

The Greek and Latin Traditions Regarding the Procession of the Holy Spirit

Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

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The Holy Father [Pope St. John Paul II], in the homily he gave in St Peter Basilica on 29 June 1995 in the presence of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, expressed a desire that “the traditional doctrine of the Filioque, present in the liturgical version of the Latin Credo, [be clarified] in order to highlight its full harmony with what the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople of 381 confesses in its creed: the Father as the source of the whole Trinity, the one origin both of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

What is published here is the clarification he has asked for, which has been undertaken by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. It is intended as a contribution to the dialogue which is carried out by the Joint International Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church.

In its first report on “The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity,” unanimously approved in Munich on 6 July 1982, the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church had mentioned the centuries-old difficulty between the two churches concerning the eternal origin of the Holy Spirit. Not being able to treat this subject for itself in this first phase of the dialogue, the Commission stated: “Without wishing to resolve yet the difficulties which have arisen between the East and the West concerning the relationship between the Son and the Spirit, we can already say together that this Spirit, which proceeds from the Father (Jn 15:26) as the sole source in the Trinity and which has become the Spirit of our sonship (Rom 8:15) since he is also the Spirit of the Son (Gal 4:6), is communicated to us particularly in the Eucharist by this Son upon whom he reposes in time and in eternity (Jn 1:32).” (Information Service of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, n. 49, p.108, l,6).

The acknowledgement that the Father is the sole source in the Trinity is good, although it would have been better to declare that the Father is the sole source of the Holy Trinity.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God’s Son because the Holy Spirit — in time — descended on and filled the Lord Jesus Christ, Who had — in time — become the incarnate God-Man. But the Clarification, by juxtaposing Galatians 4:6 (because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.) with the declaration that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father — something which is from before the ages and is outside of time — it gives a false impression that the verse testifies to the Holy Spirit’s eternal origin.

The Catholic Church acknowledges the conciliar, ecumenical, normative, and irrevocable value, as expression of the one common faith of the Church and of all Christians, of the Symbol professed in Greek at Constantinople in 381 by the Second Ecumenical Council. No profession of faith peculiar to a particular liturgical tradition can contradict this expression of the faith taught and professed by the undivided Church.

Why would a particular liturgical tradition use a profession of faith other than that which is an expression of the one common faith of the Church and of all Christians? This suggests a rejection of *lex orandi, lex credendi*.

On the basis of Jn 15:26, this Symbol confesses the Spirit “τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον” (“who takes his origin from the Father”). The Father alone is the principle without principle (ἀρχὴ ἄναρχος) of the two other persons of the Trinity, the sole source (πηγὴ) of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, therefore, takes his origin from the Father alone (ἐκ μόνου τοῦ Πατρὸς) in a principal, proper, and immediate manner.¹

There are many good statements in this paragraph: the profession that the Father alone is the principle without principle, that the Father is the sole source of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit ... takes his origin from the Father alone. It would have been better to profess that the Father is the sole source of the Son and the sole source of the Holy Spirit. This would exclude the possibility of interpreting the statement to mean that the Son could be a source of the Holy Spirit but not of the Son and the Holy Spirit as is the Father. It would also be better to have placed a full stop after stating the Holy Spirit takes His origin from the Father alone, rather than adding in a principal, proper, and immediate manner. By principal, the statement leaves open the possibility of incorrectly introducing the Son as a secondary source of origin of the Holy Spirit; by proper, the statement leaves open the possibility of a secondary source being an origin in an improper manner (whatever that might be!); by immediate, the statement leaves open the possibility of a non-immediate or secondary source being an origin of the Holy Spirit.

The Greek Fathers and the whole Christian Orient speak, in this regard, of the “Father’s Monarchy,” and the Western tradition, following St Augustine, also confesses that the Holy Spirit takes his origin from the Father “principaliter,” that is, as principle (De Trinitate XV, 25, 47, PL 42, 1094-1095). In this sense, therefore, the two traditions recognize that the “monarchy of the Father” implies that the Father is the sole Trinitarian Cause (Αἰτία) or Principle (principium) of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The word also does not belong in the first sentence of this paragraph. Augustine’s speculation (which he made clear was speculative and not meant to be the basis of new teachings) that the Holy Spirit takes his origin from the Father *principaliter* (the word *principaliter* means an original source and implies a secondary source) is not exactly equivalent to the English principle which does not imply a secondary source. Augustine speculated there was a secondary origin of the Holy Spirit (the Son); he formulated this to provide a philosophical answer to the invented problem of distinguishing between the Son and the Holy Spirit. This Western tradition makes the Son a Co-Monarch — which is not equivalent to the Father’s Monarchy as the Clarification would suggest.

This origin of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone as Principle of the whole Trinity is called ἐκπόρευσις by Greek tradition, following the Cappadocian Fathers. St Gregory of Nazianzus, the Theologian, in fact, characterizes the Spirit’s relationship of origin from the Father by the proper term ἐκπόρευσις, distinguishing it from that of procession (τὸ προῖέναι) which the Spirit has in common with the Son. “The Spirit is truly the Spirit proceeding (προῖόν) from the Father, not by filiation, for it is not by generation, but by ἐκπόρευσις (Discourse 39, 12, Sources chrétiennes 358, p. 175). Even if St Cyril of Alexandria happens at times to apply the verb ἐκπορεύσθαι the Son’s relationship of origin from the Father, he never uses it for the relationship of the Spirit to the Son (Cf. Commentary on St John, X, 2, PG 74, 910D; Ep 55, PG 77, 316 D, etc.). Even for St Cyril, the term ἐκπόρευσις as distinct from the term “proceed” (προῖέναι) can only characterize a relationship of origin to the principle without principle of the Trinity: the Father.

