
II. THE FILIOQUE CONTROVERSY

1. *“One God,” East and West*

Because Paul Owen writes from a Western perspective, his presentation quickly reveals the root of the difference between the Greek and Latin perspectives:

Orthodox Christians believe that God is one eternal, personal and spiritual divine substance who exists in three modes of subsistence, or three self-distinctions.

Here, “Orthodox Christians” refers to ‘mainstream (Western) Christians,’ not to the Eastern Orthodox. In fact, the authentic Eastern Orthodox mind would disagree with the above statement which seems to confuse “personal” and “substance.” The Greek Fathers would have written quite a different summary, something along the lines of:

Orthodox Christians believe in one God the Father, whose person is uncaused and unoriginate, who, because He is love and communion, always exists with His Word and Spirit.¹

Our Western theologian continues with an equally problematic statement:

Now when we come to the biblical evidence a decision has to be made. Does one start with the assumption that God is one, and then attempt to explain how God can be three; or does one begin with the knowledge that God is three, and then attempt to explain in what way God can be one? This decision is an important one, and as we will see, it is the basis of important differences of understanding among Christians of different traditions. Protestants and Roman Catholics, who tend to be under greater influence from the heritage of the Western tradition, generally start with the assumption of God’s oneness. The Eastern Orthodox Church on the other hand follows the heritage of the East, and hence tends to begin with the knowledge of God’s threeness... In the opinion of the present writer, the Western tradition is correct to begin with the assumption of God’s oneness, and move from there to an explanation of God’s threeness.

This statement makes the Orthodox shake their heads in disbelief: the Creed affirms “we believe in one God the Father... and in one Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit...,” hence the Eastern tradition does start with God’s oneness, a oneness anchored in the person of the Father.

¹ Note: This is not a quote from Paul Owen’s article.

Here, Paul Owen is siding with the Western affirmation that the concept of the one substance (*ousia*) of God has priority over that of person (*hypostasis*). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* confirms:

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*)...¹

In his quotation of Hebrews 1:3, Paul Owen assumes – wrongly in my opinion – that “being the brightness of the glory and an exact representation of his essence” (*hos on apaugasma tes doxes kai karakter tes hypostaseos autou*) means “exact representation of the essential nature of God.” However, in the Greek Orthodox understanding, *hypostaseos* is better translated as “person.”²

2. *The font of Deity*

The article under consideration continues with a clear and helpful discussion of the essential difference of approach between East and West:

A second distinction that needs to be drawn lies between the views of the Eastern and Western theological traditions... What is the major point of difference between the Eastern and Western Church? It has to do with the understanding of the relationship of the Father to the Monarchy of the Godhead. Both East and West are agreed that the Father has a certain priority of position within the Trinity. The Father alone is unbegotten and non-proceeding. But does the Monarchy, the font of Deity, reside in the Father’s person, or in his Being? Is the Son begotten of the Father’s person, or his Being? Does the Spirit proceed from the Father’s person, or his Being? If, as the Eastern Church insists, the font of Deity resides in the Father’s person, then the Spirit clearly must proceed from the Father alone, since the Son does not possess the Father’s person. But if the font of Deity resides in the Father’s Being, then the conclusion may be drawn that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, since all are agreed that the Father and the Son are con-substantial, that is, that they are identical in essence. Largely due to the influence of Augustine, the Western Church gradually settled on the view that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, and eventually the words “and the Son” were added to the text of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.

The above summary deserves to be read with extreme care, since the real debate over the *filioque* is explained with great clarity. This is exactly what St. Photius had explained in his *Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*:

If the Father is cause of the hypostases produced from Him not by reason of nature, but by reason of the hypostasis; and if, up to now, no one has

¹ CCC, 248

² NKJ and EOB have “person.” Most other translations have “being” or “substance”

preached the impiety that the Son's hypostasis consists of the principle of the Father's hypostasis then there can be no way the Son is cause of any hypostasis in the Trinity.¹

At this point, Paul Owen continues his presentation with great accuracy:

This argument has important theological ramifications. If the font of Deity is located in the Father's person, then the divine nature of the Son and the Spirit will of necessity be a derived divinity. In fact, it is a general tendency of the Eastern Fathers (Gregory Nazianzen excluded²) to speak of God the Father as the cause of the Deity of the Son and the Spirit. The issue at stake is whether or not each of the Persons of the Trinity can be spoken of properly as God in their own right (*autotheos*). Thomas F. Torrance writes:

When the Cappadocian theologians argued for the doctrine of one Being, three Persons (*mia ousia treis hypostaseis*) they did so on the ground that the *ousia* had the same relation to the *hypostasis* as the general or common to the particular. They pointed, for instance, to the way three different people have a common nature or *physis*. They absorbed the Nicene *ousia* of the Father (*ousia tou Patros*) into the *hypostasis* of the Father (*hypostasis tou Patros*), and then when they spoke of the three divine Persons as having the same being or nature, they were apt to identify *ousia* with *physis* or nature. Thereby they tended to give *ousia* an abstract generic sense which had the effect of making them treat *ousia* or *physis* as impersonal. Then when in addition they concentrated Christian faith directly upon the three distinct hypostases of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as they are united through their common action, they were charged with thinking of God in a partitive or tritheistic way, three Gods with a common nature, which of course they rejected. They sought to meet this charge by establishing their belief in the oneness of God through anchoring it in the Father as the one Origin or Principle or Cause, *Arche* or *Aitia*, of divine Unity, and they spoke of the Son and of the Holy Spirit as deriving their distinct modes of subsistence or coming into existence (*tropoi hyparxeos*) from the Father as the Fount of Deity (*pege theotetos*). But they went further and argued that the Son and the Spirit derive their being (*einai*) and indeed their Deity (*theotes*) from the Father by way of unique causation (*aitia*) which comprises and is continuous with its effects, and by that they meant the Father considered

