

THE ICON, BETWEEN TRADITION AND POSTMODERNITY. CANON 82 OF THE TRULLO COUNCIL, CANONICAL TESTIMONY OF THE TRANSITION, FROM THE SYMBOLIC TO THE REALISTIC FIGURATIVE REPRESENTATION IN ICONOGRAPHY

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Abstract: Icons are not mere religious pictures or portraits/genre scenes but symbols of a higher reality, and because of this they cannot be painted in a realistic Christian art has gradually developed a so-called Canon: the system of symbols and approved ways of representation of Jesus Christ, his Mother, saints, and various themes. Its primary function is to ensure that the images are made in accordance with the Scriptures and the liturgical tradition; an iconographer is not completely free to express herself. However, the Canon is not something fixed as everything permanently fixed is ultimately devoid of life; various iconographers have contributed to it and continue doing so. The Quinisext Council is also known as the Trullan Council, or Council in Trullo or the 5th and 6th ecumenical councils, and marks the beginning of icon theology. The most important ruling was canon 82. It forbade the use of symbolic representations of Christ. For the first time the connection was made between images of Christ and his incarnation. The theme of the incarnation was to become the very foundation of all icon theology. Canon 82 of the Trullo Council is canonical testimony of the transition, from the symbolic to the realistic figurative representation in iconography.

Keywords: Icon, Canon 82, Christ, iconography, Council.

1. INTRODUCTION

The word "icon" means "image", but since the early centuries of Christianity, the word "icon" is normally used to refer to images with a religious content, meaning and use. Most icons are two-dimensional [1]; mosaics, paintings, enamels, miniatures, but ancient three dimensional icons also exist. Many people assume an icon must be in a Byzantine or Russian style. Many icons are, but many are not; other Orthodox Christian cultures have their own traditional styles of art, and many icons exist painted in a Western style. It is not style that makes a painting an icon, it is subject, meaning and use. In our postmodern world we have to rearticulate the meaning of icon painting in order to avoid any misunderstandings. According to Orthodox Tradition, which is declared by the Seventh Ecumenical Council and the fathers of the iconoclastic era, icon painting is an art with specific goals and character. For that purpose this art elaborates and transforms the

form under one condition, the image must always be recognizable by the faithful beholder. First, the painter removes all elements that are inappropriate and satisfy only human curiosity, but do not serve the sacred mission of the icon.

The first symbolic Christian images appeared within the first two centuries [2] after the birth of the religion, and the earliest known icons on wooden panels are dated from the 6th century. The main purpose of an icon is to provide a devotee with a focus of attention while praying; icons also, through their beauty, are reminders of another reality which is beyond the material world. In the Eastern Orthodox tradition icons are treated with special veneration, however, such an attitude is actually directed to who is represented. Icons are not mere religious pictures or portraits/genre scenes but symbols of a higher reality, and because of this they cannot be painted in a realistic Christian art has gradually developed a so-called Canon: the system of symbols and approved ways of representation of Jesus Christ, his Mother, saints, and various themes. Its primary function is to ensure that the images are made in accordance with the Scriptures and the liturgical tradition [3]; an iconographer is not completely free to express herself. However, the Canon is not something fixed as everything permanently fixed is ultimately devoid of life; various iconographers have contributed to it and continue doing so.

An icon is always the representation of a religious subject, but not every representation of a religious subject is an icon. Not are sentimental or even erotic portraits of models or historical figures masquerading as images of the saints, and unfortunately such paintings are very common in Western Christian religious art. An icon is not simply the representation of a religious subject, it is a representation with a religious meaning, and if it is an Orthodox icon it must have an orthodox meaning.

It may seem surprising that an image can be unorthodox. But consider for a moment: an image represents something - or it misrepresents something, or perhaps it represents a mere fiction. An image can mislead and it can lie - or it can be inadequate. It is for this reason Orthodox tradition forbids certain kinds of religious image.

