

# Antipode to Trauma: Wholeness, Perfection, and Health in the Biblical and Patristic Tradition

Anatolii Marchuk (ORCID 0009-0000-5779-433X)

Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University (Ukraine)

Oleksandr Marchuk (ORCID 0000-0001-9759-3540)

Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University (Ukraine)

The article examines the phenomenon of health within the framework of biblical and Eastern Christian patristic anthropology. The point of departure is the understanding of God as the Absolute of perfection and the “fullness of health”, within whom the divine intention for the human being as a complete created image is rooted. Particular attention is given to the state of primordial human nature prior to the Fall – a condition conceived as integral, harmonious, oriented toward God, and capable of dynamically actualizing its God-imaging properties. It is demonstrated that this state of ontological integrity may be described as the original norm of health, insofar as the Creator’s design, the natural functional capacities of the human being, and the human vocation to communion with the Divine plenitude converge within it. Drawing on biblical texts and the writings of the Eastern Fathers, the article investigates ideal models of humanity before the Fall, wherein the notion of perfection is not contrasted with health but disclosed together with it within a unified theological and anthropological horizon. In this perspective, “health” denotes not merely the absence of deficiency or illness, but primarily an ontological ordering-conformity to the primordial divine intention and participation in the Divine life. It is argued that in these models’ health is not reducible to a set of physiological or psychosomatic indicators but represents an integral state of harmony of the single created nature, whose full meaning is revealed only in light of *imago Dei* and likeness to God. The study concludes that the categories of “perfection” and “health” exhibit a conceptual and connotative unity at the point of their intersection with the idea of integrity, which is economically inscribed into the structure of creation and reveals a theological vision of the human person as called to participate in the Absolute of health – given both as a gift and as a dynamic task of human freedom. The phenomenon of health is thus interpreted as a key to understanding primordial anthropology and as a criterion for evaluating contemporary approaches to human wholeness, including the overcoming of pain and trauma – physical as well as spiritual. In this context, medical chaplaincy emerges as one of the most important practical fields of support for the human person, especially in the most critical situations of life.

Ultimately, the article proposes a reformulated vision of contemporary freedom and agency within the paradigm of New Humanism.

## KEYWORDS

*Health, perfection, wholeness, clinical pastoral care, healing, Bible, patristics, medical chaplaincy.*

## Introduction

A multidisciplinary understanding of the concept of health is inherently complex and necessarily includes its spiritual dimension, particularly when the task is to consider the human person in terms of the highest manifestations of functional integrity, as defined in the well-known WHO classification (*World Health Organization, 1946*). In the tradition of biblical-patristic theology – originally shared by the diverse currents of contemporary Christian confessions – this dimension is articulated not only through the categories of salvation and morality but also through the notion of ontological healing, which encompasses integrity (*ὁλοκλήρος*), perfection (*τέλειος*), and restoration or therapeutic

healing (*σῶζω, θεραπεία*). These concepts hold fundamental significance for the contemporary practice of medical chaplaincy.

Throughout the long development of Western European and, subsequently, global scientific medicine, it became almost axiomatic to assume that the nature of health can be understood only through its contrast with disease. Thus, the epistemology of health evolved primarily in the shadow of pathology, as though illness were the principal key to defining the norm. Health came to be regarded as a secondary phenomenon, accessible only through reflection upon its opposite.

In contrast, the patristic approach views health as a state of ontological and energetic normativity, rendering



such a methodology largely exceptional and uncharacteristic. Patristic thought unfolds this problem within a fundamentally different perspective – one grounded in dogmatic-metaphysical and mystical contemplation, where the methodological focus is shaped not by rationalism but by the logic of theosis, that is, the ascent of the human person toward God. This approach emphasizes the axiological and ontological foundations of being, situating the understanding of health within the broader horizon of spiritual transformation and participation in divine life.

