

between human will and God's grace is exemplified in the Annunciation of the Most Pure Virgin Mary. This is evident in Mary's own words: "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38, ksv-cE). By virtue of her assent, the God-bearer became a participant in the mystery of salvation.

B. The Spirituality of the Heart

1. The Heart—The Core of the Human Person

- 747 Holy Scripture speaks of the heart as the inner essence of a human being and the core, or centre, of the entire person. "Just as water reflects the face, so one human heart reflects another." (Pry 27:19). The spiritual and moral state of the whole person depends on the state of the heart. The heart is the seat not only of feelings, but also of cognition, self-awareness and consciousness, as well as a human being's other. spiritual powers.
- 748 The heart is the sanctuary of the human being, where one stands before the face of God. In Holy Scripture, we read about the "thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb 4:12), where the heart constitutes the very essence of a person, the "place" where a person assumes responsibility and opens or closes oneself to God's actions. The heart is also the seat of the will. It makes decisions (see 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Cor 7:9, 8:16), and from it come good and evil intentions (see Mt 15:19; Rom 10:1; Is 57:17), and love of God and neighbour (see Mt 22:37; Mk 12:30-33; Lk 10:27).
- 749 According to Holy Scripture, all human emotions are proper to the heart: it rejoices (see Jer 15:16; Ps 27[28]:9), sorrows (Ps 24[25]:17), suffers anguish (Jer 4:19), rages (Pry 19:3) and envies (Jas 3:14). God alone can plumb the depths of the human heart: "for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam 16:7). God tests the mind and searches the heart (see Jer 17:10). In God, human beings come to recognize themselves and contemplate the depths of their own hearts.
- 750 One of the active manifestations of the heart is a person's conscience. The term "conscience" comes from the Latin conscientia (joint knowledge). Similarly, the Ukrainian term sovist comes from the Church Slavonic sovidaty (to know jointly). Conscience involves not so much the knowledge held by an individual, or some kind of "subjective truth," but joint knowledge with the Divine Persons for the purpose of joint action with them. Holy Scripture tells of the human heart's capacity to distin-

guish between good and evil. King Solomon prayed for "wisdom of the heart" in order to discern between good and evil (*see 1 Kgs 3:9*). In the Gospels, Christ indicates that the heart can be the source of both moral good and moral evil (*see Lk 6:45; Mt 12:35*).

751 In accordance with the tradition of the Holy Fathers, conscience is the most important factor in a person's being. As Abba Dorotheus teaches:

When God created man, he breathed into him something divine, as it were, a hot and bright spark added to reason, which lit up the mind and showed him the difference between right and wrong. This is called the conscience, which is the law of his nature ... it is something divinely implanted in us, as we have said, and it can never be destroyed. It always patiently reminds us of our duties."⁴⁶⁸

Saint Clement of Alexandria teaches: "One's own conscience is best for choosing accurately or shunning. And its firm foundation is a right life"⁴⁶⁹

Saint John Chrysostom declares: "God put within our mind a judge so ever-watchful and vigilant—I mean conscience. It is impossible that any judge among men and women should be so indefatigable as our conscience is."⁴⁷⁰

2. Internal Watchfulness (Attentiveness) and Guarding of the Heart

752 Human thoughts and decisions are born in the heart; it is where intentions and aspirations emerge; it is the source of will and desires. The Christian is called to cultivate the "field" of his or her heart and be careful that the "seed of the enemy" not enter therein (*see Mt 13:24-30*).

753 Being attentive to the heart is first and foremost about dismissing evil thoughts and guarding the heart with sensitivity. Saint Macarius the Great teaches the following:

[As with the eye] so it is with the mind toward the heart. And the heart itself is but a small vessel, yet there also are dragons and there are lions; there are poisonous beasts and all the treasures of evil. And there are rough and uneven roads; there are precipices. But there is also God, also the angels, the life and the kingdom, the light and the apostles, the treasures of grace—there are all things.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁸ ABBA DOROTHEUS, Instructions and Epistles, Instruction 3: On Conscience, 1-2.

⁴⁶⁹ CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, The Stromata, 1: PG 8, 693.

⁴⁷⁰ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, Discourses on Lazarus, 4:4: PG 48, 1011.

⁴⁷¹ Pseudo-Macarius, Spiritual Homilies, 43, 7: PG 34, 776.