

In this paper, I will attempt to present a comprehensive picture of the theological significance of the icon in the Orthodox Church. My goal is to contribute at least to a slight extent to the spreading of a consciousness about icons as vehicles of dogmatic communication, specifically in the Czech environment, which still lacks a wide range of basic catechetical literature. My work delineates the concept of an icon and continues with an explanation of its mystical role arising from the creation of humankind in the image and likeness of God. I consider that the basic criterion of an image – its element of divine inspiration corresponding to an adequate extent to God's current economy, which fully culminates in the Pentecost – is fully justified by the constant presence of the use of iconographic expression in the liturgical acts of the Old Testament and New Testament Churches. In order to explain the mystic and sanctifying nature of the icon, I include an interpretation of the philosophical system of the Christian-Neo-Platonic tradition of understanding the presence of the archetype in the image on the basis of the element of similarity. In the outline of basic subjects during the Seventh Ecumenical Council, by the analysis in controversial use of the terms "latreia" and "proskynesis" in council documents, a question is opened about the essential requirement to understand the tradition of the Church mainly on the basis of its catholicity and apostolicity as criteria for its sacred character. I have not neglected to delineate the basic argumentative premises of the iconoclasts – an inadequate mixing of the terms "substance" and "quality" when setting equality between "similar" and "consubstantial". In order to explain the use of the terminological expressions latreia and proskynesis, I have mentioned their occurrence in an analysis of the canon of the morning service of the Victory of Orthodoxy. The conclusion consists of an "integration and inclusion" of artistic forms of pagan art in Christianity and the genesis of the classic iconographic style. Here I have made mention of the most commonly occurring elements which support from the original "total inspiration" a gradual historical refinement specific to the peculiar artistic language of the icons of the Orthodox Church.