The review of contemporary scholarship demonstrates the continuity and further development of the patristic doctrine of deification (θέωσις) as the central anthropological category of the Eastern Christian tradition. Most studies emphasize that the activity of the Holy Spirit constitutes the primary condition for the human ascent to God-likeness. In the article by Archpriest Marek Lavrsiuk *The Role of the Holy Spirit in Human Deification* (2016), it is underscored that the Holy Spirit makes the human person a “partaker of the Divine nature” (Bible: 2 Pet. 1:4), since the gifts of the Spirit represent the one divine energy in which the human being truly participates. This conclusion is fully consonant with the classical patristic teaching of Athanasius of Alexandria and Basil the Great concerning the inseparable action of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the creation of the world, in the ontological grounding of being, and in its ultimate perfection.

In the theological research of Mikael Leydenhag (2020), particular attention is given to the teleological dimension of deification: it constitutes not only the metaphysical horizon but also the existential meaning of human life, since union in the Holy Spirit is the final vocation of human nature. A similar idea is found in the works of prominent twentieth-century Orthodox theologians, such as Vladimir Lossky (1991) and Marguerite Lot-Borodine (1994), who emphasize that the human being is created with an intrinsic potentiality for God-likeness. Lossky insists in particular that only in the Holy Spirit can the human person realize his or her “archetype” – the likeness to Christ and participation in the life of the Holy Trinity.

In studies devoted to the theology of St. Maximus the Confessor, scholars emphasize the indissoluble connection between ascetic virtues and deification. Researchers such as Gregory Voyles (2018) point out that love and the other virtues in Maximus' system are not merely moral qualities but ontological modes of participation in divine life. The virtues, according to Maximus, possess a therapeutic dimension – an insight of particular relevance for contemporary implementations of clinical pastoral care.

Modern theological sources and studies by Norman Russell (2004) – likewise highlight that deification constitutes the ontological telos of the human person, realized through the sanctifying, life-giving, and perfecting action of the Holy Spirit. This perspective synthesizes the classical patristic teaching with contemporary theological reflection, shaping a holistic understanding of spiritual and anthropological health.

Given these studies, it becomes evident that the patristic idea of integrity – understood as the unity of nature and grace, perfection and health – retains its enduring relevance in contemporary theological research. It provides a foundational framework for a deeper understanding of how the spiritual-energetic

dimension of human existence is manifested in the process of theosis, conceived as the dynamic becoming of the human person in the Holy Spirit. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that this state is interpreted in the postlapsarian condition of humanity. Nevertheless, the traditional Eastern patristic approach to analyzing the principles of perfection – considering perfection from the standpoint of perfection itself, and health from the standpoint of health – remains methodologically decisive.

In this context, it is appropriate to recall, among the vast number of significant authors, such influential scholars as Jean-Claude Larchet, Lars Thunberg (1965; 1985), Serhii Zarin, Yurii Chornomorets, Michael Pomazansky, and many others. Although studies on practical methods of attaining perfection in the works of Serhii Zarin (2006), or the general patristic-anthropological principles articulated by the contemporary Ukrainian theologian Yurii Chornomorets (2001), as well as systematized historical-philosophical and patristic syntheses, offer valuable insights, they still do not address the problem through the lens of the phenomenon of health. Only the work of Jean-Claude Larchet – well known in contemporary European patristic scholarship – specifically examines both the theoretical (patristic tradition) and practical (ascetical) aspects of perfection as a spiritual-therapeutic process.

Moreover, an important segment of modern literature interprets virtues as a form of “the health of the soul”. This idea has deep roots in the writings of Basil of Caesarea (1980), who maintained that evil constitutes an illness of the soul, whereas virtue is the cause of its healing. In his seminal work *Thérapeutique des maladies spirituelles* (2014), Jean-Claude Larchet demonstrates that the early Christian tradition understood salvation as healing: virtues function as therapeutic means that purge the soul of the passions and restore its natural harmony. According to Larchet, spiritual health is realized through the synergy of human will and divine grace – an insight of particular importance today, especially regarding the potential application of these principles within the sphere of clinical pastoral care.

Despite the substantial body of existing research, a number of narrowly focused, attributive – indeed, “symptomatic” – manifestations of the phenomenon of health within the broader context of perfection remain insufficiently explored. The present study seeks to address this lacuna.

The aim of the research is to identify the principal attributes and qualities that constitute the Eastern patristic construct of ideal models of perfection, to determine the prospects of their possible existential and practical realization, and to elucidate the oikonomic implementation of the teleology of being as integral wholeness – namely, its health.

