

God transcends everything. How can we approach Him?



Every created nature is far removed from and completely foreign to the divine nature.

For if God is nature, other things are not nature; but if every other thing is nature, He is not a nature, just as He is not a being if all other things are beings. And if He is a being, then all other things are not beings. And if you accept this as true also for wisdom, goodness, and in general all things that pertain to God or are ascribed to Him, then your theology will be correct and in accordance with the saints. God both is and is said to be the nature of all beings, in so far as all partake of Him and subsist by means of this participation: not, however, by participation in His nature – far from it – but by participation in His energy. In this sense He is the Being of all beings, the Form that is in all forms as the Author of form, the Wisdom of the wise and, simply, the All of all things. Moreover, He is not nature, because He transcends every nature; He is not a being, because He transcends every being; and He is not nor does He possess a form, because He transcends form.

How, then, can we draw near to God? By drawing near to His nature? But not a single created being has or can have any communication with or proximity to the sublime nature. Thus if anyone has drawn close to God, he has evidently approached Him by means of His energy. In what way? By natural participation in that energy? But this is common to all created things. It is not, therefore, by virtue of natural qualities, but by virtue of what one achieves through free choice that one is close to or distant from God. But free choice pertains only to beings endowed with intelligence. So among all creatures only those endowed with intelligence can be far from or close to God, drawing close to Him through virtue or becoming distant through vice.

Thus such beings alone are capable of wretchedness or blessedness. Let us strive to lay hold of blessedness.

Let us not apply anything from our world to Him or, if we apply, let us know that our concept, even if it might help us, it is far from Truth.

Based on Saint Gregory Palamas

In the photo is a candid shot from a memorial service

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