgy, and as the macrocosmic liturgy which encompasses the totality of human life—is a most intimate form of this participation. For this reason, Irenaeus of Lyons, in the second century, writes, “But our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion.”<sup>3</sup> This embodied enactment of liturgy in turn forms the human being. Aidan Kavanagh’s “Mrs. Murphy”<sup>4</sup>—the character who, despite having no formal academic theological training, has been formed and has come to experience the liturgy in the most intimate sense—is the figure that embodies what Christians are called towards. As will be further demonstrated, this participation and, by extension, formation, requires a complete immersion into the event of liturgy.

Eucharist (εὐχαριστία) literally means “thanksgiving.” The literal meaning of the word betrays a particular perspective associated with the act. As opposed to being a static object, thanksgiving is a process that invites participation. The Eucharist is not simply the bread and the wine, but the bread and wine seen within the act of thanksgiving of the assembly.<sup>5</sup> The form of this thanksgiving, however, is defined by the act of offering. This is observed in the liturgy of St. Basil where the presbyter exclaims to the assembly, “Let us give thanks (*eucharistōmen*) to the Lord,” to which they respond “[It is] worthy and righteous.”<sup>6</sup> In the Coptic liturgy, after this a prayer speaking of God’s greatness is prayed by the presbyter, followed by a hymn saying, “Come to the table, and God let us bless with the angels and the archangels, proclaiming and saying: ‘Holy, holy, holy are you O Lord, Alleluia.’”<sup>7</sup> The invitation to “give thanks”—that is, the invitation to *do* the Eucharist—is followed by an invitation to “come to the table.”

2 Evagrius of Pontus, “Chapters on Prayer,” in *Evagrius of Pontus: The Greek Ascetic Corpus*, trans. Robert E. Sinkewicz, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford University Press, 2006), 199.

3 Irenaeus of Lyons, “Against the Heresies (Book 4),” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, trans. Alexander Roberts and William Rambaut, vol. 1 (Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), 435.

4 Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology* (Pueblo Books, 1984), 146–47.

5 Alexander Schmemmann, *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom*, trans. Paul Kachur (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2002), 94.

6 “ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΗΣΩΜΕΝ ΤΩ ΚΥΡΙΩ;” “ΔΖΙΟΝ ΚΕ ΔΙΚΕΟΝ.” Abdelmessih El-Massoudi, ed., *al-Khulāji al-Muqaddas: ayy kitāb al-thalātha Qadāsāt ma’a šalawāt ukhrā muqaddasa* (Dayr al-Sayyida al-‘Adhrā’ al-Baramūs, 2015), 347.

7 “ΔΕΥΤΕ ΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΤΡΑΠΕΖΑΝ: ΤΟΝ ΘΕΟΝ ΕΥΛΟΓΟΥΜΕΝ: ΣΥΝ ΑΓΓΕΛΙΣ ΚΕ ΑΡΧΑΓΓΕΛΙΣ: ΒΟΩΝΤΕΣ ΚΕ ΛΕΓΟΝΤΕΣ. ΔΓΙΟΣ ΔΓΙΟΣ ΔΓΙΟΣ: ΣΥ ΚΥΡΙΕ ΑΛΛΗΛΟΥΙΑ.” El-Massoudi, *al-Khulāji al-Muqaddas*, 351.

The movement of thanksgiving, may, thus, be understood as a response to the very act in which God offers a banquet prepared at his table. After all, the word liturgy—*λειτουργία*—denoted a social act in which the rich performed an act of service to the community.<sup>8</sup> In this same way, the Eucharist—thanksgiving—can be appreciated as participation in this act of self-giving nourishment offered by God to the world. Similarly, the Eucharistic liturgy itself understands this to be an act of offering. In the prayer that immediately precedes the epiclesis in the liturgy of St. Basil<sup>9</sup> the presbyter asserts, “We offer to you, your gifts, from what is yours.”<sup>10</sup> The liturgy, thus, acknowledges the Eucharist as an act of offering of what is given to man by God, back to God.

Man is a psychosomatic being, and, therefore, requires both physical and spiritual participation. The use of material objects and physical participation within the liturgy, therefore, leads towards the formation of the human being as created in the image and likeness of God to offer all creation back up to him as priest in a cosmic liturgy.<sup>11</sup> After all, man is placed in the midst of creation to relate, through his physicality, all creation to himself and lift it, through his spirit, up to God. This embrace and offering up of all things by man constitutes and re-establishes all creation as eucharistic. All things are to be offered up to God in thanksgiving, and therefore, all human experience finds its telos in the Eucharist. As such, the Eucharist being a symbol of—that is, being that which makes present<sup>12</sup>—the cross and resurrection of Christ within human praxis, it reforms the human being into a more intimate likeness of God, for this is precisely the effect of the incarnation on the human condition. Being taken on a narrative journey through the senses, man is conditioned and formed into the image of the pattern of God. In this way, just as all experiences in the microcosmic liturgy are shadows on the journey towards the Eucharist, so also all experiences in the macrocosmic liturgy of the life of man become shadows of Christ.

Through a Coptic Orthodox hermeneutic, but drawing from a wider range of patristic and modern authors, this paper will attempt to demonstrate that the breadth of physical experience that is offered within liturgy ought to be properly experienced as being an extension of the Eucharist. Firstly, by engaging with patristic and medieval writers, it will demonstrate the early Christian understanding of creation as revelatory of God, and thus, Eucharistic. Secondly, engaging with modern phenomenologists and other modern thinkers, placing them in conversation with some of the early and medieval Christian writers, the paper will argue that knowledge of God is to be experienced, first, and then studied, second. In this way, the

8 Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology*, 57.

9 This can also be found in the anaphora of St. John Chrysostom.

10 “Тенеріпросферін наκ ἰνηετε ποук ἰλ.ωρον εβολъен ннѣте поук.” El-Massoudi, *al-Khulāji al-Muqaddas*, 371.

11 See Jeffrey L. Morrow, “Creation as Temple-Building and Work as Liturgy in Genesis 1–3,” *Journal of the Orthodox Center for the Advancement of Biblical Studies* 2, no. 1 (2009): 1–13.