Accordingly, the core objectives include: elucidating the properties of the Divine Absolute of perfection; analysing their creaturely and image-bearing grounding within human nature; outlining theoretical prospects for their actualization as a means of attaining health; clarifying the etymological dimensions of the potential conceptual and connotative correspondence between the categories of “health” and “perfection.”

#### Research methods

The methodological foundation of this study integrates theological-anthropological, phenomenological, and exegetical approaches. A cataphatic – apophatic method is

employed to analyze the phenomenon of health within the framework of the biblical and Eastern Christian patristic tradition. The research also applies textual and contextual analysis of biblical passages and the writings of the Church Fathers, as well as a comparative-historical method to juxtapose the primordial models of Divine and human perfection prior to the Fall.

In addition, the study uses etymological and conceptual-categorical analysis of key terms (τέλειος, ὁλοκλήρος, σῶζω, etc.) in their theological and anthropological usage. The synthesis of contemporary scholarship (Larchet, Lossky, Russell, Chornomorets, among others) is carried out through an analytic-synthetic review of the literature, which enables a multidimensional interpretation of the phenomena of spiritual health and deification.

The methodological framework also encompasses the practical dimension of potential application within the field of clinical pastoral care, which is actively being developed today under the auspices of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine.

### Results and Discussion

The first step in analyzing perfection is to establish a general definition of the concept by considering its etymological roots. The Greek terms denoting “the perfect” or “perfection” derive from notions of goal, purpose, and consummation. In the same sense, the Greek word τέλος was rendered in Church Slavonic as “верхъ”, which in Ukrainian has been preserved through the prefix до- (as in *довершеність*), indicating actual attainment of that which constitutes the summit, apex, or culmination of development. According to the etymological analysis by Moskalenko and Shansky, the Ukrainian adjective досконалий can be further expanded by the synonymous series “completed, full, excellent” (*Melnychuk, 1985: 255*). For a comprehensive terminological characterization, it is also appropriate to mention the Latin equivalents perfectus and perfectio, derived from facere with the prefix per, which conveys the meaning “carried out, accomplished to the end, fully completed”. Thus, the perfect is that which is directed toward its end – as the finalizing act of everything that, striving for its fulfillment, is oriented toward attaining (in its full integrity) what, according to the Church Fathers, will be completely realized only beyond the boundaries of empirical limitation, existential changeability, and temporal conditionedness. Clarifying the etymological foundations of these terms leads to a deeper understanding – within the interpretation of the Christian East – of the immeasurable magnitude of the Divine will and intention, conceived as a theandric (synergistic) project of providentially determined ontological transformation of humanity and the entire created cosmos. Consequently, this provides the basis for analyzing the meaning and purpose of human existence in patristic tradition, which identifies the ultimate aim as the attainment of the creaturely ideal of perfection potentially inherent in human nature (*Marchuk, 2014: 190*).

The challenge of conceptualizing perfection lies in the synergistic yet polar relationship between the Divine and the human. “God”, writes St. Basil the Great, “is the fullness of all qualities and perfections in their highest and infinite mode” (*Pomazansky, 1994: 54*). Thus, the Creator, as the uncreated Measure and Ideal of all possible positive creaturely essential and hypostatic actualizations, appears in the thought of the Eastern Christian Fathers as the ontological Archetype of perfection – experientially apprehended apophatically and intellectually grasped

through its cataphatic manifestations. Within this inseparable methodological dyad, characteristic of the Eastern patristic tradition, Divine Perfection is described, first, on the ontological-essential level, apophatically, as fullness: of self-existence, immutability, freedom from temporal contingency, immeasurability, and spatial incomprehensibility. Second, on the spiritual-energetic level, cataphatically, Divine Perfection is revealed in the absolute expression of intellect, wisdom, omniscience, plenitude of operative power, beatitude, goodness, mercy and love, truth, and, ultimately, in the very “hypostasis” of holiness (*Marchuk, 2017: 23*).

