



# Pastoral Gleanings from Gregory of Nazianzus' Oration 2

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## 1. Introduction

Gregory the Theologian<sup>1</sup> also known as Gregory of Nazianzus, has been treated as one of the brightest stars in the firmament of the Christian tradition. He is mostly credited for paving the way for the final defeat of the Arians at the Council of Nicaea. His "five theological orations"<sup>2</sup> which was the threshold of the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity is viewed as the ultimate turning point in the Arian controversy. He is credited with the theological acumen and ecumenical ability for preparing the imperial city for the Nicene ascension. **Jacques Noret** has argued, "Gregory as the most cited author, after the Bible, in Byzantine ecclesiastical literature."<sup>3</sup> The Byzantine connoisseur of Greek letters, **Michael Psellos**, considers Gregory not simply the Theologian par excellence but Christian Hellenism's worthy counterpart

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<sup>1</sup> The reason for this title is Gregory's urgent championing of a Trinitarian conception of God and his insistent care to articulate a theological terminology for speaking of God in a way consistent with Scripture and the Church's tradition of faith. Brian E. Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus - The Early Church Fathers*, (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group: 2006), 41.

<sup>2</sup> The five theological orations of Gregory of Nazianzus are: "First Theological Oration - Preliminary Discourse," "The Second Theological Oration - On Theology," "The Third Theological Oration - On the Son," "The Fourth Theological Oration - On the Son," and "The Fifth Theological Oration - On the Holy Spirit."

<sup>3</sup> Brian E. Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus - The Early Church Fathers*, (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group: 2006), 13.

to the orator Demosthenes.<sup>4</sup> This paper provides a gist initially looking at the life of Gregory, and then briefly attempts to delve upon the pastoral gleanings solely from Oration 2<sup>5</sup> – an important work of Gregory of Nazianzus and its implications.

## 1.1 Brief Biography of Gregory of Nazianzus

Gregory of Nazianzus was born in a privileged family to parents Gregory the Elder and Nonna in the region of Cappadocia in about 330. He was the second of three siblings; he had an older sister, Gorgonia, and a younger brother, Caesarius. His father, the elder Gregory was a member of the Hypsistarii sect until his conversion and baptism by Leontius, bishop of Caesarea, in 325.<sup>6</sup>

**1.1.1 Education** - Gregory began his education under the tutelage of a pedagogue named Carterius, and continued at the grammarian in Nazianzus before proceeding on to the provincial capital, Caesarea, to further his education. The major focus was on literature and rhetoric.<sup>7</sup> He received training at some of the best schools in the Roman Empire. It was at Cappadocian Caesarea that Gregory first met Basil and formed a friendship. But later, the two parted ways for further education, Gregory

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<sup>4</sup> Brian E. Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus – The Early Church Fathers*, (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group:2006), 27.

<sup>5</sup> This work is a long apologia, supposedly delivered at the Paschal festival of 362 to his home congregation in Nazianzus, for fleeing to rural solitude immediately after being ordained a presbyter there by his father, the previous Christmas.

<sup>6</sup> The Hypsistarii sect had a doctrinal makeup of, “a mixture of Hellenic error and Jewish legal fantasy. They practiced Sabbath observance and followed the Jewish dietary laws while rejecting circumcision. They held to strict monotheism, rejecting both pantheism and Trinitarian theology and referring to God only as the Almighty.” William M Ramsay, *Luke the Physician and Other Studies in the History of Religion*, (Wipf & Stock, Eugene, Oregon, 1979): 401.

Thomas P. Halton, ed. and Denis Molaise Meehan trans., *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, vol. 75, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: Three Poems* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1987), 2.

<sup>7</sup> John A. McGuckin, *St. Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001), 35.

and his brother, Caearius, to the school of rhetoric at Caesarea in Palestine and Basil to Constantinople.

**1.1.2 Tryst with Asceticism** - At Athens, Gregory was soon reunited with Basil, and the two became close friends, encouraging one another in their studies as well as in their pursuit of holiness. Though the political and mercantile power of Athens' was receding, the city was still an academic center. In the face of such social and moral challenges to their religious, Cappadocian upbringing, Gregory and Basil sought to protect themselves by pursuing a form of strict asceticism even in the midst of their tumultuous urban setting. This experience was apparently quite formative for Gregory as his commitment to ascetic values.