The Iconoclasts tried to abolish icons from the Church's life, but failed [4]. They accused the icon-worshippers of idolatry, and claimed the making and worship of images was forbidden in the Bible. The Church's response is firm and clear; the making of images is permissible - even in the Old Testament, God Himself commanded the making of certain images (e.g. the Cherubim on the cover of the Ark, (Exod.25,19) and if they are images of Christ and His saints, then they are to be treated with reverence and veneration. We do not adore images; adoration [latreia] is due to God alone, but we do venerate and reverence them. The saints, as deified human beings are also worshipped, and with a higher kind of worship than are their images, but no saint, not even the Theotokos herself, is ever adored.

Icons allow us a glimpse of the Kingdom of God, a vision the Word of God in human form, of humanity deified in the saints, of matter transfigured by the power of the Spirit. Icons are windows onto aspects of reality we cannot normally see, and help us awake our spiritual senses so that we become more vividly aware of the Divine energies that suffuse and uphold all Creation. The theology of the icon is based on the Incarnation, the revelation of the Image of God

in the human form of Jesus Christ [5]. This first icon was one made without human hands and revealed in the temple of Christ's body. By imitating the divine artist, the iconographer not only participates in sacred creation, but theologically asserts the reality of Jesus humanity.

The icon of God likewise exists in each of us, for we, too, are made in God's image. This gives man the ability to communicate with God, to be transformed by his presence, and become like God, participating in his divine character. As a bridge of prayer between God and the human person, an icon gives the viewer the occasion to commune with the divine. Icons of the sacred not only set an atmosphere for prayer, but by contemplating the holiness of the person represented in the icon, one can experience the presence of God which is "contagious". One becomes aware of praying and worshipping in the presence of angels and saints. Icons are used to enhance the beauty of the church, but also to teach us about our faith initially and then to remind us of this teaching. By bringing us in contact with holy persons, we are enthused to imitate them, helping to transform and sanctify us [6]. Ultimately the icon is a means of worshipping God and venerating his saints.

The painted wood or wall has no value in itself if the believer is not put in a relationship with God. The icon is not just a symbol or reminder of a holy person, but has the character of an epiphany, manifesting the presence of God through the transfigured subject of the icon who is shown as redeemed and participating in God's light. These people revealed the image of God in their lives in an eminent way. Now they invite the viewer into a communion with them and through them with God. Bringing us into living encounter with the person represented, an icon becomes a door to sacred time and space. An iconographer by definition is Christian, for he attempts to portray the dogmas of his faith. Because the artist does not reproduce what he sees but what he understands about the essence of life, he has to be a person transformed by prayer in order to perceive a universe that has been transfigured through Christ. God is asked to inspire the artist and guide his hand. Because God is the true artist, icons are not signed by the iconographer.

2. ANALYSIS

The art of Icons in the Orthodox Church is called "hagiography" or "holy painting", because it depicts holy persons and subjects. The painter, or "hagiographer" is not simply a craftsman executing a painted representation of a religious subject: he has a spiritual office, which he fulfils in the church, just like the priest, and the preache [7]. The liturgical Icon has a theological meaning. It is not, as we have said, a painting made to delight our eyes, or even to remind us of holy persons, like the pictures we keep at home to remind us of our beloved relatives and friends; it is painted in such a way as to elevate us above the corrupt world. It therefore has nothing in common with paintings that portray people in a material manner, including Saints, as we see in the religious art of the West. In the liturgical icon, holy persons are portrayed in their purity.

For this reason, liturgical art does not change like other human affairs, for it is immutable, like the Church of Christ to which it gives expression. The holy tradition is the column of fire that leads the church through the wilderness of the unstable world. This comes as a surprise to men of

the present century, who are not prepared to plunge into the depths of the spiritual sea, but swim on the surface of the senses, carried away by the currents and eddies of the waters. Liturgical art nourishes the believer with spiritual sights and sounds, filtering what enters through the gates of the senses, delighting his soul with the heavenly wine, and bestowing upon him peace of mind. Technical skill in this art is not merely a mechanical matter, but partakes of the spirituality and sanctity of the things it wishes to portray [8]. For this reason, the technical vocabulary of religious painting, the names of the tools and the expressions used for all aspects of it, have a religious character. The very materials used by the religious painter are blessed, humble, fragrant, delicate.

