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EDITORIAL

The purpose of *St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* is to serve our English-speaking Orthodox Communicants in America in the fields of theological knowledge and religious education. . . . The aim of the Quarterly is, on the one hand, to introduce to the English-speaking Orthodox (and other Christians) the rich Tradition of the Church; and on the other hand, to interpret the current issues of the day in the light of our Holy Faith and Tradition.

This paragraph in the “Foreword” to the inaugural issue—Fall of 1952—of *St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* (renamed *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* in 1969) is remarkable for describing and prescribing a balance between fidelity to the dogmatic, liturgical, and spiritual inheritance of Orthodoxy and responsible engagement with the challenges of the time. It is noteworthy, too, that the “Foreword” presents the *Quarterly* as both “a continuation of and successor to the academic theological journals of Old Russia” and a vehicle for “spreading knowledge and understanding of our Orthodox Faith, History, and Spirituality in America.”

At the time, this was the first English-language Orthodox theological journal in the world,¹ an expression of Fr Georges Florovsky's vision for

¹It is noteworthy that the participants in the First Congress of Orthodox Theology (Athens, November 29–December 6, 1936) discussed a plan for a pan-Orthodox journal, called *La Revue Orthodoxe*, *The Orthodox Review*, or *Orthodoxe Theologische Zeitschrift*. This proposal, submitted by Prof. Nicolae Cotoș of the University of Cernăuți/Chernivtsi, was unanimously endorsed by the participants, but the project was partially accomplished only with the publication of the first issue of *St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* in the Fall of 1952. See the letter by Fr Alexander Schmemmann addressed to Fr Georges Florovsky on December 20, 1948 in Paul Gavrilyuk, *On Christian Leadership: The Letters of Alexander Schmemmann and Georges Florovsky (1947–1955)*: Texts transcribed, compiled, translated, introduced, and annotated by Paul Gavrilyuk (Yonkers, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary

academic rigor and fertile theological reflection at the *Quarterly's* sponsoring institution, St Vladimir's Seminary. Eminent Orthodox theologians have followed Florovsky as editors over the decades—beginning with Frs Alexander Schmemmann and John Meyendorff and ending with Fr John Behr and Professor Paul Meyendorff²—and made the *Quarterly* “a world-class scholarly journal” and the “flagship periodical of Orthodox scholarship.”³

Much has changed since 1952 in the Church and in the world. Evidently, much has also changed for St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary and its *Quarterly*. In this day and age, the stature and vision of a single individual are not sufficient for the task at hand. Reflecting an ongoing shift towards collaboration and team work at the Seminary, *SVTQ* will be led, beginning with this first double issue of 2020, by an

Press, 2020), 125–31 (especially 130). See also *Procès-verbaux du Premier Congrès de Théologie Orthodoxe à Athènes, 29 Novembre–6 Décembre 1936, publiés par les soins du Président Prof. Hamilcar S. Alivisatos* (Athènes: Impr. “Pyrros” S.A., 1939), 451–54.

²The *Quarterly* was always recognized as being “published by the Faculty of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, a graduate school of Theology for all branches of the Orthodox Church,” but this project was undertaken during these decades either by one editor or by an editorial team as follows: Fr Georges Florovsky (Editor-in-Chief) and Julia D. Malinchoc (Managing Editor): vol. 1 (1952–53), no. 1 (Fall 1952) through vol. 3 (1954–55), nos. 3–4 (Spring-Summer 1955); Fr Georges Florovsky (Editor): vol. 4 (1955–56); Fr Alexander Schmemmann, Fr William Schneirla, and Dr Nicholas Arseniev (Editorial Board): vol. 1 (5) (1957), no. 1 (January) through vol. 3 (1959), no. 4 (Fall); Fr Alexander Schmemmann, Dr Nicholas Arseniev, Fr John Meyendorff, and Fr William Schneirla (Editorial Board): vol. 4 (1960); Fr Alexander Schmemmann (Editor), Dr Nicholas Arseniev, Fr John Meyendorff, and Fr William Schneirla: vol. 5 (1961), nos. 1–2; Fr John Meyendorff (Editor), Dr Nicholas Arseniev, Fr Alexander Schmemmann, and Fr William Schneirla: vol. 5 (1961), no. 3 (Fall) through vol. 9 (1965), no. 1; Fr John Meyendorff (Editor): vol. 9 (1965), no. 2 through vol. 19 (1975), no. 2; Fr John Meyendorff (Editor), John H. Erickson (Associate Editor): vol. 19 (1975), no. 3 through vol. 28 (1984), no. 2; Fr John Meyendorff (Editor), Dr John Breck (Associate Editor): vol. 28 (1984), no. 3 through vol. 28 (1984), no. 4; Dr John Breck (Editor): vol. 29 (1985), no. 1 through 39 (1995), no. 4; Dr Paul Meyendorff (Editor), Dr John Behr (Book Review Editor): vol. 40 (1996), nos. 1–2 through vol. 45 (2001), no. 4; Fr John Behr (Editor): vol. 46 (2002), no. 1 through vol. 49 (2005), no. 4; No Editor/Editorial Board [Published by the Faculty of St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary]: vol. 50 (2006), nos. 1–2 through vol. 51 (2007), no. 1; Dr Paul Meyendorff (Editor): vol. 51 (2007), nos. 2–3 through vol. 63 (2019), no. 4.

