

MANABU AKIYAMA

**SOTERIOLOGICAL DIMENSION IN THE ANAPHORA OF THE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL
– IN LIGHT OF THE ESCHATOLOGY OF ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA –**

CONTENTS – 1. Introduction; 2. Chronological facts about Gregory and Basil; 3. Doctrine of “Apokatastasis” in the works of Gregory; 4. Anaphora in the Liturgy of St. Basil; 5. Controversies over the Epiclesis in the Liturgy of St. Basil; 6. Resurrection as Universal Salvation in the Anaphora of the Liturgy of St. Basil; 7. Resurrection as New Creation of the Image of God; 8. Conclusion.

1. Introduction

The Liturgy of St. Basil is now used in churches of the Byzantine rite, i.e. in the Greek Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church, 10 times a year. Since we have sufficient grounds for thinking that the essential text of this liturgy goes back to the phraseology and thought of St. Basil himself (330-379), it bears witness to the liturgical actuality in the time of the Greek Fathers of the 4th Century.¹ This is a remarkable point of this liturgy, because the other rite, i.e. the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, which is generally used throughout the year, cannot be necessarily thought to reflect the voice of St. Chrysostom (344-407) himself. When we try to promote dialogue between Catholics and Orthodoxies and other Christians on the bases of the Church Fathers, this liturgy will be of much value, because it faithfully reflects patristic spirituality. Moreover, Gregory of Nyssa (335-394) for example – the younger brother of St. Basil – can be assumed in all probability to have used such a liturgical text as we have in the name of St. Basil. In fact, almost all the works of Gregory were composed after his ordination to the episcopate (372). So Gregory can be essentially assumed to have formed his theology in accordance with the episcopate, which was imposed upon him by the forcible intention of his elder brother, St. Basil. Much of what Gregory wrote was composed in direct response to the suggestion and memory of Basil.

¹ For a more detailed discussion, H.-J. SCHULZ, *Die byzantinische Liturgie: Glaubenszeugnis und Symbolgestalt*, Trier 2000, esp. 23.

On the other hand, Gregory of Nyssa often uses in his works the term 'apokatastasis'. This Greek term, usually translated as 'universal salvation', was used in Peter's second sermon in *Acts of the Apostles* 3:21 for the first time in a Christian work. Later, especially in the works of Origenes (185-253), this term came to mean that ultimately all free mortal creatures, i.e. angels, men, and devils, will share in the grace of salvation. In Gregory's works, there cannot be found such an Origenistic tendency. Yet, for example in *De Vita Moysis (On the Life of Moses)*, one of Gregory's representative works in his last years, he writes thus:

1) "Perhaps someone, taking his departure from the fact that after three days of distress in darkness the Egyptians did share in the light, might be led to perceive the final restoration (*apokatastasis*) which is expected to take place later in the kingdom of heaven of those who have suffered condemnation in Gehenna".²

This passage may include some textual problems. Apart from that, the doctrine of apokatastasis was ultimately condemned in 553 as heretic, with the charge made about the Origenism. In fact, the doctrine of apokatastasis on the one hand is rather optimistic and on the other is subject to a charge of underestimation of the free will of humankind. However, the critical comments against the apokatastasis were made chiefly by St. Augustine; the doctrine of universal salvation, more or less, can be found in almost all the teachings of the main Greek fathers, Clement of Alexandria or Maximus the Confessor for example, as well as Origen and Gregory. Generally speaking, to the religious sensitivity of eastern people such a notion as 'universal salvation' is very attractive. In fact, in many points this doctrine is in harmony with the thought of salvation in Maháyána-Buddhism.

In the field of eschatology it is pointed out that Gregory held considerably universalistic views pertaining to the history of salvation.³ In this paper we would like to try, in the light of the eschatology of Gregory of Nyssa, to find and point out the chance to read some universalistic messages on salvation in the text of Anaphora of the Liturgy of St. Basil. As J. Meyendorff writes, in spite of the conservative tendencies of Byzantine theology, the interpretation of texts can be subject to substantial change and evolution.⁴ So today we are allowed to reinterpret the liturgical texts of

² *De Vita Moysis* II. 82, tr. by A. J. Malherbe – E. Ferguson (New York 1978).