This is good. It makes clear that ἐκπόρευσις can only refer to origin.

That is why the Orthodox Orient has always refused the formula τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορευόμενον and the Catholic Church has refused the addition καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ to the formula ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον in the Greek text of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Symbol, even in its liturgical use by Latins.

Again, we have a differentiation made between that which is believed and a liturgical profession of faith, implicitly rejecting *lex orandi, lex credendi*.

The Orthodox Orient does not, however, refuse all eternal relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit in their origin from the Father. St Gregory of Nazianzus, a great witness to our two traditions, makes this clear in response to Macedonius who was asking: “What then is lacking to the Spirit to be the Son, for if nothing was lacking to him, he would be the Son? — We say that nothing is lacking to him, for nothing is lacking to God; but it is the difference in manifestation, if I may say so, or in the relationship between them (τῆς πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσεως διάφορον) which makes also the difference in what they are called” (Discourse 31, 9, Sources chrétiennes 250, pp. 290-292).

Of course, Orthodox Christianity does not refuse all eternal relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit — both are part of the Triune God, Divine Persons in the Holy Trinity, both are generated by the Father. One can no more deny an eternal relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit than one can deny a relationship between siblings — although the Son and the Holy Spirit are not siblings, they both share a common source as siblings share common parentage. Moreover, the term

perichoresis was introduced by the Church Fathers to emphasize the interconnectedness and undividedness of the Three Persons — that there is eternal relationship between each of the Divine Persons.

The quote from Saint Gregory the Theologian does not testify to Latin teaching, despite the claims of the Clarification. Saint Gregory's statement about the difference in manifestation refers to the difference between begetting and proceeding as he makes clear in Oration 32:8:

You ask what is the procession of the Holy Spirit? Do you tell me first what is the unbegottenness of the Father, and I will then explain to you the physiology of the generation of the Son, and the procession of the Spirit, and we shall both of us be stricken with madness for prying into the mystery of God.

Saint Gregory's teaching is consistent with the personalistic approach of the East and stands in contrast to and even opposition to the philosophical approach of the Latin teaching rooted in the philosophical concept of divine simplicity where there is no room for a difference between begetting and proceeding. Making begetting and proceeding identical (in order to maintain the philosophical concept of divine simplicity makes necessary the introduction of a secondary cause of the Holy Spirit in order to differentiate between the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Orthodox Orient has, however, given a happy expression to this relationship with the formula διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορευόμενον (who takes his origin from the Father by or through the Son). St Basil already said of the Holy Spirit: "Through the Son (διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ), who is one, he is joined to the Father, who is one, and by himself completes the Blessed Trinity" (Treatise on the Holy Spirit, XVIII, 45, Sources chrétiennes 17 bis, p. 408). St Maximus the Confessor said: "By nature (φύσει) the Holy Spirit in his being (κατ' οὐσίαν) takes substantially (οὐσιοδῶς) his origin (ἐκπορευόμενον) from the Father through the Son who is begotten (δι' Υἱοῦ γεννηθέντος)" (Quaestiones ad Thalassium, LXIII, PG 90, 672 C). We find this again in St John Damascene: "(ὁ Πατήρ) ἀεὶ ἦν, ἔχων ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ τὸν αὐτοῦ λόγον, καὶ διὰ τοῦ λόγου αὐτοῦ ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ τὸ Πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ ἐκπορευόμενον," in English: "I say that God is always Father since he has always his Word coming from himself, and through his Word, having his Spirit issuing from him" (Dialogus contra Manichaeos 5, PG 94, 1512 B, ed. B. Kotter, Berlin 1981, p.354; cf. PG 94, 848-849 A). This aspect of the Trinitarian mystery was confessed at the seventh Ecumenical council, meeting at Nicaea in 787, by the Patriarch of Constantinople St Tarasius, who developed the Symbol as follows: "τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, τὸ κύριον καὶ ζωοποιόν, τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορευόμενον" (Mansi, XII, 1122 D).

There are many problems in this paragraph. The West has long attempted (incorrectly) to find a correlation between διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορευόμενον and the Filioque.

The word διὰ never means by in the sense of by means of, i.e. as an agent. It means through in a non-additive sense — διὰ is always non-additive, referring to a tunnelling or channelling effect, like water through a pipe. Many Church Fathers use διὰ as a way of expressing the relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit — through speaking the Word, the Father exhales the Wind/Spirit (Πνεῦμα means both) just as a person speaking exhales wind/air when speaking words. Such imagery again reflects the personalistic approach to the Holy Trinity in Orthodox teaching and again contrasts with the philosophical approach of the Latins.

In the profession of faith traditionally provided by each new patriarch when announcing his election, St Tarasius used the phrase διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ as had been used by many Church Fathers, but this was a personal profession and not a development. Since previous Ecumenical Synods (Councils) had already anathematised any and all alterations to the Symbol of Faith of Constantinople I, St Tarasius had no intention of placing himself under an anathema by developing the Symbol. One cannot help but think the Clarification has deliberately distorted the historical facts in an attempt to rationalise the Filioque as a development of the Symbol.

The doctrine of the Filioque must be understood and presented by the Catholic Church in such a way that it cannot appear to contradict the Monarchy of the Father nor the fact that he is the sole origin (ἀρχή, αἰτία) of the ἐκπόρευσις of the Spirit. The Filioque is, in fact, situated in a theological and linguistic context different from that of the affirmation of the sole Monarchy of the Father, the one origin of the Son and of the Spirit. Against Arianism, which was still virulent in the West, its purpose was to stress the fact that the Holy Spirit is of the same divine nature as the Son, without calling in question the one Monarchy of the Father.