¹ Par. 15

² Torrance (and Owen) are wrong on this point. St. Gregory of Nazianzus is very explicit: "The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have this in common; that they are uncreated, and they are divine. The Son and the Spirit have this in common; that they are derived from the Father." "They [the Son and Spirit] are not without [arche – origin or] beginning in respect of cause... They are not subject to time, since time originates from them." In Bettenson, pp. 116-117

as *Person*, i.e. as *hypostasis*, not *ousia*, which represented a divergence from the teaching of the Nicene Council.¹

Hence there is an element of ontological subordinationism which remains in the Eastern view, which in the mind of those inclined toward the view of the Western tradition leaves the door open to implicit Arianism... The West insists that the three eternal Persons share a common Deity — each Person is *autotheos*. The East maintains that the three eternal Persons share a common Divinity — the Father alone is Deity in a proper sense (*autotheos*).

Paul Owen is correct when he notes that the Western tradition tends to the conclusion that each Person is *autotheos*, but it should be clear that this has never been the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. This heresy of tri-theism was only proclaimed by John Calvin who denounced the eternal generation of the Son as “an absurd fiction.” Here, we are getting close to what is at stake with the *filioque*: is the Monarchy of the Father as only cause and origin of the Son and Spirit challenged by this addition to the creed? Roman Catholic theologians have tried to reassure the East that this is not the case. In its clarification on the *filioque*, the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity affirms:

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.

Likewise, in his article *Filioque: A Response To Eastern Orthodox Objections*, Roman Catholic apologist Marc Bonocore repeats several times that:

Both Greek East and Latin West confess, and always have confessed, that the Father alone is the Cause (Aition) or Principle (Principium) of both the Son and the Spirit.

In a remarkable essay entitled *The Filioque: Dogma, Theologoumenon or Error?*, Fr. Theodore Stylianopoulos stresses the importance of this point:

¹ The Orthodox would strongly disagree with this claim that the Cappadocian approach “represented a divergence from the teaching of the Nicene Council.” The Council confessed “One God the Father” (a person), not in One God-Essence. Homoousios meant uncreated.

Similarly Moltmann observes that “the filioque was never directed against the ‘monarchy’ of the Father” and that the principle of the “monarchy” has “never been contested by the theologians of the Western Church.” If these statements can be accepted by the Western theologians today in their full import of doing justice to the principle of the Father’s “monarchy,” which is so important to Eastern triadology, then the theological fears of Easterners about the filioque would seem to be fully relieved. Consequently, Eastern theologians could accept virtually any of the Memorandum’s alternate formulae in the place of the filioque on the basis of the above positive evaluation of the filioque which is in harmony with Maximos the Confessor’s interpretation of it. As Zizioulas incisively concludes:

The “golden rule” must be Saint Maximos the Confessor’s explanation concerning Western pneumatology: by professing the filioque our Western brethren do not wish to introduce another $\alpha\iota\tau\omicron\nu$ in God’s being except the Father, and a mediating role of the Son in the origination of the Spirit is not to be limited to the divine Economy, but relates also to the divine οὐσία.

The reader should also understand that the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of icons is rooted in its Trinitarian theology: the ‘relative worship’ (or veneration) (*prokynesis*) of icons (derived images of God) is proper if the ultimate object of worship (*latreia*) is the uncreated Trinity and even more ultimately the uncaused and unoriginate Father of whom Christ is the perfect “icon,” the “character of his *hypostasis*.” Legitimate honor and veneration due to a created image of God (parents, kings, saints) becomes idolatry if it is by intention disconnected from the ultimate prototype which is for us the Trinity and in an ultimate ontological sense, the person of the Father.

Unlike Paul Owen (and Photius), not everyone is fully aware that the critical question is “Does the Spirit proceed from the Father’s person, or his Being? If, as the Eastern Church insists, the font of Deity resides in the Father’s person, then the Spirit clearly must proceed from the Father alone, since the Son does not possess the Father’s person.” In *Being as Communion*, Metropolitan John Zizioulas offer a masterful defense of the Orthodox insistence of the priority of the person of the Father:

Among the Greek Fathers the unity of God, the one God, and the ontological principle or “cause” of the being and life of God does not consist in the one substance of God but in the hypostasis, that is, the person of the Father. The one God is not the one substance but the Father, who is the “cause” both of the generation of the Son and of the procession of the Spirit. Consequently, the ontological “principle” of God is traced back, once again, to the person. Thus when we say that God “is,” we do not bind the personal freedom of God — the being of God is not an ontological “necessity” or a simple “reality” for God — but we ascribe the being of God to His personal freedom. In a more analytical way this means that God, as

Father and not as substance, perpetually confirms through “being” His free will to exist. And it is precisely His trinitarian existence that constitutes this confirmation: the Father out of love — that is, freely — begets the Son and brings forth the Spirit. If God exists, He exists because the Father exists, that is, He who out of love freely begets the Son and brings forth the Spirit. Thus God as person — as the hypostasis of the Father — makes the one divine substance to be that which it is: the one God. This point is absolutely crucial. For it is precisely with this point that the new philosophical position of the Cappadocian Fathers, and of St Basil in particular, is directly connected. That is to say, the substance never exists in a “naked” state, that is, without hypostasis, without “a mode of existence.” And the one divine substance is consequently the being of God only because it has these three modes of existence, which it owes not to the substance but to one person, the Father. Outside the Trinity there is no God, that is, no divine substance, because the ontological “principle” of God is the Father. The personal existence of God (the Father) constitutes His substance, makes it hypostases. The being of God is identified with the person. What therefore is important in trinitarian theology is that God “exists” on account of a person, the Father, and not on account of a substance¹

Orthodox theology is especially clear on this emphasis on “the simplicity of the Most High” (Photius) because it has no fear of the absurd accusation of Arianism.

