

Amsterdam Lectures 2011-12:

Eastern Orthodox Theology: a Personal Introduction

Lecture VIII: Time and the Liturgy.

Knowledge as participation: this is theme we have encountered several times in the course of these lectures, and it the justification for including this particular lecture.

St Maximos, *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer*:

For hidden within a limited compass this prayer contains the whole purpose and aim of which we have just spoken... The prayer includes petitions for everything that the divine Word effected through his self-emptying in the Incarnation, and it teaches us to strive for those blessings of which the true provider in God the Father alone through the natural mediation of the Son in the Holy Spirit...

Dionysios on the censuring of the Church:

The hierarch, having completed a reverent prayer, near the divine altar, starts with the censuring, and proceeds to every part of the enclosure of the sacred place; he then returns to the divine altar and begins the sacred chanting of the psalms... (*Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 3. 2)

And the interpretation, or contemplation, at *EH* 3. 3. 3

Cycle: liturgical and cosmic

Time:

- cyclical and linear
- day, week, month, year – different cycles that fit together awkwardly
- Pascha, Passover, Easter: bringing the cycles into conjunction
- Lent and Pentecost dependent on Pascha
- Sunday, the Day of the Resurrection
- The Calendar, based on the solar year: feasts of Saints and Martyrs
- Nested in this, other cycles: feasts of Christ, of the Mother of God, of St John the Baptist
- The Fasts: Lent, pre-Christmas, the Apostles' Fast, the Dormition Fast
- Feasts and fasts giving shape to time
- Time as a 'moving image of eternity' (Plato, *Timaeus* 37d)
- Ambivalence of temporal cycles

Application of all this to the services of the Church, especially the Divine Liturgy (drawing especially on Maximos, *Mystagogia*)

- Symbolism of Church and church building

- Church as a little cosmos: reflecting the cosmos, and also the human as, too, a little cosmos ('microcosm')
- Sanctuary/nave : invisible/visible world : heaven/earth : soul/body : intellect/soul : spirit/letter : Old Testament/New Testament – Chinese boxes
- 'Peace to all': voice of the risen Christ
- Liturgical Dance
- Reflections inspired by Juliet de Boulay, *Cosmos, Life, and Liturgy in a Greek Orthodox Village* (Limni, 2009)
- Today: the liturgical present
- Testing our belief in the prayer of the Church: *lex orandi lex credendi*