

A New Christian Anthropology: the “horizontal” and “vertical” Dimensions of the Human Person

An Open Lecture by Fr Georgy Kochetkov



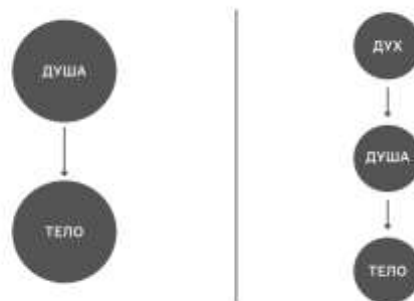
Новая христианская антропология

Новая христианская антропология: «горизонтальное» и «вертикальное» измерение человека

It is with great joy that I greet all of you gathered here today at this lecture on Christian anthropology. Today’s subject is very important to me. It is with good reason that people say our knowledge and perception should be open. My hope is that we will be able to feel this very thing with regard to today’s subject matter, too.

Not that long ago, our St. Philaret’s Institute Publishing House published a series of books entitled “The Mystery and Sacraments of the Human Person and the Church” – and I would note that “Person” and “Church” were very much intended as capitalized and were written with capital letters; in Russian we usually only capitalize the first letter of a title. The subtitle of the series was “The Experience of Mystagogy – Level 2”. The last book in this Mystagogy series – which is really an instruction manual for sacramental life – is “A New Christian (Orthodox) Anthropology”.¹ This book opens by looking at the massive subject of the dynamics of salvation of the human person and humanity as a whole. Among various things, we pose anew the question “What (Who) is Man, that Thou are Mindful of Him” (Ps 8:5) And the reason we call this view of Christian Anthropology “new”, is that it endeavours to look anew at the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the human person. What are these dimensions? Our main task today is to answer that very question.

Of course, people have been asking questions about *what* a human being is, how he can and should be understood, what his internal life is like, etc., for many centuries. In fact, very ancient religious – often pagan – as well as philosophical sayings and whole tracts on the subject have been preserved. These generally maintain that the human person is composed of two substances – body and soul.



¹ Kochetkov, Fr Georgy. “Тайны и таинства Человека и Тserkvi: Oпыr современной mistagogии второй ступени. Part 2: Novaya khristianskaya (pravoslavnaia) antropologija : Ob ustroenii i spasenii cheloveka i chelovechestva. Osnovy khristianskoj asketiki i mistiki. Moscow : SFI, 2020. 328 pages with illustrations.

The bipartite understanding of man, or dichotomy, was the most typical understanding of man in antiquity, however this understanding also had its various different interpretations. Without going into detail, we can simply say that sometimes the authors of antiquity spoke of the human person not only as body and soul, but as body, soul and spirit. That is, there were not only dichotomous, but also (trichotomous) understandings of human nature. It is very important to say that these understandings were always “vertical” – and it is no mistake that these elements of man were always envisaged as in the picture above. Why was such a “vertical” integration necessary? We answer by saying that there was a general understanding that there was a hierarchical interrelationship between spirit (soul) and material (body). Nevertheless, these principles could sharply oppose – or even be in direct enmity with each other – in such a way that one of the principles in its extreme would destroy the other. It was imagined that the spirit, in coming into the material body of a human person, experienced some sort of suffering: in being in a body, the spirit couldn’t be free; and the body, for its part, was seen by the writers of antiquity as a sort of prison of the soul (spirit).

In ancient Greece, such conceptions were stably established and well developed; moreover, they became one of the axes for ancient culture and philosophy. In time, by the 1st or 2nd centuries of our era, these conceptions changed – especially with the beginning of the Christian era. In these first Christian centuries, there were attempts to think outside the boundaries of the old, pagan bipartite and tripartite frameworks – these attempts are described in the 20th c. by the Russian Greek Christian author and theologian Avraam Samuliovich Pozov.² I have tried to look at these processes in a more indepth way in my book “A New Christian Anthropology”. The changes which the Christians tried to bring in were, for the most part, not changes in quality, but in quantity, i.e. they expressed a desire to expound in more detail or break down already existing understandings of the human person. Let’s take a very quick look at how this took place; thus we turn to the history of this question. In a traditional fashion, we’ll start with the Bible itself.

Let’s look at the text of 3 Esdras (3 Esd 16:62-63), the description of which is usual to ascribe to the Hellenistic period, the 1st c. BC or even to the early years AD. What do we see in this picture?



3 ЕЗД 16:62-63



The text gives us the opportunity to see a “person” envisaged as a “body” in whom there is a “heart”, and this “heart” is seen as the centre of human life. Within this “heart” lives “spirit”, “life” (or soul) and “mind/intellect”, and also “the breath of God”. It is extremely interesting that all these things are characteristics of the heart and not of the body. And there is a distinction made between “the spirit of man” and the “breath of God”. This Spirit of God is also an anthropological category. It is also important that we don’t always find this to be the case in Christian anthropological conceptions.