³ A. MEREDITH, *The Cappadocians*, New York 2000, 123.

⁴ A. MEYENDORFF, *The Byzantine Theology*, New York 1974, 201.

the Byzantine rite in a new light, so that the modern necessity of dialogue between East and West may be facilitated. In the process of this research, it will become clear that the text of the liturgy of St. Basil, one of the liturgical texts in the Byzantine rite, will sincerely meet the requirement of the modern age, in that it express plainly the hope of unity for the whole of humankind.

2. Chronological facts about Gregory and Basil

First we should determine some chronological facts and the dates of composition of Gregory's works cited in this paper. St. Basil the Great was appointed in 370 to succeed Eusebius in the see of Caesarea, and he held this office for the rest of his life. It brought him into the thick of further controversies with the extreme Arian party led by Eunomius, as well as with the Pneumatomachi, who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

In 370 Basil was named bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. The emperor Valens was, at the time, persecuting those who held to the doctrines of the Council of Nicaea. And early in 372 Basil, desirous of having men about him he could trust, had his brother Gregory appointed bishop of Nyssa.

In 374 Valens further tried to get rid of the bishops who were faithful to Nicaea. Gregory himself was accused of squandering funds. To begin with, the validity of his Episcopal election was called into question and he was banished from his see in 375 under Valens.⁵ However, the literary activity of Gregory can be guessed to have begun in this period. Although the date of composition of *De Virginitate (On Virginity)*, his first literary work, is not yet completely decided, we guess that this work was composed probably considerably later (for example, circa 378) than the generally accepted view, since the usages of terms are very like those in another of his works, written in 379 or 380, as we discuss below. It may be that just when the emperor Valens was killed in the battle at Adrianople in 378 Gregory was restored once more to his see at Nyssa and entered the city to the joyous acclaim of the people.

In those days Basil had started to comment on *Genesis*, but his death in 379 stopped the completion of this commentary. Since Basil's *Hexaemeron* did not include the comment on the origin of man, immediately after Basil's death on 1 January 379 Gregory started to write *De Hominis Opificio (On the Making of Man)* to complete his brother's work. So the year of composition of *De Hominis Opificio* can

| ⁵ MEREDITH, *op. cit.*, 53.

be guessed as 379. On the other hand, Gregory's elder sister Macrina also died in the end of 379 or in July 380 (on 19 July, if we depend on the *Menologion* of the Byzantine rite).⁶ Also, *De Anima et Resurrectione (On the Soul and Resurrection)*, the scene of which is set at Macrina's deathbed, seems to have been composed in 379 or 380, after her death.

Concerning the date of composition of Gregory's major works in his last days, we conjecture that both *De Vita Moysis* and *In Canticum Canticorum (Commentary on Songs of Songs)* were composed almost in the same period, in 390 or later.

In regard to the date of *Oratio Catechetica Magna (Great Catechetical Oration)* we would like to think, if anything, that Gregory's theology is nearer to that of *De vita Moysis*. So we may set the date of composition of this work after 380 – for example, in 385, as A. Meredith suggests.⁷

3. Doctrine of “Apokatastasis” in the works of Gregory

In this chapter we would like to research the notion of “apokatastasis” by Gregory of Nyssa. It has been pointed out⁸ that the hope of Gregory, as expressed in the sentence from *De Vita Moysis* quoted above in point 1), coincides with the final section of *In Canticum Canticorum*, which is also one of Gregory's masterpieces in the field of mystical contemplation of biblical texts. In this work Gregory unfolds his vision of eschatological unity of everyone, in commenting on *Songs* 6:9, “There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and maidens without number. My dove, my perfect one is one; she is the one of her mother”, as follows:

2) “When all men look to the same goal of desire and become one and no evil remains in anyone, God will be everything to everyone, to those who through unity with one another are united by participation in the good of Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom be the glory, and the might for ever and ever.”⁹

According to M. Canévet, the universal perspective of this restoration, which is thus affirmed in the 15th homily of Gregory's *In Canticum Canticorum*,

⁶ G. MAY, “Die Chronologie des Lebens und der Werke des Gregor von Nyssa”, in M. Harl (éd. par), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nyssa*. Leiden 1971, 51-67: 66.