Before discussing the intent and historical context of the Latin *filioque*, let us conclude our brief review of important Trinitarian concepts. Returning to Paul Owen’s article, we encounter another useful clarification:

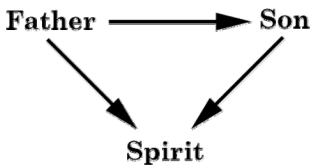
In contemporary theological and philosophical discussion, there are two heuristic approaches to understanding the Trinity. There is a “social” model, and there is a “psychological” or “modal” (not “modalistic”) model. Generally speaking, these two approaches can be traced back to the differences between the East and the West in their articulation of the nature of the “oneness” of the Godhead; but the current “social” model is also largely driven by perceived philosophical difficulties with the doctrine of the Trinity as articulated in Western manifestos such as the so-called Athanasian Creed. The “modal” or “psychological” model goes back to Augustine, and has been advocated by important thinkers in our century such as Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, Donald Bloesch, Kelly James Clark and Thomas F. Torrance. The “social” model is more heavily indebted to the Cappadocians, and is represented by theologians such as Cornelius Plantinga, Leonardo Boff, Jürgen Moltmann, Richard Swinburne, Millard Erickson and Clark Pinnock...

In [the psychological model], the distinctness in union of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is thought of as being something like (“analogous to”) the

¹ BAC, pp. 40-42

distinctness, say, of a person's intellect, heart, and will within the unity of the one person (St. Augustine).

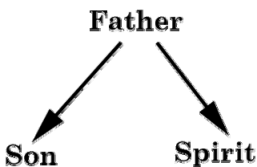
It is in the context of admittedly speculative reflection on the mystery of the Trinity that St. Augustine, while affirming the Monarchy of the Father, described the Holy Spirit as “the bond of love” between the Father and the Son. This is why Augustine taught that the Spirit proceeds “mainly” (*principaliter* means an original source and implies a secondary source) from the Father, but also from the Son, not only economically but indeed ontologically. The following illustration is a generally accepted way to express the Western-Augustinian emphasis:



Let us note, however, that the psychological imagery was also used the second-century apologists, notably Athenagoras of Athens:

The understanding and reason (*nous kai logos*) of the Father is the Son of God. But if, in your surpassing intelligence, it occurs to you to inquire what is meant by the Son, I will state briefly that He is the first product of the Father, not as having been brought into existence (for from the beginning, God, who is the eternal mind [*nous*], had the Logos in Himself, being from eternity instinct with Logos [*logikos*]; but inasmuch as He came forth to be the idea and energizing power of all material things...¹

Nevertheless, the overall Eastern tradition, because it stresses the Scriptural and pre-Nicene teaching of the Monarchy of the Father, prefers St. Ireneaus' pyramid vision of the Word and Spirit as “the two hands of God”:



¹ *Apology*, Chapter 10

Based on what has been said so far, it might be tempting to conclude that both models are absolutely incompatible; but many think that it is not the case.

The reason for this optimistic assessment is fivefold: (1) the Roman Catholic tradition has always affirmed (when pressed) that the Father is indeed “the principle without principle” of the Trinity; (2) that the intention of the *filioque* is from that of the Creed of 381; (3) the fact that in a specific sense, the expression “*qui ex Patre Filioque procedit*” is orthodox (Romanides); (4) that Rome has “refused the addition *kai to yiou* to the formula *ek tou patros ekporevomenon* in the Greek text” and (5) the expression “through the Son” (or variations thereof), especially with the verb *proinai* is Patristic and acceptable.

On the other hand, we will also discuss the boundaries of orthodoxy and consider certain problems with the Roman Catholic background.

3. *The Latin filioque: intent and concerns*

Let us consider point (2), “that the intention of the filioque is different from that of the creed of 381.” Orthodox theologians are aware that the West, confronted with lingering Arianism, was pursuing a different theological agenda with its modified creed. The *Clarification* published by the Vatican introduces the context of the *filioque* clause thus:

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 (*arche, aitia*) of the *ekporevosis* 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.

Mark Bonocore (RC) is also helpful in this admission that:

So, to someone coming from this Eastern heritage – indeed, for any Greek-speaker who knows what the term “*ekporevosis*” implies (i.e., procession from a single source, principal, or cause), the addition of the Latin clause “*Filioque*” (“and the Son”) seriously challenges, if not totally destroys, the originally-intended meaning of this Creedal statement. And we Roman Catholics fully agree and admit this. The introduction of the *Filioque* is clearly a departure from the original intention and design of the A.D. 381 version of the *Constantinopolitan Creed*. However, it is not a departure from apostolic orthodoxy.

In other words, official Roman Catholicism teaches that the Latin *procedit* used in the Vulgate to translate the Greek *ekporeutai* had in fact a wider meaning, not only that of ‘having its cause and origin in,’ but “a wide implication.” In fact, it is explained that *procedit* was understood as equivalent to *proinai*, a concept which can be a source of confusion between economy and ontology.