And St. Paul, in his 1st letter to the Thessalonians speaks of the human person as spirit, soul and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23) – that is, he uses a tripartite, rather than bipartite scheme.

² See: Pozov, A.S., *Osnovy drevnetserkovnij antropologii*: [in 2 vols]. St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg University Publishing House, 2008.



True he doesn't spend much time describing the idea, and he specially doesn't go into detail. And sometimes he speaks as if from a bipartite understanding, made up of only soul and body, i.e., St. Paul doesn't present us with any general theory. And it is worth mentioning that we can really attribute 1 Thessalonians to St. Paul, rather than to one of his students or followers, as is sometimes the case with letters generally attributed to Paul. And what St. Paul said about spirit, soul and body became extremely important for later Christian history. It entirely corresponds to the frameworks used in antiquity, though with one small exception: we don't find the typical "vertical" integration in St. Paul. There is no trace of the typical assumption of vertical integration in 1 Thessalonians.

St. Irenaeus of Lyon, and Origen after him (a brilliant theologian who for many was regarded as a saint by the Church) and then St. Gregory of Nyssa – all Christian theologians of a philosophical bent – say something similar to St. Paul. In their works the complete person is body, soul and spirit, and that is all they say. In St. Methodius of Olympus, who was an opponent of Origen, we read that the nature of man is only body and soul, come together in a single image. He probably has in mind a single ontological, intelligible image.

With the development of Christian thought, St. Maximus the Confessor, one of the great saints among the fathers who lived in the first half of the 7th c., we see an attempt to broaden the traditional tripartite framework.

- Человек:
- тело
 - чувства
 - душа (ум и воля)
 - ум (высший разум)



He speaks of the human person as a body and then adds ontological characteristics such as senses, soul and mind. We have reason to believe that by "soul", St. Maximus meant mind and will, and by "mind", he meant νοῦς (nous) – that higher reason which, it follows, is in some sense spirit. If we are right in our assumptions, then once again we are not far from the frameworks of antiquity, although St. Maximus has broadened the picture a bit: there is a body, a soul made up of capacities of sensing, intellection and volition, and there is spirit, which is made up of higher human intellection and the person's own spirit.

Next we have Michael Psellos, the well-known philosopher from the 11th c., who reveals that there are six levels in the human person.



- Человек:
- ум (разум от Бога)
 - логическая душа (ум-разум)
 - неразумная душа (чувства)
 - природа (воля)
 - (физическое) тело
 - материя (прах земной, пыль земная)

The first level is “mind”, i.e. human intellection, which is from God. Within the parentheses on the picture above you see my own interpretation of Psellos’s terms. In order to save time we won’t go through citing all the quotations, as the author spells them out in great detail. So here you have my interpretation of what he says.

Then we see something very interesting in Psellos. If “mind”, for Psellos, can be understood as human mind from God, e.g. spiritual, higher, having its source in God, and it follows, as spirit, then on the next level lower he posits man’s logical soul, understood as the human mind and the rational sphere of his soul.

Still lower is man’s “non-reasonable soul”. In other words, he sees man as having a reasonable, logical soul and also and a non-reasonable soul, by which he means human sensing and feeling.

Mikhail Psellos places the “nature”, or character of a person within his “non-reasonable soul”. It is interesting that this is a separate category, which I am inclined to understand from the texts and general impression of the author, relates to something like the ambition of human nature and the will of the soul.

After spirit (reasonable mind) and soul (mind, feelings and will), comes body. It is composed of two levels: the physical body and, at last, simply of “material”. All this already doesn’t relate to human nature, but to human material, which Mikhail Psellos understands as ashes and dust of the earth, which we know figure in the Biblical text on the creation of man.

As you can see, a fairly interesting framework is emerging, although it clearly refers back to the same paradigm from antiquity: the human person is tripartite – made up of spirit, soul and body.

Further we might return to the thought of Clement of Alexandria (2nd half and end of the 2nd c.), a predecessor of Origen in the Alexandrian school. I have left Clement’s thoughts until the end, insofar as he unexpectedly gives human nature a whole 10 ontological levels:

Декада (десятерница)

- пять чувств (зрение, слух, обоняние, вкус, осязание)
- умное слово
- способность к плотскому размножению
- дух человека («дыхание жизни»)
- господствующая часть души (высшая воля и духовный разум)
- благодать и Дар Духа Святого



First of all, he considers each of the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch to be individual levels. He names them each, rather than designating them with one term, as “the 5 senses”.

After the senses, he has the level of the “intelligent word”. This is also entirely unique; no one else does this. And Clement gives this particular trait of human life its own separate level in the nature of the human person.