The beauty of liturgical painting is a beauty of the spirit, not of the flesh. The art is abstinent and austere [9], expressing richness through poverty, and just as the Gospels and the Old Testament are concise and laconic, so Orthodox religious painting is plain, lacking in excessive ornamentation and vain displays. The old religious painters fasted when they worked, and when they began an icon they changed their underclothes, so as to be pure both internally and externally. As they worked, they chanted psalms, so that their work would be executed in a spirit of contrition and so as to prevent their mind dwelling on worldly matters.

In holy icons, "the flesh is crucified along with passions and desires". Our understanding of icons will rest on these foregoing observations regarding Orthodox theology. Indeed, before the iconoclastic controversy, almost nothing was written by the Fathers about icons, except that they existed. It was not until iconoclasm, a heresy, surfaced that the Fathers of the Church devoted any extended attention to the veneration of sacred images. And when they did speak, what they wrote was typical of the Orthodox way of theologizing: laconic and reticent. Thus, while the Fathers teach that the honor which an icon is shown is transmitted to its prototype (to the holy person or event which it represents), they do not tell us how this is done [10]. And how it is that an icon conveys Grace, sanctifying those who venerate it - this also is not explained. These mysterious processes are defined in response to heretical challenges to their validity or salutary worth, but a healthy respect for the limitations of human logic and language - indeed, of the human mind - prevents any probing in great depth.

In formulating a theology of icons, the Fathers addressed two distinct periods of iconoclastic misbelief: the first extending from the outbreak of officially supported iconoclasm to the Seventh Oecumenical Synod (730-787); the second period beginning about 815 and ending with the restoration of the images under the empress St. Theodora (843). During the first period, the main spokesman for the iconodules, though by no means the only one, was St. John of Damascus [11] (ca. 675-ca. 749). In the second period, the same can be said about St. Theodore the Studite (759-826).

Hence there are three stages in God's post-lapsarian relations to man. The first is depicted in the Old Testament and is characterized by symbol and shadow – symbolic [12]. prefigurations of the "good things to come". The second stage is embodied in the New Testament, which is characterized by the iconic (by image). Here we have the "true form [eikon, or icon] of these realities". The third stage of this relationship will, of course, be the Kingdom of God to come, in

which man will see reality itself, "face to face". Clearly, with regard to iconography, the "symbolic" can occupy only a secondary position, since the significant quality of an icon par excellence is the fact that it constitutes a real image of that which it depicts [13]. The image is in some way a "true" form of the prototype, participating in it and integrally bound to it. In the second stage of the iconographic controversy, St. Theodore the Studite elucidated this profound relationship between image and prototype [14].

By mouth synods and bishops mission, the church is watching over the authenticity of "divine art". She "has not been created by painters, but instead is a rule confirmed a tradition of the Church". Synod in Trullo or Quinisext of 692 formulates rules, thus providing a safe criterion for judging the value of iconographic images. Canonical tradition of the Orthodox Church was expressed by Canon 82 of the Synod of Trullo in this sense: At the Council of Trullo, held in 692, the 82nd canon declared: *In certain reproductions of venerable images, the Forerunner is pictured pointing to the lamb with his finger. This representation was adopted as a symbol of grace. It was a hidden figure of that true Lamb who is Christ our God, shown to us according to the Law. Having thus welcomed these ancient figures and shadows as symbols of the truth transmitted to the Church, we prefer today grace and truth themselves, as a fulfilment of the Law. Therefore, in order to expose the sight of all, at least with the help of painting, that which is perfect, we decree that henceforth, Christ our God be represented in His human form, and not in the form of the ancient lamb. We understand this to be the elevation of the humility of God the Word, and we are led to remembering His life in the flesh, His Passion, His salvific death, and thus, deliverance which took place for the world* [15].