Bonocore continues:

But, if the Western Church agrees with the East that the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone, then what does it mean by “Filioque” —that the Spirit proceeds “from the Father and the Son?” When the West speaks of the Spirit “proceeding” from the Father and the Son, it is referring to something all-together different than “procession” as from a single source (*aitia*). It is not advocating two sources or principals for the Spirit, or some kind of “double spiration,” as is all-too-commonly (wrongly) assumed by many Eastern Orthodox. Rather, it is using the term “proceeds” in an altogether different sense. And the best way to illustrate the two different senses or uses of the term “proceeds” (Greek vs. Latin) is though the following analogy:

If a human father and son go into their back yard to play a game of catch, it is the father who initiates the game of catch by throwing the ball to his son. In this sense, one can say that the game of catch “proceeds” from this human father (an “aition”); and this is the original, Greek sense of the Constantinopolitan Creed’s use of the term “proceeds” (“*ekporeusis*”). However, taking this very same scenario, one can also justly say that the game of catch “proceeds” from both the father and his son. And this is because the son has to be there for the game of catch to exist. For, unless the son is there, then the father would have no one to throw the ball to; and so there would be no game of catch. And, it is in this sense (one might say a “collective” sense) that the West uses the term “proceeds” (“*procedit*”) in the Filioque. Just as acknowledging the necessity of the human son’s presence in order for the game of catch to exist does not, in any way, challenge or threaten the human father’s role as the source or initiator (*aition*) of the game of catch, so the Filioque does not deny the Father’s singular role as the Cause (*Aition*) of the Spirit; but merely acknowledges the Son’s necessary Presence (i.e., participation) for the Spirit’s eternal procession from the Father to Someone else —namely, to the eternal Son. Father and Son are thus collectively identified as accounting for the Spirit’s procession. This is all that the Filioque was ever intended to address.

This type of analogy is of course puzzling, to say the least, for the Orthodox reader. It always seems that the West tends to define the Spirit in terms of what is common between the Father and Son, which may depersonalize the Spirit while affirming the Father and Son as the two real ‘co-partners’ and ‘co-monarchs.’ However, we can also perceive that in a certain sense, a carefully expressed *filioque*, with the right verb, can be an acceptable orthodox opinion.

This is the respected assessment of Metropolitan John (Zizioulas):

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 ἐκπορεύεσθαι 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 ἐκπορεύεσθαι 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 ἐκπορεύεσθαι but the προεῖναι of the Spirit.

Since Zizioulas refers to St. Maximus the Confessor, it will be useful to hear from the respected Father how the *filioque* could have an orthodox meaning:

For the procession they [those at Rome] 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 (προῖέναι) through the Son, and they showed in this way the unity and the immutability of the essence.”

Based on this clarification, if the verb is *proinai*, then “though the Son” is orthodox. Likewise, “and the Son” (understood as strict equivalent to “through the Son”) is also acceptable. But the point that is now clear is that “and the Son” cannot be added to the Greek verb *ekporev-* under any circumstance, while even “through the Son” is very problematic.

This being said, the Orthodox do not mean that the unilateral insertion of the *filioque* clause in the Creed was ultimately helpful or that it would have been acceptable to someone like St. Maximus. But if dialogue in truth and love is our goal, this approach shows that the issue is not unsolvable.

4. *From the Father through the Son?*

We now arrive at an expression that is acceptable on both sides because of its patristic use: that the Spirit proceeds (*procedit-proinat*) from the Father through the Son. It should also be said that this formula is not excluded by St. Photius' insistence that the Spirit proceeds (*ekporev-*) from the Father alone. Fr. Stylianopoulous explains:

Photios' famous formula, "the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone," intends not to deny the intimate relations between the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit, but only to make utterly explicit that the Father alone causes the existence of both the Son and the Spirit, conferring upon them all his being, attributes, and powers, except his hypostatic property, i.e., that he is the Father, the unbegotten, the source, origin, and cause of divinity.

After reviewing several patristic quotations, Eastern Orthodox apologist Thomas Valentine concludes that "through the Son" is "the typical Eastern formula," but with this important caveat:

The word *dia* never means by in the sense of by means of, i.e. as an agent. It means through in a non-additive sense — *dia* is always non-additive, referring to a tunnelling or channelling effect, like water through a pipe. Many Church Fathers use *dia* as a way of expressing the relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit — through speaking the Word, the Father exhales the Wind/Spirit (*pneuma* means both) just as a person speaking exhales wind/air when speaking words.

Fr. Stylianopoulous offers an encouraging conclusion on how close the two positions are, if they are properly understood and carefully expressed:

[Jean Michel] Garrigues [RC] speaks about "a dominant trend in the Eastern tradition to regard the mediation of the Son merely as a passive and quite non-causal condition of the procession of the Spirit from the Father alone" (p. 153). Obviously for Garrigues "passive" and "non-causal" are identical, whereas Staniloae [EO] shows that the Eastern tradition holds to an active, yet non-causal, participation of the Son in the Spirit's procession from the Father.

Fr. Stylianopoulous also discusses a number of expressions are suggested, not for inclusion in the Creed, but as acceptable formulations to a mystery that remains beyond our reason:

- the Spirit proceeds from the Father of the Son;
- the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son;
- the Spirit proceeds from the Father and receives from the Son;
- the Spirit proceeds from the Father and rests on the Son;
- the Spirit proceeds from the Father and shines out through the Son.

These formulas would probably be acceptable opinions within the realm of catholic orthodoxy, but should they be accepted in a dogmatic Creed? Most Eastern Orthodox would reject any idea of modifying the Creed of 381, sometimes for the wrong reasons¹, but also for very good ones.