Orthodox Christians cannot help but rejoice that the Vatican's Clarification explicitly states that the Father is the sole origin ... of the Spirit. Yet, Orthodox Christians cannot help but wonder how the Latins can possibly reconcile the Filioque with this.

Although the purpose of the Filioque may have been to resist Arianism, any student of Christian history is aware that new teaching introduced to resist existing errors is not always correct (e.g., the error of Monophysitism was introduced to resist the error of Nestorianism). The fact that the East overcame Arianism (which was a problem in the East long before it appeared

in the West) without resorting to the innovation of making the Son a source of the Holy Spirit's eternal origin demonstrates how unnecessary it was to introduce the innovation of the Filioque to combat Arianism.

We are presenting here the authentic doctrinal meaning of the Filioque on the basis of the Trinitarian faith of the Symbol professed by the second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople. We are giving this authoritative interpretation, while being aware of how inadequate human language is to express the ineffable mystery of the Holy Trinity, one God, a mystery which is beyond our words and our thoughts.

The Catholic Church interprets the Filioque with reference to the conciliar and ecumenical, normative, and irrevocable value of the confession of faith in the eternal origin of the Holy Spirit, as defined in 381 by the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in its Symbol. This Symbol only became known and received by Rome on the occasion of the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451. In the meantime, on the basis of the earlier Latin theological tradition, Fathers of the Church of the West like St Hilary, St Ambrose, St Augustine and St Leo the Great, had confessed that the Holy Spirit proceeds (procedit) eternally from the Father and the Son.²

As will be subsequently admitted, the Latin term *procedit* does not have the same meaning as *ἐκπορεύεται* and there is nothing in the statements of Sts Hilary and Ambrose indicating they believed the Holy Spirit proceeds (*procedit*) eternally from the Father and the Son. Augustine appears to be the first Latin writer to introduce this innovation — and he was quite explicit that his writing was speculative and should not be assumed to be correct. St Leo the Great appears to have copied Augustine's speculative teaching, but he was opposed to adding the Filioque to the Symbol of Faith.

It is interesting that the footnote admits the source of the earlier Latin theological tradition comes from Tertullian — whose teaching was condemned by the Church. One cannot help but question the orthodoxy of teaching based on that of one condemned as a heretic.

Since the Latin Bible (the Vulgate and earlier Latin translations) had translated Jn 15:26 (*παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται*) by "*qui a Patre procedit*," the Latins translated the *ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον* of the Symbol of Nicaea-Constantinople by "*ex Patre procedentem*" (Mansi VII, 112 B). In this way, a false equivalence was involuntarily created with regard to the eternal origin of the Spirit between the Oriental theology of the *ἐκπόρευσις* and the Latin theology of the *processio*.

The Greek *ἐκπόρευσις* signifies only the relationship of origin to the Father alone as the principle without principle of the Trinity. The Latin *processio*, on the contrary, is a more common term, signifying the communication of the consubstantial divinity from the Father to the Son and from the Father, through and with the Son, to the Holy Spirit.³ In confessing the Holy Spirit "*ex Patre procedentem*," the Latins, therefore, could only suppose an implicit Filioque which would later be made explicit in their liturgical version of the Symbol.

It is good to see the admission that *ἐκπόρευσις* and *processio* are not equivalent.

It is good to see the admission that the Filioque was based upon a supposed implication based upon a misunderstanding of the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, the statement that *processio* signifies the communication of the consubstantial divinity ... from the Father, through and with the Son, to the Holy Spirit — especially the use of *with* in addition to *through* — suggests that the Son contributes something to the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Such a teaching is unacceptable to Orthodox Christians. As St Photius the Great teaches:

If the procession from the Father is perfect (because Perfect God proceeds from Perfect God) then what specific and concrete thing does the procession from the Son contribute? For if it supplies something concrete and specific, then the procession from the Father would not be perfect and complete.

In the West, the Filioque was confessed from the fifth century through the *Quicumque* (or "*Athanasianum*," DS 75) Symbol, and then by the Councils of Toledo in Visigothic Spain between 589 and 693 (DS 470, 485, 490, 527, 568), to affirm Trinitarian consubstantiality. If these Councils did not perhaps insert it in the Symbol of Nicaea-Constantinople, it is certainly to be found there from the end of the eighth century, as evidenced in the proceedings of the Council of Aquileia-Friuli in 796 (Mansi XIII, 836, D, ff.) and that of Aachen of 809 (Mansi XIV, 17). In the ninth century, however, faced with Charlemagne, Pope Leo III, in his anxiety to preserve unity with the Orient in the confession of faith, resisted this development of the Symbol which had spread spontaneously in the West, while safeguarding the truth contained in the Filioque. Rome only admitted it in 1014 into the liturgical Latin version of the Creed.

The history presented here is correct, although it de-emphasises how strongly the popes resisted adding the Filioque and omits the fact that it was only added after political pressure from the so-called Holy Roman Empire, marking the final takeover of the Roman papacy by the Germans.