In other words, for the bishops who attended the council, the image of Christ was in itself a confession of the physical reality of Jesus Christ's incarnation in the flesh. Icons of the god-man Jesus Christ reaffirmed this, whereas images of a lamb did not. Nevertheless, the effects of the Council of Trullo might not have spread very far if it were not for the subsequent iconoclastic heresy, which began in the 700 years. Thus, the image of Christ already implied for the fathers of the Council in Trullo a confession of faith in the historical Incarnation, which could not be properly expressed in the symbolic figure of a lamb and needed an image of Jesus "in His human form".

We make pictures of the invisible God because God first took on human flesh and made Himself visible as the person Jesus Christ. This argument ultimately prevailed, and as such the canons of Trullo were included in the Seventh Ecumenical Council. Those canons included the prohibition of images of the Lamb of God. The older images of the Lamb of God, such as those in Ravenna survived because the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council were not "image-smashers", yet new images of Jesus Christ as "the Lamb" were not allowed.

The true job of the iconographer is to lead the image-making faculties out of their bondage to home-made illusions, so that they can truly mirror the image-making faculty of God the creator. This is part of the gift of being made in the image of God. The icon fights against our interior addiction to the symbol making game which distorts our contact with reality. In Duodecimum Saeculum, John Paul II's letter to Bishops on the twelfth centenary of Nicea II

(1987), the Pope underlines the importance of rediscovering the Christian icon: "The rediscovery of the Christian icon will also help in raising the awareness of the urgency of reacting against the depersonalising and at times degrading effects of the many images that condition our lives in advertisements and the media, for it is an image that turns towards us the look of Another invisible one and gives us access to the reality of the spiritual and eschatological world [16]".

The first sentence of the canon explains the situation existing at that time. It speaks of St. John the Baptist (the "Precursor") pointing out Christ, who is represented as a lamb. We know that the realistic image of Christ, His adequate portrait, existed from the beginning, and it is this portrait which is the true witness of His incarnation. In addition, there were also larger cycles representing subjects from the Old and New Testaments, particularly those of our major feasts, where Christ was represented in His human form. And yet symbolic representations replacing the human image of Christ also existed in the seventh century. This attachment to the biblical prefigurations, in particular to the image of the lamb, was particularly widespread in the West. It was necessary, however, to guide the faithful towards the stand adopted by the Church, and this is what Canon 82 of the Quinisext Council does.

Because it is the truth which came through Jesus Christ, it is not a matter of translating a word into images, but of showing the truth itself, the fulfilment of the words. Indeed, when he was speaking of "the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world", it was not a lamb at which St. John the Baptist was pointing but rather Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of God who became Man and came to the world to fulfil the law and to offer Himself in sacrifice. It is He who was prefigured by the lamb of the Old Testament. It is this fulfilment, this reality, this truth which had to be shown to everyone. Thus the truth is revealed not only by the word, but it is also shown by the image. The text of the canon implies an absolute denial of all abstractions and of all metaphysical conceptions of religion. Truth has its own image. For it is not an idea or an abstract formula, it is concrete and living, it is a Person, the Person, "crucified under Pontius Pilate". When Pilate asks Christ, "What is truth?" (John 18:38), Christ answers by remaining silent before him. Pilate leaves, without even awaiting an answer, knowing that a whole multitude of answers can be given to this question without one of them being valid. For it is the Church alone which possesses the answer to the question of Pilate. Christ says to His apostles: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). The correct question is not "What is truth?" but rather "Who is the truth?" Truth is a person, and it has an image. This is why the Church not only speaks of the truth, but also shows the truth: the image of Jesus Christ.

The council orders that the symbols of the Old Testament, used in the first centuries of Christianity, be replaced by direct representations of the truth they prefigured. It calls for the unveiling of their meaning. The image contained in the symbols of the Old Testament becomes reality in the incarnation. Since the Word became flesh and lived among us, the image must directly show that which happened in time and became visible, representable and describable [17]. Thus the ancient symbols are suppressed because a direct image now, exists and, in relation to this direct image, these symbols are belated manifestations of "Jewish immaturity". As long as the wheat was not ripe, their existence was justified, even indispensable, since they contributed to