12 Schmemmann, *The Eucharist*, 38–40.

Eucharist as offering intimacy with God, is something to be experienced, and that experience of created things, ought to reveal intimate, experiential, Eucharistic, knowledge of God. Finally, looking to modern epistemology and other modern authors, this paper will attempt to argue that through this experience offered by the liturgy, man is brought through a narrative journey, through which he is formed to be the Eucharist in the macrocosmic liturgy. Thus, God is revealed and known as Eucharist, through the narrative into which the human being is physically immersed in the context of the liturgy.

## THE WORLD AS EUCHARIST

All creation reveals God. This stance persisted within Christianity from its early centuries. Early Christians would insist that all that God does through his will conforms to his nature, and therefore, creation relates knowledge of God. Basil of Caesarea writes,

Moreover, you will find that the world was not devised at random or to no purpose, but to contribute to some useful end and to the great advantage of all beings, if it is truly a training place for rational souls and a school for attaining the knowledge of God, because through visible and perceptible objects it provides guidance to the mind for the contemplation of the invisible [...]. That it might be shown, then, that the world is a work of art, set before all for contemplation, so that through it the wisdom of Him who created it should be known.<sup>13</sup>

As will be demonstrated in the sections below, for early Christians, this was, indeed, what it meant for the Son to be the Word—the Logos through whom all things come into reality. All things are real, they exist, for no other reason than that they conform to the pattern of God. As such, approaching, knowing, and embracing creation while placing Christ as the telos of all experience, reveals God. This revelation is formative, and therefore, rouses man to know God even more intimately. This cyclic movement of intimacy with God is precisely the one to which man is directed to participate in, within the Christian liturgical tradition. As man realizes God through creation, he is moulded to love him more intimately; and in loving him more intimately, God becomes more immediately recognized in all things.

## WHAT GOD IS, THIS HE DOES

Who God is, in his nature, this is what he enacts through his will. In the famous fourth-century Arian controversy, this was the position of Athanasius of Alexandria. Arius would famously assert that “there was when the Son was not,”<sup>14</sup> which, for Athanasius, is a statement that compromises the divinity of the Son, and subordinates him to the Father. To hold a position such as

<sup>13</sup> Basil of Caesarea, “Homily 1: Creation of the Heavens and the Earth (On the Hexaemeron),” in *Exegetic Homilies*, trans. Agnes Clare Way, *The Fathers of the Church* 46 (Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 11–12.

<sup>14</sup> Henry Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great*, *Oxford History of the Christian Church* (Oxford University Press, 2001), 196.

Arius', is to suggest that the Son is not of the same essence as the Father. One of the arguments that Athanasius used against Arius states that for all things that God does through his will, there exists a prototype that is internal to his essence. For Athanasius, if God takes on the act of creation, it must also mean that this action, which he enacts through his will, reflects an interior reality of God—the begottenness of the Son. To quote Athanasius at length,

But if there is no Son, how then do you say that God is Creator? ... But if, according to them, the divine essence itself is not fruitful but barren, like a light that does not shine and a fountain that is dry, how are they not ashamed to say that God has creative energy? Denying what is by nature, how can they not blush to wish to give precedence to what is by will? If God creates things that are external [to the divine essence] and at first were not, by willing them to be, and thus becomes their Maker, how much more is he first of all Father of an offspring from his own proper (*idias*) essence? For if they grant to God the willing of what is not, why do they not acknowledge of God what supersedes the willing? But what supersedes the willing is his bringing-forth and his being Father, by nature, of his own (*idiou*) Word. Therefore, if that which is first, which is according to nature, does not exist, according to their mindlessness, how can that which is second, which is according to will, come to be?<sup>15</sup>

Gregory of Nyssa, less than a century after, would state this much more concisely. He would assert that God is not swayed by the evils of man to enact evil. Therefore, if God, in his very nature, is the very being by which goodness itself is measured, then, since he does not enact evil, all things that he does conform to his essence—the essence which defines goodness. Gregory writes, “Although we offered no reason for the good, no rather, on the contrary, we were totally in evil, he has not abandoned his own nature, but what he is, this he also does. For it was not likely that he who is good by nature would bring about something contrary to what he was by nature.”<sup>16</sup> This recognition of God in all things presents a hermeneutic lens through which creation is to be perceived. If all things reveal and make God known, then all things are meant to be Eucharistic, precisely because the Eucharist perpetuates the incarnation throughout time. After all, everything that is done by God is necessarily trinitarian. In the words of Athanasius, “The Father himself, through the Word in the Spirit works and gives all things.”<sup>17</sup>

As such, even the Eucharist is an immersion within of the life of the Trinity, in the same way that the work of salvation enacted by the incarnation is trinitarian. The Father sent the Word in the Spirit to reunite man, once more, with himself. In this, the Eucharistic nature of all creation

15 Athanasius of Alexandria, “Exegesis of Prov. 8:22 (Or. Ar. 2:2, 2:3, 2:18-82),” in *Athanasius*, trans. Khaled Anatolios, The Early Church Fathers (Routledge, 2004), 89–90.

16 Gregory of Nyssa, *Gregory of Nyssa’s Treatise on the Inscriptions of the Psalms*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford University Press, 1995), 110.

17 Athanasius of Alexandria, “Letter Two to Serapion,” in *Works on the Spirit*, trans. Mark DelCogliano, Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, and Lewis Ayres, Popular Patristic Series 43 (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2011), 125.

is highlighted. If God is revealed and made known in all things, then all things are to be lifted and offered back to him, eucharistically. Just as the Eucharist is offered in participation with Christ, who is the high priest (cf. Heb 4:14–16), so also should all things be offered up to God in participation with Christ—that is, as human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, materializing, and incarnating God within creation.

#### THE LOGOS AS THE PATTERN OF CREATION

Given the outlined possibility—and necessity—of knowing God through creation, in fact, the very defining feature of creation as *God's creation* is its conformity to God's own pattern—his very Word. If all that God does, flows from his nature, then all creation must necessarily conform to his image. As such, for creation to be properly called “creation,” it must adhere to Christ, “the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation” (Col 1:15), through whom the Father is revealed. Justin Martyr, in the second century, writes,

But his Son, who alone is properly called Son, the Word, who was with him [God, the Father] and was begotten before all things, when in the beginning he [God, the Father] created and arranged all things through him [the Son], is called Christ, because he was anointed and because God the Father arranged all the things of creation through him.<sup>18</sup>

In this way, the trinitarian revelation of God—that is, the knowledge of God, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit—percolates even to the very fabric of being. If God can be known in creation, then it is through his Son, in the recognition of him granted by the Holy Spirit, without whom “no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’” (1 Cor 12:3). Once again, if all creation conforms to the pattern of Christ, then all things are Eucharistic, because they reveal him who is Eucharist.