In the Patristic period, an analogous theology had developed in Alexandria, stemming from St Athanasius. As in the Latin tradition, it was expressed by the more common term of procession (προϊέναι) indicating the communication of the divinity to the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son in their consubstantial communion: “The Spirit proceeds (προεῖσι) from the Father and the Son; clearly, he is of the divine substance, proceeding (προϊόν) substantially (οὐσιωδῶς) in it and from it” (St Cyril of Alexandria, Thesaurus, PG 75, 585 A).⁴

Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) writes:

Another important point in the Vatican document is the emphasis it lays on the distinction between ἐκπόρευσις and processio. It is historically true that in the Greek tradition a clear distinction was always made between εκπορεύεσθαι and προεῖναι, the first of these two terms denoting exclusively the Spirit’s derivation from the Father alone, whereas προεῖναι was used to denote the Holy Spirit’s dependence on the Son owing to the common substance or οὐσία which the Spirit in deriving from the Father alone as Person or ὑπόστασις receives from the Son, too, as οὐσιωδῶς that is, with regard to the one οὐσία common to all three persons (Cyril of Alexandria, Maximus the Confessor et al). On the basis of this distinction, one might argue that there is a kind of Filioque on the level of οὐσία, but not of ὑπόστασις.

However, as the document points out, the distinction between εκπορεύεσθαι and προεῖναι was not made in Latin theology, which used the same term, procedere, to denote both realities. Is this enough to explain the insistence of the Latin tradition on the Filioque? Saint Maximus the Confessor seems to think so. For him the Filioque was not heretical because its intention was to denote not the εκπορεύεσθαι but the προεῖναι of the Spirit.

Unfortunately, the Clarification, by rendering both ἐκπόρευσις and προεῖναι as proceed, has created an equivocation which distorts the truth regarding the teaching of St Cyril of Alexandria. The term ἐκπόρευσις, although traditionally translated in English as proceeds might better be rendered originates from whilst προεῖναι could be rendered sent (before/forth) in order to make the difference clearer. Thus, the passage from St Cyril of Alexandria would be more clearly rendered in English as The Spirit is sent forth from the Father and the Son; clearly, He is of the divine essence, essentially sent forth in and of the divine essence. This is a reflection of the teaching of perichoresis — the interconnectedness of the Divine Persons means that not only is there communication of the divinity to the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son in their consubstantial communion (quoting the Clarification), but there is communication of the divinity to the Son from the Father and the Holy Spirit and communication of the divinity to the Father from the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Labelling the Alexandrian teaching as an analogous theology (to the Filioque) is interesting. If the Vatican means to interpret the Filioque in a manner which is analogous in the sense of correspondence or equivalence and not in the sense of chronologically parallel, it would go far towards resolving the issue. If this is the case, then it would be most helpful if the Vatican would repudiate the Augustinian teaching of the Filioque (e.g., Wherefore let him who can understand the generation of the Son from the Father without time, understand also the procession of the Holy Spirit from both without time. — On the Trinity, 15:26:47) and re-interpret previous conciliar teachings which have taught contrarily to Orthodox teachings, including that of the Alexandrians.

In the seventh century, the Byzantines were shocked by a confession of faith made by the Pope and including the Filioque with reference to the procession of the Holy Spirit; they translated the procession inaccurately by ἐκπόρευσις. St Maximus the Confessor then wrote a letter from Rome linking together the two approaches — Cappadocian and Latin-Alexandrian — to the eternal origin of the Spirit: the Father is the sole principle without principle (in Greek, αἰτία) of the Son and of the Spirit; the Father and the Son are consubstantial source of the procession (τὸ προϊέναι) of this same Spirit. “For the procession they [the Romans] brought the witness of the Latin Fathers, as well, of course, as that of St Cyril of Alexandria in his sacred study on the Gospel of St John. On this basis they showed that they themselves do not make the Son Cause (Αἰτία) of the Spirit. They know, indeed, that the Father is the sole cause of the Son and of the Spirit, of one by generation and of the other by ἐκπόρευσις — but they explained that the latter comes (προϊέναι) through the Son, and they showed in this way the unity and the immutability of the essence” (Letter to Marin of Cyprus, PG 91, 136 A-B). According to St Maximus, echoing Rome, the Filioque does not concern the ἐκπόρευσις of the Spirit issued from the Father as source of the Trinity, but manifests his προϊέναι (processio) in the consubstantial communion of the Father and the Son, while excluding any possible subordinationist interpretation of the Father’s Monarchy.

The East Romans (labelled Byzantines in the Clarification) are blamed for translating processio with ἐκπόρευσις whilst the Latins are to be excused for translating ἐκπόρευσις as processio? Is this not an egregious double-standard? Does it not also demonstrate the complaint of many Church Fathers regarding the inadequacy of the Latin language for theological teaching?

It would appear that the Clarification seeks to portray the Filioque as equivalent to the Alexandrian teaching by uniting them in the label Latin-Alexandrian. This is promising, although it would contradict previous teachings embraced by the Vatican.

It is unfortunate the Clarification cites a text from the Letter to Marin of Cyprus and attributes it to St Maximos the Confessor when such attribution is strongly disputed by scholars for a multitude of reasons. But, even if authentic, the letter cannot be viewed as supporting the Filioque as presented in previous Vatican teachings. If, however, the Vatican means to change its previous teachings, reconciling them with the Alexandrian teachings, then it would be helpful for the Vatican to re-interpret its earlier conciliar teachings.