its maturation. But in "the wheat ripe with truth", their role was no longer constructive. They even became a negative force because they reduced the principal importance and role of the direct image. As soon as a direct image is replaced by a symbol, it loses the absolute importance it embodies. The Fathers and the Christological councils had found clear and precise dogmatic formulas to express, as much as it was possible to do in words, the teaching of the Church on the incarnation of God. But words were not enough: The truth still had to be defended for a long time against those who did not accept it, in spite of the extreme clarity of conciliar decrees and patristic formulas. It was not only necessary to speak the truth, it was also necessary to show it. In the realm of the image, it was also necessary to make a rigorous confession which would stand up against the obscure and confused doctrines which everyone could accept equivocally, but which were not true. It was not a matter of finding a compromise to satisfy everyone, but of clearly confessing the truth, so "that this fulfilment might be seen by all", according to the words of Canon 82 [18].

Thus Canon 82 of the Quinisext Council expresses, for the first time, the teaching of the Church on the icon and simultaneously indicates the possibility of conveying a reflection of the divine glory through the means of art and with the help of some symbolism. It emphasises all the importance of historical reality, acknowledging the realistic image, but only one which is represented in a special way, with the help of a symbolic language that reveals the spiritual reality which only the Orthodox teaching conveys. It considers that the symbols, "the figures and shadows", do not express the fullness of grace, although they are worthy of respect and may correspond to the needs of a given epoch. But this iconographic symbolism is relegated to its secondary place and never replaces the direct image.

Canon 82 expresses, for the first time, what we call the iconographic canon, i.e. a set criterion for the liturgical quality of an image, just as the "canon of Scripture" establishes the liturgical quality of a text. The iconographic canon is a principle allowing us to judge whether an image is an icon or not. It establishes the conformity of the icon with Holy Scripture and defines what this conformity consists in: the authenticity of the transmission of the divine revelation in historical reality, by means of what we call symbolic realism, and in a way that truly reflects the Kingdom of God.

We understand this to be the elevation of the humility of God the Word, and we are led to remembering his life in the flesh, His passion, His saving death and, thus deliverance which took place for the world.

This is an extraordinary passage - the elevation of the humility of the God the Word. The painter must paint the icon of Christ in a way which enables the viewer to remember both the historical events "in the flesh" and the fact that this is God the Word in the flesh" [19]. Immediately the iconographer is ordered to find a way to paint a paradox. The iconographer is also directed to show "the deliverance of the world" - so it is not only the life of Christ which is to be painted, but the saints and the rest of the material creation. Furthermore they are to be painted in way which shows they are "delivered" - how do we paint material creation in way which shows it is delivered?

The history of iconography after 692 is a history of the response to this challenge. This canon demands the formation of a method of painting - neither a symbolic language nor photographic realism - which elevates the humility of God the Word. So as we paint the incarnation, the passion, and the acts of deliverance culminating in the postresurrection events we have to paint them simultaneously in two ways. We must paint the humility - the humanity - in such a way that the divinity is not forgotten: and we must signpost the divinity without making it appear that it belongs to a drifting insubstantial nonincarnate world. The precise technique of the iconographic brushstroke, the way of drawing so that the figure is lifted upward, and the later Russian method of *petit lac* which dialogues between the insubstantial and the precise line, all evolve from this canon. In this canon we have the origin of the whole experiment with anti-natural folds of garments, complementary colour discords in highlighting garments, reversed perspective, non-natural colours for animals and the *petit lac* illumination of landscapes.

The intention of the canon is very precise, and cannot be departed from without departing from the faith, but the method remains in evolution. We cannot say that the method is completed until the second coming itself. We can only say that certain practical ways have evolved which are an indispensable basis, They are the foundations of the iconographic language and are taught by the iconographic schools. This is the language of the Church's art - utterly unique and one like no other. It is created solely to express the unique Christian revelation.

However, like any form of language or music, a lot depends on how you put it together - a great poet or composer can put their language together in a way a mediocre composer can never aspire to. Some will always be performers - even virtuoso and brilliant performers in music and the arts - rather than composers. The true mark of genius is not in endlessly inventing new compositions or new methods but in the way you put the language together. This is what creates a Theophanes or a Rublev.