The apophatic character of the divine ontological attributes, together with the immeasurable richness and multivalence of their perfections, already affirms the inherent absoluteness and incomprehensibility of God's perfection for the human being. Yet the very formulation of the problem of perfection, once subjected to analysis, points toward the possibility of its positive resolution, for although God is unknowable by nature, He is not unknowable by grace. Precisely at this point the horizon of attaining spiritual-personal, energetic perfection opens up: through the positive impulse of the hypostatic orientation of the human will, operating synergically with the logos-grounded structure of human nature, there emerges the possibility of forming a mode of existence directed toward blessedness and, ultimately, toward eternal blessedness as the consummation of a nature perfected by grace. Such possibilities become perceptible within a cataphatic approach to the spiritual-energetic principles of perfection within the conceptual pair “Divine – human”. The analysis of this group of attributes arises from the patristic conviction that God is a spiritually rational Being, a Person who, having created another person, wills to reveal Himself in that person through the boundlessness of His perfections. In communion with the Creator, “true humanity is realized only when the human being lives in God and shares in the divine qualities,” for, as Anastasius of Sinai teaches, when God created Adam “in His image and likeness”, He “breathed into him grace, illumination, and the ray of the All-Holy Spirit” (as cited in *Pomazansky, 1994: 81*). Through this “impression” upon the newly created nature, there came about what Athanasius of Alexandria describes as “the adoption of the human being by the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit” (*Athanasius of Alexandria, 1996: 45*). It is not accidental that Gregory the Theologian emphasized: “we are a portion of God” and that the human being carries within himself “a stream of the invisible Divinity”, a sign of participation in divine energies (quoted in *Larchet, 2014: 35*). These energies-qualities, manifested in the creative act and inexhaustible in number, unfold as an unending multiplicity of properties which, being God's thoughts-wills concerning the human being, are in fact the logoi of the human essence and therefore naturally correspond to it. Although divine, these qualities, by virtue of their essential inscription into creation and through the gift of grace, appear as authentically human properties – constitutive of human nature itself. Thus, a person becomes truly and fully human to the extent that he or she possesses them (*Marchuk & Marchuk, 2014: 228*).

Through the multitude of attributes – many of which remain unknown to us – the writings of the Fathers and Teachers of the Church offer various synthesized classifications that systematize the most significant properties of the imago Dei: rationality and freedom. Dependent qualities, which unfold through human assimilation to the Creator in cooperation with the Spirit,

include governance, the capacity for creativity, the property of immortality, and the potential for incorruptibility (*Chornomorets*, 2001: 75-76).

The God-imprinted qualities are given "as if in potentiality" (*Basil of Caesarea*, 1970: 206), "in a germinal state" (as cited in *Larchet*, 2014: 39), so that through likeness – which is "their actualization" (*Basil of Caesarea*, 1970: 206) – they may "be compelled to grow and brought to completion" (as cited in *Larchet*, 2014: 40). In this way, the features of the divine image in the human person, given their potential for realization in the process of becoming like God, can, in their perfected form as virtues of deification, be understood as perfection. The ontological aspect of this perfection consists in the fact that the properties of the imago Dei, granted as creative gifts and natural capacities within human essence (*Chornomorets*, 2001: 74), when actualized (through a change in the mode of existence without alteration of the essential logos), render the human being God-like. Through this actualization in the form of virtues, the human person participates in and is endowed with divine qualities, enabling one to possess by grace what God possesses by nature (*Maximus the Confessor*, 1985: 124). Consequently, the human being naturally becomes truly human and transitions from potential to actual perfection through participation in the essential, ever-actual Source of these qualities – the One to whom humanity is called to be conformed (*Thunberg*, 1965: 89-91).