The fact that in Latin and Alexandrian theology the Holy Spirit proceeds (προεῖσι) from the Father and the Son in their consubstantial communion does not mean that it is the divine essence or substance that proceed in him, but that it is communicated from the Father and the Son who have it in common. This point was confessed as dogma in 1215 by the fourth Lateran Council: “The substance does not generate, is not begotten, does not proceed; but it is the Father who generates, the Son who is begotten, the Holy Spirit who proceeds: so that there is distinction in persons and unity in nature. Although other (alius) is the Father, other the Son, other the Holy Spirit, they are not another reality (aliud), but what the Father is the Son is and the Holy Spirit equally; so, according to the orthodox and catholic faith, we believe that they are consubstantial. For the Father, generating eternally the Son, has given to him his substance (...) It is clear that, in being born the Son has received the substance of the Father without this substance being in any way diminished, and so the Father and the Son have the same substance. So, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from them both, are one same reality” (DS 804-805).

This same council of 1215 also taught: The Father is from no one; the Son is from the Father only; and the Holy Spirit is from both the Father and the Son equally. As it stands, it contradicts Orthodox teaching and stands in opposition to the Alexandrian teaching previously discussed. It is difficult to see how the Vatican could reconcile itself to the Alexandrian teaching without repudiating this passage.

In 1274, the second Council of Lyons confessed that “the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son, not as from two principles but as from one single principle (tamquam ex uno principio)” (DS 850). In the light of the Lateran Council, which preceded the second Council of Lyons, it is clear that it is not the divine essence that can be the “one principle” for the procession of the Holy Spirit. The Catechism of the Catholic Church interprets this formula in n. 248 as follows: “The eternal order of the divine persons in their consubstantial communion implies that the Father, as the ‘principle without principle’ (DS 1331) is the first origin of the Spirit, but also that as Father of the only Son, he is, with the Son, the single principle from which the Spirit proceeds” (Second Council of Lyons, DS 850).”

Of course, it is not the divine essence that can be the “one principle” for the procession of the Holy Spirit — essences (natures) do not beget or give procession of function as a principle or act in any manner. (They simply are.) It is hypostases that do such things. But the failure to recognise that simple fact has long plagued Latin teaching which subordinates the Divine Persons and everything about them to the Divine Essence. It is good to see the Vatican distance itself from that error.

The first quote from Lyons II (1274) in the Clarification does not include the end of the sentence — the most interesting part. Lyons II confessed ... that the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son, not as from two principles, but as from one principle; not by two spirations but by one spiration. The Vatican needs to clarify how the Father and the Son can be one principle giving one spiration without subordinating the Holy Spirit. Without a radical re-interpretation of Lyons II, it appears incompatible with Alexandrian and Orthodox teaching.

For the Catholic Church, “at the outset the Eastern tradition expresses the Father’s character as first origin of the Spirit. By confessing the Spirit as he “who takes his origin from the Father” (“ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον” cf. Jn 15:26), it affirms that he comes from the Father through the Son. The Western tradition expresses first the consubstantial communion between Father and Son, by saying that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (Filioque). (...) “This legitimate complementarity, provided it does not become rigid, does not affect the identity of faith in the reality of the same mystery confessed.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church n. 248). Being aware of this, the Catholic Church has refused the addition of καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ to the formula ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον of the Symbol of Nicaea-Constantinople in the churches, even of Latin rite, which use it in Greek. The liturgical use of this original text remains always legitimate in the Catholic Church.

It is disingenuous to state the Latin teaching first expresses the consubstantial communion between Father and Son when in reality the first emphasis in the Latin teaching has long been the essence (substance) of the Godhead of which the second expression has been the consubstantial communion or common essence of the Father and the Son with the Holy Spirit an

afterthought (frequently reduced to the love between Father and Son). This emphasis on the essence of the Godhead in preference to beginning with the Divine Persons Who have revealed themselves to us has long been a problem between the Latin teaching and the Orthodox tradition. Unfortunately, this Clarification, although offering some positive statements, seems unwilling to break with this problematic teaching.

Once again, the Clarification suggests that the faith proclaimed during liturgy does not need to match the faith the worshippers are taught to profess. This implicit rejection of *lex orandi, lex credendi* is disturbing.

If it is correctly situated, the Filioque of the Latin tradition must not lead to subordination of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity. Even if the Catholic doctrine affirms that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son in the communication of their consubstantial communion, it nonetheless recognizes the reality of the original relationship of the Holy Spirit as person with the Father, a relationship that the Greek Fathers express by the term *ἐκπόρευσις*.⁵

Although the Latin teaching should not lead to subordination of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity that has, in fact, often been the case.

The statement that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son in the communication of their consubstantial communion poses an extreme problem. As St Photius the Great states, the Holy Spirit is consubstantial because He proceeds from the Father, but He does not proceed because He is consubstantial. If the Father and Son can, by communication of their consubstantial communion cause the Holy Spirit, then why cannot the Son and Holy Spirit by communication of their consubstantial communion cause a fourth hypostasis within the Holy Trinity? Indeed, why stop even there? Indeed, as St Photius the Great states, this logically leads to an infinite number of processions and persons until at last this doctrine is transformed into a [pagan] Greek polytheism! The reference to the original relationship does nothing to dispel such fears.

In the same way, if in the Trinitarian order the Holy Spirit is consecutive to the relation between the Father and the Son, since he takes his origin from the Father as Father of the only Son,⁶ it is in the Spirit that this relationship between the Father and the Son itself attains its Trinitarian perfection. Just as the Father is characterized as Father by the Son he generates, so does the Spirit, by taking his origin from the Father, characterize the Father in the manner of the Trinity in relation to the Son and characterizes the Son in the manner of the Trinity in his relation to the Father: in the fullness of the Trinitarian mystery they are Father and Son in the Holy Spirit.⁷ The Father only generates the Son by breathing (*προβάλλειν* in Greek) through him the Holy Spirit and the Son is only begotten by the Father insofar as the spiration (*προβολή* in Greek) passes through him. The Father is Father of the One Son only by being for him and through him the origin of the Holy Spirit.⁸

In teaching that the Father begets the Son and gives procession to the Holy Spirit coevally there is neither subordination of the Holy Spirit nor subordination of the Son. However, when the Holy Spirit is taught as consecutive to the relation between the Father and the Son, this symmetry is destroyed and the Holy Spirit, being placed after the Father and Son, is given a subordinate place in the Holy Trinity.