After the “intelligent word”, Clement names the “ability to multiply bodily”. This looks a bit strange and might even cause a smile or two, but it’s certainly just as unique as his other levels. Absolutely no one else sees the structure of the human person like this. Clement’s approach, in and of itself, is interesting and important; it bears witness to the fact that Clement doesn’t demean or debase the human ability for human bodily multiplication, but on the contrary, places it very high and is not ashamed of it.

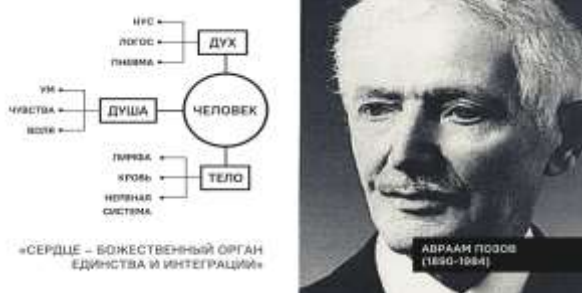
Further, he speaks, of course, of the “spirit of man”, and of the “breath of life”, of which we read in the Biblical account of the creation of man.

Then Clement of Alexandria singles out the “ruling part of the soul” (more precisely of the spirit of man), by which he means simultaneously man’s higher willpower, and his spiritual reason.

And, finally, the highest and tenth level of human nature goes to the “grace and Gift of the Holy Spirit”. This is also very important: the spirit which is divine in nature and the Gift of the Holy Spirit are part of human nature, for Clement. This is how Clement’s full-blown understanding of the human person looks in all its richness.

For a whole millennium, Clement of Alexandria was considered a saint by both the Western and Eastern Christian Churches: his works were read, known and valued, though not a single other person repeated or used the framework for understanding the human person that Clement gives us. Many traits of his framework remain absolutely unique – used only by this remarkable catechist and gnostic-philosopher.

So now let us skip forward to the 20th c. and look at what Avraam Samuilovich Pozov (1890–1984), our countryman and a remarkable Russian emigrant, has to say about Christian anthropology. In his work entitled, “The Foundations of Early-Church Anthropology” (Osnovy drevne-tserkovnoj antropologii), he proposes an approach which is already well known to us, affirming that the human person is a unity of spirit, soul and body. Of course, Pozov is getting this from Greek culture and ontology, but endeavours to interpret this in a Christian way. For this reason, he gives the image a trinitarian meaning and compares it with our dogmatic understanding of the Trinitarian God. Moreover, Pozov proposes, that each level of the human tripartite unity is also tripartite in its own right.



The human spirit he interprets as a unity of three elements: “nous” (νοῦς), “logos” (λόγος) and “pneuma” (πνεῦμα). “Nous”, is of course, spiritual mind; this term is also translated as spirit, but should be considered, in the first instance, as spiritual mind. The human “logos” relates to the human word and the Word of God, just as “pneuma” – the human breath of life – is associated with the Holy Spirit. Pozov interprets the soul traditionally as a unity of mind, senses and feeling, and will, but he also tries to understand and depict the body in a Trinitarian fashion, although perhaps he doesn’t entirely succeed in this regard. He mentions only lymph nodes, blood and nerves, although it is clear that a person’s body cannot be fully described only by these things, as it contains many other components. Pozov attempts a Trinitarian interpretation of the human body, but doesn’t really think things through to the end. He speaks, however, separately of the human heart, although it isn’t altogether clear where he puts the heart in his framework. Pozov speaks of the “heart” as the divine organ of unity and integration in the human person, but such a designation of heart doesn’t fit very organically into his general anthropological framework. Perhaps in his system the “heart” should be interpreted as the divine spirit and mind/reason within the human person (like “nous”), or perhaps as the thing which is located “above” this.

And, of course, we should also mention Boris Petrovich Vysheslavtsev and his well-known work entitled “An Ethic of Transformed Eros” (“Etika preobrazhjonogo erosa”). Vysheslavtsev distinguishes seven ontological levels of the human person and endeavours to take a new look at this question, using the most contemporary understandings of the human persona available to him.

- Семь онтологических ступеней:**
1. физико-химическая энергия;
 2. энергия живая (клетка);
 3. психическая энергия (в т.ч. коллективное бессознательное);
 4. индивидуальная душа, в т.ч. личное бессознательное;
 5. сознательная душа;
 6. духовное сознание, дух, духовная личность;
 7. человек в себе, его самость метафизическая и метапсихическая.