The primordial human being – though only potentially perfect – unfolded, in the synergy of human will and divine grace, the prospect of the single true and naturally proper goal of human existence: actual union with God. Even the Creator's commandment (Bible: Gen. 2:16-17), as Maximus the Confessor argues, was intended to guide humanity toward the right use of its last conditional "imperfection" – freedom (*Lossky*, 1991: 185). Such a model of divine-human relationship, which in a certain sense "self-limits" God for the sake of genuine human choice, would have affirmed not only the divine omnipotence but also the fullness of human perfection. Through this choice, aligned with the natural will, humanity would have actualized its God-given capacities and fulfilled its cosmic vocation. According to Maximus the Confessor, this vocation unfolds through the accomplishment of five consecutive syntheses: uniting the created with the uncreated; the sensible with the intelligible; within the sensible realm – heaven (the angelic world) with earth; on earth – Paradise with the rest of the world; and within Paradise – man with woman, the two modes of human nature (*Maximus the Confessor*, 2003). Structurally, human nature, capable of reaching toward the Uncreated through the intellect (nous) and connected with all principal layers of created existence (with the earth through the body, the sensible realm through perception, and the intelligible realm through the soul), was meant to subordinate each of these domains to the higher one, thus uniting all reality in a single movement toward God (*Epiphaniovich*, 2013: 74). The divine commandments concerning the law of freedom (Bible: Gen. 2:16-17) and the care for creation (Gen. 1:26), directed toward its transformative unification, were intended to reveal within the primordial human being the indwelling potential and effective means of fulfilling this law – thereby manifesting divine truth in the integrity and perfection of all creation. The synthesis of the sexes – the internal unity of the human nature and its operative powers (*Maximus the Confessor*, 1985: 169) – when actualized through dispassion and rational virtue (*Thunberg*, 1965:

407), perfects humanity as a "spiritual Paradise". Because of this, by means of the realized capacities of governance, the human being becomes the mediator uniting this "Paradise" with the rest of the earthly realm, integrating corporeality into universal harmony through love. Having filled the created world with virtue and attained an "angel-equal excellence" (*Epiphaniovich*, 2013: 74), the perfected human being would gain the capacity for ecstatic ascent to the heavens – into the sphere of spiritual cognition – which provides the conditions for apprehending a higher form of knowledge through the next stage of the sensible-intelligible synthesis. At this stage of the unifying process, the human being, through "angelic understanding" (*Epiphaniovich*, 2013: 75), became capable of contemplating the suprasensory logoi of all created beings – the entire hierarchy of divine volitional-intellectual intentions (*Pseudo-Dionysii Areopahit*, 2018: 153) – in a noetic transcendence that discloses the universal logos of all that exists, the all-encompassing creative movement of God toward the world in the fullness of divine love. "Through love," and through the miracle of divine philanthropy, in the final synthesis the "cosmic Adam" was required to overcome the ultimate boundary between the created and the uncreated, between creation and the Creator. At this culminating stage of successive unifications, the human person would have approached the limit between two qualitatively distinct realities – the immeasurable difference between them, which Maximus the Confessor describes as an abyss (*Maximus the Confessor*, 2003: 70). This synthesis, being supra-natural, opens a qualitatively higher, "ever-blessed" mode of existence in God. Having united within himself all created being, Adam was to "lead the single creation to God. Then God would have given Himself to humanity and to all creation gathered in humanity; the deification of creation would have been accomplished" (*Epiphaniovich*, 2013: 76). Yet the boundlessness of God's providential design, through its longing for hypostatic union with human nature (*Thunberg*, 1985: 78), "grants beings the possibility of completing their movement toward God" (*Thunberg*, 1985: 79), and through divine adoption enables them to live in participation in the inner life of the Trinity (*Thunberg*, 1985: 80). Maximus the Confessor proclaims the mystery of the Incarnation of the pre-eternal Logos, who – by the power of His divinity united to humanity – overcomes the unfathomable "abyss" between the created and the uncreated, for "the divine Logos and God always wills His Incarnation to be actualized in all things and in all people" (*Maximus the Confessor*, 2003: 125). The deification of human nature in Christ bestowed upon humanity the capacity to receive without hindrance the fullness of divine energies. Consequently, "created nature becomes, by the state of grace, the same as uncreated nature – entirely united with the entire God, becoming everything that God is, except for identity of essence" (*Maximus the Confessor*, 2003: 131). This reality constitutes a sign that, through likeness to God, the human being attains not only the cataphatically describable divine properties – rationality, freedom, sanctity by grace, power, governance, existence according to the mercy of divine justice in beatitude and universal love – but also the apophatic ones: divine self-subsistence, immutability, eternity, immeasurability, and omnipresence through union with all that exists (*Marchuk*, 2014: 192).