The claim that it is in the Spirit that this relationship between the Father and the Son itself attains its Trinitarian perfection suggests there is something lacking in the perfection of the relationship between the Father and Son. Such teaching is clearly erroneous. Likewise, the claim that the Father is Father of the One Son only by being for him and through him the origin of the Holy Spirit suggests the Father's fatherhood is somehow dependent upon the Holy Spirit, i.e. imperfect. This, too, is erroneous.

The translation of *προβάλλειν* and *προβολή* provided here are bizarre. The words are derived from *προβάλλω* which means to project, to extend, to put forward. It was used by St John of Damascus in a phrase proponents of the Filioque have often claimed support their position: The Father is the *προβάλλεὺς* (projector), through the Logos, of the manifesting Spirit. But in the same chapter of *The Orthodox Faith* St John writes, We speak of the Holy Spirit as from the Father, and we call it the Spirit of the Father, yet we do not speak of the Spirit as from the Son. It is thus clear that St John's use of *προβάλλεὺς* cannot be used to support the idea that the Son is a source (even secondarily) of the Holy Spirit and that St John rejects the Filioque.

The sentence beginning Just as the Father is characterized... reflects a confusion of Persons, which is, unfortunately, characteristic of the Latin teaching on the Holy Trinity. The footnote at the end of the sentence (number 7) has nothing to do with anything in the paragraph. The eighth footnote is also irrelevant to the paragraph.

The Spirit does not precede the Son, since the Son characterizes as Father the Father from whom the Spirit takes his origin, according to the Trinitarian order.⁹ But the spiration of the Spirit from the Father takes place by and through (the two senses of *διὰ* in Greek) the generation of the Son, to which it gives its Trinitarian character. It is in this sense that St John Damascene says: "The Holy Spirit is a substantial power contemplated in his own distinct hypostasis, who proceeds from the Father and reposes in the Word" (*De Fide orthodoxa* I, 7, PG 94, 805 B, ed. B. Kotter, Berlin 1973,

It is true that the Holy Spirit does not precede the Son, but it is equally true that the Son does not precede the Holy Spirit. Both are generated (the Son by begetting, the Holy Spirit by procession) coevally. Unfortunately, acceptance of the Filioque distorts this truth and results in a subordination of the Holy Spirit. Footnote nine is irrelevant to the point: the citation from St Gregory of Nyssa does not support placing the Holy Spirit in a position subsequent to the Son, and, moreover, the first citation given in this footnote is explicitly condemned by the Synodikon on the Holy Spirit as spurious and those who use it are subject to anathema.

The Clarification repeats its earlier error regarding the meaning of $\delta\iota\alpha$ and this leads to the suggestion that the Father requires the spiration of the Spirit to take place by and through the Son as if the Father alone is imperfect and needs the Son to give perfect procession to the Holy Spirit. A proper understanding that $\delta\iota\alpha$ is always non-additive would prevent this mistake and would not lead to the distortion of the passage from St John of Damascus which even the French Dominican scholar, Yves Congar admits:

The per Filium of John Damascene is not the Filioque. In the material sense, John's texts are a denial of the procession of the Spirit from the Father and from the Son as from a single principle. [I Believe in the Holy Spirit, Vol. 3, p. 39]

What is this Trinitarian character that the person of the Holy Spirit brings to the very relationship between the Father and the Son? It is the original role of the Spirit in the economy with regard to the mission and work of the Son. The Father is love in its source (2 Cor 13:13; 1 Jn 4:8, 16), the Son is "the Son that he loves" (Col 1:14). So, a tradition dating back to St Augustine has seen in the Holy Spirit, through whom "God's love has been poured into our hearts" (Rom 5:5), love as the eternal Gift of the Father to his "beloved Son" (Mk 1:11, 9:7; Lk 20:13; Eph 1:6).¹¹

The divine love which has its origin in the Father reposes in "the Son of his love" in order to exist consubstantially through the Son in the person of the Spirit, the Gift of love. This takes into account the fact that, through love, the Holy Spirit orients the whole life of Jesus towards the Father in the fulfillment of his will. The Father sends his Son (Gal 4:4) when Mary conceives him through the operation of the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk 1:35). The Holy Spirit makes Jesus manifest as Son of the Father by resting upon him at baptism (cf. Lk 3:21-22; Jn 1:33). He drives Jesus into the wilderness (cf. Mk 1:12). Jesus returns ("full of the Holy Spirit" (Lk 4:1). Then he begins his ministry "in the power of the Spirit" (Lk 4:14). He is filled with joy in the Spirit, blessing the Father for his gracious will (cf. Lk 10:21). He chooses his apostles "through the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:2). He casts out demons by the Spirit of God (Mt 12:28). He offers himself to the Father "through the eternal Spirit" (Heb 9:14). On the Cross he "commits his Spirit" into the Father's hands (Lk 23:46). "In the Spirit" he descended to the dead (cf. 1 Pet 3:19), and by the Spirit he was raised from the dead (cf. Rom 8:11) and "designated Son of God in power" (Rom 1:4).¹² This role of the Spirit in the innermost human existence of the Son of God made man derives from an eternal Trinitarian relationship through which the Spirit, in his mystery as Gift of Love, characterizes the relation between the Father, as source of love, and his beloved Son.