**1.1.3 His Ordination** - In 361, Gregory's father recalled him to Nazianzus, and on Christmas day, with great approval from the congregation, ordained Gregory to the office of priest.<sup>8</sup> Gregory acknowledged that in so doing his father paid him "the highest honor in his power"<sup>9</sup> it was still an undesired honor. Gregory states, "*Tyranny of this kind (I can call it by no other name and may the Holy Spirit pardon me for feeling thus) so distressed me that I suddenly shook myself free of everyone, friends, parents, fatherland, kin. Like an ox stricken by the gadfly I made for Pontus, anxious to have the most godly of my friends as medicine for my agitation.*"<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Peter Schaff, ed., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, vol. 7, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 204.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas P. Halton, ed. and Denis Molaise Meehan trans., *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, vol. 75, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: Three Poems* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1987), 87.

<sup>10</sup> *Gregory of Nazianzus - The Early Church Fathers*, (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group: 2006), 9.

**1.1.4 First Resentment and Flight to Pontus** - Gregory remained in Pontus for a few months, but “*fear of irreverence toward his father and disobedience to God quickly persuaded him to return and accept his charge.*”<sup>11</sup> He returned to Nazianzus, where he preached his first sermon as a priest—Oration I—on Easter day 362, apologizing for his flight. Gregory later planned to give a full explanation for his flight in an expanded sermon to his congregation who were miffed, now known to us as Oration 2.

**1.1.5 Return back to Nazianzus** - Gregory divided his time between assisting his father in the administration and shepherding of the church in Nazianzus and pursuit of the monastic life with Basil at Pontus. Following the death of the Bishop of Caesarea, Gregory and his father succeeded in procuring the vacant position for his friend, Basil.

**1.1.6 Second Resentment and fallout with Basil** - When Emperor Valens split Cappadocia into two provinces, Caesarea and Tyana, in 371, Basil became embroiled in a power struggle with Bishop Anthimus of Tyana. Basil in an attempt to consolidate his authority by establishing new bishoprics in Tyana, consecrated Gregory to the see of Sasima.<sup>12</sup> Gregory, however, had grown comfortable in his position at Nazianzus which allowed him time to pursue his meditation and prayers at Pontus from time to time. He resented this appointment to what he regarded as a “*stopping place.... without water or vegetation, not quite civilized, a thoroughly deplorable*

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas P. Halton, ed. and Denis Molaise Meehan trans., *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, vol. 75, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: Three Poems* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1987), 2.

<sup>12</sup> William A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, vol. 2 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1979), 27.

and cramped little village.”<sup>13</sup> Basil accused him of shirking his duty. He accused Basil of making him a pawn in ecclesiastical politics.<sup>14</sup> Gregory was apparently very hurt by the manner in which Basil's callously misused his friendship which resulted in the fallout between them. Gregory never relocated to Sasima but instead continued to serve under his father at Nazianzus.

**1.1.7 Withdrew to Seleucia** - Following the death of his parents, Gregory remained on at Nazianzus to serve in his father's place, but then withdrew to Seleucia to pursue meditation and prayer. As he was working through his grief, he realized that his presence was preventing the bishops from choosing an appropriate successor to his father's bishopric. In Seleucia, he was emotionally down on receiving the tragic news that Basil had died, as he felt the rift between them had not been entirely mended.<sup>15</sup>

**1.1.8 Gregory the Theologian** - The Orthodox community at Constantinople, having endured the repression of an Arian majority, called onto Gregory to lead them. Gregory began immediately to preach the worship of the Trinity, and his five sermons on that topic Orations 27 to 31, gained him the title of Gregory the Theologian.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Thomas P. Halton, ed. and Denis Molaise Meehan trans., *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, vol. 75, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: Three Poems* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1987), 89.

<sup>14</sup> James Kiefer, GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, [http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/Gregory\\_Nazianzus.htm](http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/Gregory_Nazianzus.htm).

<sup>15</sup> Peter Schaff, ed., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, vol. 7, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 195.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Schaff, ed., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, vol. 7, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 197.