In the Coptic tradition, the same language has been used for both Christ's incarnation, and for the Eucharist. An example of this can be found in Būlus al-Būshī, a fourteenth century Copto-Arabic theologian. Al-Būshī writes, “His divinity is united with his body. He has been united with the holy bread and has transformed it into his body in truth and not merely in likeness.”<sup>19</sup> Parallel to this, al-Būshī writes of the incarnation, “In his compassion he willed to become incarnate, and became united with the body in his divinity.”<sup>20</sup> This convergence of language is no mere coincidence, but highlights the Coptic Orthodox outlook that does not distinguish between the events of the incarnation and the Eucharist; emphasizing the relationship between the incarnation, the liturgy, and human life. The incarnation is

18 Justin Martyr, “The Second Apology,” in *Writings of Saint Justin Martyr*, trans. Thomas B. Falls, vol. 6, *The Fathers of the Church* (Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 125.

19 Būlus al-Būshī, “God Granted Us Participation in the Body of Christ,” in *Coptic Christology in Practice: Incarnation and Divine Participation in Late Antique and Medieval Egypt*, trans. Stephen J. Davis, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford University Press, 2008), 305.

20 Būlus al-Būshī, “God Has Provided Us with Eternal Life,” in *Coptic Christology in Practice: Incarnation and Divine Participation in Late Antique and Medieval Egypt*, trans. Stephen J. Davis, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford University Press, 2008), 304.

perpetuated throughout human history in the Eucharist, the Eucharist forms human life into a macrocosmic liturgy, and, as such, human life becomes a perpetuation of the incarnation throughout human history. For this reason, the Church is considered the “body of Christ” (cf. Eph 1:13; 2:22; 4:16; 1 Cor 12:12–27; Rom 12:4–5; Col 2:19), because it is the space wherein man is called to be Christ incarnate. This was precisely the perspective which shaped the early Christians’ ideas of salvation. The incarnation was redemptive because it penetrated through the very nature and being of man. Man, through the incarnation, can now become like God.<sup>21</sup> Thus, a perspective that understands creation as Eucharistic inasmuch as it reveals Christ, allows for an understanding which places the telos of creation in intimate knowledge of Christ.

### CHRIST AS REALITY AND TRUTH

Christianity, from its earliest articulations, locates the very definition of *being* within God. If God is, then creation becomes; if creation is, then God is above being. Gregory of Nazianzus, the fourth-century Cappadocian, explains that God is “absolute existence, independent of everything else. The actual, personal being of God in its fullness is neither limited nor cut short by any prior or any subsequent reality—so it was and so it will be.”<sup>22</sup> Early Christians would often read this theology in the conversation wherein God reveals himself to Moses as “I am who I am” (Ex 3:14).<sup>23</sup> In this revelation by God of himself, he comes to be known as the only absolute—as the only thing that is real, as reality itself. All things that exist, therefore, only do so in reflection of him, and in doing so, they participate, in some capacity, in him who is. In the words of Origen of Alexandria, “And in him who truly exists, who said by Moses, ‘I am who I am’ [Ex 3:14], all things that are have participation, which participation in the God and Father extends to all, the righteous and sinners, rational and irrational beings, and absolutely everything that exists.”<sup>24</sup> After all, the very notion of the

21 This language of exchange within the incarnation is very common amongst early Christian thinkers. See for example, “The Word of God speaks, having become man, in order that such as you may learn from man how it is even possible for man to become a god.” Clement of Alexandria, “The Exhortation to the Greeks,” in *Clement of Alexandria: The Exhortation to the Greeks, the Rich Man’s Salvation, and The Fragments of an Address Entitled To the Newly Baptized*, trans. G. W. Butterworth (Harvard University Press, 1960), 23; “The Son of God shares our nature so we can share His; as He has us in Him, so we have Him in us.” John Chrysostom, “Homily 20 on Ephesians 5:22-23,” in *On Marriage and Family Life*, trans. Catherine P. Roth and David Anderson, Popular Patristic Series 7 (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1986), 51; “Since he became like us (that is, a human being) in order that we might become like him (I mean gods and sons), he receives our properties into himself and he gives us his own in return.” Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, trans. David R. Maxwell, vol. 2 (InterVarsity Press, 2015), 363.

22 Gregory of Nazianzus, “The Fourth Theological Oration (Oration 30): On the Son,” in *On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters to Cledonius*, trans. Lionel Wickham and Frederick Williams, Popular Patristic Series 23 (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2002), 108.

23 John Chrysostom, *St. John Chrysostom: Commentary on Saint John The Apostle and Evangelist, Homilies 1-47*, trans. Sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin, The Fathers of the Church 33 (Catholic University of America Press, 1957), 146; Gregory of Nazianzus, “Oration 45: On Holy Pascha,” in *Festal Orations*, trans. Nonna Verna Harrison, Popular Patristic Series 36 (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2008), 65.

24 Origen of Alexandria, *Origen: On First Principles*, trans. John Behr, vol. 1, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford University Press, 2018), 75.

existence of creation reflects God, and therefore, for things to exist, they, in turn, communicate him.