There are two primary reasons for which the Orthodox insist that the Creed of 381 should not be modified, and these should be carefully considered by Roman Catholics. The first one is that the Creed of Nicea-Constantinople did become the common confession of faith, so much that Pope Leo III had it engraved on two plaques on silver and mounted in Rome. By altering the common Creed, even without evil or heretical intent, the West created what became a dogmatic difference in the very proclamation of Faith. The Arian menace was soon defeated, and the pastoral need for the *filioque* had disappeared long before the Great Schism. The second reason is that the *filioque* addition goes beyond what was written in the Scriptures and by the honored Fathers of the Second Council. There can be no doubt that the "Spirit proceeds from the Father" as is taught by our Lord in John 15:26, but this is as far as the Scriptures will go. Thomas Valentine (EO) offers a reflection worthy of consideration:

Unless one asserts that either the Lord Jesus Christ spoke a superfluous repetition or that Saint John distorted the Lord's words and created a superfluous repetition, it is not possible to claim, as have some supporters of the Filioque, that ἔκπορεύεται has the same meaning as πέμψω. Not only are the words etymologically different with distinct meanings, but the phrase who from the Father proceeds uses ἔκπορεύομαι in the present tense (ἔκπορεύεται), indicating the proceeding of the Holy Spirit is not a future event, but a present reality having begun in the past and still in progress. Moreover, the fact that Saint John only uses ἔκπορεύομαι one other time (5:9) should make the reader-interpreter aware that Saint John may be indicating something special or unusual.

The combination of these facts makes clear that the proceeding of the Holy Spirit is something quite different than the sending of the Holy Spirit. Most English translations of the Holy Scriptures make the distinction between the Son's promise that he will send the Holy Spirit from the Father and that the Holy Spirit is proceeding from the Father quite clear. The notable exception is the Vatican-approved New American Bible which badly distorts the passage.

¹ A 'wrong reason' would be to invoke canon 7 of Ephesus, as Mark Bonocore demonstrates in his previously cited article.

King James Version But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me

New American Standard When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me

New International Version When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

Young's Literal Translation And when the Comforter may come, whom I will send to you from the Father — the Spirit of truth, who from the Father doth come forth, he will testify of me

New Jerusalem Bible When the Paraclete comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who issues from the Father, he will be my witness.

New American Bible When the Paraclete comes, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father — and whom I myself will send from the Father — he will bear witness on my behalf.

Hence, the reason of the Orthodox insistence that the *filioque* be removed from the Creed is in fact to foster ecclesial unity and to uphold of Scriptural terminology of the Ecumenical text.

5. *Revisionist theology?*

There is another valid reason for which Orthodox are loath to concede to an acceptable (or even positive) interpretation of the *filioque*, and that reason is the great difficulty in reconciling Rome's insistence that "[the

Father] is the sole origin (*arche, aitia*) of the *ekporevsis* of the Spirit” with the constant affirmation that the Spirit “proceeds by a communication of the same singular essence by one eternal spiration from the Father and the Son as from one principle.” Even though the Vulgate translated *ekporevomenon* by *procedit*, the official *Clarification* explains that in these affirmations, *procedit* does not mean *ekporevsis* but *proienai*, so that something different than causal origination is being discussed. This is a very subtle nuance, often lost on the masses, as we can imagine. The consistent wording of Latin theology is as follows:

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. *The 4th Lateran Council, 1215, A definition against the Albigenses and other heretics*

[We] confess that the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son, not as from two principles, but as from one; not by two spirations but by one. *The 2nd Council of Lyons, 1274, Constitution on the Procession of the Holy Spirit*

The Father is not begotten; the Son is begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. *The Council of Florence, 1438-45, Decree for the Jacobites*

The Council of Florence in 1438 explains: “The Holy Spirit is eternally from Father and Son He has his nature and subsistence at once (simul) from the Father and the Son. He proceeds eternally from both as from one principle and through one spiration And, since the Father has through generation given to the only begotten Son everything that belongs to the Father, except being Father, the Son has also eternally from the Father, from whom he is eternally born, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son.” *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 246*

The confusing and objectionable aspect of these dogmatic statements is that the Monarchy of the Father as “sole origin (*arche, aitia*)” of the Son and Spirit is never mentioned. Roman Catholic theologians assure us that there is a good reason for this: what is being discussed in those documents is not ultimate causality (since the issue is settled), it is the collective or shared dimension of the Spirit’s origin. As St. Maximos explained, the orthodox *filioque* is not about the *ekporevsis* but the *proienai*. The Eastern Orthodox concern, as we have seen in John Zizioulas, is that “the distinction between *εκπορεύεσθαι* and *προεῖναι* was not made in Latin theology, which used the same term, *procedere*, to denote both realities.” This is obvious in popular Roman Catholic defenses of the *filioque*, where the strong affirmation of the unique causality of the Father is absent and where no mention is made of the difference between *εκπορεύεσθαι* and *προεῖναι*. A typical example is the *Catholic Answers* tract on the *filioque*:

Scripture reveals that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. The external relationships of the persons of the Trinity mirror their internal relationships. Just as the Father externally sent the Son into the world in time, the Son internally proceeds from the Father in the Trinity. Just as the Spirit is externally sent into the world by the Son as well as the Father (John 15:26, Acts 2:33), he internally proceeds from both Father and Son in the Trinity. This is why the Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of the Son (Gal. 4:6) and not just the Spirit of the Father (Matt. 10:20).

With such a presentation, it not surprising that the Orthodox reject that version of *filioque* as confusing and heretical. On the other hand, the recent high-level clarifications are useful and constructive.

The Orthodox impression is that historically, “principle” (*principium*) was presented as equivalent to *aitia*, and “proceed” (*procedit*) equivalent to *ekporevsis*. This seems to have been the intent of the council of Florence, where the Greeks were asked to recognize “the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son as from one “principium” (arche) and from one cause (aitia).”¹

As a result, the Latin insistence on the *filioque*, affirming both the ‘single cause’ and the ‘common or collective cause’ seemed somewhat schizophrenic. It can certainly be admitted that Photios’ simple ‘pyramid scheme,’ which admittedly seems to ignore the unity of Father and Son in the Spirit, did not lead to such acrobatics of theological nuancing.