⁷ MEREDITH, *op. cit.*, 90.

⁸ Malherbe – Ferguson, *op. cit.*, fn. 102.

⁹ *In Canticum Canticorum*, GNO VI, 469.4-9, tr. by A. J. Malherbe – E. Ferguson, in *op. cit.*

finds its parallel and justification in the theory of image explained in the 16th and 17th chapters of his earlier work *De Hominis Opificio*.¹⁰ The passage below testifies that:

3) “When the Sadducees once argued against the doctrine of the resurrection, and brought forward, to establish their own opinion, that woman of many marriages, who had been wife to seven brethren, and thereupon inquired whose wife she will be after the resurrection, our Lord answered their argument so as not only to instruct the Sadducees, but also to reveal to all that come after them the mystery of the resurrection-life: «for in the resurrection. He says, «they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more, for they are equal to the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection». Now the resurrection promises us nothing else than the restoration (*apokatastasis*) of the fallen to their ancient state; for the grace we look for is a certain return to the first life, bringing back again to Paradise him who was cast out from it”.¹¹

This work of Gregory, as suggested in chap. 2 above, was probably written in 379 after the death of St. Basil in 379. In this passage the meaning of “apokatastasis” is explained as ‘restoration to the ancient state’. Faced with the death of his elder sister Macrina, Gregory also expresses his eschatological vision in another work, *De Anima et Resurrectione*, which was composed in about the same period. Gregory writes thus:

4) “None of the beauties we now see, not only in men, but also in plants and animals, will be destroyed in the life to come. The word of the apostle seems to me to support in every detail our opinion about the resurrection and to show what our definition stated, that the resurrection is nothing but the restoration (*apokatastasis*) of our nature to its original state. We learn this from Scripture which tells us that in the beginning of the world, the earth first produced grass and then came the seed and, when this fell into the earth, the same species was born again as had grown in the beginning. This is what the divine apostle is saying about the resurrection. We learn not only this from him, that man is changed into something more magnifi-

¹⁰ M. CANÉVET, “Exégèse et théologie dans les traités spirituels de Grégoire de Nysse”, in *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse*, 144-165; 157.

¹¹ *De hominis opificio*, in PG 44.188C (XVII.2), tr. in NPNF.

cent, but that nothing else is hoped for than for him to be *what he was in the beginning*.¹²

In another passage of *De Anima* the term “apokatasasis” was used thus:

5) “In order to provide a comprehensive definition, we shall say this: the resurrection is the restoring (*apokatastasis*) of our nature to its former condition”.¹³

Thus in the earlier works written in 379 or 380 Gregory defines the resurrection as “restoration to the ancient state” (*apokatastasis*). On the contrary, in the later works such as *De Vita Moysis* or *In Canticum Canticorum*, cited above, there can be found no understanding of *apokatastasis* in relation to the resurrection, but Gregory’s eschatological tendencies become clearer and his hope for unity comes to the fore.

Concerning the phrase ‘what he was in the beginning’, quoted in 4), Gregory interprets this as Christ, the first-born of God. He writes in chap. 16 of *De Hominis Opificio* thus:

6) “«God created man», the Scripture says, «in the image of Himself». There is an end (*telos*) of the creation of that which was made «in the image»; the Scripture then resumes the account of creation, and says, «male and female created He them». I presume that everyone knows that this is a departure from the *Prototype*: for «in Christ Jesus», as the apostle says, «there is neither male nor female». Yet the phrase declares that man is thus divided”.¹⁴

Here the paragraph cited as “the apostle says” is a quotation from *Letter to Galatians* 3:28. With regard to this passage we would like to discuss the point again in chap. 7 below. Gregory also writes in an earlier work *De Virginitate*, the year of composition of which we surmised above to be circa 378, as follows:

7) “This concern, then, for the finding of what is lost is the restoration (*apokatastasis*) to the original state of the divine image, which is now covered by

¹² *De anima et resurrectione*, in PG 46.156BC, tr. by V. W. Callahan (Washington D.C., 1967).

