

Theosis
**Some ideas of Deification as reflected throughout the
Ethiopic Divine Liturgy**

[*Theosis*: algunas ideas de la 'deificación' a través de la 'Liturgia Divina
Etiópica']

Andualem DAGMAWI
University of St. Michael's College, Toronto
andudag@yahoo.com

Resumen: La divinización ha sido considerada como el plan eterno de Dios para la humanidad y consiguientemente el propósito final de la encarnación. La participación en la vida divina comienza con el bautismo y se nutre con la eucaristía. La celebración litúrgica transmite esta gracia salvífica a los fieles. Es un proceso en curso marcado por la apertura al amor en la fe. La pneumatología se halla en el corazón de la soteriología ortodoxa, que hace posible la realización de la humanidad a semejanza de Dios.

Abstract: Divinization has been regarded as God's eternal plan to humanity and subsequently the ultimate purpose of the incarnation. Participation in the divine life is initiated in baptism and nurtured through the Eucharist. Liturgical celebration mediates this salvific grace to the faithful. It is an ongoing process marked with openness to love in faith. Pneumatology is at the heart of Orthodox soteriology that makes possible humanity's realization of the likeness of God.

Palabras clave: *Synergeia*. Pneumatología. Deificación. Liturgia divina.

Key words: *Synergeia*. Pneumatology. Deification. Divine Liturgy.



Orthodoxy has maintained for so long Christian life as Christo-centric, Sacramental and Ecclesial. By Christo-centric it means that Orthodoxy places Christ as the core of its doctrinal teaching and liturgical celebration. This centrality of Christ is constantly revealed and experienced in the daily sacramental life of the Church. Subsequently, the sacramental grace of Christ has been bestowed upon the faithful through the solemn liturgical celebration, which enables them to become partakers thereof.

In highlighting this, Stephen Finlan and Vladimir Kharlamov remark, “the liturgy provides a glimpse of future divinization.”¹ This in turn complies with the famous theological principle: *lex orandi lex credendi* – the rule of prayer should be the rule of faith. For Orthodoxy, the theology and spirituality of *theosis* is at the heart of its Eucharistic-ecclesiology. The purpose of this research paper is therefore to explore the diverse meaning of *theosis* as reflected throughout the Eucharistic anaphorae of the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church.

The Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* [ἔνωσις] Church is one of the ancient Oriental Orthodox Churches.² The Eucharistic Liturgy is the central feature of Ethiopian Orthodoxy. This apostolic Church is one of the most ancient of Christian Churches, which has maintained for such a long duration of time the tradition of the divine worship of the early apostolic church. The Holy Eucharist, in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, is the center of the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The Eucharist by its nature is the crown of all celebrations, and the climax of worship.³ The Ethiopic liturgy is the gold mine and indispensable core for the Church’s fundamental theology. Profoundly, its Eucharistic Divine Liturgy constantly celebrates the saving work of God that is culminated in the sacrificial

¹ Stephen FINLAN and Vladimir KHARLAMOV (eds.), *Theōsis: Deification in Christian Theology* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2006), PP. 12, 46-47.

² The Interim Secretariat Oriental Orthodox Conference (ed.), *The Oriental Orthodox Churches Addis Ababa Conference* (Addis Ababa: Artistic Printers, 1965), P. 3. Historians mostly refer to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church as “the largest of the five non-Chalcedonians Eastern Churches.” See WONDIMAGEGNEHU and MOTOVU, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Church*, p. xiii.

³ Samuel A. B. MERCER, *The Ethiopic Liturgy: Its Sources, Development and Present Form*, pp. 46, 71, 79-79, 85-85. Sergew Hable SELASSIE, “The Establishment of the Ethiopian Church,” *The Church of Ethiopia: A Panorama of History and Spiritual Life*, pp. 1-6. Ayalew TAMIRU, *YeEtiopia Emmet Be Sostu Hegegat I “The Faith of Ethiopia According to the Three Laws”* (Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam Printing Press, 1960), p. 205. D. O’ HAULON, *Features of the Abyssinian Church* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1946), 36, 39. F. L. Cross, ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974, 2nd ed.), p. 830.

death and triumphant resurrection of the Son of God.⁴ Remarkably, this is quite evident in the Church's long-standing liturgical theology and spirituality.

According to several liturgical scholars, the most ancient layers of Ethiopian Liturgy could be traced back to the fifth century.⁵ It is during this time that many liturgical texts are translated into *Ge'ez*, the indigenous ecclesiastical language of the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church. Since then, this Church has preserved a rich treasure of various Anaphoras. The present Ethiopic Liturgy has fourteen Anaphoras.⁶ These Anaphoras are attributed to the Lord, our Lady St. Mary, the Apostles and the Fathers of the Church, especially those of the Golden Age. Allegedly, the earliest anaphora (the Apostles) dates back to the apostolic age.

The Doctors of the Ethiopian Church have diligently assigned each of the anaphoras to be celebrated throughout the Church's liturgical year. Accordingly, the anaphora of the Apostles is celebrated on the memorial feast of the prophets, apostles and martyrs. The anaphora of the Lord is performed on the feasts of the holy family's return from their persecution to Egypt, on the consecration of a newly constructed Church and on the Assumption of the Holy Virgin Mary. The anaphora of our Lady St. Mary is celebrated on her different feast days and the feast of Annunciation. Lastly, the anaphoras of the Church Fathers are used on the feasts of Holy Trinity, Nativity, Epiphany, Cana, Transfiguration, Hosanna, Maundy Thursday, Crucifixion, Holy Cross, Holy Saturday, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, Cherubim and Seraphim, the Lord's Day, Saints and

⁴ Archbishop YESEHAQ, *The Structure and Practice of the Ethiopian Church Liturgy*, i. Soteriologically, the word Economy, *oikonomia* refers to the divine plan or dispensation of God towards His creation. Gorgorios, *YeEtiopia Ortodox Täwahedo Betekristian Tarick* ["History of the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwahedo Church"], p. 155.

⁵ Ernst HAMMERSCHMIDT, *Studies in the Ethiopic Anaphoras* (Berlin, 1961), pp. 41-43.

