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## SOBORNOST IS THE MAIN NECESSARY CONDITION OF THE ORTHODOX ART REVIVAL

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### СОБОРНОСТЬ КАК НЕОБХОДИМОЕ УСЛОВИЕ ВОЗРОЖДЕНИЯ ПРАВОСЛАВНОГО ИСКУССТВА

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**Summary.** Modern religious experts register a new evolution turn of the Russian Orthodox art. Meantime, the main requirement for its revival is sobornost. The question is to comprehend sobornost as fundamental value of the Russian spiritual culture, to find opportunities for its rebirth and operation in the present social situation of continuing immaterial crisis.

**Keywords:** sobornost, orthodox, art creation, icon-painting, transfiguration.

**Аннотация.** Современные специалисты отмечают новый виток в развитии русского православного искусства. Меж тем главное условие его возрождения – соборность. Вопрос состоит в том, чтобы понять соборность как базовую ценность русской культуры, возможность реального возрождения и функционирования православного искусства в нынешней бытийной ситуации продолжающегося кризиса духа.

**Ключевые слова:** соборность, православие, искусство, иконопись, преобразование.

The guidelines of the revival of the icon-painting in Russia is closely connected to the name of the Archimandrite Zinon, who was a monk of the the Pskov Dormition Monastery of the Caves. Icon-painting skills and divinity are combined in Zinon's creative work. For him the icon is not only for copying of the sample, but it can't exist without living faith experience as it is liturgical. Icon is the fruit of the clerical sobornal consciousness and not the work of personal creation. During his creative hunting Fr Zinon pushes forward to the Orthodox icon-painting source penetrating into the clerical tradition deeply.

Being sceptical about the existence of the national school of icon-painting in nowadays Russia, the master considers that the reason for its absence is the lack of spirituality. Fr Zinon records with a feeling of regret that many of contemporary icon-painters lack spiritual competence. That's why they accept archaistic manner of painting accompanied with worn spots, dark images, dull background, etc. Fr Zinon names this technique «fancy aestheticism», produced by inability of modern icon-painters to say their own word because of their poor spiritual education. Icon is the fruit of the clerical sobornal consciousness and doesn't exist without living faith experience. Scanty understanding of the icon sobornost deprives it of divinity content, so that it becomes meaningless. Aesthetics and visual characteristics prevail over authentic content. National icon-painting school can survive if only there is a recovery of the Byzantian tradition, that is the source of the Russian icon-painting school. «Nowadays each icon-painter has to cover the same way like Russian icon-painters had covered after Russia was converted to Christianity. Trying to penetrate as deeper as possible the magic of icon-painting one has to examine the best images and only in this case after being joined to it, you are able to add something yourself» [1, p. 34].

Zinon's creative work combining the art of icon-painting and theology let us call him a canonical iconography follower. His style is characteristic for the austerities of a hermit's life, concentration, peace and at the same time his images are full of strained intensity proceeding from the bottom of this peace.

The idea of the sobornal unity of the heavenly and the terrestrial under Christ's head is translated by the icon-painter with the help of some techniques. The iconographical plot of the «Descent to Hades» shows for example how the effect of the movement and the peace is attained.

Christ's figure leaning towards Adam is in the centre of the composition. Adam and Christ's hands binding together produce ascending diagonal, which is spread with the Christ's fluttering gown. This movement upwards includes Christ's erecting body. The cross in his hands makes the characters of the plot go out of the dead peace towards life's light, meaning sobornost.

The composition of the other icon on the subject «Resurrection» is very similar. The monumental static figure of the Saviour is in the centre. Dynamical strain is created by the imagining of the Saints and the Prophets gathered around Christ. Their hands in a prayerful movement, their looks at Christ upwards give the motion to the composition structure of the icon image field and penetrate the depth of the moral emotional experience of the Resurrection. The position and the gestures of the Saints as well as fine white lines emphasize spiritual sense of the icon. Exceptional charm of the Fr Zinon's icon doesn't divert attention from the divinity aspect of his works. Icon is «coloured theology» in master's considered opinion. Fr Zinon writes: «It throws back to the eucharistical experience of the Church, inseparably connected to it as well as with the moral life level. When the level was high and the ecclesiastical art was in its blossom, and when the church life fell into decay the ecclesiastical art was on the decline too. At the same time being a part of the sobornal creation of the Church icon-painting could influence the condition and development of the conciliar entity of the Church. That's why it is necessary to care about the Church in order «it can wholly express the beauty so characteristic of it» [1, p. 7].

Thus Fr Zinon associates the revival of the Orthodox Church with the icon revival.

In nowadays life situation when sensitivity for the Liturgy is lost and the names of St. Gregory the Theologian, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Maximus the Confessor are forgotten, artist has to accept creative work as kenosis or Golgotha sacrifice and «to be closer to the reality he witnesses». «Icon is created

out of the living experience of the Heavens and the Liturgy, that is why icon-painting has always been considered to be church ministry as well as the Mass. Moral requirements to icon-painters had been very high as well as to the the priests and deacons» – writes Fr Zinon [1, p. 5].

The Orthodox Church interprets icon as a kind of divinity. Being comprehended like this icon makes the canon to be perceived not as a sample paralyzing master's creation but as a way which connects him to the tradition and gives opportunities to make a new image.

Every Fr Zinon's icon is painted following the canon of icon-painting. Every time he draws in a new way, giving a new meaning, being absorbed in the moral condition characteristic of «theologians of the first appeal icon», finding more accurate means to perceive a new depth of the eternal truth, «for it is the Orthodoxy, which can say much» [9, p.16].

Fr Zinon's «coloured divinity» is considered by many specialists to have been confirmed as leading trend in modern icon-painting. Since the 90's of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Fr Zinon's School has been distinguished.

Many contemporary talented icon-painters: A. Sokolov, A. Lavdanskij, A. Voronskij, V. Lyubarskij, A. Kugoev learnt at Fr Zinon and now work in Russia and abroad. Nevertheless, when asked if there is an icon-painting school in Russia Zinon gives a negative answer [2].

Zinon associates restoration of icon-painting with monastic life and believes that the future of the Church is impossible without icon-painting. The process of renewal of liturgical singing is bound with monastic life as well. «If life is considered to be a part of the hierarchical deifying cosmos which realizes its place and purpose in this hierarchy living as unity (i. e. the concept of conciliar nature of the Church is observed), this life is like a plain chant defining by both hierarchy and exposed structures as well as by harmonic correspondence and a single melodic principle.

Similar to a chant consisting of interpenetrating hierarchical structures pierced through with a single melodic principle, life transpierced with a single aspiration for God, can be regarded as a chant» [3, p. 20].

The chant is an acquire of the unity through spiritual and moral self-determination. Spiritual power arises as a result of praying deed which is the destiny of the life of asceticism. Thus and so, the restoration of true aspiration for God depends on the restoration of monastic or parish community.

The concept of chant tends to subordinate and combine all the psalm singings of the mass into a single melodic and rhythmic system. The whole mass becomes as if one chant run through unified sobornal divinity. Thus and so, the restoration of the office of the Old Russian chants, icon-painting, architecture and other kinds of the Church art is impossible without restoration of the idea of the Orthodox community and monasteries, that is social organizations working on the base of conciliar (sobornal) principle.

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