This natural communication of God in creation shapes it to be Eucharistic. This is to be contrasted with the human consumption of creation. Gregory of Nyssa would insist that hunger is something good, and when properly oriented, it ought to function as a hunger for God. However, as observed in the temptations of Christ on the mount (cf. Mt 4:1–11, Mk 1:12–13, Lk 4:1–13), when Satan tempts Christ saying, “Command these stones to become loaves of bread” (Mt 4:3), it is a temptation to move away from the telos of creation and consume it. Gregory writes, “The inventor of temptations, when he realized that the feeling of hunger had arisen even in him, advised him to meet his desire with stones, that is, to divert his hunger from natural food to unnatural.”<sup>25</sup>

Evagrius would dissect this movement of man towards the consumption of creation, and would identify its root as, what he calls, “mental representations” (νόηματα). Human desire, for Evagrius, is not derived from the object of desire itself. Rather, it is associated with the images which man associates with what he desires. Evagrius writes, “All the demonic thoughts introduce into the soul mental representations of sensible objects; impressed by these, the mind carries about within itself the forms of those objects.”<sup>26</sup> A common image that Evagrius employs to illustrate this, is desire for gold.<sup>27</sup> As it stands, gold is simply a material that “it is sand-like and scattered through the lower regions of the earth.”<sup>28</sup> Gold is not what moves man towards greed. Rather, it is the mental representation of what man associates with gold—namely, power, wealth, influence. These are what man seeks through creation, placing the object of desire as the distorted telos of creation. This, for Evagrius, is the root of sin: “A pleasure hostile to humanity, born of free will, and compelling the mind to make improper use of the creatures of God.”<sup>29</sup> This misuse of creation, constitutive of sin, is entirely antithetical to the creation of man. For many early Christians, in the beginning, God creates a temple.<sup>30</sup> Man is placed in the midst of this temple as an image of the God of this cosmic temple. In this way, imaging God, man is a priest in reflection of the one high priest, placed to offer all things up to God.

25 Gregory of Nyssa, *Homilies on the Beatitudes: An English Version with Commentary and Supporting Studies*, ed. Hubertus R. Drobner and Albert Viciano, trans. Stuart George Hall, *Vigiliae Christianae Supplements* 52 (Brill Publishers, 2000), 50.

26 Evagrius of Pontus, “On Thoughts,” in *Evagrius of Pontus: The Greek Ascetic Corpus*, trans. Robert E. Sinkewicz, *Oxford Early Christian Studies* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 154.

27 Evagrius, “On Thoughts,” 156; 158; 164–65; 166–67; 169–70.

28 Evagrius, “On Thoughts,” 158.

29 Evagrius, “On Thoughts,” 166.

30 See for example Ephrem the Syrian, “Hymn VI,” in *Hymns on Paradise*, trans. Sebastian Brock, *Popular Patristic Series* 10 (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1990), 111; Clement of Rome, “Second Clement,” in *The Apostolic Fathers*, trans. Michael W. Holmes, 3rd ed. (Baker Academic, 2007), 155; Michael W. Holmes, trans., “Shepherd of Hermas,” in *The Apostolic Fathers*, 3rd ed. (Baker Academic, 2007), 469; Cyril Hovorun, *Meta-Ecclesiology: Chronicles on Church Awareness* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 52.

## EXPERIENCE AS EUCHARISTIC

If all creation is created in conformity to who God is in his essence, echoing the Word, and is sustained into existence through its relation to God, thereby allowing for God to be known therein, then the use of created things within the Orthodox Christian liturgical tradition must be oriented towards revealing God in some way. Ultimately, man is not called to know God through an intellectual assault, but rather, through an intimate experience of him. As such, the liturgy, being a place where God is revealed to the experience of man, embodies this knowledge of God through enacted and embodied experience.

## KNOWLEDGE AS EXPERIENCE

From a wider Orthodox Christian perspective, knowledge of God must always refer to an experience and participation in God, as opposed to intellectual knowledge.<sup>31</sup> While both are translated in English as “knowledge”, Greek distinguishes between these two types. Knowledge as experience is denoted in Greek as γνῶσις, as opposed to its intellectual counterpart, ἐπιστήμη.<sup>32</sup> For example, one may gain all sorts of epistemic knowledge from reading a book about trees. However, without encountering a tree, it is impossible to come to know (γνῶσις) a tree. While both types of knowledge fulfill different purposes, a line must be drawn to demarcate the two modes of knowing. Moreover, while not necessary, it is possible to gain epistemic knowledge through gnostic knowledge, whereas the opposite is impossible. To put it more simply, by experiencing something, it can be studied to gain intellectual knowledge of it, whereas simply reading a book about a topic does not necessarily lead to experience. These two modes of knowing parallel different methods of human reflection: primary reflection, and secondary reflection.

Relating to epistemic knowledge, primary reflection spans the intellect. Khaled Anatolios describes it as that which “dissolves the unity of experience by seeing the object as abstracted from my relationship with it.”<sup>33</sup> Secondary reflection, on the other hand, as relating to gnostic knowledge, “reasserts and reappropriates the concrete link between myself and the object of my experience.”<sup>34</sup> In this way, secondary reflection brings intellectual knowledge, and reframes it within the space of experience. Gabriel Marcel gives the example of perceiving one’s own body as “a body,” through primary reflection, but recognizing it as “my body” in

31 This is not to say that there is no place for intellectual knowledge. Rather, this is to place the telos of intellectual knowledge as coming to experience. C. S. Lewis, for example, compares intellectual knowledge with a map, that serves no purpose if not used to reach the experience of the location to be travelled to. See C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (Harper San Francisco, 2001), 154–55.

32 Vladimir Lossky, *Orthodox Theology: An Introduction*, trans. Ian Kesarcodi-Watson and Ihita Kesarcodi-Watson (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1978), 14.

33 Khaled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Baker Academic, 2011), 34.

34 Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, 34.

secondary reflection.<sup>35</sup> The example offered by Marcel is, perhaps, best suited to exemplify the Christian use of gnostic knowledge due to the intimacy that is present with one and their own body. In its Christian use, knowledge as gnosis carries an extremely intimate nuance. Throughout scripture, the verb ἔγνων, or “I know,” and its variants, is used to express sexual intimacy (cf. Gn 4:1; 4:17; 4:25, to name a few). This is the extent of the intimacy which man is called to experience with God. After all, marriage reflects the eternal reality of the relationship which exists between the Church and Christ—between man and God. Thus, the call towards knowledge of God, is a profoundly intimate invitation. It is an invitation into the prototype which the most intimate of human relationships reflect. It is an invitation into an eternal intimacy with God. In the words of Christ, “And this is eternal life, that they know [γινώσκωσιν] you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (Jn 17:3). This is, ultimately, the mode of knowledge which man is called to participate in through his experience of creation. If creation communicates God, then God ought to be known, in the most intimate sense, through his creation.