⁶ S.A.B. MERCER, *The Ethiopic Liturgy: Its Sources, Development, and Present Form*, pp. 5-6, 95. H. M. HAYATT, *The Church of Abyssinia* (London: Luzac and Co., 1928), p. 95. *Matshafa Qiddassie* ["The Book of Liturgy"] (Addis Ababa: Axum Printing Press, 2000), p. 5. The fourteen anaphoras of the Ethiopian Church are: The Anaphora of the Apostles, the Anaphora of the Lord, the Anaphora of St. John, Son of Thunder (St. John the Evangelist), the Anaphora of our Lady St. Mary, the Anaphora of the Three Hundred (The Nicean Fathers), the Anaphora of St. Athanasius, the Anaphora of St. Basil, the Anaphora of St. Gregory of Nazianzen, the Anaphora of St. Epiphanius, the Anaphora of St. John Chrysostom, the Anaphora of St. Cyril, the Anaphora of St. James the Serug (St. Jacob of Serouh), the Anaphora of St. Dioscorus, the Anaphora of St. Gregory II (St. Gregory of the Armenians). See Marcos DAOU (tr.), *The Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, Revised by M. Hazen (Cairo: Egyptian Book Press, 1959), pp. 69, 98, 110, 103, 153-154, 174, 197, 218, 233, 249, 263, 279, 294, 304. E. HAMMERSCHMIDT, *Studies in the Ethiopic Anaphoras* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961), pp. 41-43.

commemoration of Archbishops, Bishops and Priests. Of the given anaphoras, the most frequently used are: the anaphoras of the Apostles, the Lord, our Lady St. Mary, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Dioscorus of Alexandria.

Structurally, the Liturgy of Ethiopian Orthodox Church consists of three major sections.⁷ First is the Preparatory Rites or *Gəbə'atä Mənṭola'ət* (ግብዓተ መንግሥት). This name is given precisely because this function usually takes place within the veils of the sanctuary. This is composed of brief prayers and blessings upon the Church's various Vessels – Coverings (ግሳፊዳት), Paten (ጸሕፊ), Chalice (ጽዋዕ), Cross-spoon (ዕርፈ መስቀል), and Vestments (አልባሳት). It also prescribes the different instructions and guidelines of liturgical functions proper to the priests, deacons and the laity attendants.

Secondly, the Pre-anaphora section or *Sərə'atä Qəddassie* (ሥርዓተ ቅዳሴ) mainly consists of introductory prayers and rites, Scriptural readings and the profession of faith (i.e., recitation of the Creed). Thirdly and foremost, the Anaphora or *Fərə Qəddassé* (ፍሬ ቅዳሴ) can be translated as “Prayer of Thanksgiving.” Its structure is formed by the Dialogue, Sanctus, Post-Sanctus, Institution Narrative, Anamnesis, Epiclesis, Diptychs and then the sincere invitation to Holy Communion. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the attached appendix at the end of the Ethiopic Liturgical Book is called Prayer of the Covenant or *Şəlotä Kidanə* (ጸሎተ ኪዳን). This prayer, also known as *Trisagion* Prayer, always precedes the Eucharistic Liturgy.

The overall approach feature of the Ethiopian Liturgy is highly apophatic, marked with mystical spirituality. Accordingly, it offers to readers from the Western world a very valuable resource for the understanding of not only of the Ethiopian liturgy but also of its theology, spirituality and life. The key themes that recur throughout the Ethiopic anaphoras are: God's greatness, His creation *ex nihilo*, His divine providence, the Fall, the fulfillment of the divine promise of salvation in the incarnation, cosmological recreation, the grace of deification of

⁷ Nikolaus LIESEL, *The Eucharistic Liturgies of the Eastern Churches*, trans. David Heimann (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1963), pp. 38, 40-50. E. HAMMERSCHMIDT, *Studies in the Ethiopian Anaphoras*, pp. 50-60. S.A.B. MERCER, *The Ethiopic Liturgy: Its Sources, Development and Present Form*, pp. 295-373. For further details on each texts, See M. DAOUD (tr.), *The Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, pp. 5-59. S.A.B. MERCER, *The Ethiopic Liturgy: Its Sources, Development and Present Form*, pp. 141-220.

humanity, the Church as redeeming Body of Christ, the foretaste and experience of the eschatological hope, the sacraments as efficacious means of divinization.

Etymologically, the Greek term (θεώσις) *theosis* could interchangeably be used as Deification or Divinization. Broadly speaking, it would be defined as: “union, participation, partaking, communion/partnership, divine filiation, adoption, recreation, intertwined with the divine, similitude with God, transformation, elevation, transmutation, commingling, assimilation, intermingling, rebirth, regeneration, and transfiguration.”⁸ Biblically, the doctrine of *theosis* is based firmly on the famous Petrine verse, “You may become participants of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4). Orthodoxy considers the grace of deification as the original goal of human’s creation and its existence, which had been once interrupted by the drastic fall of humanity. Nevertheless, it has been made possible now through the incarnation of the Son of God. As it shall be revealed in the discussions that follow, towards the realization of humanity’s divinization Eucharistic ecclesiology is a case in point.⁹

Fundamentally, *theosis* refers to the continuing experience of Christians to imitating God so as to be transformed into the divine likeness of God. Of course, it should be understood that this happens without getting rid of their human nature, which has been made possible only through the mystery of the incarnation.¹⁰ In highlighting this, Professor Pablo Argárate made use of a mathematical illustration and explained the practicality of deification with the geometric principle called an asymptote line. As of this mathematical expression, a line of asymptote would possibly come closer to its opposite axis, and yet it would never touches or crosses the axis. Likewise, the fallen Adamic nature of humankind became divinized without becoming God in the strict sense of the term.

Theōsis is an unfinished process, emphasizing the idea of *synergia*, which implies the necessity of divine-human cooperation towards its fulfillment. Reflecting on the significant role of personal experience in one’s spiritual journey of life, Alexander Schmemmann speaks, “... In its essence, Christian faith is a personal encounter with Christ, an acceptance not of this or that teaching or dogma

⁸ FINLAN and KHARLAMOV (eds.), *Theōsis: Deification in Christian Theology*, p. 6.