6. *But what are we talking about?*

At this point in our study, if the reader has not yet decided to give up on understanding this controversy altogether, we can offer Jaroslav Pelikan’s witty ponderings:

If there is a special circle of the inferno described by Dante reserved for historians of theology, the principal homework assigned to that subdivision of hell for at least the first several eons of eternity may well be the thorough study of all the treatises--in Latin, Greek, Church Slavonic, and various modern languages--devoted to the inquiry: Does the Holy Spirit proceed from the Father only, as Eastern Christendom contends, or from both the Father and the Son (ex Patre Filioque), as the Latin Church teaches?

Perhaps one reason for the mystery and abstract complexity of this issue is that few people understand what (or better who) the Holy Spirit is all about. In the Book of Acts, we read:

¹ CE, Entry: Council of Florence

Paul said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' And they replied, 'No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit!' And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began to speak with tongues and to prophesy.¹

Today's problem is not that Christians do not know that "there is a Holy Spirit," the problem is that few would be able to explain who the Spirit is and what he accomplishes. Indeed, very few theologians or apologists who discuss the issue of the *filioque* engage the question of what we mean by Father, Son and Holy Spirit. St. Augustine (whose 'work in progress' *De Trinitate* was published against his will) was among those who, for better or worse, attempted to understand the trinitarian mystery of the Godhead with imaginative and controversial analogies.

I would like to suggest, carefully and without any doctrinal claim, that the scriptural descriptions of the Holy Spirit points to the following definition:

The Holy Spirit is the divine-uncreated, hypostasis, power² and mind that manifests what is true and existing.

This definition makes sense when we consider the role of the Holy Spirit at the Lord's baptism, the epiclesis of St. Basil and the fact that "no one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit."³ Hence, the "Spirit of Truth" is the revealer of what is true, the One who "knows the deep things of God."⁴ The relationship of the Spirit with God (or the Father, in an absolute sense) and the Word seems clear: the Father is the primordial and causal mind with the purpose and identity of love and communion. The Word or Son is the expression, the self-aware agent that executes and communicates the Father's transcendent mind. This is the theology of the New Testament:

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made time and space. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his person, sustaining all things by his powerful word.⁵

¹ Acts 19:2, 6

² This is the dynamic and kenotic aspect to the Spirit in the sense that His mission is not to impose His hypostasis but to reveal and glorify what He indwells. See Zechariah 4:14 NJB (Not by might and not by power, but by my spirit' -- says Yahweh Sabaoth)

³ 1 Corinthians 12:3

⁴ 1 Corinthians 2:10

⁵ Hebrew 1:1-3

This is why the Orthodox and patristic tradition insists, as Fr. Romanides often repeats, that the Angel-Messenger of YHWH is the pre-incarnate Logos. The incarnate Word is the spoken mind of the Father who is love and who calls us to communion. But the Word is revealed to other minds as such (Lord and Savior) only by the work of the Holy Spirit. In summary, the Trinity expresses the idea of message, messenger and revealer, or mind, word and meaning.

Within this framework, we can say that the meaning proceeds from the mind and rests in the word, but the meaning truly originates from the mind, and does not depend on the word. Yet, the meaning proceeds from the mind through the word. Even more importantly, this approach does not subordinate the meaning to the word and allows for the symmetry that is often lacking in Western theology: the word also proceeds from the mind according to the meaning¹. The Word and Spirit are intertwined and complementary in their ontology and economy: the Spirit manifested the anointed Word and likewise the Word pours out the Spirit. This is why the Eastern tradition insists on the invocation of the Holy Spirit after the words of institution are recited. The supremacy of the conscious Father-Mind is thus established, as well as the co-inherence or mutual indwelling (*perichoresis*) of the Word and Spirit.

Hence, meaning proceeds (ontologically) from the mind only, independently of the word; this is the Photian intuition. Moreover, meaning proceeds from the mind to rest in the word and through the word. If there is a certain collective origination of the meaning from the mind and word, isn't there also a collective origination of the word from the mind and meaning? This is what the idea of *perichoresis* suggests.

We should also consider the implications of the gift of tongues on the relationship between meaning and word, spirit and mind. Augustine's presentation of the Spirit as bond of love between Father and Son was expressed in his Father-Mother-Child analogy, which was used to defend the idea of a principal cause (Father) and a collective origination for the Child-Spirit. Of course, this very problematic analogy would need to be balanced with the more 'Biblical' one: Spirit (*ruah*) is feminine in Hebrew²

¹ This is a very Semitic concept.

² Likewise, *sophia* is feminine in Greek, and we notice that Irenaeus for instance talked about the Word (Son) and Wisdom (Spirit) of God. In the New Testament, the Wisdom of God is normally associated with Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:24). This theme of a 'feminine Spirit' has been developed and popularized in Roman Catholic circles by Scott Hahn. See also Acts of Thomas in ANF 8, p. 541

and the Child would seem to be Jesus, not the Spirit¹. In summary, we have to be extremely careful with any terminology or imagery that does not faithfully echo the biblical and patristic presentation.

There is also a subtle distinction that - God is merciful! - can only be a daring opinion: if the Spirit manifests God to other minds (us), does He also manifest God to God Himself in a reflexive way? If so, the economy of God to our minds would be analogous to the ontology of God to his own mind, a *theologoumenon* that cannot be dogmatized in any way.

7. *The fear of Arianism*

Before reaching a conclusion and summary, I would like to mention that the ‘shadow of Arianism’ – and the fear thereof - may be more of a factor than we realize. For whatever reason, what we call the Western tradition has tended to theologize on the opposite extreme of Arianism. As we have mentioned, the early tendencies of the Roman Church were on the Modalistic side, and it is in Reformed / Protestant Western Christianity that we find such aberrations as ‘Oneness’ theology and the triple *autotheos* of John Calvin.