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**1.1.9 Abrupt Consecration and Retirement** - Gregory was consecrated to the office of a bishop at the beginning of the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 381. When the Egyptian bishops arrived, however, they objected to Gregory's accession on the grounds of the fifteenth canon of Nicaea, arguing that a bishop could not transfer from one see to another.<sup>17</sup> Gregory, realizing their primary concern was to remove him, and ever sensitive to attacks on his person, resigned. He had already become disenchanted with the partisanship he had seen emerging in the council, and strongly decried it in his parting address, Oration 42, "The Last Farewell."<sup>18</sup> Gregory The Theologian finally returned to his family's estate at Arianzus where he dedicated his time for editing his writing for posterity.

## 1.2 Pastoral Gleanings from Oration 2

### 1.2.1 Oration 2: In Defense of His Flight to Pontus

Oration 2 is not just an apology for Gregory's flight, but also an intelligent initiative to bring healing to the divided church at Nazianzus which was gripped by the schism<sup>19</sup> while Gregory was sheltering at Pontus in the winter of 361-362.<sup>20</sup> In Oration 2, Gregory is speaking to the members of the congregation who are still faithful to his father, whom he had to convey a strong view of the priesthood and retain their

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<sup>17</sup> Peter Schaff, ed., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, vol. 7, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 198.

<sup>18</sup> This Oration was delivered By Gregory of Nazianzus during the Second Ecumenical Council, held at Constantinople A.D. 381. The audience consisted of the one hundred and fifty Bishops of the Eastern Church who took part in the Council, and members of his own congregation.

<sup>19</sup> Brian E. Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus - The Early Church Fathers*, (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group: 2006), 51.

<sup>20</sup> John A. McGuckin, *St. Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 106-111.

support, and also win back those departed members to whom his words would be reported.

McGuckin opines that Oration 2 was “extensively remodeled and amplified by Gregory in the aftermath of his retreat from Constantinople at the end of his ecclesiastical career, rather than at the beginning where he explains the great responsibility, demands, and skills needed for the pastorate.”<sup>21</sup>

### 1.2.2 Reasons to flee from his pastoral calling:

a. He was surprised and yet confused – *“I was astonished at the unexpectedness of what had occurred, as people are terrified by sudden noises.”*<sup>22</sup>

b. He desired the serene life than a life of turmoil – *“In the next place, there came over me an eager longing for the blessings of calm and retirement... so that I could not submit to be thrust into the midst of a life of turmoil by an arbitrary act of oppression.”*<sup>23</sup>

c. He was fearful of profaning the sacred office – *“I was ashamed of all those others, who, ... intrude into the most sacred offices; and, before becoming worthy to approach the temples, they lay claim to the sanctuary.”*<sup>24</sup>

d. He doubts his qualification – *“I did not, nor do I now, think myself qualified to rule a flock or herd, or to have authority over the souls of men.”*<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> John A. McGuckin, *St. Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001), 106.

<sup>22</sup> Translated by Charles Gordon Browne and James Edward Swallow. From *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 7*. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1894.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/310202.htm>. Hereafter Oration 2.6.

<sup>23</sup> Oration 2.6.

<sup>24</sup> Oration 2.8.

<sup>25</sup> Oration 2.9.

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He further shares that he never aspired for the higher office despite the prevalent context when early Christianity was at the golden age as the job of a pastor was nothing special merely meant 'a low estate job.'<sup>26</sup> Whether Gregory intended for a prominent government post with his educational credentials is never categorically listed specially when he pens the phrase, "not consistent with myself."<sup>27</sup>

### 1.2.3 Explains the reason for his flight

*Gregory explains that he sought to "live superior to visible things, ever preserving in myself the divine impressions pure and unmixed with the erring tokens of this lower world and being both, and constantly growing more and more to be, a real unspotted mirror of God and divine things, as light is added to light., and what was still dark grew clearer, enjoying already by hope the blessings of the world to come, roaming about with the angels, even now being above the earth by having forsaken it, and stationed on high by the Spirit."<sup>28</sup>*

Thus, it is also safe to concur keeping in mind his financial and philosophical training, he sought to a life of philosophic leisure as more ideally suited to the pursuit of purification over the mundane life of a pastor. <sup>29</sup>

### 1.2.4 Church Leadership

It is interesting to note that Gregory reasons very profoundly that when one is called to rule over the church, he/she must strive "to be free from sin or be restored from

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<sup>26</sup> Brian Matz, *Gregory of Nazianzus - Foundations of Theological Exegesis and Christian Spirituality*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Publishing Group, 2016), 57.