⁹ Ted A. CAMPBELL, *Christian Confessions: A Historical Introduction* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), p. 48.

¹⁰ Kallistos WARE, *The Orthodox Way*, Revised Edition (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003), pp. 124-125.

about Christ, but of Christ Himself.”¹¹ As Gregory Glazov says, “Theōsis begins with the humble opening up of oneself to the reception of God’s word, and progresses through the keeping and cultivation, i.e., the doing of the word” (Jas. 1:22-27).¹² For Orthodoxy, the ultimate purpose of Christian life here and now is to attain the God-given grace of His divine likeness – divinization. As such it is a life-long process, which is to be nourished constantly through the ecclesiastical sacraments. Being a divine gift and human task, divinization demands *synergia* – the divine-human cooperation.¹³

Interestingly enough, Kallistos Ware has made a clear cut distinction between the divine essence and the divine energies of God so as to draw a demarcation line between what the Orthodox notion of deification is and what deification is not. His reflection reads:

By the essence of God is meant his otherness, by the energies his nearness. Because God is a mystery beyond our understanding, we shall never know his essence or inner being, either in this life or in the age to come. If we knew the divine essence, it would follow that we knew God in the same way as he knows himself; and this we cannot ever do, since he is Creator and we are created. But, while God’s inner essence is for ever beyond our comprehension, his energies, grace, life and power fill the whole universe, and are directly accessible to us.

... When a man knows or participates in the divine energies, he truly knows or participates in God himself, so far as this is possible for a created being. But God is God, and we are human; and so, while he possesses us, we cannot in the same way possess him.

... The essence signifies the whole God as he is in himself; the energies signify the whole God as he is in action. ... Thus the essence-energies distinction is a way of stating simultaneously that the whole God is inaccessible, and that the whole God in his outgoing love has rendered himself accessible to man.

By virtue of this distinction between the divine essence and the divine energies, we are able to affirm the possibility of a direct or mystical union between man and God

¹¹ Alexander SCHMEMANN, *Celebration of Faith: I Believe*, vol. 1 (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003), p. 16.

¹² FINLAN and KHARLAMOV (eds.), *Theōsis: Deification in Christian Theology*, pp. 3-4, 28.

¹³ T.A. CAMPBELL, *Christian Confessions: A Historical Introduction*, 50-53. T. [Kallistos] WARE, *The Orthodox Church*, New Edition, (London: Penguin Books, 1997), pp. 231-238.

- what the Greek Fathers term the *theosis* of man, his “deification” - but at the same time we exclude any pantheistic identification between the two: for man participates in the energies of God, not in the essence. There is union, but not fusion or confusion. Although “oned” with the divine, man still remains man; he is not swallowed up or annihilated, but between him and God there continues always to exist an “I-Thou” relationship of person to person.¹⁴

The liturgical life of the Church maintains the divine-human relationship, which ultimately aims at the progressive transformation of our earthly human nature into the divine glory of God. Referring to this, Gregory Glazov speaks, “Entry into life means transformation from lowly earth, that is, *soil*, into the full stature of an exalted tree of righteousness ... a paradisaic tree of life and knowledge.”¹⁵ As Stephen Finlan highlights, in order to understand properly the transformative experience of Orthodoxy’s mystical and sacramental life, the Pauline soteriology that depicts Christ our Saviour as the Second Adam is a case at point. The early Church Fathers introduced well this typological imagery to the early patristic scholarship. Typologically speaking, as humanity inherit death and corruptibility through the first Adam, humanity has also now overcome death and acquire the grace of incorruptibility through Christ, the Second Adam (1 Cor. 15:20-21; 45-47).

According to the abovementioned Petrine verse, divinization is simply the process of human’s achievement of incorruptibility. Sacramentally, this is attained through our frequent participation in the Lord’s Eucharistic banquet. Towards that end, internalizing the divine word of God in our life is really crucial. Along with this, the Apostolic Fathers consider deification as the final goal of Christian life towards imitating Christ and the ultimate expression of their love for Christ through martyrdom. Due to this, Orthodoxy understands salvation as the unification of the faithful with Christ, which in turn identifies ‘deification’ with ‘Christification.’ By so doing, the Fathers understand the ultimate goal of the

¹⁴ T.K. WARE, *The Orthodox Way*, pp. 22-23.

¹⁵ FINLAN and KHARLAMOV (eds.), *Theōsis: Deification in Christian Theology*, pp. 16, 27, 110.

vocation of Christians as to become 'bearers of Christ' (Χριστοφόροι).¹⁶ Ted. A. Campbell rightly refers to *theosis* as: "the heart of Eastern Christian spirituality."¹⁷

For Pauline soteriology, we already became partakers of the earthly things because of the first Adam. On the contrary, we have become bearers of the heavenly grace through our association with the Second Adam (1 Cor. 15:44-47). Christ, the Second Adam granted us the potentiality to become partakers of His divine glory. In this regard, Jeffrey Finch articulates the famous Athanasian soteriology, "... The incarnation did not automatically or mechanically divinize the human nature of which every individual is an instantiation, but gave to every member of the human race only the potential to be divinized."¹⁸

Scriptures, which themselves are the divine breath of God, speak of the Christian faith as the "Way." (Jn. 14:6; Acts 9:2; 19:7-9). Henceforth, Christian life to which we are graciously called to live out here and now is an unfinished spiritual race that is to be completed with perfection of divine grace in the world to come. In asserting the necessity of divine-human cooperation in the ongoing process of divinization, Kallistos Ware points out,

... To be a Christian is to be traveler. Our situation, say the Greek Fathers, is like that of the Israelite people in the desert of Sinai: we live in tents, not houses, for spiritually we are always on the move. We are on a journey through the inward space of the heart, a journey not measured by the hours of our watch or the days of the calendar, for it is a journey out of time into eternity.¹⁹

The Church is the central place of human's divinization process since the sacraments, the outward signs and symbols of the invisible grace, would have no validity apart from the Church. Subsequently, this reveals the distinctive feature of Orthodox spirituality, which has been briefly traced at the introductory remarks, as sacramental and ecclesiastical.²⁰ According to Orthodox ecclesiology, the Church is the community of believers who sojourn to the eternal kingdom of God inspired by the power and grace of the Spirit. Towards that end, the Church's Eucharistic

¹⁶ FINLAN and KHARLAMOV (eds.), *Theōsis: Deification in Christian Theology*, pp. 43-48, 52, 55, 60, 65.

