

# MODERN EUROPEAN MAN AND ICON

“...the truth is in Jesus.”  
Ephesians 4:21

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This is a topic that is hard to speak about. Majority of modern people have lost the integrity of thinking that is characteristic for both the Gospel and the icon as the main basis of the art of the Church. Even if one keeps the phraseological fragments that describe the works of art, people apply their own understanding to icons, their own “age” and quite seldom there is possible to find people who are able to compare their understanding with what God in Jesus Christ *has done* for the sake of man. Therefore, speaking about an icon, we should widen our horizon, and first of all, realizing that the foundation of icon is –

## Incarnation of God

With his incarnation the Son of God re-creates, renews the image of God in man that is darkened by the sin. Following God’s intention human being is not only the carrier of God’s image in himself but he is given also the God’s likeness. God’s likeness is the task given to a man that should be carried out during one’s life. In order to understand that, we should briefly turn to the story of creation of a man.

The Old Testament announces (*Genesis 2:7, 19*) that man was created from the “dust of the earth”. In ancient Hebrew the word that stand for the term “man” is *adam*, which is derived word from another Hebrew word *adamā* with the meaning “earth”, “soil”. “And the Lord God formed man (*adam*) of the dust (*adamā*) of the ground.” The bodies of animals are also made of the same material – the dust. Although both the world of man and that of animal has the same material foundation, human being has received from God something additional that differs him from animal: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (*Genesis 1:27*).

As it is generally known, human being guided by his free will started to alienate himself from God, started to break God’s set rules of the eternal life, choose death, and, like precisely the professor Arnold Toynbee has evaluated this event, – became a “running man”, a man that is taken over by fears.

Through the event of incarnation God looks into the eyes of man’s problem of sin very realistically and offers most perfect solution for the issue of man’s deepest needs; how to come back to God, how to regain one’s real identity – the unity with its Creator? The starting point for the answer to this question is the testimony of the first Christian community: “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (*1 Corinthians 15:3*). They don’t share anything about the life of Christ but speak about the gain in His death. Early Christians were well aware that because of these facts – *died, resurrected* – they are no more the same people like they were before meeting Christ, because they have witnessed a new life in themselves that they consider being the gift of Holy Spirit or *pneuma* (in Greek, e.g., the language of the New Testament). It turns out that such is the experience of Christians in all times – God, once being born in the shape of man, who has died and resurrected, gives the power to man having the transforming impact on a man. When the early Christians reflected upon their experience, they interpreted the experience of Spirit that has come from the Jesus the Nazarene: “The Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (*2 Corinthians 3:17*). In other words, The Lord Jesus Christ has founded the Church, in which Holy Spirit of God works synergistically – by renewing the God’s image in a person who strives for God-likeness. This process, as the Church Fathers teach, takes place when a person realizes God’s given task, “You should be born again from above!” Through the Sacrament of Baptism the image of God in a man is restored completely but renewal of God’s likeness is dynamic process that asks person’s conscious efforts and strivings in order to reach ability to love that is the highest degree likeness of God in a man.

Christ has abolished the power of original sin over the person and is giving him ability to realize the goal for what he has been created – God’s likeness. A man through Christ has gained the possibility of *deification* but this possibility is given to a renewed person, the one that is lighted up by purified image of God. And this is the process, by which, again speaking with the words of A. Toynbee, the running man comes back home, the process that is opposite to chaos, disorder and death.

We live in the time of mind chaos: the chaos of ruling views and attitudes does not allow a mind to calm down, and speaking with the words of the Gospel, to sit down by the foot of Jesus like Mary, to calm down and to listen to what God wants to

say. And therefore one of the rays of light that can lead us through intellectual chaos and darkness in our age of confusion – is faith however archaic it would seem to us expressed in the language of ancient Church in our world of changing values.

The Gospel is not for blessing to anyone if at first we do not love Christ. Christ is not a text but a living Person who lives in His Body – the Church. And icon is one of the expressions of the tradition of the Orthodox Church that bears witness of the real event of Christ's incarnation.

