

depths: "no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God" (*1 Cor 2:11*). Our knowledge of God will grow in faith, according to the words of the holy apostle Paul, until we see him "face to face" (*1 Cor 13:12*). For humankind, the incomprehensibility of God guarantees an endless growth in coming to know God, which is "eternal life."

84 Just as the Father cannot be circumscribed, so also his incomprehensibility attests to the impossibility of reducing the Personhood of God to any forms of expression used by human beings, whether through image or word. God the Father is not portrayed on icons, because the Father did not become incarnate, nor take on the image of a human being. The Father is revealed by his only-begotten Son, who is the "image of the invisible God" (*Col 1:15*).

B. We Believe in the Only-Begotten Son

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father. Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in being with the Father. (Symbol of Faith)

You are without beginning, invisible, incomprehensible, uncircumscribed, unchangeable, the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ ... he is the image of your goodness, the perfect seal of your likeness—revealing you, the Father, in himself—living Word, true God, Wisdom before the ages, Life, Sanctification, Power, and the true Light. (Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)

85 God the Father begets the Son in freedom and love. The invisible love of the Father, from which the Son is begotten, becomes visible in the Son: "The Father is the invisible [Revelation] of the Son, and the Son is the visible [Revelation] of the Father."⁶⁴ In this love, the Father and the Son are one. The begotten Son is at the same time hypostatically (as Person) different from the Father. The Father begets Someone other than himself, revealing himself completely within the Son, as Other.⁶⁵

86 The Son of God is a reflection of "God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being" (*Heb 1:3*). His personal generation from the Father is a begetting of "Light from Light, true God from true God. "The Son

⁶⁴ IRENAEUS OF Lyons, *Against Heresies*, IV, 6, 6: PG 7, 989.

⁶⁵ See ATHANASIUS THE GREAT, *First Letter to Serapion*, 16: PG 26, 568.

of God, "reveals in himself the Father." He is the "living Word,"⁶⁶ who was in God "from all ages" and was God (see *Jn* 1:1). This Son of God is "the image of [the Father's] goodness, the perfect seal of [the Father's] likeness,"⁶⁷ "the image of the invisible God" (*Col* 1:15). Therefore, the Son of God is simultaneously the Word and Image of God.

1. The Son of God Revealed in the Holy Scriptures

87 At the Theophany on the Jordan River, the Father himself calls Jesus Christ his own Son: "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased" (*Mk* 1:11). In the Old Testament, the title *son of God* is given to the people of God: "Thus says the LORD, Israel is my first-born son" (*Ex* 4:22). The title is also given to the Messiah, the Anointed One: "The Lord said to me, 'You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession'" (*Psa* 2:7-8).

88 The New Testament gives new meaning to the title *Son of God*, emphasizing the uniqueness of the relationship between Jesus Christ and God the Father. Christ himself makes a distinction between his own divine sonship and our sonship in God: "I am ascending to my Father and your Father" (*Jn* 20:17; see *Jn* 1:18). The Father witnesses to the exclusiveness of Christ's sonship in the revelation at the Transfiguration: "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" (*Lk* 9:35). The evangelist John professes the divinity of God's Son: "The Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know him who is true ... he is the true God and eternal life" (1 *Jn* 5:20).

2. The Only-Begotten Son

89 The Son of God, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, equal in dignity and essence with the Father, is "the splendour of the Father, the unchangeable and immutable image of his essence and his nature, the fountain of wisdom and grace."⁶⁸ Therefore, the Church professes Christ to be the only-begotten Son, in the bosom of the Father (see *Jn* 1:18). Begotten of the Father, the Son is uncreated; he is the only One from the Father, an unrepeatable Person of God, the Word of God.

For God sent forth the Word ... just as the root puts forth the tree, and the fountain [i.e., spring] the river, and the sun the ray ...

⁶⁶ See *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father Basil the Great, Anaphora.

⁶⁷ See *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father Basil the Great, Anaphora.

⁶⁸ *Floral Triodion*, Monday of the Holy Spirit, Vespers, Second Kneeling Prayer.