¹⁷ T.A. CAMPBELL, *Christian Confessions: A Historical Introduction*, p. 52.

¹⁸ FINLAN and KHARLAMOV (eds.), *Theōsis: Deification in Christian Theology*, p. 110.

¹⁹ T.K. WARE, *The Orthodox Way*, pp. 7, 100.

²⁰ T.A. CAMPBELL, *Christian Confessions: A Historical Introduction*, p. 55. See also p. 1 of the present article.

celebration is the very foundation as well as the culmination of its christified / divinized nature. As of the long-standing Orthodox tradition, “the whole liturgy links believers to the sacrifice of Christ.”²¹

Insofar as the ecclesial dimension of divinization is concerned, baptism, the first sacrament of Christian initiation, is the beginning and benchmark of this lifelong spiritual pilgrimage alongside with the divine pathway of faith. Indeed it should be underlined here that this spiritual journey of the faithful towards eternity will be culminated at their union with Christ, which would be attained through the Holy Communion.²² Of course, Orthodoxy wholeheartedly confesses: “God is both end-point and starting point. He is the host who welcomes us at the conclusion of the journey, yet he is also the companion who walks by our side at every step upon the Way.”²³

The Church’s consecratory prayer upon the Chalice reads: “We pray and beseech thee, O lover of man, bless this chalice and fill it with pure blood, so that it may be a spring of life, even of the holy blood which ran from the side of thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ for us, on the holy cross, because he was crucified to prepare us for the remission of sin with his blood.”²⁴ This text asserts that the salvific deeds of the Saviour have been continuing on the liturgical life of the Church. By virtue of their worthy participation in these awesome divine mysteries, the faithful shall become divinized as the regenerating grace is bestowed upon their lives. Subsequently, the Church, which is the New Eve, became fully part of the body of Christ, the New Adam.

According to Athanasian soteriology, we became partakers of the divine nature of God through Christ, the incarnate Son of God. This divine participation, which is made possible only through the incarnation of the Son of God, has also a Trinitarian implication. The opening prayer of the Ethiopic liturgy mentions, “Now also let it be blessed, hallowed and pure, so that it may become the life of soul, body and spirit at all times. Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us; and fill the wine with joy and happiness, for goodness, for life, for salvation and for the

²¹ John D. ZIZIOULOUS, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985), pp. 20-23. T.A. CAMPBELL, *Christian Confessions: A Historical Introduction*, p. 60.

²² T.K. WARE, *The Orthodox Way*, pp. 7, 109.

²³ T.K. WARE, *The Orthodox Way*, p. 12.

²⁴ M. DAUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 6.

remission of sin, for understanding, for healing, for the counsel of the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and world without end.”²⁵

In addition, the Prayer of Wrappings, which the celebrant says while covering the Eucharistic elements also says, “We place it upon this blessed paten in the likeness of the sepulcher in which thou hast passed three days and three nights. Let my hands be like the hands of Joseph and Nicodemus who wrapped thy body and found there peace, rest and honour from the Father and from the Son and from the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and world without end.”²⁶

For Ethiopian Orthodoxy, the Church’s Divine Liturgy is the right time, place and moment to experience the grace of deification and to facilitate its process. In affirming this fundamental truth, the liturgy itself proclaims, “Master, Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son, the Word of God the Father, who hast broken off from us all the bonds of our sins through thy life-giving and saving sufferings ...”²⁷ Hence this Christo-centric soteriology of Orthodoxy would be of a greater help towards our understanding of the economic Trinity.²⁸ At the incarnation, the divine Son of God took on our entire human nature, which subsequently made our fallen human nature to become partaker thereof. Kallistos Ware sums up this crucial belief in a nutshell, “God’s descent makes possible man’s ascent.”²⁹

Along with this, Professor Pablo Argárate also once illustrated the centrality of the divine kenotic process with the example of see-saw where one’s ascent would be fulfilled at the expense of the other’s descent. And this happened through the incarnation of the divine Word of God. The anaphora of John Son of Thunder illustrates, “Yet thou didst visit the humble through the advent of thy Son. ... Through thy mercy thou bringest near to thyself those who are far off.”³⁰ In other words, the humble descent of the divine Son of God graciously effected the ascent of the fallen human nature into the divine realm of God.³¹ A certain liturgical text

²⁵ M. DAUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 24.

²⁶ M. DAUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 30.

²⁷ M. DAUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 31.

²⁸ *On the Incarnation: The Treatise De Incarnatione Verbi Dei*, Trans. & ed., A Religious of C.S.M.V. (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1996), pp. 26-29. FINLAN and KHARLAMOV (eds.), *Theōsis: Deification in Christian Theology*, pp. 104-105.

²⁹ T.K. WARE, *The Orthodox Way*, 74.

³⁰ M. DAUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 111.

³¹ Boris BOBRINSKOY, *The Mystery of the Trinity: Trinitarian Experience and Vision in the Biblical and Patristic Tradition* trans. Anthony P. Gythiel (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1999), p. 224.

also asserts, “O our Lord and our God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hast raised us from the earth and lifted us up from the dust to set us with thy angels and with the princes of thy people.”³²

Interestingly enough, this phrase makes use of the famous patristic thought that the heavenly became an earthly so that we might belong to the heavenly realm. By so doing, the Saviour has restored the fallen humanity to its former glory. Nevertheless, this divine grace of immortality needs to be cultivated through our ongoing Christian life here and now that is to be perfected in the world to come. Another text sheds light on this saying, “... Who didst raise the humble from the earth and exalt them to heaven, who didst lead us unto new way of salvation through the multitude of your mercies.”³³ Through the incarnation the gracious Lord has rendered to humankind the possibility of attaining His likeness, which had been lost due to the fall. In this regard, the humble descent of the Divine Son of God that is fulfilled in the incarnation is regarded as a re-creation task. This is mainly because it made possible the recovery of the divine plan of God to humanity.

