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## The meaning of time - a photo journal with an old clock



Eternity cannot simply be an unchangeable substance, it cannot be like eternal self-sustaining law. Such eternity cannot be inexhaustible and creative.

The fact that it is inexhaustible and creative comes from its interiority, which is one of a personal Existence. Eternity must include an inner dimension and freedom of the will. Only then can it be inexhaustible, a source of continuous novelty. If we think of God's eternity simply in terms of pure reason, or of eternal substance, then we will not have a real image of eternity but an erroneous one.

Eternity must be full of life and, therefore, true eternity must be the eternity of God, being perceived as a real and eternal Subject with Himself, but which at the same time is the Source of an infinite variety of manifestations. But true personal life exists only where there is communion, and one cannot speak of the fullness of life without the fullness of communion. Therefore, the fullness of life only endures in perfect communion between perfect subjects or persons.

Thus, true eternity is that of the Holy Trinity. The Trinity of Persons is both the fullness of communion and that of eternity. The Holy Trinity remains forever unchangeable in His love, but His love is full of life and therefore has an unlimited potential for manifestations and works.

Eternity is life and life is movement. That which is simply motionless is also dead. If God is entirely motionless then being God means being dead! But the type of movement, which is always the same – the automatic movement of a machine – is also death. The true meaning of eternity can only be found in communion between eternal people whose love is inexhaustible. And, those who share this interpersonal communion receives eternal life for themselves.

Understood in this truth – as personal communion of life – eternity should not be seen as the polar opposite or antithesis of time.

Time is defined as the interval between the offer of this love of God and our response.

Based on Father Dumitru Staniloae

**[These photographs](#)** show monks carrying out maintenance on the old clock in the tower of the Main Church. Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi, Mount Athos.

The clock is an Austrian design from around 1750.

— Source: [asceticexperience.com](http://asceticexperience.com)