It is revealing that the issue of Arianism is addressed several times in Mark Bonocore’s extensive *Response to Eastern Orthodox Objections*. At one point, the Roman Catholic apologist writes:

[The *filioque*] was included in the Creed by the Western fathers at Toledo in order to counter the claims of the 6th Century Spanish (Germanic) Arians. These Arians were of course denying this essential and orthodox truth – that is, the Son’s eternal participation in the Spirit’s procession.

But Arianism² had nothing to do with the question of the Spirit’s procession: the only truth debated with the Arians was the uncreated nature and eternality of the Logos. What Bonocore calls an “essential and orthodox truth” so dear to the West is in fact a complex and delicate subject of discussion. His *Response* continues:

It is of course quite disturbing (from the Western perspective) that modern Eastern Orthodox (i.e., Photian) theology comes very close to advocating this same Arian view by refusing to incorporate the Son’s participation in the Spirit’s eternal procession in any way.

¹ See, for instance, the last prayer of St. Polycarp: “O Lord God Almighty, Father of thy beloved and blessed Child, Jesus Christ, through Whom we have received full knowledge of thee...”

² At least in the East. It is possible that the Spanish Arians emphasized other aspects of the Son’s non-eternality.

However, the Photian position does no such thing, and if it did, it would simply be the affirmation that the ontological procession of the meaning of the mind has its total cause and origin in the mind, independently from the word.

Fr. Romanides also noticed this lingering concern with Arianism in the writings of St. Augustine:

Augustine was completely obsessed by the Arian argument that proof that the Logos of the Father is created is the fact that He appeared to the Prophets and Patriarchates of the Old Testament and the prophets and Apostles of the New Testament.

Indeed, Cappadocian-Orthodoxy is sometimes perceived with concern by Westerners. This is what Paul Owen expressed very clearly:

Hence there is an element of ontological subordinationism¹ which remains in the Eastern view, which in the mind of those inclined toward the view of the Western tradition, leaves the door open to implicit Arianism...

Hence, Metropolitan John Zizioulas felt compelled to insist:

Orthodox theology is especially clear on this emphasis on “the simplicity of the Most High” (Photius) because it has no fear of the absurd accusation of Arianism.

Eastern Orthodoxy insists that the teaching of the First and Second Ecumenical Councils is correct in affirming that the unity of God is in the *autotheos* Father who eternally begets His Word and spirates His Spirit, so that their divinity is indeed derived. But this language (confirmed by the Roman Catholic magisterium with some reluctance) makes our Western colleagues uncomfortable. As a result, their ability to refute the neo-Arianism of Jehovah’s Witnesses is in fact weakened by the implicit embracing of the triple *autotheos* implied with the *filioque* emphasis. Roman Catholic author Ben Finger discusses the tension between the intent of the Creed of 381 and the historical Western struggle with its monarchic theology:

This term [*autotheos*] in initial use was by [Valentine] Gentile [during the post-Reformation era] who proposed that the Father alone is affirmed in Himself as deity and the deityship of the Son and Spirit were derived

¹ This assertion is actually untrue: God the Father is love, this is the eternal expression of his Being, which is why the Father is always with his Word and Spirit, being as communion. We might as well argue that the ontology of the Father as love-communion is placed under the ontological subordination of the Son and Spirit since without them the Father cannot be who He is.

from Him¹. Thus in Gentile's teaching the Son and Spirit are of a different essence² than the Father by possessing the capability of *autotheos*. Robert Bellarmine, a leading apologist for the Roman Catholic in the sixteenth century, defended Calvin by arguing that Calvin in using *autotheos* was attempting to defend true doctrine and it was only an issue of *modus loquendi*. Bellarmine proposed that Calvin erred in his manner of speech, particularly in the Institutes I.13-29 and in his treatise against Gentile, when using the term *autotheos*. Bellarmine furthermore criticizes Calvin for his critique of "God of God" as being a hard saying in conjunction with *autotheos*. Bellarmine suggests that the reason why Calvin proclaims the Son as being *autotheos* is because the Son and the Spirit are of the same essence as the Father and is driven to this in defense of the claims of Gentile. Bellarmine in the end finds Calvin to be orthodox upon this issue and only erred in the manner of speaking.

Hence, Calvin's triple *autotheos* is close to the theology of the West, even though this terminology was rejected.

Likewise, in dealing with John 14:28 ("The Father is greater than I am"), Western theologians are reluctant to bring up the Monarchy of Father and the derivative divinity of the Son as the first and best explanation (this was the exegesis offered by all the great Eastern doctors:

The Son says not, "My Father is better than I," lest we should conceive him to be foreign to his nature, but "greater," not indeed in greatness nor in time, but because of his generation from the Father himself. (Athanasius, Orations against the Arians 1.58)

Since the Son's origin (arche) is from the Father, in this respect the Father is greater, as cause and origin. Wherefore also the Lord said thus, "My Father is greater than I," clearly inasmuch as He is Father. Yea, what else does the word Father signify unless the being cause and origin of that which is begotten of Him?² (Basil, Against Eunomius 1.25)

Superior greatness belongs to the cause, equality to the nature.... To say that [the Father] is greater than [the Son] conceived as man is certainly true, but no great thing to say. For what marvel is it if God is greater than man?² (Gregory of Nazianzus, Oration 30.7)

If any one say that the Father is greater in so far as He is the cause of the Son, we will not gainsay this. But this, however, does not make the Son to be of a different essence. (John Chrysostom, Homily 70)³

¹ This is authentic Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox doctrine, as we have seen.

² This is where things became heretical. The "essential" language of the Fathers dealt with the uncreatedness of God, not with causality.

³ See also Alexander of Alexandria (Ep. to Alex.). Augustine and Ambrose, it is true, insisted that the Son was referring to his humanity.