## What is icon in the Church?

The Seventh Ecumenical Council (787) accepted the dogma about veneration of icons. Icon is not only some sacred image. Icon is a testimony to fact that God became a man. He became a man in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Even if we see the Mother of God in icon we see her as the person through which God has come to us. Also looking to icons of saints we see them as the ones through whom God has shined in the world. In the same way the icons with depicting of particular events are not only the stories but the moment that tells about God being manifested among us. That is why when looking to icon and praying, our prayer always concentrates on Christ.

Icon helps to transfer from the material to spiritual. If we look into water and in the reflection see the heavens we immediately raise our eyes to heavens above. That indicates that there is something we see with our eyes but as well the fact that there exist something that can be grasped only in the depth of heart.

The national value of iconography is not there in colors or the elements of composition – as icons are canonic. It means that there is special strict use of colors defined in the tradition of the Church as well the compositional framework for every particular type of icon. They exist constant. Therefore it would be irrational seek for the nuances that differ icons created in different Orthodox Churches and considering these differences as a "national element". According to the essence of icon it is only the surface of things, peripheral phenomenon that in no way allows coming closer to the essence of icon. Icons are not painted by artists in order to express with them some of their personal opinion, personally felt color gamut, composition or to reflect in colors or composition some of their subjectively understood interpretation of some motive from the Scriptures. The essence of icon is there in Christology, in the teaching of the Church on Jesus Christ being man and God, the Savior of the world. This basic dogma of Christian faith is also the foundation of iconography.

Iconography primarily is not an art in its traditional Western understanding – that would depict reality by involving in this depiction or illustration the very personal perspective of an artist. Such a concept (here outlined very simplified) opens doors for deformation of depicting the reality. Reality in deformation – in such terms can be characterized the basic principle of artistic depicting of the world outside. Probably, it wouldn't be in vain for the sake of explicitness of the idea to remind sometimes the method mentioned in the critique of art, namely, "to turn defect into effect", e.g., the originality of artistic perception becomes the principle that allows quite big deviation from "reality". Subjectivity brought to its end is the distinctive feature of such an approach.

Christology, the teaching of the Church on two natures of Christ ("true God and true man") sets forth different requirements for sacred art (Orthodox iconography). First of all – it means that artistic output is not separable from the creative activity of deification of a human being himself. In the anthropology of asceticism it is called 'theosis' (from Greek) that literally means 'deification', so consequently – penetrating of the personality of an artist with the Holy Spirit of God. It is possible only if artist believes God as the savior of world and that of himself. Here it is place for citing Apostle Paul who wrote in the Epistle to the church of Corinth: "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Corinthians 12:3). Jesus – man from Nazareth, but Christ – Savior, 'Soter', Redeemer (from Greek 'Anointed One'). Apostle was willing to say that recognition of Jesus as Savior asks for the presence of specific spiritual qualities – those of the Holy Spirit – in a man, who is willing to find out this Christological truth. The reality that Jesus is the Christ is not possible to comprehend otherwise than after the beginning of the mentioned process of deification.

The same refers also to the artist who has engaged writing an icon. One thing is to become acquainted with it but completely another – to re-create it. Besides, to re-create it not because to demonstrate one's *personal emphasized* attitude but in order to witness in oneself the activity of the very Holy Spirit that is inherent to the canon. When canon accepted the artist repeats it. Only from outside it may seem the thing is about mechanic copying.

The modern technique of document copying, of course, gives possibility to multiply the original in all the details and in unlimited amount. Not like this is the activity of the Holy Spirit among men, however also here the conversation is about the spread of the Gospel that happens through people.

Here we come to the essence of iconography and to the main issue of "national element of sacred art".

Traditionally an art historian would work with clarifying the coloring being made in different countries, used materials and other historically and subjectively conditioned factors. In that we can really distinguish the "Moscow school of icono-

graphy", "Novgorod school of iconography", "Pskov school of iconography", etc. But following the ecclesiastic or Church-based meaning the national worth of sacred art is embodied in totally other, completely unexpected aspect – namely, as its participation in the dissemination of the Gospel. For the same as the Church is spread in world where God is being praised, in the same way iconography witnesses about special miracle of theosis or deification that takes place in Moscow, Novgorod, Pskov... Without fail we may conclude that in such a case in front of historian of the Church art there is double satisfaction: one when seeing excellent works of art, and other when recognizing the process of theosis caused by God-being man in the person of an artist. Where is the person who prays there is the Church. The same we can say – where the icons are being written there is the Church. Because the icon – it is not a portray of some saint, it is a *spiritual image* being penetrated and satiated with prayers, or the witness won by struggle of a new man in the personality of an artist.

