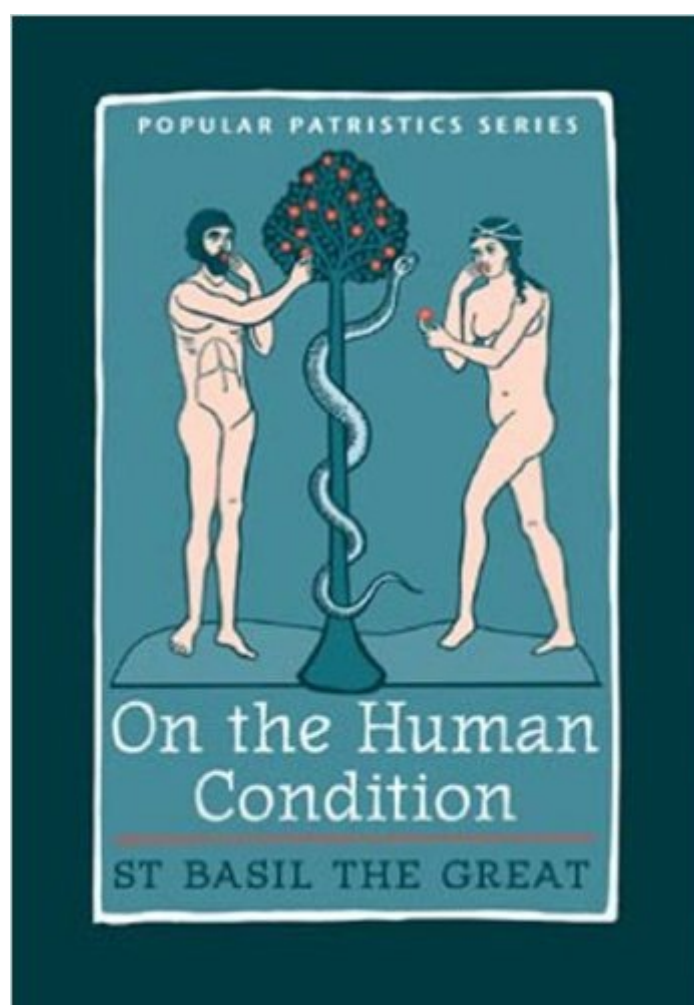


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On The Human Condition: St Basil The Great (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press "Popular Patristics" Series) (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press "Popular Patristics" Series)



Synopsis

This informative and enjoyable little book serves as a valuable introduction to major themes in Greek Patristic anthropology—the image of God in the human being, the Fall of humanity, and the cause of evil—and brings together the main writings of St Basil the Great, fourth-century archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, on these subjects. St Basil deftly addresses the questions posed by the human condition with characteristic clarity and sobriety. He formulates a balance between humility grounded in our creation from the earth and confidence based on the dignity of being created according to God's image. In addition to two discourses on the creation of humanity, this volume includes Letter 233 to Amphilocheus of Iconium, St Basil's spiritual son—a succinct and pointed discussion regarding the functions of the human mind, the activity for which God created it, and how it can be used for good, evil, or morally neutral purposes. This letter complements the discussion of emotions in St Basil's Homily against Anger, also included in this volume. Finally, the book includes excerpts from St Basil's fatherly instructions to his ascetic communities, commonly known as the Long Rules or the Great Asceticon, which emphasize the communal dimension of human identity: humans are naturally interrelated, social, and interdependent.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The assorted writings in this volume are a wonderful addition to every armchair theologian's library, especially as St. Basil "the Great" was one of the greatest Church Fathers of the late 4th century. On the Human Condition is concerned essentially with theological anthropology and includes: On the

Origin of Humanity- Discourse 1: On that which is according to the Image- Discourse 2: On the human being
Homily Explaining that God is Not the Cause of Evil
Homily Against Anger
Homily on the Words "Be Attentive to Yourself"
Letter 233, to Bishop Amphilochius, Who Has Asked a Question
Long Rules (Selections)
These provide a wonderful introduction to the main contours of the understanding of humanity that was present in the Greek Fathers, and which would become normative for later Eastern Orthodox theology. The image of humanity that emerges is one of incredible dignity and tragic brokenness. "Neither does each know himself as he is", writes St. Basil. St. Basil paints a picture of humanity corrupted by sin, but rather than such corruption turning humanity into autonomous, rebellious agents, sin renders humanity confused and driven by that which it does not understand. "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." Although we are made in the image and likeness of God, the likeness is lost and image of God within is defaced. Thus Christ shows us what true humanity is, and the Holy Spirit perfects this within us. "Christianity is that which gives likeness unto God." The doctrine of deification - becoming by grace what God is by nature - is important here, because in the light of Christ we understand what we were made for, and not just what we have fallen from.

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