³Gavrilyuk, *On Christian Leadership*, 130n38; Gavrilyuk, *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 246.

editorial team of three professors at St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, who also rely on a stellar Advisory Board for deep and broad theological expertise.

We endeavor to build on the legacy of our distinguished predecessors by keeping our gaze on the truth and beauty of Tradition—for authentic theology must always remain a student and disciple of those sanctified men and women of God, both the biblical patriarchs and prophets, apostles and evangelists, and the later “fathers” whom Florovsky called “true prophets in the true sense of this word [because] they beheld the mystery of God”⁴—and also by taking seriously the world in which the Word of God speaks the words of eternal life (Jn 6.68) and into which he has descended to manifest God's love unequivocally, unreservedly, sacrificially, and redemptively (Jn 3.16).

While the *Quarterly* retains its focus on the Fathers as a constant reference for a genuinely Orthodox theology, there are other avenues that also need to be explored. *SVTQ* can play a significant role in helping Orthodox academics and the Orthodox Church more broadly to rediscover the relevance of the patrimony of biblical Israel and of Second Temple Judaism for Christian theology and spirituality, to ponder the parallels and mutual influence between theological developments in the Church and the Synagogue, and to examine the opportunities all of this presents for the dialogue with Judaism.

We must also reflect, in the spirit of the Fathers, on the challenge of inhabiting a world that is religiously pluralistic and characterized by a concomitant erosion and ideological instrumentalization of religious faith; on issues affecting our worldwide human family such as mass displacement and forced migration caused by war, poverty, natural disasters, or political oppression; on bioethics, medical ethics, and the ethics of environmental stewardship within the context of the Orthodox tradition;

⁴Discovered posthumously by Andrew Blane, the handwritten text that includes the remark about the Fathers as true prophets and beholders of the divine mystery was penned by the eighty-year-old Florovsky in preparation for a talk. Blane considers it “a digest of his theological sojourn as well as an outline of his proposed theological testament.” Andrew Blane, ed., *Georges Florovsky: Russian Intellectual, Orthodox Churchman* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993), 153–54.

on the difficult theological and pastoral questions that arise as a result of massive cultural and societal shifts within an increasingly post-Christian civilization, but also because of the past and present entanglement of Orthodox Christians in patterns of thought and practice incompatible with the Kingdom (e.g., slavery, racism, xenophobic nationalism, right- and left-wing political totalitarianism, economic corruption and consumerism). There is nothing particularly new here, considering that the very first essay published in the inaugural issue of *SVTQ* was titled, precisely, “The Challenge of Our Time.”

Theological journals play an important role in the larger scholarly endeavor of “academic theology.” Even though the latter is, in a sense, a contradiction in terms and a betrayal of the Orthodox understanding of theology, Orthodoxy cannot retreat from modernity in the name of some misremembered “tradition.” Academic theology—and all its institutions and all its pomp and all its pride—is not to be exorcized, but put to some good Levitical work. We assume this involvement decisively and with all sobriety, understanding, in the words of the same Fr Georges Florovsky (written in reaction to the mounting pressure to evaluate Bulgakov’s Sophiological speculations in terms of Orthodoxy versus heresy), that “theology should not be taken, or mistaken, for Church doctrine.”⁵ Indeed, there can be no claim of offering readers that experiential acquaintance with God which deserves the name of Theology in the true sense. All one can aim for, within the parameters of a theological journal, is academic integrity, quality, and professionalism.

St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly is a double-blind reviewed journal interested in publishing texts covering the entire spectrum of scholarship relevant to Orthodox thought and life, aiming to contribute to both academia and the Church something substantial, well researched, pertinent, and timely—in that order. Readers will find here original research, review articles, and translations, but also theological essays and comments of a more personal nature, short notices, and official theological statements published by the various bilateral commissions that carry out their task of theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and other Christian bodies.

⁵Blane, ed., *Georges Florovsky*, 66.

An Orthodox conscience, such as *SVTQ* strives to reflect, is, by definition, pan-Orthodox. The decision to publish only texts written in English is a purely practical one, and does not, in any way, imply a myopic focus on the Anglophone or, worse yet, North American world. As a matter of fact, we hope to be able to publish translations of important theological texts, old and new, from all over the world, to the extent to which their dissemination in English would highlight noteworthy contributions that should be better known and appreciated.

Assuming the editorship of the *Quarterly* is a task equally exciting and daunting. “For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish’” (Lk 14.28–30). We rely, in this project, on those giving of their time to provide anonymous reviews of the submissions, on the members of the Advisory Board, on the support of the Seminary and its faculty, on donors and benefactors, as well as on a worldwide network of scholars and students of Orthodox theology. If the *Quarterly* is to confirm—by its cargo, as it were—the generous designation “flagship periodical of Orthodox scholarship,” this can only be the fruit of a collaborative enterprise. We invite your contributions, suggestions, and support.