It is known to icon painters that the new ones are being trained first of all by making them paint the ornaments, then the clothing, further coming to the depiction of hands and parts of bodies. The highest level of icon painting is the daring to set to face, especially the eyes. Eyes – the mirror of a soul. Observing the icons of great icon painters the eyes of saint follows the believer everywhere, eyes is the conceptual and often also compositional centre of an icon. Firm, concentrated, observant, penetrating and watchful stare is not surrendering itself to a person who himself stays alien to the process of deification. The key to the transfigured expression of face lays in the very transfiguration of the artist himself, in that inner spiritual strength of a person that he has gained in prayer.

### The spiritual content of icon

Icon always shows the unity between man and God. It depicts the transformed, renewed man ("you should be born again from above") under the influence of God's holiness and grace. The theoretician of iconography Lev Uspensky writes that the icon always indicates to the reality what Apostle Peter, John and James experienced on the Mount of Tabor where Christ's Transfiguration took place: "And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light (..) and behold, then from the cloud came a voice that said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him'" (*Matthew 17: 2-7*).

By this event it is possible to understand the spiritual content of icon: it indicates to what was revealed to the Apostles in the Mount of Tabor – they all were looking at the face of Jesus but what they saw was His divine Glory, the light of divine Truth.

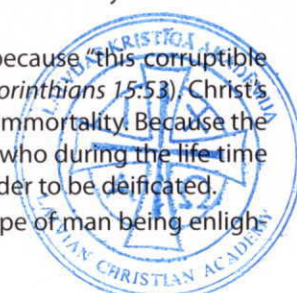
Every icon depicts this divine Truth.

As it is known, the message of the Gospel about the salvation can be preached with words, and the witness can be given by following Christ, by fulfillment of His commandments. Icon bears witness about truth by depicting it. Artist is preaching his inner experience of transfigured soul about what the Lord Christ has transformed in him and is doing it by the visible to people means of the image of holy person.

All what can be said about the spiritual content of an icon is included in the First Epistle of Apostle Paul to Corinthians. Apostle compares our mortal body with a seed that is thrown into earth. In the time of life given to us the seed should sprout to such level in order to enter the eternity, in order to being resurrected in such a shape that we will be given by the Lord. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. So there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (*1 Corinthians 15:42-44*).

Christ has renewed our natural being for living in immortality, because "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (*1 Corinthians 15:53*) Christ's Transfiguration on the Mount of Tabor is a sign for possibility of person's immortality. Because the power that resurrects the saints after their death is the same Holy Spirit who during the life time gives a person wisdom and power to follow Christ in such a quality in order to be deified.

In icon there is no ordinary face of a person depicted but the shape of man being enlight-





tened by eternity. Because the very essence of icon is to show the possibility of immortality, the inheritors of the Heavenly Kingdom and the illustrated people in icons have received it already during this life time on earth. Icon is a depiction of such a person, in whom one can see the noble deeds of Spirit of God by blessing the people and extinguishing the passions of sin in them. The Spirit of God enlightens the whole person in a way one becomes willing to pray God, to worship and thank God as the prayer leads a person in the realm of divine light. *Icon is a person being drawn in visible way that has become a living icon, the bearer of the likeness of God.*

"Icon doesn't depict God. It shows the presence of a person in the divine life." Icon shows a person in the full naturalism of his earthly life but such a person who is cleansed from sin and has come close to the possibility of a divine life. In icon there is no exaltation. It realistically tells that a person is spiritual being, that Christ gives a real strength not to live following the dictation of flesh but becoming able to obey God.