According to Orthodoxy, the divinization of the fallen humanity is made possible only when the divine Logos united perfectly with it during the incarnation. This is precisely because what belongs to divinity belongs to humanity and vice versa. What happened really in the incarnation is the divine Logos took part in our earthly life as He assumed our human nature. Likewise, our human nature became partaker of the divine nature as it is united fully with the divine Son of God in the incarnation. Soteriologically, the Athanasian discussion goes, “He was made man that we might be made God (*theopoiethomen*)” and this happened through *communicatio idiomatum* – communication of properties.³⁴

As of the soteriological reflection of St. Irenaeus, the salvation of humankind made possible the renewal of the entire cosmos. Towards that end, Irenaeus grounded his anthropology mainly on the notion of Adam being the “cosmic person.” The Church’s Eucharistic-cosmology vividly resounds the recapitulating

³² M. DAUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 11.

³³ M. DAUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 12.

³⁴ William P. ANDERSON (ed.), *A Journey Through Christian Theology: With Texts from the First to the Twenty-First Century*, illustrations by Richard L. DIESSLIN (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), pp. 39-42.

grace of Christ as revealed in the early patristic scholarship.³⁵ Of course, it is quite evident that such a cosmological reflection of soteriology called recapitulation - *anakephalaiosis* - complies with the Pauline understanding of the restoration of the entire creation to its original state (Eph. 1:10).

Interestingly enough, Irenaeus further elucidates that the process of recapitulation is applicable to both the backward as well as forward condition of humanity.³⁶ Basically divinization was originally intended to be the ultimate goal of humankind. However, humanity's progressive journey towards this goal of life had been interrupted once with the fall. It is interesting to note that Orthodoxy understands the incarnation not only as a divine loving response to the drastic situation of fallen humanity. Rather, it regards this great mystery of salvation as "re-creation," which paved the way to deification.³⁷

For the Fathers, the divine economy of salvation wrought by the divine Son of God is equally understood as the ultimate purpose of the mystery of the incarnation.³⁸ After all, William P. Anderson sums up the aforementioned Athanasian soteriology as: "an incarnational understanding of redemption."³⁹ In the divine economy God became consubstantial to humanity and vice versa. This is precisely because to save [deify] humankind equally means to made it consubstantial to the divinity. *Kenosis* however, is at the centre of this divine accomplishment. Through His divine-emptiness, Christ brought about the entire creation to the Father.⁴⁰ In highlighting this, the Ethiopic liturgical order reads: "... the coal of fire ... who is God's Word that was made man from thee, who offered himself to his Father for incense and an acceptable sacrifice."⁴¹

³⁵ Stuart G. HALL, *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church* (London: SPCK, 1995), 65. BOBRINSKOY, *The Mystery of the Trinity: Trinitarian Experience and Vision in the Biblical and Patristic Tradition* trans. Anthony P. Gythiel, pp. 4-5.

³⁶ Louis BERKHOF, *The History of Christian Doctrines* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2002), 65-67, 165. Bobrinsky, *The Mystery of the Trinity: Trinitarian Experience and Vision in the Biblical and Patristic Tradition* trans. Anthony P. Gythiel, pp. 307-308.

³⁷ W.P. ANDERSON (ed.), *A Journey Through Christian Theology*, pp. 41-42. T.A. Campbell, *Christian Confessions: A Historical Introduction*, p. 53.

³⁸ G.L. PRESTIGE, *God is Patristic Thought* (London: SPCK, 1952), p. 67.

³⁹ W.P. ANDERSON (ed.), *A Journey Through Christian Theology*, p. 43.

⁴⁰ G.L. PRESTIGE, *God is Patristic Thought* (London: SPCK, 1952), p. 46. Steven BIGHAM, *The Image of God the Father in Orthodox Theology and Iconography and Other Studies* (Torrance, California: Oakwood Publications, 1995), pp. 44-45.

⁴¹ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 41.

The Divine Eucharistic liturgy of Orthodoxy understands the liturgy as the extension of the paschal mystery and a continuing process of offering the entire cosmos to God (Rom. 8:22; 2 Cor. 5:17; Ps. 24:1). By so doing, the Eucharistic Liturgy maintains the cosmological renewal that has been effected through the redemptive works of Christ. For Orthodox liturgists, “Christ is the guest and the host, the receiver and the received, the offering and the offerer in the Eucharistic act.”⁴² In Orthodox tradition, humanity has become an active participant by playing a leadership role in maintaining and facilitating the cosmological renewal and sustenance.

Towards that end, Orthodoxy maintains that the “Eucharistic bread always symbolizes the universe, the whole created order.”⁴³ In other words, the solemn offering of the Eucharistic elements imply the constant transformation of the entire cosmos during the Church’s liturgical celebration. In asserting this, the Eucharistic anaphora of St. John Son of Thunder elucidates:

We, who are gathered together to make remembrance of thy sufferings and partake in thy resurrection from the dead, beseech thee, Lord our God, as this bread which was scattered among the mountains and the little hills, in the forests and the vales, being gathered together, became one perfect bread, likewise gather us together, through thy divinity, out of all evil thought of sin into thy perfect faith. As with the mixture of this wine with water, the one cannot be separated from the other, so let thy divinity be united with our humanity, and our humanity with your divinity, and let thy greatness be united with our humility and our humility with thy greatness. Lord accept this our offering from us for a memorial of righteousness before thee.⁴⁴

Referring to the dual purposes of transformative grace of the Eucharistic liturgy, one of the preparatory prayers reads: “Lay thy hand now on this holy cross-spoon which is thine; bless it, sanctify it, and give it power as thou didst give to the tongs which were in the hand of one of the Seraphim, the holy angels, for the purification of the lips of Isaiah the Prophet.”⁴⁵ As of this prophetic vision (Isa. 6:1-8), Isaiah is a depiction of penitents, his leprosy implies to their sinful state, the Seraph represents the officiating priest, the tong carried in his hand refers to the

⁴² Gennadios LIMOURIS, *Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation: Insights from Orthodoxy* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990), p. 50.

⁴³ G. LIMOURIS, *Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation: Insights from Orthodoxy*, pp. 48-49.

⁴⁴ M. DAUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 123.