¹³ *De anima et resurrectione*, in PG 46.145D-148A, tr. by V. W. Callahan.

¹⁴ *De hominis opificio*, in PG 44.181AB (XVI.7), tr. in NPNF.

SOTERIOLOGICAL DIMENSION IN THE ANAPHORA OF THE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL

the filth of the flesh. Let us become what the first being (*prótoprastos*) was during the first period of his existence".¹⁵

The thought that appears here can be said to be nearer to that of 6) quoted above, because in both passages the notion of creation appears and "the first being" in the creation was taken notice of. This confirms the validity of our conjecture about the date of composition of *De Virginitate* being relatively late.

In summarizing this chapter, we should say that in *De Vita Moysis*, which was probably composed circa 390, the usage of the term 'apokatastasis' is very eschatological and seems to have gotten near to the meaning of 'universal salvation'. And *In Canticum Canticorum*, too, which was probably written in almost the same period, the hope of universal salvation is clear. So, in his exegetical works in his last years, Gregory depended closely on the scriptural texts and explained his hope along with this dependence. However, in his earlier works *De Hominis Opificio* or *De Anima et Resurrectione*, which were written in about 379 or 380, just after the deaths of blood brother and sister, his vision of the final days of humankind is explained more theoretically through the concept of resurrection, and is considered in the light of the creation of humankind by God. This hope of his seems to have been expressed in terms such as 'restoration to the ancient state'. So, notwithstanding the development of the doctrine of apokatastasis, the essential and starting point of Gregory's doctrine can be viewed as restoration to the ancient state of human beings, i.e., return to the first-created state of human nature as the unique image of God.

4. Anaphora in the Liturgy of St. Basil

Here we should turn our eyes to the text of the liturgy of St. Basil. The fact that Basil's hope for "unity" is prominent is a very distinctive point in the text of his liturgy. In the face of controversy on the Arian heretics St. Basil was especially worried about the unity of the Christian Church.

Now, first, we would like to quote the "Post Sanctus" paragraph and after that "the Institution Narrative", "Anamnesis" and "Epiclesis" from the text of the Liturgy of St. Basil.¹⁶

¹⁵ *De virginitate*, GNO VIII/I. 302.5-9, tr. by V. W. Callahan.

¹⁶ We have followed the English text that C. Kucharek carries in *the Byzantine-Slav Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, Combermere 1971, 615-623; 743-749. Concerning the original Greek text of the liturgy of St. Basil, we make reference to that in use now, usually in the Hungarian Greek Catholic Church. Cf. *A görög szertartású katolikus egyház szent és isteni liturgiája*, Nyíregyháza 1920.

Post Sanctus

...When he lived in this world, he gave us the precepts of salvation, and in turning us away from the deceits of idolatry he brought us to know you, true God and Father; thus he acquired us for himself as a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. After cleansing us with water and sanctifying us with the Holy Spirit, he gave himself as our ransom to the death in which we were held captive, sold under sin. Descending into hell through the cross so that through himself he might fulfil all, he loosed the pains of death. He rose again on the third day and established the way to the resurrection from the dead for all flesh, because it was not possible that the Author of life himself should be the victim of corruption; thus, he became the first risen of those who have fallen asleep, the first-born of the dead, that he might be first over all and in all. When he ascended into heaven, he sat at the right hand of your majesty on high, whence he will come to render to everyone according to his deeds.