In the remainder of the *Clarification* we see demonstrated the old problem of the Latin tendency to confuse the economy of the Holy Trinity with the existential origin (the eternal and immanent existence) of the Holy Trinity. Citing texts which clearly apply to the economy of the Holy Spirit working in time, it carelessly applies these to the existential origin of the Holy Spirit, calling the Spirit an eternal Gift. Not only does this demonstrate confusion between the economic and existential origin of the Holy Spirit, it also subordinates the Holy Spirit to the point of being a gift from the Father to the Son, rather than affirming the Spirit's full personal equality to both the Father and Son.

This same confusion between the economic existence and the eternal, immanent existence of the Holy Trinity also manifests itself in the citation (footnote eleven) of St Gregory Palamas, even though it admits that St Gregory Palamas teaches the procession ($\epsilon\kappa\tau\acute{o}\rho\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$) of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone.

The original character of the person of the Spirit as eternal Gift of the Father's love for his beloved Son shows that the Spirit, while coming from the Son in his mission, is the one who brings human beings into Christ's filial relationship to his Father, for this relationship finds only in him its Trinitarian character: "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba! Father!" (Gal 4:6). In the mystery of salvation and in the life of the Church, the Spirit, therefore, does much more than prolong the work of the Son. In fact, whatever Christ has instituted — Revelation, the Church, the sacraments, the apostolic ministry, and its Magisterium — calls for constant invocation ($\epsilon\pi\acute{\iota}\kappa\lambda\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$) of the Holy Spirit and his action ($\epsilon\nu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$), so that the love that "never ends" (1 Cor 13:8) may be made manifest in the communion of the saints with the life of the Trinity.

Although not directly related to the Filioque problem; it is interesting that the Clarification translates $\epsilon\nu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$ as action rather than energy. But the Latin insistence on divine simplicity that causes it to reject the Divine Energies of the Holy Trinity as

proclaimed by Orthodox Christians, causes the Latins to avoid rendering ἐνέργεια as energy.

Conclusion of Commentary

There is much in the Clarification that is good. It appears closer to the faith of the Second Ecumenical Synod (Constantinople I, AD 381) than past teachings of the Latin tradition. Unfortunately, there remains confusion between the economy of the Holy Trinity and the existential origin of the Holy Trinity. This confusion causes many problems. Also problematic is the tendency to uncritically follow Augustinian speculations which result in subordinating the Holy Spirit — especially the idea that the Holy Spirit is the love between the Father and Son or a gift from the Father to the Son.

Orthodox Christians have no problem with the Filioque in the economic sense, but they cannot and will not accept the projection of the Filioque into the existential origin of the Trinity. Unfortunately, past statements, including those from what the Vatican regards as Ecumenical Councils remain an issue for Orthodox Christians. Because they cannot be repudiated without undermining the Vatican's claim to infallibility, it will be difficult — if not impossible — to find agreement. Unless the Vatican can reinterpret these statements (through further clarifications?) — especially those from Lateran IV (1215), Lyons II (1274), Florence (1438-1445) and Vatican I (1869-1870) — it seems unlikely that the Filioque problem can be resolved.

Even if the Filioque were to be clearly defined as applying only in the economic sense, Orthodox Christians would still insist on its removal from the Symbol of Faith (the Creed) for a number of reasons. Rome, under Pope John VIII, agreed to this as late as the Eighth Ecumenical Synod (Constantinople, 879-880). Not only have any and all changes to the Symbol as composed by the Second Ecumenical Synod (Constantinople, 381) been repeatedly condemned by Ecumenical Synods (Ecumenical Councils) in which the popes of Old Rome participated and which they accepted, but the structure of the Symbol makes clear that it refers to the eternal origin of the Holy Spirit, just as it refers to the eternal origin of the Father and the eternal origin of the Son. The Symbol professes the Son as τὸν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα (begotten of the Father) whilst the Holy Spirit is τὸ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον (proceeds from the Father). Both γεννηθέντα and ἐκπορευόμενον can be used to complete the phrase τὸν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς _____; they are interchangeable.

For another commentary, see Metropolitan Ioannis (John) Zizioulas' One Single Source.