⁴⁵ M. DAUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 6.

cross-spoon, and the burnt coal symbolizes the body and blood of Christ. A part of prayer from the anaphora of St. Cyril also recounts, "Let not this coal of fire which we have laid before thee upon thy holy altar be our accuser, and let not this bread of worship which we break be for the vengeance because we did not purify our soul and our body."⁴⁶ Accordingly, the divine power of Spirit transforms the liturgical vessels as well as the faithful themselves by making them worthy to attain purification and holiness.

Overall, the Ethiopian Church identifies its Eucharistic banquet with the Lord's Supper, which Christ instituted on Maundy Thursday. In affirming this, one of the Church's consecratory prayers recited over the Paten runs:

O Lord our good and life-giving God, who didst stretch forth thy holy hands on the tree of the cross, lay thy holy hand upon this Paten which is full of goodness, and on which food of a thousand years is prepared by those who love thy holy name. Now also, Lord our God, bless and sanctify and purify this Paten which is full of coals of fire, thy holy body, which we offer on the holy altar in this apostolic church.⁴⁷

Henceforth, as the holy apostles became divinized as a result of their participation in this awesome divine banquet, so also the faithful are to become christified (i.e., bearers of Christ) through the same liturgical banquet. A consecratory prayer over the Cross-spoon attests, "... Now bless it, sanctify it, and purify it; give to this Cross-spoon power and glory as thou didst give to the tongs of the Seraph."⁴⁸ This is all about the decisive role of divine intervention in effecting the transformation of the Eucharistic elements in general as well as those of the partakers of the mystery in particular. In strengthening this point, the prayer that follows shortly says, "... grant me to find grace and mercy in this hour, and send me thy power on high that I may be worthy to accomplish thy holy ministry according to thy will and thy good pleasure ..."⁴⁹

In highlighting the pneumatological dimension of the Eucharistic liturgy, a certain prayer reads, "O God, who hast sanctified this offering, which hast been prepared before thee, through the descent of the Holy Spirit upon it, cleanse us, O

⁴⁶ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 273.

⁴⁷ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 14.

⁴⁸ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 15.

⁴⁹ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 15.

Master, from all our sins, hidden and open.”⁵⁰ Also the prayer that is to be recited at the completion of the consecratory prayers over the ecclesiastical vessels reinforces, “... do thou, O our Master, make us in the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish this ministry and the ‘Preparatory Service,’ ...”⁵¹ In brief, it is the Spirit Who takes part in consecrating the ordinary materials and personality to the performance of the divine mysteries. The epiclesis of the anaphora of the Apostles also elucidates, “We pray thee and beseech thee, Lord, that thou wouldest send the Holy Spirit and power upon this bread and upon this cup. May he make them the body and blood of our Lord and our God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”⁵²

This explicit reference to the Holy Spirit could be understood as Orthodoxy’s pneumatologically-oriented sacramentology. A liturgical text vividly clarifies: “... for holy are these thy holy things according to the gifts of the Holy Spirit: through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and with the Holy Spirit, the life-giver, who is co-equal with thee, are fitting honour, glory and power, both now and ever and world without end.”⁵³

It is worth mentioning the opening prayer of the Eucharistic liturgy that addresses to the centrality of the Spirit in the overall liturgical undertakings, “How awful is this day and how marvelous this hour wherein the Holy Spirit will descend from heaven and overshadow and hallow this sacrifice.”⁵⁴ Pneumatology is at the heart of the Eucharistic liturgy of the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church. The Holy Spirit plays a significant role in transforming the minister to become worthy for the celebration of the divine mystery. In addition, the Spirit also bestows His divine power and grace in order to effect the transformation of both the Eucharistic elements as well as that of its partakers.

While making a sign of the cross upon the gifts, the celebrant shall pray: “Christ, our very God, sign with thy right hand, bless with thy hand, sanctify with thy power and strengthen with thy Holy Spirit, so that this bread will be for the remission of the sins of thy people.”⁵⁵ This prayer in turn reveals the power of the Spirit that transforms unworthy things and makes them worthy to the service of

⁵⁰ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 214.

⁵¹ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 17.

⁵² M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 75.

⁵³ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 17.

⁵⁴ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 21.

⁵⁵ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 23.

God. Moreover, it also sheds light on the fact that it is the same Christ Who arranged the first meal still works through the officiating priest.

Ethiopic liturgy shares the idea of the early patristic thought that divinization is the eternal divine plan of the gracious and ever-loving God destined for humankind. The prayer, which the celebrant shall say before the reading of the Gospel, reveals, "Lord our God and Saviour and lover of man, thou art he who didst send thy holy apostles and ministers, and thy pure apostles unto all the ends of the world to preach and teach the gospel of thy kingdom, and to heal all the diseases and all the sicknesses which are among thy people, and to proclaim the mystery hidden from before the beginning of the world."⁵⁶

Furthermore, a brief prayer that follows shortly the reading of the Gospel of John says, "... The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, the word of the living Father, and the life-giving Word, the Word of God, rose again and his flesh was not corrupted."⁵⁷ This particular prayer expresses the incarnation as the ultimate revelation of God. Besides, it also articulates that the Eucharistic liturgy is the Church's effective channel to communicate the grace of incorruptibility as it bequeaths the fruit of the cross to the faithful.

The celebrant prays shortly after the dismissal of the catechumens: "O Lord our God, who, for thy love to man which is inexpressible, didst send thy only-begotten Son to the world to bring back unto thee the lost sheep, we beseech thee, our Master, not to send us back when we offer unto thee this awful oblation which is spotless. We do not depend upon our righteousness but upon thy mercy, O thou who hast loved our race."⁵⁸ Salvation, the restoration of fallen humankind to its original status, is also partaking of the divine nature of immortality.

In the incarnation the Son of God became fully human without losing His divine nature. Attesting to this, the Creed attributed to the Holy Apostles says, "We also believe that Christ is not in the least degree inferior because of his incarnation, but He is God, the Word who truly became man, and reconciled mankind to God being the High-priest of the Father."⁵⁹ In so doing, the liturgy reflects the Nicean teaching that defends the divine nature of the Saviour. Along with this, it also argues for the divinization of humanity for it is effected only through a divine

⁵⁶ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 52.