Also, nine centuries later, the Stoglav Council in 1551, has resumed the subject of the art of painting of icons, and in the content of canonical dispositions, said that rules should take into account the painters when they paint an icon [20].

Icon painters were told to be humble and live piously, not quarrel or drink and , above all, to follow strictly the icon-painting manual. The Church, not the artist, was to decide how an icon should be painted and what a saint should look like. The high clergy was told to insist that ancient icons should serve as models and not let painters get involved in their own inventions, disregarding the letter of the manual. Rublev was pointed to as a good example to follow [21]. However, the new generation of iconographers was unable to reach the artistic level of Rublev and Dionisii, despite the more favorable conditions that prevailed during most of the 16th century. Many of Stoglav's decisions remained on paper, or were only partially put into effect, and it could not have been otherwise.

Synod of the Hundred Chapters in 1551 requires bishops to watch, "each in his diocese with a tireless care and attention, as iconography to restrain from Imagination, following the tradition ... At which God deprived of gift, to be stopped from painting icons ...". Icon of God should not be entrusted to those who disfigure and dishonor it. Mastery and talent, although

necessary, are far from sufficient. It was requested a third condition: the sanctity of life, an artist soul purified by prayer and asceticism and doubled by a contemplative faculty. An icon can never down below a certain artistic level; this is the minimum they instrumental. Theological place, it is also praise, singing, poetry in color. Iconographer must have a sense of color, hearing musical consonance of lines and shapes, perfect mastery the means by which will be described heaven. Above this level, opens the infinite of the vision inspired. However, the icon is not so beautiful as it is Truth that go down into it and clothe its forms. Every finite is, mathematically, the ratio between two infinities. Similarly, any image corresponding to two infinities: the divine light and the human spirit. Church tradition cultivated style and taste with a perfect refinement. Iconographic canon has stipulate the broad principles regarding the form and content. Brief remarks can be found in podlinniki (authentic texts), books serving as guides iconographers. Some were “illustrated” and presented schematic models of traditional compositions; others “explanatory” technical precepts contained. These learned about preparing plasters, about fixing colors, especially gold, the presentation of certain symbolic details about the order of the paintings in a church [22].

3. CONCLUSIONS

As we have seen in our overview of the icon in Orthodox society and worship and in its historical context, the terms “symbol” and “icon” have very specific applications in Orthodox thought. During the first period of the iconoclastic era, we saw the first systematic attempt to distinguish between the symbolic and iconic. St. John of Damascus, seeing this distinction in the Old Testamental understanding of God in symbolic terms and the New Testamental encounter with God in image, in iconic form, centers his defense of the veneration of icons on a very vivid distinction between symbol and icon. In keeping with the apophatic principles of Orthodox theology, his argument is that symbolic representations of God in the Old Testament (for example, as a voice or as the burning bush) are not God as such, the symbol expressing a negative statement about the reality of God in symbols which He cannot be (God cannot, of course, be a burning bush or a voice, since He is absolutely transcendent and ineffable, constantly expressing this unknowable nature in Old Testamental affirmations of man's inability to “see” God “no man has seen God and lived”, or, that is, no man can maintain personal existence within the vision of the essence of Being itself). It is essential that we understand this point, for it brings us to a more precise definition of what symbol means in iconographic nomenclature. We should not imagine, here, that apophatic language expresses mere negative analogical theological concepts. Not at all. It is not as though God were “like” some symbol, in apophatic thinking [23], yet beyond it, but simply that God is not that symbol.

Unlike a symbol, an icon brings one to participation in the reality which the icon “represents”. The image and its prototype, “symbol” and “reality”, as it were, are brought together. In essence, we can address the question of why the veneration of an icon reaches up to its prototype by responding that it is in the intrinsic character, in the hypostatic identity of an icon, that veneration of the image reaches up to the prototype.