Having fulfilled his primordial vocation through an interior ascent toward wholeness – healing and restoring his being – Adam united, that is, brought into a state of

health, all created reality within himself by continually contemplating the One God in every creature, so that peace reigned in all and through all. By realizing the divine intention to lead all creation into harmonious unity – a characteristic mark of genuine health – through the mediating role of the human person, the natural and authentic form of human existence emerged as a life “without sorrow, pain, or anxiety”. “Possessing the divine gifts and the inherent strength that proceed from the Logos of the Father”, who became incarnate and overcame the boundaries of createdness, mutability, and spatio-temporal limitation, the human being “had no cause to fear any inner illness; for in the body there was perfect health, and in the soul perfect serenity”. Only “sound and stable qualities in their natural state” could properly characterize such existence. Through union with God – the absolute source of health – and by nourishing her longing spiritual-bodily nature from this fullness, the human being preserved in universal harmony all the capacities granted to her in a healed and actualized form. Hence, as St. Gregory of Nyssa affirms, “the human race, as it was originally intended, delighted in health” (*Gregory of Nyssa, 2020: 77*).

At this stage of the study, we have finally approached the possibility of offering an initial, surface-level analysis of the central idea underlying the problem of health – a notion that, like any form of true genius, is inherently simple, although its comprehension is pedagogically demanding. For this purpose, it is helpful to clarify that the patristic idea of wholeness and all-unity can also be traced in the terminological and etymological origins of the very concept of “health”. Š. Ondruš argues that the Slavic word *zdravij* (“healthy”) derives from Proto-Slavic *srъnъ*, which is cognate with Old Indic *sárvaḥ*, *solūos* / *soṛuos* meaning “whole”; with Latin *salvus*; and with Greek *ὅλος* (“whole, healthy”), developing through forms such as *srōv-* > *strov-*, *zdrov*, *strav-* > *sdrav* (Melnichuk, 1985: 255). In the Greek language – dominant within the literary and theological heritage of the Eastern Fathers – the appropriate conceptual equivalent (also characteristic of New Testament usage) is the cluster of terms derived from the verb *σώζω*, which itself shares a root with the adjective *σῶς* (*σῶος*), originating from *tvaos*; *tva* = Old Indic *tuvi*, meaning “strong, mighty”. This allows Serhii Zarin to interpret the adjective *σῶς* (*σῶος*) as signifying “healthy” in the strict sense (Latin *sanus*). In the New Testament, moreover, the Greek *σώζειν* in its positive, dynamic sense denotes the restoration of wholeness, strength, and health. In the passive form, the verb *σώζω* is translated precisely as “to recover,” “to become healthy,” or “to receive healing” (Zarin, 2006: 97).

The idea of all-unity (holistic integrity), characteristic of the Eastern patristic tradition, brings together two semantic trajectories – perfection and health – within a narrowly focused analytic framework. This synthesis emerges through the interpretation of the phenomenon in its absolute and maximally ideal forms, through the theoretical perspectives of its practical actualization, and through the etymological examination of the terms “perfection” and “health,” which converge into a distinctive phenomenological unity, a specific conceptual – connotative integrity. Thus, when posed the direct question – What is health for the representatives of Eastern Christian patristics, for the God-inspired authors of the biblical texts? – the answer is marked by a kind of luminous simplicity: health is itself the sign and substance of perfection.

It appears as the teleological essence, goal, and meaning of human existence and, through humanity, of the

entire cosmos: as that summit toward which all creation is directed, the unceasing and never-completed ascent into all-integrity. Health is an incomparable gift – perfect a priori in its givenness – yet one that nevertheless requires the active synergetic cooperation of the human person for its realization. In this sense, it constitutes a dynamic ontological orientation through which the fragmentations and conditional ruptures of human nature are overcome, enabling the unification of all structural and functional dimensions of the human being in the process of God-likeness. Most importantly, health becomes the fundamental idiom, the defining mark and meaning of the mode of existence according to the logos of human nature within the divine-human project of unifying perfected humanity. In its ultimate consummation – by grace – in the mystery of deification, health manifests as the fullness of human completion in God (*Marchuk, 2017: 35*).

