

Vladiko, blagoslovi! (addressed to a Name Glorifying Bishop)

I read this today. "He shall be great, and shall be called Son of the Highest. Thou shalt not call Him so, but He shall be called. Thou shalt not set His Name upon Him, but He shall be called. And by Whom shall He be called? Clearly, by the consubstantial Father Who knows exactly the nature of the Son, since no man knoweth the Son, but the Father, and no man knoweth the Father but the Son. For He of Whom the Son was ineffably and timelessly begotten, possesses also the unerring apprehension of Him; and He Who has the true knowledge of the offspring, may be trusted also to apply an appropriate name. Wherefore saith the God of all and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.' He is forever, though the name is given to Him now for our instruction and cognizance. For this reason, it says, 'He shall be named,' not 'He shall become.': for before all time He had been enthroned together with His consubstantial Father."

( "The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople" trans. Cyril

Mango DUMBARTON OAKS STUDIES THREE

Harvard University Press Cambridge, Massachusetts 1958 page 118

Homily V The Annunciation )

Asking for your holy prayers and kissing your hand of blessing, an Orthodox priest still in HOCNA

Dear Father,

Bless! Thank you so much for sending this quote from St. Photios the Great. This quote clearly contradicts the name worshipers/glorifiers use of names. They say names are the object itself and the divine energy of God. St. Photios uses names in Orthodox fashion to be something man or God calls the object. Hence, he states that the second person of the Holy Trinity "shall be called Son of the Highest", "He shall be called....by the consubstantial Father" who " may be trusted also to apply an appropriate name" and " He is forever, though the name is given to Him now for our instruction and cognizance". This use of names is important because it allows names to refer to the object, apply to the object, call the object, or pertain to the object. Thusly we can name each Person of the Holy Trinity or even the essence of God as "unknowable, ineffable, infinite, dwelling in unapproachable light, inscrutable, unchanging, impassable, beyond comprehension etc." The name glorifiers on the other hand state "the Name of God (not the words, not the letters, not the sounds but its inner significance and meaning) is God Himself in His uncreated energies." This formula or understanding works for some names of God. The Divine Light of Tabor is God Himself in His uncreated energies, but it doesn't work for the name Jesus for instance. Try it. "The Name Jesus, not the words, not the letters, but its inner significance and meaning is God Himself in His uncreated energies." This is false. It is actually a blasphemous denial of the Godman. Jesus is the name revealed by God to Joseph to be given to the second Person of the Holy Trinity, the only begotten of the Father before all ages when He became the only begotten of the Virgin Mary in time. It is the name which is above all other names, and applies to the second Person of the Holy Trinity when he became man. It was not our Lord's name before all ages. It was given Him on the 8th day of his human life when he was circumcised in the flesh. God in his extreme humility and love for mankind not only took upon Himself human flesh, human will, and human energy, but also a human name. In His self emptying love, the second Person of the Holy Trinity forever identifies Himself with the human

name Jesus. A denial of the humanity of this name is a form of monophysitism, a denial of our Lord Jesus' true humanity. The reason that God places this name above all others is that He glories in His self emptying humble love for us His pitiful lowly creatures. This conflict in the church has given me renewed joy in the knowledge of God's extreme humility and love for us.

The proper use and understanding of names is important for another reason, Orthodox teaching and worship. When the simple Christian humbly prays, "Jesus save me!" he believes he is addressing the Divine Person of Jesus Christ, the Godman. The name "Jesus" refers to the incarnate Son of God. We worship the Person of Jesus Christ and we have communion with Him in prayer and most especially in the mystery of the Eucharist. Name worshipers/glorifiers change the glossary of Orthodoxy because names become things instead of refer to things. The previous humble prayer becomes, "Jesus (God Himself in His Uncreated energies) save me!" The simple prayer has been transformed by this new glossary of Orthodoxy into a prayer to God's energies instead of to the Divine Person. So much for a personal living relationship with Jesus Christ! Instead we have "Star Wars" theology, "the Force be with you!" Every Name of God is reduced to uncreated divine energies! Try another prayer, "Our Father (not the word, not the letters, not the sounds but the inner significance and meaning is God Himself in His Uncreated Divine Energies) which art in the heavens". That is not what the simple Christian thinks he is saying when invoking the Father! He believes he is calling the First Person of the Holy Trinity by the human name, the most humble and simple of human names, the first word an infant says, calling God "Abba, Daddy, Our Papa". This is the incredible humility of God which revealed to us to call His Divine Person by this intimate humble name! We praise Thee O Lord! In every heresy, the devil has an object, a purpose. The Devil's goal is to create a tower of Babel of the preaching, teaching, praising and worshiping of God. This heresy makes Orthodox worship and preaching impossible!