Institution Narrative

And he left us these memorials of his saving passion, which we have set forth according to his command. For when he was about to go forth to his voluntary and ever-memorable and life-giving death, on the night in which he gave himself for the life of the world, he took bread into his holy and all-pure hands, he showed it to you, O God and Father, and gave thanks, blessed, sanctified, broke it (aloud), and gave it to his holy disciples and apostles, saying:

TAKE, EAT, THIS IS MY BODY WHICH IS BROKEN FOR YOU FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.

(People): Amen.

In like manner, he also took the cup of the fruit of the vine, and, when he had mixed it, and had given hands, blessed, and sanctified it (aloud), he gave it to his holy disciples and apostles, saying:

DRINK OF THIS, ALL OF YOU: THIS IS MY BLOOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WHICH IS SHED FOR YOU AND FOR MANY FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.

(People): Amen.

Anamnesis

Do this in anamnesis of me: for as often as you eat this bread and drink this chalice, you proclaim my death and confess my resurrection. Therefore we also, O Master, remembering his saving passion, his life-giving cross, his

SOTERIOLOGICAL DIMENSION IN THE ANAPHORA OF THE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL

three days' burial, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension into heaven, his sitting at your right hand, O God and Father, and his glorious and awesome Second coming (aloud), offering you your own from what is your own, in behalf of all and for all,

(People): we praise you, we bless you, we thank you, Lord, and we pray to you, our God.

Epiclesis

For this reason, all-holy Master, as your sinful and unworthy servants, whom you have accounted worthy to minister at your holy altar, not because of our own righteousness, for we have done nothing good upon the earth, but because of your multifold mercy and compassion which you have so richly poured out upon us, we have the courage to approach your holy altar and, while offering you the species (*ta antitypa*) of the holy body and blood of your Christ, we pray and beseech you, O Holy of Holies, that through the goodness of your loving-kindness your Holy Spirit may *come upon us* and upon these gifts (*ta dóra*) here set forth; and may he bless them, hallow and show forth this bread, indeed, as the precious body itself of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ (People: Amen) and this chalice indeed, the precious blood itself of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ (People: Amen), shed for the life of the world (People: Amen, amen, amen). And unite with one another all of us who partake of the one bread and the one chalice in the communion of the Holy Spirit, and grant that not one of us may become liable to judgment or condemnation for partaking of the sacred body and blood of your Christ, but grant that we may find mercy and grace together with all the saints who have been well-pleasing to you through the ages:"

The text then goes into the "diptych" part ("Intercessions").

5. Controversies over the Epiclesis in the Liturgy of St. Basil

The final passage quoted above, following after the "And unite with one another all of us who partake of the one bread and the one chalice in the communion of the Holy Spirit..." is different from the text of the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, which is in general use throughout the year. The corresponding part of St. Chrysostom's Liturgy goes as follows: "So that for those who partake of them they may serve for a cleansing of the soul, the remission of sins, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the

fulfilment of the heavenly Kingdom, for confidence in you and not for judgment or damnation.” So the theology of the unity, which is characteristic in the theology of St. Basil, is prominent here.

Concerning the consecratory power of the Epiclesis and the time when the consecration happens, there have continued many controversies, especially between Orthodox and Catholic theologians.¹⁷ In the iconoclastic controversy of the 8th Century, John the Damascene insisted, in the course of explaining *ta antitypa* in the Epiclesis (cf. above), that the consecration was effected not by the words of Institution, but by the Epiclesis. Since then, Byzantine scholars as Nicolaus Cabasilas (d. 1363) and Simeon of Thessalonica (d. 1429) insisted that the consecration happens at the Epiclesis, making reference to Damascene’s view, whereas the Latins maintained that the words of Institution sufficed. In the reunion council at Florence (1438), John Torquemada (d. 1468), Bessarion (d. 1472), and Isidore the Metropolitan of Kiev (d. 1463) tried to reconcile the two opinions. After the 2nd Vatican Council the epicletical passage was inserted into the newly composed Eucharistic Prayers (2nd, 3rd, and 4th) before and after the Institution Narrative. And for example, the second plenary meeting of the Joint Commission for theological dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, held in Munich from June 30 to July 6 1982, declared thus (1, 6):

