

Chronos and Kairos  
Secular and Sacred Time  
in Relation to the History  
of Salvation and Eternity



## CHRONOS AND KAIROS. SECULAR AND SACRED TIME IN RELATION TO THE HISTORY OF SALVATION AND ETERNITY

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The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is foundational to Christianity. Because the act of creation out of nothing is a work of the Trinity *ad extra*, the whole of created reality, or the time-space continuum, has its *arché*, its ultimate beginning in the mystery of the Trinity. Hence, created reality is “*triadoarchic*” and the very act of creation out of nothing is “*triadoarchy*”. The whole of the created cosmos along with time is an icon of the Trinity, the archetype and exemplary cause, and, therefore, we can term it “*triadophoric*” reality, bearing the image and seal of the Trinity. Since all of the visible and invisible cosmos in its entirety exists in the ubiquitous Triadic God, who is the ground of all being, it is totally dependent on Him for both its existence and its operation. For this reason, the total cosmic reality is “*triadocentric*”. Furthermore, the whole cosmos in its tremendous dynamicity and temporality, is a “*triadoteleological*” reality, for it tends towards the Most Holy Trinity as its definitive goal and the Omega Point, consisting of the Divine centre, humano-Christic, and humano-cosmic apex (Teilhard de Chardin). It becomes the definitive Kingdom and Family of God.

The creation of the visible and invisible cosmos by the Triadic God is an act of infinite love and of supreme Divine Wisdom. It presupposes divine condescension, by which God waives the privileges of His transcendent dignity and infinite majesty for the purpose of approaching us through His immanence in the time-space continuum, without patronization and in a reciprocal relationship of love. The ongoing condescension

of God the Father is His paternity and His *basileosis*. It is a temporal and evolutionary process of extension of His kingdom from the act of creation, through the covenants and mighty salvific deeds in both Testaments, until the definitive consummation of the history of salvation through and in the "triadoteology". The radical condescension of God the Son in His inhumanization and redemption has been termed *kenosis*. The ongoing condescension of the Holy Spirit in His temporal mission in prophecy, biblical inspiration, sanctification, and His descent on the day of Pentecost, can be termed *episkiasis*. The three condescensions of the three Divine Persons are the mysteries and ineffable meetings of the eternal with the temporal, of the infinite with the finite, of the holy with the imperfect and sinful, of the necessary with the contingent etc.

The *history of salvation* is a record of the historic events and mysteries, from "triadoarchy" through "triadocentricity" to "triadoteology", of the historic events and mysteries in which are revealed the divine and salvific activities of the Triadic God. On the other hand, the *divine economy of salvation* is the mystery of the divine plan embracing the order of nature and grace (Eph 3:9; cf. 1Cor 2:7-8) hidden in the intellect of the Triadic God in all eternity before the creation of the world out of nothing and revealed through the mystery of the execution of that divine plan through "triadoarchy" (the creation of the time-space continuum and of all creatures through evolution by the Triadic God), through the divine acts of salvation recorded in the sacred history (Old and New Testaments), through the mystery of the God-man Jesus Christ (Rom 16:26), and through the activity of the Holy Spirit ending in the "triadoteology".

Now let us discuss the mystery of time, sempiternity, and eternity in which the history and economy of salvation are set. Aristotle delivered a classical definition of time based on a physical and objectivistic vision of reality: χρόνος είναι δοκεῖ ἀριθμὸς κινήσεως κατὰ το πρότερον καὶ ὕστερον, "time seems to be a measurement of movement according to before and after" (*Physics*, IV,2,219b,1; cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 37,10-11). This definition became dominant in the Middle Ages, e.g. Albert the Great (*Summa theologiae* I,21,2) and St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa theologiae* I,10,1-6). This objectivistic, cosmocentric and dimensional succession of moments in movement (or duration), and a quantitative, measurable, homogenous time-space continuum, is the "external" time of the Western tradition. It measures external relationships of reality. This is *chronos*, or secular and cosmic time or times, including earlier, now and later (or past, present and future).

More relevant theologically, however, is the "internal" or intrinsic time, which is fulfilled, qualitative and the anthropocentric dimension of