You stated that reading the Psalms affected your opinion on this matter. Passages such as "Blessed be the Name of the Lord" and "Praise the Name of the Lord" convinced you that "the Name of the Lord" must be God Himself. If a person said to me, "Blessed be the names of your parents" have they stated the names of my parents? No. The entire book of the Psalms rarely states the actual name of God which is "Yahweh" in Hebrew or "Jehovah" in English or "I am who I am" or "I am". This is the Name that God told the prophet Moses His Name is at the burning bush on Mt.Sinai (Exodus 3:13-15). The Jews considered this such a sacred name that they would only print it without the vowels! They were reluctant to utter this Name. That is why the psalmist David uses the phrase "the Name of the Lord" as a substitute for the actual Name of the Lord. The passages are to be interpreted with the actual Name of God, Yahweh, mentally substituting for the verbal phrase "Name of the Lord" in each case. For instance, "Blessed be Yahweh from henceforth and forevermore". As we all know, the Hebrews would also never depict God visually in statues, art, images, or drawings either in two dimensions or three. All this changed after God became man. Now we not only can but must depict God in icons so that we proclaim the incarnation of the Son of God. In the gospel of St. John 8:55-59, Our Savior says something completely shocking to the Jewish ear steeped in the Old Covenant, "your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad.....Verily, verily I say unto you. Before Abraham was, I am." Our Savior openly used the divine name to apply to Himself! What was the reaction of the Jews? "They took up stones to cast at Him". Furthermore, He states, "I have manifested Thy Name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world" (John 17:6).

How did He manifest this divine Name, I am? Our Lord Jesus showed Himself to be the Ever-existing One by His power to heal every sickness and infirmity, by His power to expel demons, by His giving of sight to the man born blind without eyes (John 9), by His command over the winds and the sea, by His walking on the water, by His multiplication of the loaves and the fishes, by raising the dead, by His forgiveness of sins, by His preaching of the words of eternal life, by His self-emptying love and extreme humility as expressed most especially in His passion and crucifixion, and by rising from the dead on the third day. From now on we can and must openly proclaim the Name of the Lord, I am. As a consequence, every icon of our Savior bears the Greek letters for "I AM" thus proclaiming to all who venerate this holy image that Jesus is truly God and truly man. But even the Name "I am" is a name, not God Himself. It is an appellation revealed by God in human language to express the eternal existence of God, that He is without beginning or end, that He is uncreated, and that He is unlike all other objects, beings, or substances which had a time at which they were not or a time in the future at which they will be not. Human language fails us here in that His existence is beyond any created existence. God in His humility instructed the prophet Moses to call Him this even though He is beyond all possible names, descriptions or labels.

The quote of St. John of Kronstadt in his book "My Life In Christ" needs to be addressed. On page 477 of the 4th edition published by Holy Trinity Monastery 2000AD, he writes, "The Name of God is God Himself." and on the next page, "The soul of the man is in the man's name; for instance the soul of John is in the name of "John" thus, at the appellation my soul recognizes itself in the name and answers to it. Thus, in the name of Jesus Christ dwells Christ Himself, wholly, His soul and body, united to the Godhead". St. John's words were written prior to the teachings of Anthony Bulatovich. St. John reposed in 1908. "My Life In Christ" was published originally in 1897 but the Name worshiping heresy didn't erupt till 1910. From the context of the text it is clear that he does not mean either statement in an ontological sense, but in the sense that when a man hears his own name being called his soul, indeed his whole person, responds to it. If his name is cursed or if his name is praised he responds with his whole being. If God's Name is cursed or blessed then God Himself is. The dishonor or honor given to the Name passes to the One being named. The honor to the icon passes to the prototype. "Remember, the power is not in the word, not in the name, but in Christ Himself who is being named." (St. Barsanuphios of Optina written after the condemnation of Anthony Bulatovich as a heretic). Names are words, sounds, and letters used to refer to, call, signify, or pertain to something or someone. When that Someone is God and the Name is spoken with faith and love, it is possible that God will choose to be present through that name, not just His energies, but the person of Jesus Christ. There is not a mechanical attachment of God to His Name, but one in which God still acts according to his sovereign will. This contradicts one of the errors of Bulatovich who taught that even the unconscious repetition of God's name has wonder working power. In the divine eros of prayer to our Lord Jesus, the Name Jesus and His divine Person are one. The Constantinopolitan Council of 1913 says, "In prayer (especially the Jesus prayer) the name of God and God Himself are inseparably into our consciousness. And it is as if they coincide, and indeed, they cannot and ought not be separated, opposing one to the other; but this only in prayer and only by our heart. Examined theologically and in reality, the name of God is only a name! It is not God Himself or an attribute (characteristic) of His. It is the name of the object not the object itself." St John of Kronstadt clarifies this further with the following words, "Let not the heart weak in faith think that the cross or the name of Christ act of themselves, or that this cross and this name of Christ

produces miracles when I do not look with the eyes of my heart or with the faith of Christ". The heretic Bulatovich on the other hand taught that "the name of God, being God Himself, works of itself." Bulatovich condemned the Orthodox Church's teaching which is that it is not by the power of the divine name that miracles are performed, but by God Himself, and that the name of the Lord serves only to call upon God.

Please reconsider your decision to remain in HOCNA so that the faithful can be reunited again.

Affectionately yours in Christ,

An Orthodox priest