#### LITURGY AS KNOWING GOD

Liturgy, in its most constitutive sense, offers knowledge of God to its participants. This is the telos of liturgy which all things therein are designed to facilitate. This is not done in a neo-Platonic sense, that aims at a merely epistemic knowledge of God, but rather, the liturgy moves man towards experience, participation, and union with God. As Gregory of Narek, a tenth century Armenian monk, writes, “Lord Jesus, one of the (divine) essence: by tasting you, we have come to know your Father and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>36</sup> Ultimately, the Eucharist, Gregory describes, being the climax of the liturgy establishes and materializes this knowledge on a physical level to match and reflect the spiritual reality being enacted. This is, in fact, the method by which the totality of the liturgy operates. The liturgy conditions and habituates man through movements, rhythms, and physical stimulation—audible, visual, olfactory, tactile, and ultimately, gustatory—to embody the very life of God. As Geoffrey Ready writes,

Just as we cannot *know* the balance involved in riding a bike by focusing on our muscles or our individual movements, so also we cannot really know the meaning of liturgy in any of its constitutive parts. We need rather to  *dwell within* the liturgy, within its particular movements, symbols and words.<sup>37</sup>

35 Gabriel Marcel, *The Mystery of Being: Reflection & Mystery*, trans. G. S. Fraser, vol. 1 (Henry Regnery Company, 1950), 92–102; Maurice Merleau-Ponty picks up on Marcel’s language asserting “I am my body,” to assert the inevitable link between primary and secondary reflection. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes (Routledge, 2012), 151; See Gabriel Marcel, *Metaphysical Journal*, trans. Bernard Wall (Rockcliff, 1952), 332–33.

36 Gregory of Narek, “Prayer 75: Representing Heaven on Earth,” in *From the Depths of the Heart: Annotated Translation of the Prayers of St. Gregory of Narek*, trans. Abraham Terian (Liturgical Press, 2021), 337.

37 Geoffrey Ready, “Living God’s Story: Strengthening Liturgical Participation and Christian Formation through the Renewal of Enacted Narrative in the Orthodox Divine Liturgy” (D.Min., Toronto, University of Toronto, 2020), 46–47.

Here, Ready is not voiding the utility of liturgical study. Rather, he is asserting that liturgical study may reveal why liturgy works, but liturgical formation is not incumbent on the study of liturgy. People who have not studied liturgy are able to participate and be formed by the liturgy, just as those who have formally studied it. For this reason, liturgy is a primary form of theology, because it is concerned with this experience and encounter that leads to intimate knowledge (γνῶσις) of God.<sup>38</sup> Gnosis must always be the source of epistemic knowledge. In the words of Kavanagh, “First ‘right worship’ and only secondarily doctrinal accuracy. This is very radical. It implies that worship conceived broadly is what gives rise to theological reflection, rather than the other way around.”<sup>39</sup> Even this epistemic form of knowledge, and its verbalization, will always be lacking, as God, in the words of Gregory of Nyssa, “is inaccessible to knowledge.”<sup>40</sup> Such is the epistemological model to which the liturgy conforms. Liturgy aims to bring God within the space of experience and participation of man. For this reason, the liturgy embodies her worship to form man into an orientation in which he may recognize, experience, and come to know God in all things.

#### KNOWING THROUGH EMBODIMENT

Christ asked his disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” (Mt 16:15; Mk 8:29; Lk 9:20). This is precisely the question which the liturgy aims to answer. The liturgy does not attempt to answer what God is, but rather who God is. However, if the liturgy aims at communicating God to man through experience, then this must necessarily be embodied, since the human being is a psychosomatic being. If experience of God is strictly intellectual, the other half of what the human being is does not know God. Therefore, this dualistic approach to liturgical experience forfeits the material existence of man, and thus, his capacity to carry out his priestly ministry wherein he offers all things up to God.

The liturgy, however, is far from surrendering physical participation. The Christian liturgical tradition makes use of material creation through which God is revealed. As previously discussed, all creation finds its telos in attesting and proclaiming God; realizing God as their telos thus brings them into a further state of being in which they both conform to and reveal God. As such, the use of incense, icons, vestments, and ultimately, bread and wine, in liturgy, reveals God in that his act of their creation conforms to his nature. Moreover, the embodiment of liturgy does not cease at the experience of creation, but extends even to the experience of man and God through man. The liturgy involves processions, liturgical kissing, hymnography, and all sorts of choreographed movements by presbyters, deacons, and congregants, occurring within a set space and time, through which man participates in a grand dance that involves the whole assembly

38 Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology*, 75.

39 Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology*, 3.

40 Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, trans. Abraham J. Malherbe and Everett Ferguson, *Classics of Western Spirituality* (Paulist Press, 1978), 115.

where God is made palpable.<sup>41</sup> In this way, ritual brings the body to where the spirit is. If through the liturgy, climaxing with the Eucharist, man is united with God, then the physical and embodied participation of man within the liturgy brings the body to experience and be united with God, in his ecclesial body. As James K. A. Smith writes, “Ritual is the way we (learn to) believe with our bodies.”<sup>42</sup> Through action and ritual, man is formed and immersed into a hermeneutic that observes all creation as exclaiming God. Christina Gschwandtner, for instance, astutely identifies the very embodied and moving intended use of liturgical space, as she writes,

Liturgical space is for movement. It is not static This is true not only of the activities of censuring and blessing by priests or deacons, but movement characterizes the experience of all participants in liturgy. One does not simply stand in the space of liturgy, but one exercises a variety of motions and gestures on and within it.<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, this bodily experience of liturgy, is unique and “new” within each liturgical event. “Each time anew,” writes Gschwandtner, “the body must enter into the liturgical space, cross the threshold between narthex and nave, approach the sanctuary for the reception of communion.”<sup>44</sup> If liturgy is actively participated in—that is, if this grand dance that includes the whole body of Christ is joined, intentionally—then there remains no room for consuming creation as though it ought to bring about anything but God himself. Through the use of material creation, the liturgy forms man to come to know God through its materiality. Such knowledge, therefore, that is implanted into the very being of man through liturgy, ought to pervade well beyond the scope of the microcosmic liturgy, into the macrocosmic liturgy, which spans the whole of human life. In the words of Ready,

That formation is more craftlike than didactic, more *caught* than *taught*, means our new mystagogy needs to make sense of the role of the body—both the corporeal individual body and the corporate collective body—and specifically, of the story-shaping power of pre-cognitive bodily actions and rituals.<sup>45</sup>

In this way, God, who cannot be known, condescends and is made known within the liturgy. In being revealed to man through every facet of human experience—that is, being revealed in what man can see, hear, touch, smell, and ultimately taste—God is made *known* in the most intimate sense. Through this knowledge of God, therefore, man is formed and oriented in such a way that enables him to embark on a cosmic liturgy that spans the totality of creation throughout the whole of human life.