We must make a final rejoinder, here, related to language as it is used in contemporary Orthodox theology. We have presented a distinction between symbol and icon in classical Orthodox terminology deriving from the iconoclastic period. Some modern writers, such as L. Ouspensky, have spoken of a notion of "symbolic realism" or, to use the words of the famous Greek iconographer, Fotis (Photios) Kontoglou, "anagogic" symbol, or symbol leading upward and away from itself. A careful reading of these experts in iconographic history and philosophy clearly shows that they are using these special definitions of symbol in the way that it might be understood in contemporary art history, liturgics, or phenomenological circles. They are simply attempting to address the unique Orthodox concept of the iconic in less specific historical terms than we have used. At any rate, their use of language certainly points to the iconic, not to symbol as the iconodules understood it, and focuses itself on the iconic as it is inextricably tied to the Incarnation. Their references, then, should all be understood in terms of the theoretical definitions that we have set forth in these summary comments.

Canon 82 is directed mainly against "Jewish immaturity" and abolishing the "figures and shadows" of the Old Testament. Instead, Canon 100 of Quinisext Council is directed against "immaturity pagan". Here is the text: *"Let thine eyes behold the thing which is right" orders Wisdom, "and keep thine heart with all care". For the bodily senses easily bring their own impressions into the soul. Therefore we order that henceforth there shall in no way be made pictures, whether they are in paintings or in what way so ever, which attract the eye and corrupt the mind, and incite it to the enkindling of base pleasures. And if any one shall attempt to do this he is to be cut off* [15].

It's hard to believe that the church will be made representations "to provoke shameful pleasures". But there were still the time of the Council, along with liturgical feasts, certain pagan holidays, such as Brumalia - festivities in honor of Bacchus - dancing and celebrating ancient deities like Canon 62 of the Synod which forbids. These pagan celebrations were naturally reflected in art, sometimes in the form of images gross indecency. It was normal for the Church to be declared fit removal of its members under the corrupting influence of such representations, the more so as some elements of art that were entering the sacred art, darkening his Christian background. Canon 100 proves that the Church asks its members a certain asceticism is not only life but art that reflects and influences both this life. Concern for the moral aspect of art proves how important was this aspect in the life of the Church. Canon reflected, as we shall see later, the fundamental principle that crosses all around the patristic writings and sacred art. By Canon 82, the Church responds to attack the Jews of that time, against the Christian image, and in Canon 100, removes any vestige of Hellenistic art which could negatively influence the human mind, predisposing it to immorality [24].

The language of Christian iconography is a faith language in a process of evolution - an evolution which moves at the pace of the church and the society it witnesses to. This brings us back to the missionary aspect of art. We are not just doing our own thing to have people admire our inventiveness and artistic genius. Iconography is a service industry. The canon imposes the duty to expose to the sight of all, with the help of painting, that which is perfect so that the viewer

will be led to remember. This imposes on us the duty to paint in a way that others can understand. This involves "speaking" visually in a way that the mass of church goers can hear. This will involve catechesis in the language of iconography, which supports the bible and creed, as it involves catechesis in the bible and the creed. We are responsible, through our art, for the faith formation of our fellow christians.

In naturalistic painting, developed in Western Europe after the Renaissance, the ideal for painters was to create an illusionistic painting that gives the spectator the impression that there exists a different iconic reality behind the surface of the painting. They thought that in this way the painting would be a real substitute of reality. But the consequences were very serious. In this way they created two separated realities that did not communicate. A real one and a false one. The reality of iconography [illusionist religious painting] was the false one. Christ and the saints appear as if they live in a different reality, away from our reality. The Body of Christ, the Church, seemed to be broken in pieces. The absence of Christ was evident to anyone who entered a church and could see a naturalistic painting. Christ was there as a painting but the spectator had the impression that the person was absent. So there were ecclesiological consequences.

In Byzantine painting, the mode chosen by the Orthodox Church for the rendering of icons, things were different. As I have already mentioned, the first and primarily goal was to visualize the unity of the Church, so that the spectator entering the church could immediately feel this truth. For that reason the pictorial space of the icon should be in front of the picture field and not behind. The space and time of the person depicted on the icons should be the same with the spectators. Therefore, the painters following this need avoided the iconic reality of exaggerated illusionism and created a real iconicity. In my opinion this is the basic difference between naturalistic painting and Byzantine painting.

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