Vysheslavtsev speaks of the first level of the human person as “physical and chemical energy”, and of the next level as “living energy” – having in mind the cell. His third level is “psychic energy”, which he relates to the collective unconscious, and after this his fourth level is the “individual soul”, which he says includes the personal unconscious principle. It’s rather curious that for Vyshslavtsev the personal unconscious is based upon the collective unconscious. On the fifth level, Vysheslavtsev places the “conscious soul”. It’s obvious that since there was an unconscious there also needs to be something conscious. The sixth level is “spiritual consciousness” – which is, for the moment, only consciousness. We can really feel the 20th c. in all of his categories, although spiritual consciousness is understood by him as “spirit”, and as “spiritual personality”. It is interesting that Vysheslavtsev connects spiritual consciousness with the spiritual personality, or spiritual man; the category of personhood suddenly appears – and this fact is significant. To complete the picture, he gives us his seventh level of the human person, which is “the human person as self – his metaphysical and metapsychic “self-hood”. Within his system, this highest level is higher than the human spirit and the human personality, which is a view that is far from uncontested.

In this review, I haven’t referred at all to the views of one of the most well-known, and I would even say “great” Christian anthropologists – Nikolay Berdyaev. But to give a worthy presentation of his views would take a significant amount of time. He doesn’t provide us with a single, separate work dedicated to human nature, and he makes use of various interpretations of human nature, insofar as these were different across various different periods of his life and work. It would be necessary to write an entirely separate scholarly work dedicated to Berdyaev’s understandings of the human person and human nature, and unfortunately this subject still awaits the scholar who will tackle it; to present Berdyaev’s anthropological views in an integral fashion would be very important, indeed. His anthropological views are extremely interesting and complex, and to read them out of all of his various different works is not an easy task. For this reason, I don’t present Berdyaev’s views here, although he contemplated and thought on these questions about the human person more thoroughly, deeply, and integrally than other philosophers of the past century.

Such is our short history of anthropological teaching, and I have endeavoured to review and present almost all the knowledge on the Christian view of human anthropology which is available today. Everything else (excluding Berdyaev) is just slight variations on that, which I have tried to present in this paper.

However, I am not entirely satisfied. It seems to me insufficient simply to broaden and deepen that which was already known by some point in antiquity. For this reason, I have tried to find a key to a new, purely Christian revelation on the human person and on humanity. I never doubted that such Christian revelation existed – after all, Jesus Christ radically changed the human person and humanity; He saved the human person and transfigured him. Of course, working on this at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries (although I began to think about these things in the 1960s), I have understood that the entire question centres around the revelation of the integral human person in authentic relationship (*lichnostj*) and sobornost (translator’s note, i.e. the authentic human person in relationship and authentic community). Thanks be to God, we finally have new understandings and new words to describe this new revelation. The new understanding of the human person and of humanity as a whole is in any way bound to be connected with new understandings of personhood and sobornost, although different people continue to understand these things in different ways. What conclusions has this yielded?

To begin with, I came fairly quickly to the conclusion, based upon the Gospel, that the integral human person in authentic relationship (*lichnostj*) is a person “born from above”. The word ‘*lichnostj*’ is not used in the Holy Scriptures, but the scriptures do contain the remarkable words which say “you must be born from above” (John 3:7). But what does it mean to be born from above? It means that a human being is born as a human person in authentic relationship (*lichnostj*), and is no longer only a presenting “face”, or an individual. The integral human person in authentic relationship is born “of water and the Spirit”, and this means that in him is something of the earth, from people, and something from above, from God, through Christ in the Holy Spirit. Both of these things are necessary, and without this agreed act a person cannot be born as an

integral human person in authentic relationship (lichnostj), having grace from God, but also being a man, born of the Holy Spirit, not only individually as a self, but personally, in such a way as to deepen the integrity of the person through authentic connectedness to “the other” in community, through Christ in the Holy Spirit.

Thus, during the first stages of work on my Christian anthropology, during the course of our meetings on mystagogy, I decided that the integral human person in authentic relationship (lichnostj) is spiritual man. In him lives the spirit from God and, simultaneously, that spirit to which the thinkers of antiquity referred. If this is true, then it would be sufficient to turn away from patristic and ancient bipartite structures and again, following various different Christian thinkers and fathers of the church mentioned above, reaffirm a tripartite framework. But even this turned out to be less than simple. As might be expected, such an intention yielded in rejection and misunderstanding on the part of many Orthodox believers, and especially from dogmatic theologians and scholars of patristics, who are working with dichotomous patristic understandings of the human person. For such people, these understandings are the patristic inheritance which remains with us, and we in the Orthodox Church are used to being very respectful and showing reverence to the patristic inheritance. But as we have seen, even the holy fathers have very differing opinions on these matters. For instance, we have seen how St. Paul and St. Irenaeus both use not only bipartite, but also tripartite frameworks for understanding the human person. And I required a decisive step in the direction of the tripartite understanding.

For many years I pursued this path, completing my mystagogical cycle revealing Christian teaching on the human person for the newly baptised. In doing so, I tried to enrich the tripartite understanding through real Christian experience, and nothing more. And of course, over time, I couldn't help but feel that something was missing, and that we were again leaving something aside in using the same, albeit developed, but nevertheless “antique” understanding of the human person. This meant that it was necessary to return to our understanding of what an integral human person in authentic relationship (lichnostj) is. It isn't simply a spiritual human being; it's something more. And this is because, in my opinion, Christian revelation on the human person needs to be even more radical than it has been.