### Conclusion

The conducted research demonstrates that employing the combined cataphatic-apophatic approach to the phenomenon of health within the patristic framework of perfection makes it possible to identify the essential qualitative attributes embedded in the two foundational models of completeness – the Divine and the primordial human. It has been established that, in patristic thought, perfection possesses an intrinsically dynamic character: it unfolds through the actualization of the God-given properties inscribed in human nature, properties whose realization initiates an ontological transformation through the process of deification. This perspective broadens the understanding of health, presenting it not merely as the normative functional state of human nature but also as a prerequisite and constitutive dimension of the metaphysical transfiguration accomplished through theosis.

The study further argues that, according to the Fathers of the Christian East, the first-created human being was called to transcend the boundary between the created and the uncreated in communion with the Incarnate Logos. By doing so, humanity was meant to fulfill its primordial vocation: to embody the creational ideal of health and to serve as a healing principle both for itself and for the entirety of creation. Consequently, the patristic concept of wholeness – viewed through the lens of an ideal, existentially realizable model of human perfection – provides grounds to affirm a distinct phenomenological unity between the nature of perfection and its hypostasis, which is health.

Within this horizon, it becomes evident that medical chaplaincy, when grounded in the biblical and patristic tradition, reveals the profound spiritual meaning of caring for the inner well-being of the human person. Such an approach highlights that healing is inseparable from the person's journey toward God, for the human vocation is directed toward holiness and participation in divine life – toward becoming, by grace, what God is by nature. Thus, the ministry of the chaplain in the medical setting harmoniously integrates into the patristic understanding of the human being as called to deification, and the care for the integrity of the patient emerges as a continuation of this divine-human vocation.

### REFERENCES

- Athanasius of Alexandria. (1996). *On the Incarnation* (J. Behr, Trans.). St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.
- Basil of Caesarea. (1970). *Sur l'origine de l'homme* (A. Smets & M. Van Esbroeck, Eds.). Éditions du Cerf. (In French).



- Basil of Caesarea. (1980). The writings of Basil the Great (R. J. Deferrari, Ed.). Catholic University of America Press.
- Chornomorets, Yu. P. (2001). Anthropology of Eastern Patristics (Candidate of Philosophy dissertation). Institute of Philosophy, Kyiv.
- Epiphanius, S. L. (2013). *Prepodobnyi Maksym Spovidnyk, yoho zhyttia i tvorchist* (Vols. 1-2). Vyd-vo O. Abyshko. (In Ukrainian)
- Gregory of Nyssa. (2020). *On the making of man: A modern translation*. Blurp.
- Larchet, J.-C. (2014). *Thérapeutique des maladies spirituelles* (3rd ed.). Éditions Saint-Paul. (In French)
- Lavrusiuk, M. (2016). The role of the Holy Spirit in human deification. *Elpis*, 18, 39-52. <https://doi.org/10.15290/elpis.2016.18.05>
- Leydenhag, M. (2020). Deification and the Christian life: A pneumatological approach. University of St Andrews Research Repository.
- Lossky, V. (1991). *The mystical theology of the Eastern Church*. James Clarke & Co.
- Lot-Borodine, M. (1994). *La déification de l'homme selon la doctrine des Pères grecs*. Cerf.
- Marchuk, A., & Marchuk, O. (2014). Fenomen zdorov'ia ta pryntsyipy doskonalosti v antropologii skhidnoi patrystyky. *Naukovyi visnyk Chernivetskoho universytetu. Filosofiia*, (726-727), 227-232. (In Ukrainian)
- Marchuk, O. T. (2014). Fenomenanaliz zdorov'ia u systemi patrystychnykh pryntsyypiv doskonalosti. *Chastyna I. Atrybuty ideal'nykh modelei u perspektyvakh kholistychnoi aktualizatsii. Hileia: Scientific Bulletin*, 88(9), 189-194. (In Ukrainian)
- Marchuk, O. T. (2017). *Kontseptsiiia dukhovnoho zdorov'ia v antropologii skhidnoi patrystyky* (Candidate Dissertation). Natsionalnyi pedahohichnyi universytet imeni M. P. Drahomanova. (In Ukrainian)
- Maximus the Confessor. (1985). *Selected writings* (G. C. Berthold, Trans.). Paulist Press.
- Maximus the Confessor. (2003). *On the cosmic mystery of Jesus Christ: Selected writings* (P. M. Blowers & R. L. Wilken, Trans.). St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.
- Melnichuk, O. S. (Ed.). (1985). *Etymologichnyi slovnyk ukrainskoi movy* (Vol. 2: D-Koptsi). Naukova dumka. (In Ukrainian)
- Pomazansky, M. (1994). *Orthodox dogmatic theology: A concise exposition*. St. Herman Press.
- Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite. (2018). *Pro mistychnu bohoslaviu* (per. z davnohrets. Onufrii (Kindratyshyn)). Svichado. (In Ukrainian)
- Russell, N. (2004). *The doctrine of deification in the Greek patristic tradition*. Oxford University Press.
- Thunberg, L. (1965). *Microcosm and mediator: The theological anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*. C. W. K. Gleerup.
- Thunberg, L. (1985). *Man and the cosmos: The vision of St Maximus the Confessor*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.
- Voyles, G. (2018). The healing function of virtue in Maximus the Confessor. *Toronto Journal of Theology*, 34(1), 67-85. <https://doi.org/10.3138/tjt.2017-019>
- World Health Organization. (1946). *Constitution of the World Health Organization*. World Health Organization.
- Zarin, S. M. (2006). Asketyzm za pravoslavno-khrystyianskum vchenniam: Etyko-bohoslovskie doslidzhenia. Vydavnytstvo imeni sviatoho Leva Papy Rym'skoho (In Ukrainian)