---

41 Christina Gschwandtner, throughout her book, presents a detailed study of the ways that liturgy is experienced, phenomenologically in all the “ways” that the human being exists. Christina M. Gschwandtner, *Welcoming Finitude: Toward a Phenomenology of Orthodox Liturgy, Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Thought* (Fordham University Press, 2019).

42 James K. A. Smith, *Imagining The Kingdom: How Worship Works*, Cultural Liturgies 2 (Baker Academic, 2013), 92.

43 Gschwandtner, *Welcoming Finitude*, 73.

44 Gschwandtner, *Welcoming Finitude*, 81.

45 Ready, “Living God’s Story,” 44.

## LITURGY AS NARRATIVE EXPERIENCE

Humans are, most effectively, formed by narrative. For this reason, Christianity preserves narrative throughout its scriptural, hagiographic, and liturgical traditions. This immersion into the formative story of God is not a simple recollection or verbal narration of a story, but rather one that is enacted, leaving its imprint on him who enacts it. Man enacts this choreographed story between God and himself, through which he is formed and learns how life ought to be. All things are framed and reframed within the context of this narrative, and thus its embodiment teaches man how to embody life. In the words of Ready, “In the liturgy, the church acquires its fundamental story from its participation in God’s larger purposes, and our individual and communal life stories receive their *telos* through the ritual re-enactment of the narratives of God and the church.”<sup>46</sup> Ultimately, this narrative forms man into the image of God—into the image of the one who became bread so that in his consumption, man may live.

One thing to note is that the story being narrated within the liturgy is not simply an “illustratively symbolic” recollection of the events of Christ’s earthly life.<sup>47</sup> What is intended here by “narrative” is the pattern and shape of the experience by man of God as revealed in scripture and the wider tradition. Eugen Pentiu has already elaborated on how the Byzantine hymnographic tradition exegetes scripture in an audible landscape.<sup>48</sup> The proposal here is that this, in fact, happens in every facet through the senses. It is that ritual itself is used to narrate this story elaborated in scriptures and lived by the Church day-to-day. Candles *illuminating* icons invite one to *touch* and venerate them. When one *hears* the hymns, his gaze *looks* at where the sound is coming from. When the presbyter processes around the nave, the *sound* of the bells and the *smell* of the incense call attention to the icons decorating the church. The *light* of the candles is diffused by the incense, illuminating the space as the chanters chant that the “aroma is our Saviour,”<sup>49</sup> thus expounding that in fact what is *symbolically real* is Christ’s presence filling the nave. Prostrations, in *movement*, exegete God’s very own character as one who empties himself. *Hearing* the Trisagion one is *moved* to cross himself highlighting that God as Trinity is known most vividly in the cross.

These various movements and experiences are exegeted by the textual elements of the liturgy but also, in turn, further inform and add new dimensions to the perception of the words being said and heard. This journey of the senses coheres together to build a cogent narrative—it narrates God’s very own story, and so also the story of man and his life with God.

46 Ready, “Living God’s Story,” 43.

47 See Schmemmann, *The Eucharist*, 30–31.

48 See Eugen J Pentiu, *Hearing the Scriptures: Liturgical Exegesis of the Old Testament in Byzantine Orthodox Hymnography* (Oxford University Press, 2021).

49 “πεσαρωνατα πε πενωστηρ.” El-Massoudi, al-Khulāji al-Muqaddas, 261.

### A STORY THAT FORMS

As argued by Alasdair MacIntyre in his book, *After Virtue*, narrative is an effective method of learning.<sup>50</sup> This can be observed even in popular culture with fables, epics, dramas, and stories being used to teach various desirable patterns of behaviour to children. In fact, it is perhaps the lack of didactic character that is the telling feature of narratives that effectively form humans. What makes a story effectively formative is not long diatribes about the advantages or disadvantages of any particular characteristic. Rather, what makes a story formative are the attributes that symbolize the world in which one lives, and the capacity of making the story desirable to emulate. Illustrating certain patterns as being conducive of a desirable outcome and others as leading to an undesirable end, teach and form the consumer of the narrative how to interpret and act in the world. In the words of Vigen Guroian, “The great stories avoid didacticism and supply the imagination with important symbolic information about the shape of our world and appropriate responses to its inhabitants.”<sup>51</sup>

This is also the aim of Christian liturgy. The liturgy moves to narrate and enact a story through which man is formed into a particular way of interpreting and interacting with the world. The liturgy does not narrate an arbitrary story, but the story of God, and therefore, our own stories, as human beings created in his image and likeness—as human beings called to live his very own life, whereby we embrace and offer creation back up to him. For this reason, in the words of Ready,

The liturgy has the potential to restore and reform us because it *re-narrates* our identity, drawing us into the narrative arc that replays and re-enacts the story of God reconciling the world to himself in Christ, which is the true *telos* of the world and the basis of the vision of flourishing (the ‘good’) towards which we are drawn.<sup>52</sup>

Through the enactment of its narrative, therefore, liturgy aims to reform the whole of the life of man to conform to God’s own story. In this way, the whole of human life is formed to become a cosmic liturgy, in which man embodies the same narrative presented and enacted within the microcosmic liturgy. As Ready puts it, “In liturgy, then, God’s story shapes our own, the narrative of the age to come moulding us to be citizens and bringers of the kingdom: in liturgy we come to inhabit God’s world and his story.”<sup>53</sup>

### AN ENACTED STORY

In the Christian liturgical tradition, this narrative is enacted and embodied throughout the ritual of liturgy. In the same way that in the life of man God ought to be recognized in all things, liturgy narrates and embodies

50 Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed. (University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 216.

51 Vigen Guroian, *Tending the Heart of Virtue: How Classic Stories Awaken a Child’s Moral Imagination* (Oxford University Press, 1998), 18.