In icons we see the correspondence to reality of life, also the concern in order to preserve alive specially the link with the face of depicted person and his portrait resemblance. Of course, not always it is possible. In most cases the likeness or resemblance is considered by the Orthodox person knowing the ranks or orders of saints and always will be able to say, which rank the person depicted in icon belongs to. Orthodox icon never is written after free imagination of an artist or from some live model because that would mean breakaway from the prototype. When we observe the icon of Patron Saints of Europe – then one can ask: how we can know how St. Cyril, St. Methodius and St. Benedict looked like? In icon the depiction of a historic reality is not the main one. The main is to become aware of the mentioned person as a carrier of God's blessing, therefore icon must remind us about *sanctity*, about the Christ's renewed person in us. Otherwise icon has no point. If icon while depicting the incarnated Word in a human body could be able showing us the only historically precise reality as it is done, for instance, by photography, it would mean then the Church sees Christ with the eyes of unbelieving crowd. But Christ has said: "He that has seen me has seen the Father" (*John 14:9*). So when looking to Jesus we see His divinity. And looking to the Patron Saints of Europe we do become aware of their activity in the name of rebirth of Europe as a spiritual continent.



### Patron Saints of Europe



The title of the "Patron Saint of Europe" comes from the special attention of Catholic Popes of the 20th century being paid to the issue of Europe being cultural and spiritual continent. It was the Pope Pius XII who in 1947 called St. Benedict "the father of Europe" thus nominating him the Patron Saint of the movement for unity in its initial stage after the experienced atrocities of the 2nd World War, and in the midst of the threat of the communist expansion.

Later the Pope Paul VI in the second year of his pontificate in the 2nd Vatican Council declared St. Benedict the Patron Saint of Europe. The Pope John Paul II took from his predecessors fully the patronage over the idea of European unity. Besides St. Benedict, the Pope also declared St. Cyril and St. Methodius as Patron Saints. In the same manner the Pope focused on and reminded the hagiography of St. Benedict commemorating the 1500th anniversary of his birth, which was celebrated in 1980, at the beginning of the Pope's pontificate.

**St. Benedict** (b. circa 480, Nursia, Italy – d. March 21, 547, of a fever while in prayer at Monte Cassino, Italy) founded the monastery at Monte Cassino where he wrote the *Rule* of his established Order. His discipline was so strict that there was an attempted murder on his life committed; some monks conspired to poison him but he blessed the cup and rendered it harmless. He returned to his cave but continued to attract followers and eventually established twelve monasteries during his lifetime. He had the ability to read thoughts, to prophesy and foretell the attacks of devil. He destroyed heathen worship statues and altars, cast the demons out from caves sacred to pagans. At one point there were over 40 000 monasteries guided by the *Benedictine Rule*. The summation of the Rule is expressed in the motto: "Pray and work" (in Latin ORA ET LABORA). These words were taken as the foundation for the just-established Latvian Christian Academy back in 1993. Although the Academy is not a monastery, the unity of spiritual efforts



and practical application of the Christian calling was important for the new initiative when the Church was renewed in Latvia in the beginning of 90-ties.

Gradual expansion of the Benedictine Order, which St. Benedict had founded, played a significant role in spreading Christianity over the whole continent. Saint Benedict therefore has been highly respected in Germany, especially in Bavaria; he has been a pillar of the European unity as well as a strong reference to undeniable Christian roots of its culture and civilization.

**St. Cyril** (b. 827, Thessalonica, Greece – d. February 14, 869, Rome), brother of St. Methodius, was sent with Methodius by the Emperor in 861 to convert the Jewish Khazars of Russia, a mission that was successful, and which allowed him to learn the Khazar's language. In 863 he was sent with Methodius to convert Moravians in their native tongue. Though some Western clergy opposed their efforts and refused to ordain their candidates for the priesthood, they did great work. They both developed an alphabet of the Slavonic language that eventually became what is known as the Cyrillic alphabet today derived from the name of St Cyril. After harsh initial criticism for their use of it they achieved approval of the Liturgy in Slavonic language, which was an important breakthrough.

**St. Methodius** (b. 826, Thessalonica, Greece – d. April 6, 885, Moravia, today the Czech Republic) joined his brother St. Cyril in mission to convert the Jewish Khazars of Russia and Moravians. He helped to develop an alphabet for the Slavonic language (Cyrillic today). He also evangelized in Moravia, Bohemia, Pannonia, and Poland. Methodius was Archbishop of Velehrad, today the Czech Republic, but was suspended from the cathedra and imprisoned in 870 due to the opposition of German clergy to his activities. Often in trouble over his use of Slavonic in liturgy some claimed he preached a heresy and often he had to reject the offence, false judgments and accusations towards him. He translated the Bible into Slavonic languages. He was the pioneer to use the local and vernacular languages in Liturgy.