## Антипод травми – цілісність, досконалість і здоров'я у біблійній та патристичній традиції

Анатолій Марчук (ORCID 0009-0000-5779-433X)

Чернівецький національний університет імені Юрія Федьковича (Україна)

Олександр Марчук (ORCID 0000-0001-9759-3540)

Чернівецький національний університет імені Юрія Федьковича (Україна)

У статті досліджується феномен здоров'я в координатах біблійної та східнохристиянської патристичної антропології. Вихідною засадою є розуміння Бога як Абсолюту досконалості та «повноти здоров'я», в якому закорінено задум про людину як довершений тварний образ. Особливої уваги надано стану першоствореної людської природи до гріхопадіння, що первісно мислиться як цілісна, гармонізована, спрямована до Бога й здатна до динамічної актуалізації богообразних властивостей. Показано, що цей стан онтологічної цілісності може бути описаний як первинна норма здоров'я, оскільки в ньому збігаються задум Творця, природний функціонал людини та її призначення до співпричастя з Божественною повнотою. На основі аналізу біблійних текстів і східних Отців Церкви розглянуто ідеальні моделі людини до падіння, у межах яких поняття досконалості не протиставляється поняттю здоров'я, а розкривається з ним у спільному богословсько-антропологічному горизонті. Окреслено, що у такому ракурсі «здоров'я» позначає не лише відсутність пошкодженості чи хвороби, а насамперед онтологічну впорядкованість, відповідність первісному задуму й участь у Божественному житті. Обґрунтовано, що в цих моделях здоров'я постає не просто як сукупність фізіологічних або психосоматичних параметрів, а як цілісний стан гармонії єдиної створеної природи, який набуває свого повного змісту лише в перспективі богообразності та богоподібності. Зроблено висновок про концептуально-конотаційну єдність категорій «досконалість» і «здоров'я» в точці їх перетину з ідеєю цілісності, що ікономічно вписана в структуру творіння й розкриває богословське бачення людини як покликаної до участі в Абсолюті здоров'я, даному як дар і водночас як динамічне завдання людської свободи. Феномен

здоров'я інтерпретується як ключ до розуміння першозданої антропології та як критерій для оцінки сучасних підходів до людської цілісності – подолання болю, травм, не лише фізіологічних, а й духовних. Одним із найважливіших завдань практики допомоги людині інколи в найкритичніших ситуаціях життя беззаперечно постає сфера медичного капеланства.

**Ключові слова:** здоров'я, досконалість, цілісність, клінічне душпастирство, лікування, Біблія, патристика, медичне капеланство

---

Received (Надійшла до редакції): 11.10.2025,  
Accepted (Прийнята до друку): 15.11.2025  
Available online (Опубліковано онлайн) 30.12.2025