Then I began to take a new and analytical approach to our question; I began to look at the tripartite understanding from antiquity not as a vertical hierarchy of three elements, but horizontally. I envisaged the three qualities as equal, because all people have them in equal proportion, preserving them as simple and clear for each of the elements. And I didn't begin to broaden, although it would have been possible to do this, as the other thinkers and theologians that we have discussed above have done.

I simply began to look at the simple, tripartite framework as horizontal rather than vertical, because I had come to the conclusion that each of the three qualities is inherent to all people, independent of the quantity and quality of their lives. As a result, the idea of a “horizontal” dimension of the human person was born.

But we still needed some sort of hierarchical structure – some sort of vertical – after all, our horizontal aspect isn't a complete description of the human person. It was the philosophers and dogmatic theologians among the church fathers, liturgists and ascetics who helped me with the first stage of my work, but I looked to Christian mystics, anthropologists and existential thinkers for help with this second stage – and especially to N.A. Berdyaev.

My desire to look at the foundational Christian understandings in a tripartite, rather than bipartite way, helped me. What do I mean by this? As everyone knows, things have an external reality – a sort of manifestation, and they also have an essence which is their ontological reality. It's a textbook skill – to be able to distinguish the manifestation from the essence of things. But in wanting to get away from dialectics, I added a third level to this framework – the mystical reality of all things. In this level I brought together divine reality, i.e. the Mysteries of the divine Life, with existential divine-human reality, i.e. with the reality of existence, the existence of things – in the highest and deepest sense of the word “existence”, of course.

These three dimensions might also be expressed in the following way: firstly, with the help of this triad of levels: accidental – essential – existential, and secondly by the following triad: phenomenological – noumenal – mystical. Beginning from this, we might propose the following

triads, particularly important in the Church, which strictly observes its canons of faith, practice and life. In terms of faith the triad would be kerygmatic – dogmatic – mystical, i.e. the levels relate to degree of revelation. In terms of prayer the levels would be: ritual (formal rites) – mysterial (sacramental) – and sacral (inner, hidden). In terms of life the levels would be: aesthetic – ascetic – mystical.

And at this point, if we look at tripartite man from a vertical perspective, then it begs the conclusion that there is really an anthropological vertical hierarchy – a vertical dimension to the human person, which can be described in the following way. In the first place it is the discernment between a human person (a human individual) and the mass of humanity, in which the human person is no one and doesn't even have a name. On the second level is the hypostasis of the human person, his "face" as an ontological reality (his essence and nature), which is to be made in the image of God - an icon of God in the person (in his love, freedom, authenticity, beauty and kindness), and also in his personal principle (his "persona", how he presents himself). And thirdly, we have the level of the integral human person in authentic relationship (lichnostj) as a mystical and existential reality, as a person born from above, of water and the Spirit – the person spoken of in the Gospels, who bears the likeness of God and has various different gifts of the Holy Spirit.

This is how my vertical understanding of anthropology – the vertical dimension of the human person – came into being. In its simplest form I would call the triad: individual – "persona" – integral human person in authentic relationship (lichnostj). By "persona" here, I mean precisely the hypostasis of the person himself – his ontological "face". Therefore, when I want to describe the human person on the ontological level, I use the word "face", or "persona", in quotation marks, so that people won't confuse this with some other human face, be it physical, psychological, spiritual or mystical. I mean precisely the hypostasis of the human person, but at the same time the face that we see on an icon. And in a classical icon we see faces which show the human person precisely in this ontological dimension.

And here is how we can now think of the human person:



This picture is much more satisfying, because everything falls into place: we have both the understanding of the human person from antiquity with its tripartite understanding of spirit, soul and body, and the Christian revelation of the new man. And in this human person there is a place for human individuality, for his ontological "persona", and for his integral human being in authentic relationship (lichnostj) as spiritual man, living in Christ and in the Holy Spirit, i.e. for the person who has access to the Heavenly Father through Christ and the Holy Spirit. And on every level of the anthropological "vertical" the person is recognized in his fullness, i.e. in his spirit, soul and body – and this is particularly important. And truly, it is important for us to recognize, that not only in human individuality, not only in human nature, but in the authentic human person in relationship there is both spirit and body, i.e. spirit, soul and body.