The divinity of a person can always be seen in the light of that revelation, which is given to believers in the Church and who are enlightened and transfigured by the Holy Spirit. The perspective of people of the Church differs by this revelation from the perspective of secular people on icon. In the visible we see the invisible, in the temporal – the eternal. The essence of the icon is yet revealed in the service, liturgy. The same as the liturgy itself also the icon is the revelation of eternity to people living in time. Therefore in the Church art the portrait of a person can only be a historical document, it never places itself above the liturgical, divine image – the icon.

## Icon and holiness

Icon is profound expression of spiritual experience of holiness in colors and line. Only experienced, personal experience can give possibility to find the exact words, forms, tones of colors and lines, which correspondingly would retell what is included in the term "holiness". Therefore the Church has defined that icons should "be depicted in concordance with the holy heritage of the Church" because through the Church canon we come close to the knowledge that the witnesses of the holy events possessed back in their time; we are grounded on the living experience of the Church and in the messages of Church memories about particular deeds of holy people.

The Seventh Ecumenical Council of the Church has indicated that "God's blessing (grace) rests on the archetype", that "the saints during their life were fulfilled with the Holy Spirit of God" and that "also after their death the presence of God's Spirit is in their souls, places of their repose and in their holy depictions"<sup>1</sup>. Special grace of the Holy Spirit that is immanent in the image defined by canon is exactly that power, which "opens the eyes of believers", "heals the sicknesses of soul and body".

In what way practically in icon works this spiritual reality that is described by the Church Fathers? – It cannot be expressed by any words. In our life if we come across a saint person most frequently we may not notice his holiness. "World doesn't see the saints, similarly how the blind ones don't see the light," in his sermon writes Philaret, Bishop of Moscow.<sup>2</sup> Not seeing holiness it is not possible to depict it.

Icon shows holiness in a symbolic way: *especially important is light*, in which the faces of saints are beaming. This special light in icon is expressed with the aureole or nimbus that serves as a direct indication to the presence of spiritual realm. The light, in which the faces of saints are shining and which embraces their heads that are the main part of the body, has a spherical shape. It is not possible directly to depict this light, the only way to depict it with the means of artistic expression is by painting a circle, which is as if cross-section of spherical light. Aureoles are not some wreaths of light or little crowns above heads being something from outside put on the heads of saints, but the most important is to be skillful enough to draw the radiance or shining of face of a saint. Nimbus is not an allegory but symbolic depiction of specific reality. It is compulsory part of icon, necessary but

1 Иоанн Дамаскин. *Первое Слово в защиту святых икон*, гл. XIX [John of Damascus. The First Word in Defense of Icons, ch. XIX].

2 Филарет (Дроздов), святитель. Слово 57 [Sermon № 57]. – From: *Сочинения Филарета, Митрополита Московского и Коломенского. Слова и речи*, т. 3 [Works of Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow and Kolomna. Sermons and speeches, vol. 3]. М., 1877 (Канон праздника).

nevertheless insufficient; nimbus was used also in heathen drawings.

All the color gamut of icon, the fineness of lines symbolically shows the inner condition of a person and the face shines with the light of God's blessing. This condition of highest spiritual upheaval of a man the Church Fathers have called the "total hesychia" or "complete silence". "When prayer is lighted with the divine presence and grace," writes Bishop Ignatius Bryanchaninov (19th century), "the entire soul longs for God in inexpressible way, taking along the whole body. To a person who has been born for a new life not only the soul, not only the heart but also the body is being fulfilled with peace and bliss – a joy about living God"<sup>3</sup> In such a condition the spiritual upheaval of an entire person gets realized, all that has been chaotic in a man gets in order and life becomes fulfilled with light. "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding" (*Philippians 4:7*) becomes embodied in a man. It happened with Prophet Elijah who encountered God: "And behold, the Lord passed by (...) but God wasn't to be found in the wind (...) God wasn't in the earthquake (...) God wasn't in the fire; and after the fire a gentle and quiet whisper – and the Lord was in it" (see *1 Kings 19: 11-13*). The peace of God is in stillness and ordered soul. The visible appearance of man doesn't change but person is being renewed from within. "Holy Spirit, united with mind, teaches a man to keep the flesh in place and order – from head to toe: eyes to look fair and clean, ears to listen but not hear the sleazy rumors, blasphemy and belittling of others, tongue to speak good words, hands to be raised in prayer and outstretched in merciful generosity, belly to be restricted with consumption, legs to go in just and God's pleasing ways... Thus the body gets used for the good and transforms under the power of God's grace until finally it becomes part-taker into the qualities of being a spiritual body that possesses the just people who have experienced the resurrection"<sup>4</sup>

