

Dr. Papanikolaou- Lesson 11

Big Question: How does Orthodox Christianity characterize God’s relationship to the world?

Key points

Teachers should understand these few, key points before the lesson, and students should take these points away from the class.

A. “The Communion Model”

- i. God is everywhere, but not everything is God.
- ii. God and the world dwell together.
- iii. God is still one. We are monotheistic. Yet, God is one in such a way that God can be in communion with what is not one (not him, that is to say, i.e. humanity and creation), and yet he still remains one.

B. Each member of the Trinity has a distinct way of being present in creation, and yet, God is one.

C. Our idea of monotheism must accommodate this kind of communion.

Review

Ask students:

1. What did we learn last class? Review your notes and rewrite a key point or takeaway that you found significant. If you were absent, your job is to review the student guide from last class and then ask your fellow students questions about the points they’re about to share.

Give them 3 or so minutes to review and write, then ask them:

- Share what you’ve written (go around the room systematically to get feedback)
- Then ask students who were absent last class: do you have any questions they have about their points? Students may not be able to answer their questions, and that’s okay. You can affirm the question, and if it’s easy to answer yourself, do so. And if not, say “We’ll hold on to that question to see if it’s answered in any of the future classes.”

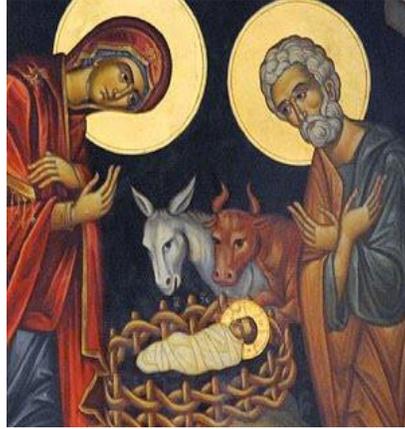
Finally, review any key points from last class that were missed, especially if they are really important for this upcoming lesson.

Opening Reflection

Say something like:

- Today we’re going to continue our two part lesson. Last time, we learned about Pantheism and Nominalism, two different perspectives for thinking about God.
- You were probably able to figure out that these perspectives are very different than what we believe as Orthodox Christians.
- Hopefully, though, learning about these perspectives will help you appreciate more thoroughly what you are going to learn about today.

2. Take a minute to compare and contrast this image with the two images that we discussed last week. Are there any similarities? What's distinctive about this one?



Preparation for Lecture

- Let's turn to Dr. Papanikolaou for some clarification. He's going to help answer the question, "How does Orthodox Christianity characterize God's relationship to the world?"
 - Encourage students to take notes in their student guide as they watch and listen to the video clip. Tell them that you will discuss the lecture afterwards.
3. Fill in points Dr. Papanikolaou makes in this video clip.
 - a. In Christianity, people have lost the sense that Christianity is about _____ "mystical unity with God" or "transformation now" _____.
 4. What is Dr. Papanikolaou's definition of "The Communion Model?"

Reflection on Lecture

5. Read the following excerpts from Metropolitan Kallistos Ware's lecture on creation. Each quotation is an Orthodox Christian response to pantheism or nominalism. Which one is which? How can you tell?
 - a. "...Creation is not just something upon which God acts from the exterior; rather it is something through which He expresses Himself from within. God is not only outside everything, but equally inside everything. Our primary images, when we describe God's relation to the world, should not be of molding, organizing, or

manipulating. We should think rather of God's indwelling and omnipresence" (8).
--Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, "Ecological Crisis: Ecologist Hope, Our Orthodox
Vision of Creation" Lecture at Fordham University

[The "Communion Model" Response to Nominalism]

- b. "...God's being is more than the universe and is not exhausted by it. Totally
imminent, He is at the same time totally transcendent" (9). - Metropolitan
Kallistos Ware, "Ecological Crisis: Ecologist Hope, Our Orthodox Vision of
Creation" Lecture at Fordham University.

[The "Communion Model" Response to Pantheism.]

6. Any final thoughts?

*Close with any of the key points that they might not have addressed in their own
sharing/discussion.*

At this point, you may choose to hand out the "Key Points" summary page for this lesson.