<sup>27</sup> Oration 2.6.

<sup>28</sup> Oration 2.7.

<sup>29</sup> Brian Matz, *Gregory of Nazianzus - Foundations of Theological Exegesis and Christian Spirituality*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Publishing Group, 2016), 57.

sin."<sup>30</sup> He goes on to further state that if no one was willing to take responsibility to lead the church, it would result in anarchy and disorder.<sup>31</sup> Gregory explains the importance to study philosophy is because it inculcates Divine truth, teaches the principles of a good and holy life, and also teaches the importance to practice these principles in the lives of individuals Christians which he terms special virtues.<sup>32</sup>

### 1.2.5 Priestly Virtue and Moral Obligation of the Clergy

Gregory describes the presbyter in the congregation as functioning as the soul in the body. Presbyters are to be those, *"who surpass the majority in virtue and nearness to God, performing the functions of the soul in the body, and of the intellect in the soul."*<sup>33</sup> This is so the church *"may be so united and compacted together that... they may, like the members of our bodies, be so combined and knit together by the harmony of the Spirit, as to form one perfect body, really worthy of Christ Himself, our Head."*<sup>34</sup>

Gregory does not differentiate between presbyter and bishop in Oration 2, but understands them *"as the one who sanctifies and purifies the people."*<sup>35</sup> He explains this in the following verses:

a. A priest must be free from evil himself if he is to lead others in holiness. Like silver and gold the priest must have been refined by fire *"or else, the wider his rule, the*

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<sup>30</sup> Oration 2.4.

<sup>31</sup> Oration 2.4.

<sup>32</sup> Oration 2.5.

<sup>33</sup> Oration 2.3.

<sup>34</sup> Oration 2.3.

<sup>35</sup> Brian E. Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus – The Early Church Fathers*, (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group: 2006), 52. Gregory uses the terms πρέσβυς ("elder"), ποιμήν ("shepherd"), and διδάσκαλος ("teacher"), in reference to priestly office (ιερωσύνη / ιερατεία). See Christopher Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 241.

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great evil he will be.”<sup>36</sup> Thus, to be holy the priest must first extricate himself from evil lest, “we undertake to heal others while ourselves are full of sores.”<sup>37</sup>

b. The priest must also be a beacon of virtue.<sup>38</sup> In order to be prepared to instruct others in virtue, he must not only destroy the “the traces of vice from his soul, but also inscribe better ones, so as to outstrip men further in virtue than he is superior to them in dignity.”<sup>39</sup>

c. The priest must emulate the standards set by Jesus and Apostle Paul. Gregory adds, “to undertake the training of others before being sufficiently trained oneself, and to learn, as men say, the potter’s art on a wine-jar, that is, to practice ourselves in piety at the expense of others’ souls seems to me to be excessive folly or excessive rashness – folly, if we are not even aware of our own ignorance; rashness, if in spite of this knowledge we venture on the task.”<sup>40</sup>

d. The priest must be a person of experience and maturity and not a matter of sudden realization. Gregory criticizes those who would believe it so, for a man must take much time growing in experience and learning in order to arrive at wisdom and holiness. “Not even extreme old age would be too long a limit to assign. For hoary hairs combined with prudence are better than inexperienced youth.”<sup>41</sup>

e. A priest must not be unfaithful. His concern in Oration 2 is that “the members are at war with one another, and the slight remains of love, which once existed, have departed, and priest is a mere empty name.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Oration 2.10.

<sup>37</sup> Oration 2.13.

<sup>38</sup> Oration 2.14.

<sup>39</sup> Oration 2.14.

<sup>40</sup> Oration 2.47.

<sup>41</sup> Oration 2.72.

<sup>42</sup> Oration 2.78 – 79.

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f. A priest must not give way for any factionalism and infighting of the priesthood.

