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and experienced not just in their self

contained form, but in their relation to others and everything around us. True existence is a connected-ness. It is also the very place where the instability and fragility of our lives is most revealed. If we can withdraw into ourselves, it is possible to imagine that we are fine, and that the things and people around us are just noise, sometimes enjoyable and other times annoying. But we do not think of the things and people around us as if our lives depended on them.

Against this withdrawal are the words of St. Silouan: "My brother is my life."

At the very core of Christian belief is the Trinitarian God. Trinity is not just a revelation of how we speak about God. It is also the revelation of the very character of existence. The monotheism of Islam substituted God as individual for God as Trinity. As such, it might be the first modern religion. That many modern Christians struggle with Trinitarian belief and expression is evidence of how far we have removed modernity from classical Christian roots. For us, "relationship" is a word that describes how we are getting along with another individual. For the Fathers, "relation" is an expression of mutual indwelling and coinherence. This exists because that exists, and they exist in one another. That is the true meaning of relationship.

When Christ says, "No one comes to the Father except by me," modern Christians take it to mean that non-Christians go to hell. It is, in fact, a statement about the nature of Trinitarian existence. No one can come to the Father apart from Christ because there is no Father apart from Christ. The Son is "Son," because of the "Father." But the "Father" is not "Father," except for the "Son" (and so on). This is true of God but is equally true of us. The limit within human existence is that we experience our personal existence as individual existence – or the temptation to do so is always present. It assumes that who we are only refers to what is within the boundaries of our skin.

A meditation: The breath we breathe. Is it part of us or is it something else? We cannot live without it. When we take it in or breathe it out, it is "our" breath. The only human existence without breath is a lifeless corpse. God "breathed" into the dust and it became a living soul. But the "breath" is also inherently the air around us. When does the air around us become "us," and when does it cease to be "us"? Of course, this is just a meditation on breath and air. But the same meditation could be extended to everything else around us. It could and should be extended to every person around us. If there were no relationships whatsoever, we simply would not exist. There is nothing within us that isn't something existing in relationship. Nothing.

We do not create relationships, nor do we have them. We are relationships and we either perceive this and pay attention or we do not. Inasmuch as we do not, we begin moving towards non-existence – death. This is not a description of massive and universal extravagance. It is possible to be very quiet, even a hermit, and yet be profoundly aware and responsive to our existence as relationship. The Scriptures say that "God is love." They do not say that God simply "has" love. God "is" love, which makes love a matter of ontology. That God is love is perfectly consistent with His existence as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. What we do not see clearly is that we are love, just as truly as God is love. Love is a mode of existence, indeed, the mode of existence.

“My brother is my life.” Consider the fullness of such a statement in Christ's words, "I have come that they might have life and that more abundantly." I will add a note of apology and explanation. I have previously written articles that criticize the use of the word "relationship," and, yet, here I am using it myself. The earlier articles stand, but I am here seeking to recapture the word "relationship" and use it in its older, theological meaning. Despite that vast vocabulary of English (the largest language in existence), words still create limits. I hope the reader will understand and be patient with me.

By Fr. Stephen Freeman

UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

Today – Annual Meeting - CGS for children

Thurs.–Sat. November 8th–10th – Fr. Daniel , Mat. Gail and Dr. Katya Hill will travel to present at the OCAMPR (Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine Psychology and Religion) Conference in Somerset NJ – This years theme "Compliance and Resistance: Discerning the Spirit". The Team will be presenting on the topic of how do we meet the needs of those who cannot speak, and provide them with the tools and training to help these members of our Body. Fr. Joseph Gall will be joining us as co-presenter with Dr. Hill and Fr. Daniel. Please pray for their travels and the wisdom of the Spirit.

Thursday, November 15th – Orthodoxy On Tap – Voodoo Brewery Meadville, PA 7pm

Saturday, Nov. 17th – Parish Ministry Meeting - 10-12noon

FEAST DAY - Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple: Tuesday, November 20th – Great Vespers with Lytia – 6pm Wednesday, November 21st – Divine Liturgy – 9:30am

Friday, November 30th – Missions Team Meeting

Sunday Dec. 2nd – St. Nic Party

Sunday, December 9th – Bake Sale

Sunday, December 16th – CGS Nativity Party

Saints Peter and Paul
Orthodox Church

25836 N. Mosiertown Rd Crossingville, PA 16414
Archpriest Fr. Daniel Mathewson – Rector V. Rev. David Smokey – Retired

Lord’s Day – 11-4-2018 Parish phone: 814-734-3801

Find us on the Web at: www.orthodoxcrossingville.org

or on Face book: Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church Crossingville

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST! GLORY FOREVER!


Today’s Hymns Tone 5 Troparion (Resurrection)

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation from the Virgin; for He will be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death, and to raise the dead! by His glorious Resurrection.

Tone 4 Troparion ( Martyrs Terence and Neonilus)
For you have said: “Mercy will be established forever; My truth will save us!” (Ps 11/12:7)

Thou hast delivered Adam from the curse, O Lord, and destraining its gates as Almighty, opening them wide into the infinite universe and the aures of all things. Intercede before Christ God to save our souls!

Tone 5 Kontakion (Venerable Stephen)

Thou didst plant a garden of the virtues, most glorious one, and did dost water it with the streams of thy tears. Since thou hast received the tree of life, O Stephen, save thy flock from corruption by thy prayers! Deliver from all evil, all of those who fervently honor thee, O wise Father. For thou hast received the tree of life, O Lord, and dost plant a garden of the virtues, most excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

Ephesians 2:4-10 (Epistle)

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Matthew 10:1, 5-8 (Gospel, Unmercenaries)

And when He called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

Luke 8:41-56 (Gospel)

And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And He fell down at Jesus’ feet and begged Him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped. And Jesus said, “Who touched Me?” When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, “Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’” But Jesus said, “Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me.” Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. And He said to her, “Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace.”

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