52 Ready, “Living God’s Story,” 43.

53 Ready, “Living God’s Story,” 34.

the story of such a life. In the words of Ready, “In the proclamation of readings from the scriptures, the performance of ritual actions, the hymns and prayers, the liturgy presents us with a myriad of sensory data, ideas and symbols, story-laden events derived from the grand narrative that is God’s own story.”<sup>54</sup> All these experiences form man, in his body, to live out the story of God. If the liturgy and the Eucharist proliferate the incarnation of Christ throughout human history, then the liturgy through all these embodied stimuli aims at bringing Christ into the experience of man. As Tadros Malaty writes, “Likewise in the last supper, the Lord brought his Church into the mystery of the cross, bestowing upon her his sacrificed life, i.e. his sacrificed body and blood, as a true sacrifice; and the Church still enjoys sacramentally the one sacrifice of the cross through the Eucharist.”<sup>55</sup>

The reality of the incarnation of Christ—his birth, death, resurrection, and ascension—is made *symbolically real* and available to be experienced by the Church—by the *gathering*—within the liturgy.<sup>56</sup> As such, the liturgy imprints this pattern of Christ onto the human being by reorienting the perspective of man towards Christ in all things. Throughout liturgy, Christ is known in all creation, according to whose pattern all things were created and are sustained into being. Thus, beyond the microcosmic liturgy, man comes to be habituated and moulded to experience Christ in all things. Man is birthed by liturgy to conform to the image in which he was created by God. He is shaped into the very image of God himself; an image that places God as the telos and measure of all things—as the hermeneutic key for interpreting all things, and in whom all things find their end.

#### FORMATION INTO BREAD

If liturgy imprints the story of God onto the human being, then liturgy necessarily forms man into the image of love, because, after all, “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8). This is, in fact, how God reveals himself. It is as in the words of Christ, “When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he” [ἐγώ εἰμι] (Jn 8:28). On the cross, Christ was known to be God, and it was on the way to the Cross that Christ was recognized by Pilate as being human in the most natural way as he says, “Behold the man!” (Jn 9:5). This is because to be most naturally human, one must be like God, and to be like God, one must empty themselves in love. For this reason, in the words of John Behr, “this one Lord Jesus Christ shows us what it is to be God in the way he dies as human, simultaneously showing us what it is to be human.”<sup>57</sup> As such, through the story narrated throughout the liturgy, man is formed to emulate, and ultimately, become the subject of this story. Man is moulded to become Christ inasmuch as he empties himself. Man is formed to unite

54 Ready, “Living God’s Story,” 35.

55 Tadros Yacoub Malaty, *Christ in the Eucharist*, 3rd ed., The Orthodox Concept 2 (Coptic Orthodox Christian Center, 2001), 21–22.

56 Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2018), 153.

57 John Behr, *John the Theologian & His Paschal Gospel: A Prologue to Theology* (Oxford University Press, 2019), 327.

with Christ, in all that he does, such that “it is no longer [man] who live[s], but Christ who lives in [him]” (Gal 2:20). Man is shaped so that he “might live no longer for [himself] but for him who for [his] sake died and was raised” (2 Cor 5:15). In embodying the story of God, wherein he is in a state of perpetual self-emptying love, man becomes more and more conformed to the image of God in which he was created. The image that was revealed to man on the cross. As Ready writes, “Claiming that narrative as our own, we reshape and arrange the events of our life to conform to the νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal 6.2), the kenotic pattern of Christ.”<sup>58</sup>

As such, the liturgy, shapes human life so that it conforms to the pattern of salvation. If salvation was accomplished by the incarnation of the Son, whereby man was reunited to God, reclaiming his most natural state of being—one which embodies the life of God as self-emptying love—then the microcosmic liturgy, by embodying this life of God, shapes the macrocosmic liturgy of human life to realize and materialize this salvific effect of the incarnation. After all, the incarnation, and therefore, its salvific telos is perpetuated throughout history within the liturgy. In the words of Ready, “The liturgy shows what this properly ‘natural’ human life is like—communion with one another, being part of one body, sacrificing our own egos for the other, loving one another, responding to a love initiated and faithfully expressed by God.”<sup>59</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This paper aimed at suggesting that sensual experiences throughout the microcosmic liturgy are ordered to move man into a narrative journey through which he is entrenched into God’s own story, coming to know him more intimately. To demonstrate this, it presented the early Christian understanding that God can be known through his own creation. This laid the ground for the possibility of knowledge being presented to the participant within the liturgy through the use of created things. Subsequently, by engaging with some modern thinkers, and briefly considering some early and medieval thinkers, the paper suggested that knowledge ought to begin with experience. As such, it is not only possible, but necessary, that the microcosmic liturgy saturate the human being within a matrix of experience, through which primary knowledge is made possible. Finally, it proposed that the most optimal form of pedagogy is one which entrenches the student within a narrative, through which he is formed. Consequently, it is reasonable to understand all the discrete points of sensual experiences offered within the microcosmic liturgy to be ordered into a narrative, which communicates God’s very own story, through which man is to be re-formed.

58 Ready, “Living God’s Story,” 40.

59 Ready, “Living God’s Story,” 113.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## SOURCES

Athanasius of Alexandria. "Exegesis of Prov. 8:22 (Or. Ar. 2:2, 2:3, 2:18–82)." In *Athanasius*, translated by Khaled Anatolios, 89–141. The Early Church Fathers. Routledge, 2004.

—. "Letter Two to Serapion." In *Works on the Spirit*, translated by Mark DelCogliano, Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, and Lewis Ayres, 106–27. Popular Patristic Series 43. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011.

Basil of Caesarea. "Homily 1: Creation of the Heavens and the Earth (On the Hexaemeron)." In *Exegetic Homilies*, translated by Agnes Clare Way, 3–19. The Fathers of the Church 46. Catholic University of America Press, 2003.

Clement of Alexandria. "The Exhortation to the Greeks." In *Clement of Alexandria: The Exhortation to the Greeks, the Rich Man's Salvation, and The Fragments of an Address Entitled To the Newly Baptized*, translated by G. W. Butterworth, 3–263. Harvard University Press, 1960.

Clement of Rome. "Second Clement." In *The Apostolic Fathers*, translated by Michael W. Holmes, 3rd ed., 132–65. Baker Academic, 2007.

Cyril of Alexandria. *Commentary on John*. Edited by Joel C. Elowsky. Translated by David R. Maxwell. Vol. 2. InterVarsity Press, 2015.