NOTES

1. These are the terms employed by St Thomas Aquinas in the Summa Theologica, Ia, q. 36, a. 3, 1 um and 2um.
2. It is Tertullian who lays the foundations for Trinitarian theology in the Latin tradition, on the basis of the substantial communication of the Father to the Son and through the Son to the Holy Spirit: "Christ says of the Spirit 'He will take from what is mine' (Jn 16:14), as he does from the Father. In this way, the connection of the Father to the Son and of the Son to the Paraclete makes the three cohere one from the other. They who are one sole reality (unum) not one alone (unus) by reason of the unity of substance and not of numerical singularity" (Adv. Praxean, XXV, 1-2). This communication of the divine consubstantiality in the Trinitarian order he expresses with the verb "procedere" (ibid., II, 6). We find this same theology in St Hilary of Poitiers, who says to the Father: "May I receive your Spirit who takes his being from you through your only Son" (De Trinitate XII, PL 10, 471). He remarks: "If anyone thinks there is a difference between receiving from the Son (Jn 16:15) and proceeding (procedere) from the Father (Jn 15:26), it is certain that it is one and the same thing to receive from the Son and to receive from the Father" (De Trinitate, VIII, 20, PL 10, 251 A). It is in this sense of communication of divinity through procession that St Ambrose of Milan is the first to formulate the Filioque: "The Holy Spirit when he proceeds (procedit) from the Father and the Son, does not separate himself from the Father and does not separate himself from the Son" (De Spiritu Sancto, I, 11, 120, PL 16, 733 A = 762 D). St Augustine, however, takes the precaution of safeguarding the Father's monarchy within the consubstantial communion of the Trinity: "The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father as Principle (principaliter) and, through the latter's timeless gift to the Son, from the Father and the Son in communion (communiter)" (De Trinitate XV, 25, 47, PL 42, 1095). St Leo, Sermon LXXV, 3, PL 54, 402; Sermon LXXVI, 2, ibid. 404).
3. Tertullian uses the verb procedere in a sense common to the Word and the Spirit insofar as they receive divinity from the Father: "The Word was not uttered out of something empty and vain, and he does not lack substance, he who proceeded (processit) from such a [divine] substance and has made so many [created] substances." (Adv. Praxean, VII, 6). St Augustine, following St Ambrose, takes up this more common conception of procession: "All that proceeds is not born, although what is born proceeds" (Contra Maximinum, II, 14, 1, PL 42, 770). Much later St Thomas Aquinas remarks that "the divine nature is communicated in every procession that is not ad extra" (Summa Theologica Ia, q. 27, a. 3, 2um). For him, as for all this Latin theology which used the term "procession" for the Son as well as for the Spirit, "generation is a procession which puts the divine person in possession of the divine nature" (ibid., Ia, q. 43, a. 2, c), for "from all eternity the Son proceeds in order to be God" (ibid.). In the same way, he affirms that "through his procession, the Holy Spirit receives the nature of the Father, as does the Son" (ibid., Ia, q. 35, a. 2, c). "Of words referring to any kind of origin, the most general is procession. We use it to indicate any origin whatever; we say, for instance, that the line proceeds from the point; that the ray proceeds from the sun, the river from its source, and likewise in all kinds of other cases. Since we admit one or another of these words that evoke origin, we can, therefore, conclude that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son" (ibid., Ia, q. 36, a. 2, c).

4. St Cyril bears witness here to a Trinitarian doctrine common to the whole school of Alexandria since St Athanasius, who had written "Just as the Son says: 'All that the Father has is mine' (Jn 16:15), so shall we find that, through the Son, it is all also in the Spirit" (Letters to Serapion, III, 1, 33, PG 26, 625 B). St Epiphanius of Saramis (Ancoratus, VIII, PG 43, 29 C) and Didymus the Blind (Treatise on the Holy Spirit, CLIII, PG 34, 1064 A) link the Father and the Son by the same preposition ἐκ in the communication to the Holy Spirit of the consubstantial divinity.

5. "The two relationships of the Son to the Father and of the Holy Spirit to the Father oblige us to place two relationships in the Father, one referring to the Son and the other to the Holy Spirit" (St Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Ia, q. 32, a. 2, c).

6. Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 248.

7. St Gregory of Nazianzus says that "the Spirit is a middle term (μέσσο) between the Unbegotten and the Begotten" (Discourse 31, 8, Sources chrétiennes, 250, p. 290). Cf. also, in a Thomistic perspective, G Leblond, "Point of view on the procession of the Holy Spirit," in Revue Thomiste, LXXXVI, t. 78, 1978, pp. 293-302.

8. St Cyril of Alexandria says that "the Holy Spirit flows from the Father into the Son (ἐν τῷ Υἱῷ)," Thesaurus, XXXIV, PG 75, 577 A).

9. St Gregory of Nyssa writes: "The Holy Spirit is said to be of the Father and it is attested that he is of the Son. St Paul says: 'Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him' (Rom 8:9). So, the Spirit who is of God [the Father] is also the Spirit of Christ. However, the Son who is of God [the Father] is not said to be of the Spirit: the consecutive order of the relationship cannot be reversed" (Fragment In orationem dominicam, quoted by St John Damascene, PG 46, 1109 BC). And St Maximus affirms in the same way the Trinitarian order when he writes: "Just as the Thought [the Father] is principle of the Word, so is he also of the Spirit through the Word. And, just as one cannot say that the Word is of the voice [of the Breath], so one cannot say that the Word is of the Spirit" (Quaestiones et dubia, PG 90, 813 B).

10. St Thomas Aquinas, who knew the De Fide orthodoxa, sees no opposition between the Filioque and this expression of St John Damascene: "To say that the Holy Spirit reposes or dwells in the Son does not exclude his proceeding from the Son; for we say also that the Son dwells in the Father, although he proceeds from the Father" (Summa Theologica, Ia, q. 36, a. 2, 4um).

11. St Thomas Aquinas, following St Augustine, writes: "If we say of the Holy Spirit that he dwells in the Son, it is in the way that the love of one who loves reposes in the loved one" (Summa Theologica, Ia, q. 36, a. 2, 4um). This doctrine of the Holy Spirit as love has been harmoniously assumed by St Gregory Palamas into the Greek theology of the ἐκπόρευσις from the Father alone: "The Spirit of the Most High Word is like an ineffable love of the Father for this Word ineffably generated. A love which this same Word and beloved Son of the Father entertains (χρηῖται) towards the Father: but insofar as he has the Spirit coming with him (συνπροελθόντα) from the Father and reposing connaturally in him" (Capita physica XXXVI, PG 150, 1144, D-1145 A).

12. Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Dominum et Vivificantem, nn.18-24, AAS LXXVIII, 1986, 826-831. Cf. also Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn. 438, 689 690, 695, 727.