“The Epiclesis is not merely an invocation for the sacramental transforming of the bread and cup. It is also a prayer for the full effect of the communion of all in the mystery revealed by the Son... That is why the Eucharistic mystery is accomplished in the prayer which joins together the words by which the Word made flesh instituted the sacrament and the *Epiclesis* in which the church, moved by faith, entreats the Father, through the Son, to send the Spirit so that in the unique offering of the incarnate Son, everything may be consummated in unity”.¹⁸

Thus, in regard to the doctrine of the Epiclesis today, the conflicts have been already solved. Yet in the patristic period there was a unity in the opinion about the moment of sanctification. As other church fathers such as John Chrysostom or Ambrose of Milan, as well as Gregory of Nyssa, say, sanctification should be found in

¹⁷ G. A. MALONEY, “Epiclesis” (art.), in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 464-466.

¹⁸ Cf. L. OROSZ, “Kiegészítő megjegyzések az epikléziszről”, in *Nikolaosz Kabaszilas Liturgia-magyarázata*, Nyíregyháza 1996, 134-137.

the moment of the Institution Narrative. Gregory thus writes definitively in the *Oratio Catechetica Magna*:

8) “The grace of the Word used to make holy the Body, the substance of which came of the bread, and in a manner was itself bread, so also in this case the bread, as says the Apostle, «is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer»; not that it advances, by the process of eating, to the stage of passing into the body of the Word, but it is at once changed into the body by means of the Word, as the Word itself said, «This is My Body»”.¹⁹

So if we interpret the text of the Liturgy of St. Basil in accordance with Gregory’s view, then we should put the moment of transubstantiation of the bread into the body of Christ at the time of the Institution Narrative. In his *Oratio Catechetica* Gregory writes in relation to the apokatastasis thus:

9) “In like manner, when, after long periods of time, the evil of our nature, which now is mixed up with our nature and has grown with its growth, has been expelled, and when there has been a restoration (*apokatastasis*) of those who are now lying in Sin to their primal state, a harmony of thanksgiving (*eucharistia*) will arise from all creation, as well from those who in the process of the purgation have suffered chastisement, as from those who needed not any purgation at all”.²⁰

His thought in this passage can be rightly said to have come nearer to that of *De Vita Moysis*. That is why we put the date of the composition of this work considerably later.

6. Resurrection as Universal Salvation in the Anaphora of the Liturgy of St. Basil

In the Liturgy of St. Basil we decided to place the moment of sanctification of the offerings in the Institution Narrative, following the interpretation of Gregory of Nyssa. Our attitude coincides with the explanation by the Greek Catholics. From such a point of view the following reasoning is possible:

¹⁹ *Oratio Catechetica Magna* XXXV, GNO III/IV, 97.5-12, tr. by W. Moore & H. A. Wilson, in NPNF.

²⁰ *Oratio Catechetica Magna* XXVI, GNO III/IV, 67.7-13, tr. in NPNF.

1. The prayer in the Epiclesis is made such that the Holy Spirit first may *come upon us*, namely upon the community of the faithful. This part first reminds us of the Pentecostal scene (*Acts* chap. 2).

2. The Institution Narrative obtains its source from the words of Jesus himself at the Last Supper. On the other hand, if the Epiclesis originates in the narrative of the Pentecost, the account of Jesus' death and resurrection must have been given between the Institution Narrative and the Epiclesis. The offerings (*dóra*) are already consecrated to the Body and Blood of Jesus by the words of Jesus himself, as told in the Institution Narrative. These offerings – bread and wine – remain the same, on the one hand as the object of the Institution Narrative told before the Anamnesis, and on the other hand as the object of the descent of the Holy Spirit besought after the Anamnesis. This fact signifies that the new community, which is to be born by the descent of the Holy Spirit, should be identified with “Jesus resurrected”. Besides, such identity of the offerings before and after the Anamnesis corresponds with the fact that the resurrected Jesus presented himself to the disciples, still with the holes in the flesh of his hands and side (*Ev. of John*, 20:20, 27). This fact could be a basis also for the doctrine of the “resurrection of the flesh”.