⁵⁷ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 58.

⁵⁸ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 59.

⁵⁹ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 65.

Being. The officiating priest beseeches the gracious Lord: “And to partake, without condemnation, of thy holy immortal heavenly gift, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”⁶⁰

The divinization of humanity aims at the recovering of the God-given grace of divine likeness, especially holiness and immortality. In highlighting this, one of the liturgical phrases elucidates: “Holy things for the holy.”⁶¹ In other words, the Eucharistic bread and wine nourishes our soul spiritually so that we may grow up with holiness and attain the grace of incorruptibility. A prayer recited shortly before the consecration of the bread goes: “Grant us to be united through thy Holy Spirit, and heal us by this oblation that we may live in thee for ever.”⁶² This in turn reveals the decisive role of the sacraments towards the realization of our deification.

During the distribution of the Holy Communion, a thanks-giving prayer for the partakers of the body and blood of Christ says: “Grant me to bring forth fruit that shall be well-pleasing unto thee, so that I may appear in thy glory and live unto thee doing thy will.”⁶³ The faithful are nourished spiritually in the Eucharistic meal so as to bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit. It is a foretaste of the ever-lasting life here and now. Remarkable to note is that the fruit of the Holy Communion, which is testified by the participants of the mystery: “Fill my mouth with praise, my heart with joy and my soul with gladness; fill me who have received of this divine mystery, O thou who hast become man for the salvation of man.”⁶⁴

To illustrate this, the chief deacon who communicates the awesome blood of the Saviour prays, “We thank God for that we have partaken of his holy things; we pray and trust that that which we have received may be healing for the life of the soul while we glorify the Lord our God.”⁶⁵ A prayer recited shortly after the drinking of the holy water runs, “O Lord, cleanse my soul and purify it also so that it may be a sacrifice unto thee, and dispose my heart that the Holy Spirit may live and dwell in it and fill it, because I have accepted thy body and thy blood in faith.”⁶⁶ During the celebration of the anaphora of the Lord, the closing phrase of

⁶⁰ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 67.

⁶¹ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 80.

⁶² M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 76.

⁶³ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 86.

⁶⁴ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 86.

⁶⁵ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 88.

⁶⁶ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 92.

the prayer, which the chief deacon reads calls upon the worshipping community: “Lift up your hearts. Let us come near the medicine of life. Let us receive the holiness which is granted unto us by grace through the wisdom of the Lord.”⁶⁷

It should be noted that humanity’s vocation to the grace of divinization is initiated by the gracious and ever-loving God. A prayer to be uttered shortly after the consecration of the bread elucidates, “Thou didst show the hidden mystery on the cross. Who is merciful and holy like thee?”⁶⁸ Referring to this, a prayer from the Lord’s anaphora reads, “We give thee thanks, holy God, the perfecter of our souls and giver of our life ... because thou hast desired that we should be saved through thee.”⁶⁹ In highlighting the role of the incarnation, one of the anaphoric texts addressed to the Father says: “Being born from the Virgin, so that he might fulfill thy will and hallow a people to thee.”⁷⁰ Therefore, one can understand that the divine will of God towards fallen humanity is to draw nearer to Him for its attainment of deification.

The transformative power of the Eucharistic meal upon worthy participants is clearly asserted, “Lord, grant inner light to the eyes of our heart, so that they may see, thank and glorify thee, remembering thee and serving thee, because thou only art their portion.”⁷¹ In addition, the consecratory prayer pleads, “Grant us to be united through thy Holy Spirit, and heal us by this oblation that we may live in thee forever.”⁷² Mentioning the sanctifying grace of the Eucharistic meal and partaking of divine knowledge, a certain text reads: “Make him who receiveth, with a pure conscience, from thy honourable table worthy of remission of sin, and of unity with the Holy Spirit to the salvation of body and soul, and worthy to come into the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom through thy favour and will.”⁷³

The post-communion prayer of the anaphora of the Lord beseeches the gracious and ever-loving God, “O thou who dost pilot the soul, the leader of the righteous, the refuge of the saints, grant us, Lord, eyes instructed so that they may always see thee, and ears to hear only thy word. When our souls are satisfied with thy grace create in us a pure heart, so that we may always understand thy greatness, thou art

⁶⁷ M. DAUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 100.

⁶⁸ M. DAUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 106.

⁶⁹ M. DAUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 100.

⁷⁰ M. DAUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 102.

⁷¹ M. DAUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 105.

⁷² M. DAUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 106.

⁷³ M. DAUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 108.

kind and the lover of man.”⁷⁴ The liturgical grace that is received through partaking of the Holy Communion makes possible the unification of the faithful with Christ. Thus, this likeness of Christ is constantly reflected in their daily life.

As it has been discussed, the life of deification that allows Christians to resemble Christ in their whole life is an ongoing process that is to be culminated with perfection in the world to come. The Eucharistic liturgy sustains our incorruptible grace as a nourishment: “We offer in thy presence for the sake of thy holy church which was saved from death through thee; and for her sake thou wert smitten in the court of judgment so that thou mightest set her free through thy blood, and that she might be fenced around with thy cross and kept by thy crucifixion against temptation until she shall enter the marriage feast in heaven.”⁷⁵ In asserting the future hope of eternity, the Eucharistic anaphora sheds light, “And as thou hast made us worthy to receive thy holy mystery in this world, so also make our portion to be with thy saints in the forthcoming resurrection from the dead, through our Lord and our Saviour Jesus Christ, through whom to thee with him and with the Holy Spirit be glory and dominion, both now and ever and world without end. Amen.”⁷⁶

The fruits of salvation have been given through the sacrificial death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And this is communicated and experienced here and now at the church’s paschal mystery. The liturgical text remarks, “He died through his will, and was buried willingly; he died to destroy death, he died to give life to the dead; he was buried to raise those who were buried, to keep the living, to purify the impure, to justify the sinners, to gather together those who were scattered, and to turn the sinners to glory and honour.”⁷⁷

Reference has been made that Orthodoxy considers the economic deeds of the Saviour as restoration of the fallen world and thereby a recreation task. The anaphora of St. Basil sums up:

Holy, holy, holy art thou, Lord our God and our creator, who put us in the garden of delight. And when we committed iniquity and transgressed through the guile of the serpent we fell far from eternal life and were cast forth out of the garden of delight. Thou didst not leave us for ever but didst visit us by thy holy prophets. And in the

⁷⁴ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 108.