In contrast, discussing the imaginary problem posed by this text, the bulletin of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lincoln offers this typical 'Augustinian' answer:¹

Jesus was speaking of his coming ascension into heaven and thus He was talking about His created human nature, when He is recorded to have said in the Gospel according to St. John, "The Father is greater than I." As man, the Father is greater, but as God, He and the Father are one (John 8:21- 58; Matthew 16:16-17; Matthew 26:63-66).²

The true Arian or the sincere seeker always realizes that this 'interpretation' of John 14:28 is weak: of course, the Father is greater than the Son in his human nature: such an obvious and meaningless statement would have no place in Our Lord's discourse. What is wrong, in the Western mind, with the explanation provided by Gregory the Theologian? It is my contention that the *filioque* theology of the Latin tradition (with its mental representation as a ▼) has a hard time affirming the patristic Monarchy of the Father's person (with its mental representation as a ▲). In that sense, it is not the Byzantine-political model which is at stake in the mind of Eastern Orthodoxy as Mark Bonocore suggests, it is the theology and intent of the Fathers of the Second Ecumenical Council. The Latin Creed begins by following the original at every line. However, without any warning sign, as Mark Bonocore admits, "the introduction of the Filioque is clearly a departure from the original intention and design of the A.D. 381 version of the Constantinopolitan Creed."

Is it not conceivable that the *filioque* is the symptom of lingering Modalism and 'crypto-triple autotheism'? It is sometimes heard (in Protestant circles) that the Father and Son simply decided, in their eternal counsel, to take on different roles in the economy of salvation, or to paraphrase Ellen White³: 'If the Father had decided to become incarnate instead of the Son, we would never have known the difference.' This heretical drift, presented under the label of 'historical trinitarianism' is especially noticeable among Evangelical Protestants.

There is a real concern, then, that Western trinitarianism, whose historical banner is the *filioque*, has abandoned the Fathers of the First and Second Ecumenical Councils along with their careful and balanced biblical

¹ See also: http://www.newadvent.org/library/almanac_thisrock92.htm

² Reprinted from December 17, 1999. *Catholic Answers* does provide the Monarchy of the Father explanation as a second possibility.

³ 'Prophetess-founder' of the Seventh Day Adventist movement.

theology. The reader should be aware that these elements are crucial and often ignored.

8. In summary

Many leading Orthodox theologians agree that a statement of faith could be produced with an orthodox *filioque*, as was done by St. Maximos. However, its insertion in the common liturgical Creed, which alters the original intention of the Fathers regardless of the language, can not be accepted by the Orthodox. A compromise might be that if the Creed is recited in Latin, the *filioque* could remain if footnoted with an adequate clarification¹.

The following table will perhaps help us summarize the complex information discussed so far. We will focus on the four verbs: to send (*pemps-*), to come out (*ekporev-*) and to proceed (*proinai*) and (*procedit*).

<i>Ekporev-</i>	
Economy	Ontology
Not used	Procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son (1)
Not used	Procession of the Spirit from the Father through the Son (2)
Not used	Procession of the Spirit from the Father only (3) “ <i>ek mon tou Patrou</i> ”

- (1) Rejected by all
- (2) Very problematic, May be viewed as a *theologoumenon* by the Orthodox
- (3) Common doctrine, this is the recommended and normative formula

¹ The footnote would have to indicate that (1) this is an alteration of the original creed and (2) that *procedit* means *proinai*, not *ekporev-*.

<i>poinai / procedit</i>	
If Economy	If Ontology
Mission of the Spirit from the Father <u>and</u> the Son (1)	Procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son (4)
Mission of the Spirit from the Father <u>through</u> the Son (2)	Procession of the Spirit from the Father through the Son (5)
Mission of the Spirit from the Father only (3)	Procession of the Spirit from the Father only (6)

- (1) Latin doctrine, acceptable to the Orthodox
- (2) Common doctrine
- (3) Never taught by anyone
- (4) Latin doctrine, acceptable to the Orthodox if 'and' = 'through'
- (5) Common doctrine
- (6) Normally preferred by the Orthodox.

<i>Pemps-</i>	
Economy	Ontology
Mission of the Spirit from the Father <u>and</u> the Son (1)	Not used
Mission of the Spirit from the Father <u>through</u> the Son (2)	Not used
Mission of the Spirit from the Father only (3)	Not used

- (1) Common doctrine, preferred on the Latin side
- (2) Common doctrine
- (3) Never taught by anyone



Hopefully, this short study has shown that a constructive dialogue has taken place on this difficult and controversial topic. If the Eastern Orthodox insistence that the text of the Creed be left unchanged and that the Monarchy of the Father be strongly affirmed, there is room for an agreement on a *procedit (proinat) filioque* theology leading to the resolution of what should not be “a Church-dividing issue.”

III. APPARITIONS AND PRIVATE REVELATIONS

It is certainly beyond the scope of this study to offer a full-fledged review of the importance of apparitions and private revelations in the doctrinal, liturgical and devotional life of Roman Catholicism. It is important to understand, though, that the sense of ‘non-identity’ experienced by Orthodox Christians vis-à-vis Roman Catholicism (and vice-versa) is partly due to the influence of such events.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart, for example, finds its origin in the apparitions received by St. Marguerite Marie Alacoque (†1690). It is not my intention to offer any opinion on specific apparitions or the merits of this particular devotional image. What needs to be understood is that the combination of ever-evolving Western art and devotions is a cause of concern to many Eastern Orthodox, who have themselves been greatly influenced by Westernized ‘iconography.’ The question, ‘what kind of music and art should we have in the Church’ is extremely important, as it is to a large extent how we express our faith and identity.

A few other influential apparitions should be mentioned: the rue du Bac and Lourdes, both connected with the theology of the Immaculate Conception, as well as Fatima, connected with the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the conversion of Russia. More recently, the controversial and popular apparitions of Medjugorje have been a