3. According to J. Meyendorff, the concept that the Eucharist is an anticipation of the eschatological fulfilment is affirmed in the canon of the Byzantine liturgy itself, which recalls the second coming of Christ as an event that *has already occurred*,²¹ the text of this canon reads, just as we have quoted above in the Anamnesis: “Therefore we also, O Master, remembering his saving passion, his life-giving cross, his three days' burial, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension into heaven, his sitting at your right hand, O God and Father, and his glorious and awesome Second coming...”. So the fact that in the part on the Anamnesis the second coming of Christ has already been mentioned means that the essentials of the Eucharist are intended for eschatological actuality.

4. In fact, in the section on the Anamnesis, the text reads that “offering you your own from what is your own, in behalf of all and for all” (In Greek: *Ta sa ek tón sôn prosperontes, kata panta kai dia panta*.) This phrase reminds us of the passage in *Letter to the Corinthians I*, 15:28: “When everything has been subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subjected to the One who has subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all.” So the phrase in the Anamnesis implies in its meaning the coming of the eschatological spirit. Meyendorff also writes

| ²¹ MEREDITH, *op. cit.*, 208.

in this context that the whole destiny of humanity and the world is involved in the Eucharist.²²

5. In the *Acts* Peter delivered his first sermon, quoting a passage from the *Book of Joel* (3:1–5), “In the last days, the Lord declares, I shall pour out my Spirit on all humanity”. The content of Peter’s sermon was that the Pentecost was really the beginning and the fulfilment of the final era, which the prophet Joel predicted. Therefore the interpretation that the Epiclesis implies the coming of the eschatological Holy Spirit has its ground in *Acts*.

6. In many passages quoted above in chap. 3, Gregory discusses the apokatastasis or “return to the ancient state” through the concept of resurrection. For example, in quotation 3) above, Gregory wrote that “the resurrection promises us nothing else than the restoration (*apokatastasis*) of the fallen to their ancient state”. Thus he identifies the apokatastasis, i.e. the universal salvation, with resurrection and defines it as “a return to the ancient state”. So, inside the liturgical text, we could indicate the dimension of “universal salvation” in the Epiclesis, in the *resurrected* body of Christ.

7. Resurrection as New Creation of the Image of God

Now we would like to go on with our discussion about the meaning of Epiclesis from the viewpoint of “creation”.

1. Passage 6) quoted above shows that Gregory, on the basis of *Galatians* 3:28, finds in Christ, who is apart from gender, the ‘Prototype’ at the time of God’s creation of man “in the image of God Himself” (*Genesis* 1:26).

2. On the other hand, Meyendorff, quoting a passage of Maximus Confessor (*PG* 91.668B), writes that the Church, as community and as building, is a sign of the new age, the eschatological anticipation of the new creation, the created cosmos restored in its original wholeness.²³ In fact, the biblical passage on the Pentecost (*Acts* chap. 2) when the Christian Church was created shows a new *creation* in an eschatological dimension.

3. The text of the Epiclesis in the liturgy of St. Basil, cited above in chap. 4, can be interpreted in a context of the Pentecost, just as we indicated in points 1. and 2. of chap. 6. So we will rightly suppose a level of new *creation* at the moment of Epiclesis.

²² MEREDITH, *op. cit.*, 207-208.

²³ MEREDITH, *op. cit.*, 208.

4. As we pointed out in point 2. of the last chapter, the offering at the moment of Epiclesis can be signified as “the resurrected Christ”. On the other hand, as we indicated in point 1. of this chapter quoting the passage 6), in the context of the new *creation* in the Epiclesis the offerings can be interpreted as the ‘Prototype’ of this creation, i.e. as Christ, the true image of God. Therefore, we can explain that ‘the resurrected Christ’ in the Epiclesis functions as a ‘Prototype’ in the new creation, if we think in terms of Gregory’s eschatological interpretation.