The proposed framework can be worked further into the following matrix:

	ДУХ	ДУША	ТЕЛО
ЛИЧНОСТЬ	ЛИЧНОСТНЫЙ ДУХ	ЛИЧНОСТНАЯ ДУША	ЛИЧНОСТНОЕ ТЕЛО
«ЛИЦО», ЛИК, ИПОСТАСЬ	ЛИЧНЫЙ ДУХ	ЛИЧНАЯ ДУША	ЛИЧНОЕ ТЕЛО
ИНДИВИДУАЛЬНОСТЬ	ИНДИВИДУ- АЛЬНЫЙ ДУХ	ИНДИВИДУ- АЛЬНАЯ ДУША	ИНДИВИДУ- АЛЬНОЕ ТЕЛО

For instance, on the first (mystical) level the integral human person in authentic relationship intersects with spirit, and as a result we have authentic interpersonal spirit. In the same

way we get interpersonal soul and interpersonal body. On the second, ontological level personal spirit, soul and body appear. And on the third level of accidentals, we see individual spirit, soul and body.

We can, however, turn this matrix upside down, and then we get the following:

	ДУХ	ДУША	ТЕЛО
ЛИЧНОСТЬ	ДУХОВНАЯ ЛИЧНОСТЬ	ДУШЕВНАЯ ЛИЧНОСТЬ	ТЕЛЕСНАЯ ЛИЧНОСТЬ
«ЛИЦО», ЛИК, ИПОСТАСЬ	ДУХОВНЫЙ ЛИК	ДУШЕВНЫЙ ЛИК	ТЕЛЕСНЫЙ ЛИК
ИНДИВИДУАЛЬНОСТЬ	ДУХОВНАЯ ИНДИВИДУАЛЬНОСТЬ	ДУШЕВНАЯ ИНДИВИДУАЛЬНОСТЬ	ТЕЛЕСНАЯ ИНДИВИДУАЛЬНОСТЬ

What do we have as a result? Let's begin from the first level. If before we had authentic interpersonal spirit, interpersonal soul and interpersonal body, we now have integral spiritual group personality, psychic group personality and bodily group personality. On the second level we have spiritual persona, psychic persona and bodily persona. And on the third level we have spiritual, psychic and bodily individuality. All of this is unusually enriches our understanding of the human person, as a whole.

We now have the possibility to broaden our understanding of the human person and think about him not only in a bipartite and tripartite sense, but also within space. In each matrix there are nine different understandings of the human person, and in two matrices we have a full eighteen different understandings.

Now let's try to move to a more three-dimensional understanding, adding also the plural to our framework – after all, the human person doesn't live alone. But if he isn't alone, then what do we have? Here we can keep our horizontal dimension – the human being in breadth – imagining him as spirit, soul and body. We can also keep our vertical dimension of integral human person in authentic relationship (lichnostj) – “persona”, and individual. But we also have the possibility of looking at man in terms of “length”. Then, in the plural, the integral human person in authentic relationship extends to be catholicity, “persona” extends to be collective life and the cathedra (i.e. conciliar being), and the individual extends to be the collective, or group. And all this takes into consideration spirit (spirits), soul (souls), and body (bodies). As a result, we have the following matrix:

	ДУХ	ДУША	ТЕЛО
ЛИЧНОСТНАЯ СОБОРНОСТЬ И СОБОРНАЯ ЛИЧНОСТЬ			
ЛИЧНАЯ КОНСИЛИАРНОСТЬ И КОНСИЛИАРНОЕ “ЛИЦО”			
ИНДИВИДУАЛЬНЫЙ КОЛЛЕКТИВ И КОЛЛЕКТИВНАЯ ИНДИВИДУАЛЬНОСТЬ			

Let us takes some time to clarify the vertical dimension and understandings related to it. First, the highest level relates to the Church more than to human society, because the Church is really a collective integral human person in authentic relationship (sobornal human person). I.e., in the following case, we understand the church as the community of Christians or brotherhood of Christ, in communion with Christ and someone else who is an elder within the Church. This might be an apostle, a prophet or a church teacher – who at the same time might not even be the elder within the Christian community (brotherhood), although such a leader does need to be chosen by all, in a sobornal way and according to revelation in the Holy Spirit. The second level is the level of church and society; such is a convocation or synod, the members of which might be well-known “faces” or “personae”, selected in some particular way. Such would be a hierarchical order having a chairman (priest, bishop, pope, patriarch, etc.) within the church, or a hierarchical society/state led by the holder of the highest-ranking office (prince, king, tsar, emperor). Such also would be a non-hierarchical group such as a senate, synagogue or synaxis, where the leader/elder is chosen

by all or by his electors. The third level within the church, people/nation, state and society would be the collection of individuals with its named boss at the helm, who makes all the decisions. This collection of individuals wouldn't even be a group without its "monarchical" or "democratic" dictator.

