

The Problem of the Place of the Person of the Holy Spirit in Orthodox Ecclesiology of the 20th Century (on the example of Eucharistic ecclesiology of Nicholas Afanasiev)

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The question of the place of the Holy Spirit in the Orthodox Ecclesiology is not a new one, but it still remains open. In this article special attention is devoted to the Eucharistic Ecclesiology of Nicholas Afanasiev, in which he has tried to give to the Person of the Holy Spirit an essential place, and to the ecclesiological ideas of George Florovsky, who in his theological constructions has been extreme Christocentric and has avoided to give a special place to the oikonomia of the Spirit. A particular remark is made also about the possibility of using the neo-patristic synthesis in the discussion (with special reference the texts of St. Basil the Great, St. Athanasius of Alexandria and Didymus the Blind).

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Introduction

The ecumenical movement of the 20th century as a search for visible unity of divided Christians has raised the question about the nature of the Church – one of the most discussed issues in theological circles. The Orthodox theologians have also become a part of this discussion and have made several attempts to give their own answers to this question, although they differ in some aspects from one another.

One of the first attempts to describe the Orthodox ecclesiology was made by Vladimir Lossky (1903-1958), who was too rash and too loud, but has put forward a hypothesis that the eastern theology is a pneumatological one while the western theology is in its essence Christocentric¹. That is why when the pneumatological questions had come to light, it was expected that the Orthodox theologians could make a major contribution to this issue. But in reality they could not cope with this responsible task. I think that John Zizioulas was absolutely right saying the following: “Orthodox theology has

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¹ Vladimir Lossky, *Essai sur la théologie mystique de l'Église d'Orient*, Paris 1990, 248p. *In English: Vladimir Lossky, The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, Crestwood, NY 1976, 252p.