5. Gregory, indeed, writes in his *De Hominis Opificio* thus:

10) “In saying that «God created man» the text indicates, by the indefinite character of the term, all mankind; for here the name ‘Adam’ was not given to the creature as history tells us in what follows; the name given to the man created is not the particular, but the general name: thus we are led by the employment of the general name of our human nature to some such view as this – that in the Divine foreknowledge and power all humanity is included in the first creation”.²⁴

With this view that all humanity is included in the first creation may be compared a passage near the end of *De Anima*, a work of the same period, where the first man in God’s creation was thus compared to a grain of corn:

11) “The first grain was the first man, Adam. But when nature was multiplied by the introduction of evil as in the harvest of the grain, men were deprived of the form of their *prototype* and, after being mixed with earth, through the resurrection we grow again in keeping with our pristine beauty, countless numbers of us having been produced”.²⁵

We would like to notice that also in this passage Gregory uses the notion of “prototype”.

6. So we can surmise that Gregory, in the context of *De Hominis Opificio*, imagines that the place of unity for humankind in the final era should be “man” as the unique image of God. Indeed in this work Gregory writes thus:

²⁴ *De hominis opificio*, in PG 44.185B (XVI.16), tr. in NPNF; partly changed.
²⁵ *De anima et resurrectione*, in PG 46.157AB, tr. by V. W. Callahan.

12) “For the image is not in part of our nature, nor is the grace in any one of the things found in that nature, but this power extends equally to all the race: and a sign of this is that mind is implanted alike in all: for all have the power of understanding and deliberating, and of all else whereby the Divine nature finds its image in that which was made according to it: man that was manifested at the first creation of the world, and he that shall be after the consummation of all, are alike: they equally bear in themselves the Divine image. For this reason the whole race was spoken of as one man, namely, that to God’s power nothing is either past or future, but even that which we expect is comprehended, equally with what is at present existing, by the all-sustaining energy. Our whole nature, then, extending from the first to the last, is, so to say, one image of Him Who is”.²⁶

7. In the last part of this work, *De Hominis Opificio*, in another respect Gregory stresses that the body and soul have a simultaneous beginning. Gregory writes thus:

3) “We are to say that in the power of God’s foreknowledge (according to the doctrine laid down a little earlier in our discourse), all the fullness of human nature had pre-existence..., and in the creation of individuals not to place the one element before the other, neither the soul before the body, nor the contrary, that man may not be at strife against himself, by being divided by the difference in point of time”.²⁷

Such simultaneity of human body and soul in origin, as J. Cavarnos points out,²⁸ would testify to the unity of human nature. Thus Gregory insists that the unity of human nature will lay the foundation for the unity of humankind, which was what he wished.

²⁶ *De hominis opificio*, in PG 44.185CD (XVI.17-18), tr. in NPNF.

²⁷ *De hominis opificio*, in PG 44.233D-236A (XXIX.), tr. in NPNF.

²⁸ J. P. CAVARNOS, “The Relation of Body and Soul in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa”, in H. Dörrie – M. Altenburger – U. Schramm (eds.), *Gregor von Nyssa und Die Philosophie*. Leiden 1976, 61-78, esp. 64-65.

8. Conclusion

As we have examined in this paper, the Anaphora of the Liturgy of St. Basil reveals itself to contain many elements of universal salvation, if we introduce the eschatological views proposed by Gregory of Nyssa, and especially those presented in his *De Hominis Opificio*. The dimension of “universal salvation” might be achieved when we notice the fact that humankind has been created by God as the unique image of God Himself. In the text of the Epiclesis in the Liturgy of St. Basil, we read that in the moment of “new creation” in the “Resurrected Christ” (i.e. the “Prototype” at the time of God’s creation of mankind), the unity of humanity might be realized.

The Liturgy of St. Basil, as one of the main legacies of Byzantine Christianity, will be of much value, together with the theological texts of Gregory of Nyssa, in modern times as a text for the unity of mankind and as a basis of peaceful dialogue between East and West.