Now let us take our three-dimensional framework and build the matrix again, slightly simplifying the vertical dimension:

	ДУХ	ДУША	ТЕЛО
СОБОРНОСТЬ	СОБОРНЫЙ ДУХ	СОБОРНАЯ ДУША	СОБОРНОЕ ТЕЛО
КОНСИЛИАРНОСТЬ	КОНСИЛИАРНЫЙ ДУХ	КОНСИЛИАРНАЯ ДУША	КОНСИЛИАРНОЕ ТЕЛО
КОЛЛЕКТИВ	КОЛЛЕКТИВНЫЙ ДУХ	КОЛЛЕКТИВНАЯ ДУША	КОЛЛЕКТИВНОЕ ТЕЛО

This is what we get: on the first level we have the communal (sobornal) spirit, soul and body. On the second level, conciliar spirit, soul and body, and on the third level – collective spirit, soul and body. It seems that these are still vague understandings for us and that they call up many different associations.

Next, as before, we switch the foundation of the matrix:

	ДУХ	ДУША	ТЕЛО
СОБОРНОСТЬ	ДУХОВНАЯ СОБОРНОСТЬ	ДУШЕВНАЯ СОБОРНОСТЬ	ТЕЛЕСНАЯ СОБОРНОСТЬ
КОНСИЛИАРНОСТЬ	ДУХОВНАЯ КОНСИЛИАРНОСТЬ	ДУШЕВНАЯ КОНСИЛИАРНОСТЬ	ТЕЛЕСНАЯ КОНСИЛИАРНОСТЬ
КОЛЛЕКТИВ	ДУХОВНЫЙ КОЛЛЕКТИВ	ДУШЕВНЫЙ КОЛЛЕКТИВ	ТЕЛЕСНЫЙ КОЛЛЕКТИВ

And this is what we get: spiritual, psychic and bodily sobornost on the first level, spiritual, psychic and bodily conciliarity on the second level, and spiritual, psychic and bodily collective on the third level.

“The human person” – from 36 different angles!

Each box of each matrix begs its own description. Of course, this is all still ahead of us, but I'm trying to think about these things. This sort of thinking has turned out to be very productive and unusually interesting – after all, our model describes the most varying human qualities and groupings. Thirty-six different angles – thirty-six different manifestations of the human person – this is quite a few. This isn't dichotomy or trichotomy – this isn't two or three categories, but greater by a whole order of magnitude. Our new approach can help us to understand and describe the human person and also very different qualities of his existence. In this light, the human person seems absolutely new and, for this reason, more interesting.

But let us try to think through at least some of the versions that have resulted from our model. Let's look, for instance, at the last box in all four matrices, where body intersects with the individual or collective. It is simple to determine what an individual body is. It is the body of a person, separate from everyone and everything. In our second matrix we have “bodily individuality”. Here, we can also easily understand what is being referred to, even if we can't give a strict scientific definition. This isn't an empty understanding or a term without meaning – after all, this sort of terminology has long been in use in life. We mean, of course, the individual human being, living only according to the interests of his body.

Next, we look at our matrices that represent plurality. Here we have the “collective body”, i.e. the “body of the collective”. When body intersects with collective, when we think about this quality, new associations are born. We may think, for instance, of a sports team. Insofar as we are speaking about persons in the plural, it could even be a sports team, because such a thing usually manifests in a “collective body”. But actually, what we are speaking of is significantly broader,

and is a quality that can inhere in any person, nor does he have to be a sportsman for this to be the case.

And finally, our fourth intersection – the “bodily collective”. We can imagine this, too. For instance, it might be a group of people who are interested only in issues relating to their bodies.

Those qualities noted in our matrices are things that are universally recognised, perhaps with the exception of understandings relating to the integral human person in authentic relationship (lichnostj) and sobornost. These qualities don’t break down the human person or the group on any level. Nevertheless, when we look at boxes relating to particular understandings, various difficulties can arise.

For instance, do all people have ontological consciousness, or not all? This is a serious question, and we aren’t even yet speaking about the third level of our vertical dimension, but only the second. This is the level of ontology, in which the human person is understood as essential and hypostatic. Is a person always a hypostasis (does he always have a “persona”) or not? Does he always have a presenting “face” and image, or not? It turns out it isn’t so easy to find these answers. Or perhaps the category of ontology is simply the fruit of Greek philosophical reflection? The Bible does perfectly well without ontology. Looking at our results, at first we want to say, “of course he does”! But then in thinking about the other side something new is suddenly revealed and we say, “Oh, no...he may not!” The human person turns out to have so many complexities and aspects, and there is nothing we can do but recognize it. Yes, with a human person understood as an individual, all is more or less clear, because no one is going to take his individuality away. But what do we do with the human person as integral human person in authentic relationship or as hypostasis? Not all people are born as “personae” or “authentic human persons in relationship” in one and the same way! And this is also an issue for which the solution is probably bound up with the calling of a specific person.