This quotation from the saint desert father Anthony actually reveals in words what is revealed in icon in colors. In these words one can hear the ontological unity of experience of Orthodox asceticism with Orthodox icon. Exactly this experience is the one icon is offering us. *With the help of colors, lines and symbolic realism icon reveals the spiritual world of a man who has become the temple of God; his inherited inner order and peace.* The body, all the details of a holy person, even the wrinkles on face, hair, clothing and everything that is around him is united and ordered in the highest meaning of these words. In icon we see the man's victory over inner divisions and splits. In the depiction of body the emphasis of light is arranged the way as if we are looking at a person being a spiritual being.

Icon has an important meaning in the liturgical life of the Church because it depicts ascetic experience and invites every person for undertaking it. This is the foundation of art of the Orthodox Church and the main goal as well. Icon is the one that helps every person spiritually to form themselves.

## Icon and prayer

The content of icon is a spiritual guide in the life of every Orthodox Christian. Icon shows how to pray. Prayer in its turn is conversation with God therefore it is necessary to become passionless, to drown one's emotionality. "Brethren," writes Gregory the Theologian, "let us not make holiness unholy, what is high into what is mean, honor into disgrace, spiritual into earthly and secular... Here everything is of spiritual nature: movements, longings, words, even pace and clothing, and it is so because mind (in Greek *nous*) drives us in all to God; spiritually, noble and with joy it happens"<sup>5</sup> And that is the content of icon. When saying a prayer in front of icon we shouldn't only look on it but to remember that there is a reminder in front of us as well: "The one who believes his body would resurrect in the Day of Judgment let keep himself clean". In prayer we close the eyes of our soul and strive forward to learn keeping oneself in order with the help of God's Holy Spirit, – in such an order, which can be found in the appearance of a person written on the icon; in order a heart would be without deceit. In such a way with the help of icon the Church tries to renew the nature of man tortured by sin, to pray for growing in the world of prayers and beauty of the Church liturgical culture.

The only goal of icon is to direct our feelings, mind, the entire our being to its genuine goal – transformation, transfiguration, cleansing from exaltation that always gives witness of unhealthy Christianity. Every icon where some saint is written shows where the meaning of earth's life is to be found, namely, that it is possible to turn one's life into spiritual act of heroism by making oneself free from the power of sin and a life being slave to sin.

The art of the Orthodox Church in that way is the visible expression of the Doctrine of Transfiguration; transfiguration is the truth of the Church and this is the place where it becomes possible.

The beauty characteristic for icon is of inner quality, it is spiritual one: "What matters is not your outer appearance but

3 See Игнатий (Брянчанинов), святитель. *Аскетические опыты*, т. 1 [*Ascetic Practice*, vol. 1] (Минск: «Лучи Софии», 2008).

4 *Добротолюбие*, т. 1 [Philokalia, vol.1], с. 21.

5 Григорий Богослов, святитель. Слово XI, к Григорию Нисскому [Sermon № 9, to Gregory of Nyssa]. – From: *Творения иже во святых отца нашего Григория Богослова* [Works of our Holy Father Gregory the Theologian], СПб, т. 1, с. 197-198.

your inner disposition (the man of heart) – imperishable in its gentle, gracious spirit that God delights in” (1 Peter 3:4). In icon one can see a person that strives for the likeness of God and has received it.

To rediscover the Church anew – here the necessity of modern spiritual realism! Because the Church is not simply a gathering of the faithful, – the Church is the Body of Christ. Here, in the Church, the revelation of new dimensions takes place, the revelation of Lord the Savior to his people. And in that it is possible to notice the triviality and shallowness of disintegrated, secular world of a man. Many recognize the fact that the real solution of social problems is hidden in the understanding of the essence of the Church. At last. Icon in this respect is a good companion and guide to it.