El-Massoudi, Abdelmessih, ed., *al-Khulāji al-Muqaddas: ayy kitāb al-thalātha Qadāsāt ma'a ṣalawāt ukhrā muqaddasa* (Dayr al-Sayyida al-'Adhrā' al-Baramūs, 2015).

Ephrem the Syrian. "Hymn VI." In *Hymns on Paradise*, translated by Sebastian Brock, 108–18. Popular Patristic Series 10. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990.

Evagrius of Pontus. "Chapters on Prayer." In *Evagrius of Pontus: The Greek Ascetic Corpus*, translated by Robert E. Sinkewicz, 183–209. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford University Press, 2006.

—. "On Thoughts." In *Evagrius of Pontus: The Greek Ascetic Corpus*, translated by Robert E. Sinkewicz, 136–82. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Gregory of Narek. "Prayer 75: Representing Heaven on Earth." In *From the Depths of the Heart: Annotated Translation of the Prayers of St. Gregory of Narek*, translated by Abraham Terian, 335–51. Liturgical Press, 2021.

Gregory of Nazianzus. "Oration 45: On Holy Pascha." In *Festal Orations*, translated by Nonna Verna Harrison, 161–90. Popular Patristic Series 36. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2008.

—. "The Fourth Theological Oration (Oration 30): On the Son." In *On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters to Cledonius*, translated by Lionel Wickham and Frederick Williams, 93–116. Popular Patristic Series 23. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002.

Gregory of Nyssa. *Gregory of Nyssa's Treatise on the Inscriptions of the Psalms*. Translated by Ronald E. Heine. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford University Press, 1995.

—. *Homilies on the Beatitudes: An English Version with Commentary and Supporting Studies*. Edited by Hubertus R. Drobner and Albert Viciano. Translated by Stuart George Hall. Vigiliae Christianae Supplements 52. Brill Publishers, 2000.

—. *The Life of Moses*. Translated by Abraham J. Malherbe and Everett Ferguson. Classics of Western Spirituality. Paulist Press, 1978.

Irenaeus of Lyons. "Against the Heresies (Book 4)." In *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, translated by Alexander Roberts and William Rambaut, 1:375–480. Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885.

John Chrysostom. "Homily 20 on Ephesians 5:22-23." In *On Marriage and Family Life*, translated by Catherine P. Roth and David Anderson, 43–64. Popular Patristic Series 7. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1986.

—. *St. John Chrysostom: Commentary on Saint John The Apostle and Evangelist, Homilies 1-47*. Translated by Sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin. The Fathers of the Church 33. Catholic University of America Press, 1957.

Justin Martyr. "The Second Apology." In *Writings of Saint Justin Martyr*, translated by Thomas B. Falls, 6:115–35. The Fathers of the Church. Catholic University of America Press, 2008.

Origen of Alexandria. *Origen: On First Principles*. Translated by John Behr. Vol. 1. Oxford Early Christian Texts. Oxford University Press, 2018.

Pseudo-Macarius. "Homily 28." In *Pseudo-Macarius: The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter*, translated by George A. Maloney, 184–86. Classics of Western Spirituality. Paulist Press, 1992.

## LITERATURE

Anatolios, Khaled. *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine*. Baker Academic, 2011.

Behr, John. *John the Theologian & His Paschal Gospel: A Prologue to Theology*. Oxford University Press, 2019.

Būlus al-Būshī. "God Granted Us Participation in the Body of Christ." In *Coptic Christology in Practice: Incarnation and Divine Participation in Late Antique and Medieval Egypt*, translated by Stephen J. Davis, 305–6. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford University Press, 2008.

—. "God Has Provided Us with Eternal Life." In *Coptic Christology in Practice: Incarnation and Divine Participation in Late Antique and Medieval Egypt*, translated by Stephen J. Davis, 304–5. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford University Press, 2008.

Chadwick, Henry. *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great*. Oxford History of the Christian Church. Oxford University Press, 2001.

Gschwandtner, Christina M. *Welcoming Finitude: Toward a Phenomenology of Orthodox Liturgy*. Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Thought. Fordham University Press, 2019.

Guroian, Vigen. *Tending the Heart of Virtue: How Classic Stories Awaken a Child's Moral Imagination*. Oxford University Press, 1998.

Holmes, Michael W., trans. "Shepherd of Hermas." In *The Apostolic Fathers*, 3rd ed., 422–685. Baker Academic, 2007.

Hovorun, Cyril. *Meta-Ecclesiology: Chronicles on Church Awareness*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Kavanagh, Aidan. *On Liturgical Theology*. Pueblo Books, 1984.

Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. Harper San Francisco, 2001.

Lossky, Vladimir. *Orthodox Theology: An Introduction*. Translated by Ian Kesarcodi-Watson and Ihita Kesarcodi-Watson. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1978.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. 3rd ed. University of Notre Dame Press, 2007.

Malaty, Tadros Yacoub. *Christ in the Eucharist*. 3rd ed. The Orthodox Concept 2. Coptic Orthodox Christian Center, 2001.

Marcel, Gabriel. *Metaphysical Journal*. Translated by Bernard Wall. Rockcliff, 1952.

—. *The Mystery of Being: Reflection & Mystery*. Translated by G. S. Fraser. Vol. 1. Henry Regnery Company, 1950.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Donald A. Landes. Routledge, 2012.

Morrow, Jeffrey L. "Creation as Temple-Building and Work as Liturgy in Genesis 1-3." *Journal of the Orthodox Center for the Advancement of Biblical Studies* 2, no. 1 (2009): 1–13.

Pentiuc, Eugen J. *Hearing the Scriptures: Liturgical Exegesis of the Old Testament in Byzantine Orthodox Hymnography*. Oxford University Press, 2021.

Ready, Geoffrey. "Living God's Story: Strengthening Liturgical Participation and Christian Formation through the Renewal of Enacted Narrative in the Orthodox Divine Liturgy." D.Min., University of Toronto, 2020.

Schmemmann, Alexander. *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*. Classics Series 1. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2018.

—. *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom*. Translated by Paul Kachur. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002.

Smith, James K. A. *Imagining The Kingdom: How Worship Works*. Cultural Liturgies 2. Baker Academic, 2013.