Gregory confesses, "We observe each other's sins, not to bewail them, but to make them subjects of reproach, not to heal them, but to aggravate them, and excuse our own evil deeds by the wounds of our neighbors."<sup>43</sup>

g. The pastor must pay close attention to some of his flock in order to help them mature, while others must be left alone so they are not crowded or discouraged from maturity by such attention. At times the pastor must "even be angry, without feeling angry, or treat them with a disdain we do not feel, or manifest despair, though we do not really despair of them, according to the needs of their nature."<sup>44</sup>

h. The pastor must learn to adapt so as to teach and care for his congregation successfully. Gregory proposes the image of an animal tamer, dealing with "an animal of many forms and shapes, compounded of many animals of various sizes and degrees of tameness and wildness."<sup>45</sup> "The point is that pastoral care must be person-specific, addressing the good news of the gospel to the nature, needs, and condition of the person for whom the pastor gives care."<sup>46</sup>

i. The priest must account for the differences in the spiritual development of his congregation: *some need to be fed with the milk of the most simple and elementary doctrines... those who are in habit babes and... unable to bear the manly food of the word: nay, if it were presented to them beyond their strength, they would probably be overwhelmed and oppressed... and so would lose even their original power. And with good reason, for they*

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<sup>43</sup> Oration 2.80.

<sup>44</sup> Oration 2.32.

<sup>45</sup> Oration 2.44.

<sup>46</sup> Andrew Purves, *Pastoral Theology in the Classical Tradition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 21.

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would not be strengthened according to Christ, nor make that laudable increase, which the Word produces in one who is rightly fed...<sup>47</sup>

It is intriguing for the reader to note that Gregory addresses himself in first person: "I did not, nor do I now, think myself qualified to rule a flock or herd, or to have authority over the souls of men."<sup>48</sup> The only underlying reason for Gregory showing deep concern for the spiritual significance of the office of priesthood could only prevalent within the context of the theological controversies of the late fourth century, where priests led their congregations astray. The priestly ministry for Gregory was about winning, protecting and sanctifying of the souls of the priest's congregation, because the priest is accountable to God for the souls of those who are entrusted to him!

### 1.2.6 Caring of Souls - Cura Animarum

Gregory employs the analogy of a physician to that of a pastor and compares the role of the pastor in the congregation to the role of the soul in the body, or the role of God in the soul.<sup>49</sup> Thus, "*the pastor, as the soul of the congregation, is given the extraordinary task of sharing in the work of deifying or making godly the people of God through a work of wrestling with sin and freeing a person from it's grasp.*"<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Oration 2.45.

<sup>48</sup> Oration 2.9.

<sup>49</sup> Oration 2.3 and 2.17.

<sup>50</sup> Andrew Purves, *Pastoral Theology in the Classical Tradition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 18.

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As Gregory notes, “the guiding of man, the most variable and manifold of creatures, seems to me in very deed to be the art of arts and science of sciences.”<sup>51</sup> Here Gregory presents the priest as the physician of souls.<sup>52</sup> In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, spiritually inspired men and women fled the big city of Alexandria, Egypt to find some rest and time to contemplate on their Christian faith. Christian tradition attributes them as fathers and mothers of the desert. These people practiced their faith in contemplation and in silence and were regarded as “specialists of the soul” or “practioners of cura animarum.”<sup>53</sup>

Drawing upon the physician analogy Gregory explains the pastor must do accurate diagnosis for getting the desired results, “*For our treatment does not correspond with virtue and vice, one of which is most excellent and beneficial at all times and in all cases, and the other most evil and harmful; and, instead of one and the same of our medicines invariably proving either most wholesome or most dangerous in the same cases...*”<sup>54</sup>

The care and skill this requires flow out of Gregory’s appreciation that human beings are “the most variable and manifold of creatures.”<sup>55</sup> His call to varied responses to diverse situations is not a call to manipulation, for he states that “it is absolutely necessary that [the church’s] ruler should be at once simple in his uprightness in all

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<sup>51</sup> Oration 2.16. Also see Peter Schaff, ed., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, vol. 7, (Grand Rapids:Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 208.

<sup>52</sup> Oration 2.16. Peter Schaff, ed., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, vol. 7, (Grand Rapids:Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 208.