⁷⁵ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 118.

⁷⁶ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 128.

⁷⁷ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, pp. 115-116.

end of days thou didst appear unto us who were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. And thou didst cause to shine upon us the light of thy only-begotten Son, our Lord and our God Jesus Christ who was made man from the holy Virgin Mary. He took flesh and was made man and taught us the path of salvation, and granted us the birth from on high, of water and of the Holy Spirit. ... By reason of which we were bound and sold through our sins. He descended down into hell from the cross.⁷⁸

Interestingly enough, the Eucharistic liturgy celebrates the divine task of re-creation saying: “He took bread on his nailed hands which formed our father Adam; He is pure without sin, and absolutely pure without deceit.”⁷⁹ This in turn attests to the very fact that the salvation of the fallen humanity is accomplished by the author of creation. The anaphora of St. John Chrysostom also mentions, “... O the hands which formed Adam were nailed with the nails of the cross! O the feet which walked in the garden were nailed with the nails of the cross!”⁸⁰ Therefore, it is the original Creator who refashioned His handiwork. He renewed our hands, which were stretched out towards the forbidden tree when He stretched his hands out upon the cross, the tree of life.

The liturgy confirms this, “Then he stretched forth his hands on the tree of the cross for suffering to cure the wounds of the sick by the sprinkling of his blood.”⁸¹ Besides, the anaphora of St. Dioscorus elucidates the economic deeds of the Saviour saying: “He who created man stretched forth his hands for suffering to set free Adam from the yoke of sin.”⁸² Summing up in a nutshell the gracious works of the creative Word to humankind, “In the beginning was the Word, and that Word was the Word of God, and that Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and his flesh hid him from us. He put on mortal flesh and made it immortal, and through this flesh, God who can never be scourged, was scourged.”⁸³

This is why it became demanding for the author of creation to take on our fallen nature so as to recreate us by restoring the divine likeness, which we lost due to the fall. In summarizing the soteriological purpose of the incarnation of the divine Son of God, the Eucharistic anaphora attributed to St. Epiphanius asserts:

⁷⁸ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, pp. 199-200.

⁷⁹ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 222.

⁸⁰ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 255.

⁸¹ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 240.

⁸² M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 296.

⁸³ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 223.

“After this, when he saw that the blood of the holy prophets, from the blood of the righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias Son of Barachias, was not sufficient for the salvation of the world, he sent unto us his Son, a Saviour and Redeemer, to save us and redeem us and take before him the remembrance of the living and the dead.”⁸⁴

The anaphora of St. John Chrysostom also strengthens the aforementioned soteriological dimension of the incarnation. Above all, it emphasizes the defied nature of our fallen human nature as it reads,

Then let us speak of the greatness of his mercies which have appeared unto us and which cannot be counted or measured. When we transgressed his commandment through the advice of the cursed serpent we were driven from the garden of delight unto destruction, from life unto death, from freedom unto slavery, and we submitted ourselves to the yoke of sin. But he did not forsake or neglect us, who were his workmanship, and did not take vengeance upon us because of our sins so that we should utterly perish as we committed sin against him, but he loved us, visited us, spared us, had mercy upon us and saved us from the hand of him who enslaved us.... He sent unto us his saving and redeeming Son, the messenger of his counsel, his right hand, his arm, his power, and the wisdom of his Father. Through him he did all that he desired in this world.⁸⁵

The Eucharistic prayer that makes the experience of the paschal mystery present to the participants of the liturgical celebration reads, “We pray thee and beseech thee, as thou didst send thy Holy Spirit upon thy holy disciples and pure apostles, so also send upon us this thy Holy Spirit who sanctifieth our souls, bodies and spirits that we may be pure through him from all our sins and may draw nigh to receive thy divine mystery ... May this Holy Spirit, who is neither searchable nor inferior, come from above the highest heaven to bless this bread and to hallow the cup, to make this bread the communion of thy life-giving body and also to make this cup the communion of thy merciful blood.”⁸⁶

The anaphora of Dioscorus also adds, “On the fiftieth day he sent to them the Holy Spirit in the likeness of fire, and they spoke in the languages of all countries; so also, as thou didst with them, send the Holy Spirit over this bread and this cup to make them the body and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, world

⁸⁴ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 239.

⁸⁵ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 251.

⁸⁶ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, pp. 257-258.

without end: as thou didst say, He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.”⁸⁷

Finally, the pilot prayer, which addresses to the partakers of the Eucharistic banquet reads: “As thou didst join the body of thy Son with our body, and thou didst mix the blood of thy Messiah with our blood, so put thy fear in our heart and the beauty of thy worship in our mind.”⁸⁸ The worthy reception of the Holy Communion effects twofold unification of its partakers among each other as well as with Christ our Saviour. The liturgical prayer sums up, “As thou hast gathered this bread which had been scattered on the mountains and the little hills, and being gathered together it became one whole bread, so also gather us, through thy divinity, from all evil thoughts into perfect faith. And as thou didst unite water with wine, and wine was united with water, and after having been united and mixed it is impossible for the one to be separated from the other, so also gather us, through thy divinity from all evil thoughts into perfect faith.”⁸⁹

As a concluding remark, “the liturgy conveys in a powerful way the continuing reality of the Orthodox connection to Christ and to the Spirit’s presence in the long history of the Church.”⁹⁰ To substantiate this, the prayer of the laying on of hands mentions: “Let thy body and thy blood which we have received from thy honourable table be for life. O Lord, send the Holy Spirit unto us that he may guide us in purity and faith. The Son of God prepared his body and blood in the world that we may receive them and live with him.”⁹¹

Recibido / Received: 7/05/2008

Informado / Reported: 24/09/2008

Acceptado / Accepted: 16/12/2008

⁸⁷ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 298.

⁸⁸ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 301.

⁸⁹ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, p. 307.

⁹⁰ T.A. CAMPBELL, *Christian Confessions*, p. 61.

⁹¹ M. DAOUD (tr.), *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, pp. 312-313.