But perhaps there are those among us those who would say that everyone has every potential. In this case, do we need to somehow build that potential into our tables? Because if a person has spent all his personal and interpersonal potential then he is no longer alive upon this earth and, in that case, isn’t a person at all. Perhaps someone really does support this point of view, but this discernment needs to be recognized as dangerous, insofar as we recognize the image of God and the hypostatic nature of every living person – even those who are non-believers. On the other hand, image understood as “persona” can be totally lost. Looking at certain “icons of God” in their concrete embodiments as isolated cases we just fall into despair.

And here our anthropological framework requires additional qualification. Movement along our vertical and horizontal axes for human existence is fruitful, but we need to stop at some point. And where precisely to stop we don’t exactly know. Where are the boundaries of our horizontal and vertical dimensions? How many qualities do we need to depict on our horizontal and vertical axes so that our matrices will work best? Though they already work pretty well.

Likewise, there are issues surrounding sobornost and conciliarity. Issues can arise insofar as we are not entirely able to define these dimensions of the human person. These understandings have come into our theology, ecclesiology and anthropology fairly recently. Many people continue to confuse sobornost and conciliarity, just as they confuse the integral human person in authentic relationship with “persona” and individuality – and this confusion is a mass event. It isn’t simple people who are confusing these things but well-known theologians and professional scholars of ecclesiology and anthropology. And there is a reason why this is happening. If in the course of the Christological and Trinitarian controversies of the 4th and 5th centuries some understanding of human nature within the Church was achieved, other understandings have yet to come forth in full clarity.

I think that it would be fitting to finish today’s lecture with the words of Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky, whose 200th birthday we recently celebrated: “The human person is a mystery. This mystery needs to be unravelled, and even if you spend your whole life unravelling, don’t say that you’ve wasted your time. I work with this mystery because I, myself, want to be a person.” (Fragment from a letter sent by young Dostoyevsky to his brother) Yes, “the human person is a mystery”, and we are working on understanding that mystery more and more deeply. After all, we are called to continually work on perceiving the mystery of man. Dostoyevsky really

did make this the goal of his life, and he did much to achieve his goal. We need to work, too, and for that reason, making sense of the horizontal and vertical dimensions of man means a great deal to us. We need to recognize that the integral human person in authentic relationship (lichnostj) is not only spirit and not only a soul without a body, as many continue to believe. We also need to recognize that individual qualities are retained by every person, even if they have already become quite well personally integrated and are in authentic relationship. Authenticity in relationship doesn't replace individuality, but transforms it, changing but not destroying it. For the moment, sadly, entirely different concepts continue to prevail in our time.

And, in conclusion, several words on the anthropological aspect of Roman Catholic – Orthodox relations. A new, Christian view on the human person and humanity, working outside the boundaries of our fixed ontological and existential fields, allows us to develop a new language for Roman Catholic – Orthodox dialogue. Experience over the last hundred years has shown that the church is moving toward a language of authentic humanity and sobornost – more based upon brotherhood and community, inside which extraneous stricture and immovability disappear – as do formalism and impersonality. An example of this is the experience of Russian communities and brotherhoods in the 20th c., for whom sharp interconfessional barriers became insignificant, just as they did for Christians persecuted under the Soviet regime and in the GULAG. For these people, as a rule, confessional boundaries entirely disappeared. In the 2nd half of the 20th c. the Roman Catholic Church, albeit with qualifications, admitted the possibility for Roman Catholic believers to structure their own community and brotherhood life. This greatly increased interconfessional fellowship. Now, after Vatican II, we see the Roman Catholic Church as different than she was in the times of Vatican I. People have again learned to look each other in the eye without seeking the heretic or schismatic in the other but striving to see brothers and sisters in Christ in each other. This living, existential experience is incredibly important, and we can build our present and future upon it.

Moreover, a clear vision of belonging for all institutional churches and structures either in the sense of social objectivity and collectivism, or in the sense of conciliarity, or in terms of coming together in a collected fashion – though not yet in terms of full sobornost – will help us to look soberly even at very important church phenomena, such as Ecumenical Councils or the authority of the Pope, without investing in them too much mystical significance, as has sometimes earlier occurred. This new vision gives them more relative and temporal significance – even perhaps functional and instrumental – allowing us to see that they are not absolute for everyone and in all times. This approach allows us to decipher solutions to even our hardest questions, which have for so long born contradiction and misapprehension between us. Our ultimate value is to achieve authentic personhood and sobornost on all levels, and not just conciliarity or some other form of social organisation of the sum total of groups of believers in Christ. This understanding opens doors for love and freedom in the church – the same doors which have too often been closed for so many people. And this, in its turn, strengthens our faith and hope in life, and strengthens us in underpinning our principles of authentic personhood and sobornost, and strengthening our living connection, which we call the “bond (in totality) of perfection” (Col 3:14). It is this bond that lies at the foundation of all authentic Christian community and brotherhood in particular – and only with the help of this bond – it is possible for us to solve all of our remaining confessional differences.