<sup>53</sup> Ulrike Elsdorfer, *Caring for souls – cura animarum*, *Interreligious Encounter on cura animarum – EPSCC AND ICPC documents and reports from 1972-1988*, (LIT VERLAG Dr. W. Hopf: Berlin, 2013), 5.

<sup>54</sup> Oration 2.33.

<sup>55</sup> Oration 2.16.

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respects, and as far as possible manifold and varied in his treatment of individuals, and in dealing with all in an appropriate and suitable manner.”<sup>56</sup>

### 1.3 Implication

#### 1.3.1 Pastor / Minister as the Physician of souls

Gregory very creatively employs the metaphor of the pastor as the physician and curer of souls. In this metaphor, one can easily understand that a physician treats the body when the patient is ill, and guides the patient to health at all times. The minister, pastor, or priest does the same, not treating the body but the soul. So if we are to serious take in gravity this metaphor, the pastor’s role is indeed more difficult than that of the physician. As individuals why is that we expect a great deal from our health practitioners but little of ourselves as pastors, or ministers.

A pastor who cannot master his/her sinful desires and cure themselves of their own self-deception possibly health others when they themselves are sick. Pastoral care as ‘cure of souls’ is about soul care.

In carefully reading Oration 2, one is acquainted with the grappling truth that involvement in ministry, Gregory is emphasizing the reader for developing a virtue to give importance to the actual life and death matters of human beings than in the running of an institution. When the minister is likened to a physician of souls, the emphasis upon healing, inner health, restoration engages the individual to closeness to God, living worthy lives appropriate with an intimate communion with God.

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<sup>56</sup> Oration 2.44.

Primarily it draws us to introspect our very lives, ones who are involved in the ministry and the crucial aspect of viewing Christian minister as human beings rather than merely servants in a Christian institution.

### 1.3.2 Philosophy & Mixed Life

For Gregory, the aspect of philosophy in the life of the priest meant a life which does not centered on intellectual subtlety but a commitment to the entire pattern of Christian life, which focused on the the purification of the heart and mind, that is accomplished through frequent retreat from the world into study and contemplation. Here the emphasis sought for a balance between the contemplative life of the philosopher/monk and the active vocation of civic or ecclesiastical service.

Andrea Sterk comments that an appreciation for a kind of 'mixed life' was not unique to Christians of this period. He further adds that for pagan philosophers of late antiquity, involvement in public affairs at a certain level went hand in hand with the life of renunciation and contemplative withdrawal. While the pagan philosopher who served as ambassadors, diplomats, or financial benefactors of their city rendered service almost exclusively on the governing class; the Christian ascetic identified with the humble and oppressed classes.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> The ancient virtue of 'euergesia' which the wealthy and powerful patrons practiced in the form of gifts to the city, was transformed by Christians into the virtue of 'ptochotrophia' that focused on supporting the poor and caring for the sick. Andrea Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Anitiquity,*" ( HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS: Cambridge, 2004) :126.

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Oration 2 needs to be looked in the viewpoint where Gregory wrestled with a natural inclination toward monastic seclusion and disinclination to govern the churches or engage in ecclesiastical affairs. Gregory of Nazianzus was angry and bitter toward his father and his friend for forcing him into the episcopate.

#### **1.4 Conclusion**

In a context where the church was threatened with great Christological debates, Gregory emerged as the forerunner for Nicean orthodoxy. Through this delivery of five sermons, he was lauded the title 'Theologian' and the manner he employed the Greek language and displayed his rhetoric skills reveal his impeccable educational qualification. Gregory endorsed for an ascetic spirituality from his student days along with his friend Basil, where he often withdrew amidst active service. He was constantly troubled in choosing between the life of contemplation where he could continue to devote himself to the quiet life of an ascetic or engage in pastoral action and provide leadership for the church during a turbulent time. In Oration 2, Gregory stressed the need of the priest to be a spiritual scholar and not being so embroiled in the mundane affairs of his parish alone but equally disciplining to the practice of and meditation and caring for the vulnerable. By employing the metaphor of a physician, the priest was to serve in the congregation as the soul and mind for which he emphasized the need to cultivating proper virtues so as to understand the seriousness in caring for human souls. In short, Gregory validated a pastoral outlook where through scholarly education; the priest must be able to understand the diversified personalities of the congregation and be able to communicate his message solely as he was commissioned by God.

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