

KAIROS

Clarifying the *filioque*: The Catholic-Orthodox dialogue

The Trinity is one simultaneous and harmonious act by which the Persons are who they are, and they are who they are only in the one act of being interrelated.

[As a contribution to better understanding between Catholic and Orthodox Christians, the Centre for Faith & Culture at Westminster College, Oxford, organized a "Kairos" symposium to discuss the clarification of the Roman Catholic position on the filioque issued in September 1995 by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.¹

The main speaker introducing the debate was Fr. Thomas G. Weinandy, O.F.M. Cap. (the Warden of Greyfriars Hall in Oxford). He was followed by Fr. Paul McPartlan of Heythrop College and Bishop Kallistos Ware. Fr. Weinandy's paper is reproduced in full after this introduction, together with Fr. McPartlan's criticisms and my own comments in conclusion.

In his own address, Bishop Kallistos welcomed the clarification—especially its admission that the mystery is ineffable. He referred to the temerity we should all feel at prying into the relations of the Trinity, and to the necessity of an "apophatic sense of wonder." The Holy Spirit, he said (quoting Symeon the New Theologian), is a hidden mystery to be revealed only at the end of time, when the immanent and economic Trinity coincide. Unfortunately, this important

¹"Greek and Latin Traditions Regarding the Procession of the Holy Spirit," *L'Osservatore Romano* (20 September 1995): 3, 6.

eschatological note is largely missing from the Roman document. Whilst welcoming it as a genuine and "reassuring" advance in several other respects, Bishop Kallistos nevertheless made a series of strong criticisms both of its vocabulary and of several remaining ambiguities. He agreed that the filioque is not necessarily heretical in the way it is understood by the (anonymous) authors of the document, but felt that in the Creed its implications remained obscure and confusing. He objected to the formulation, for example by the Second Council of Lyons in 1274, that "the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son, not as from two principles but as from one single principle," not because it must imply the procession of the divine essence (an interpretation ruled out by the preceding Lateran Council), but because of its tendency to reduce the Trinity to a Duality. The new document does not, he claimed (in a point reinforced by Greek Catholic Archimandrite Serge Keleher), address the real ecumenical problem, which is not the interpretation of the Latin insertion in the Creed, but the right of the Latin Church to have made the insertion unilaterally, after the dogmatic Symbol had already been agreed by the whole Church at an Ecumenical Council. He suggested that the word be removed from the Creed so that it could be debated properly at the level of theologoumena.

Several participants in the subsequent lively debate, both Catholic and Orthodox, agreed with this, although Fr. David Jones, O.P. doubted that the Latin Church could ever come to regard Councils such as Lyons and Florence as non-dogmatic, even if the disputed word could be removed (as it has been) on particular occasions for liturgical use. Bishop Kallistos and Fr. Norman Tanner, S.J. raised the possibility of developing a distinction between Ecumenical and General Councils, and several participants favored the idea of a future Ecumenical Council at which such questions could be definitively resolved. The debate concluded with the affirmation that a closer understanding and agreement between Catholic and Orthodox Christians contributes in a practical spiritual way to the living of our faith and to our growth in the love of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.—S.C.]

I. Clarifying the filioque, by Thomas G. Weinandy

On 29 June 1995, Pope John Paul II requested in a homily, in the presence of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I that a clarification be made concerning the *filioque* as found in the Latin Creed so as to "highlight its full harmony with what the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople of 381 confesses in its Creed." In response to the pope's request, the Pontifical Council

for the Promotion of Christian Unity published, on 13 September 1995, a document entitled *The Greek and Latin Traditions Regarding the Procession of the Holy Spirit*.

The document appears to have a threefold purpose. Firstly, to demonstrate, as the pope requested, that the *filioque* is in harmony with the Symbol of 381. But secondly, it attempts to reconcile the trinitarian theology of the East and the West by manifesting their mutual complementarity with regards to the Holy Spirit. And thirdly, it wants to argue that the source of the dispute between the East and the West lies primarily in the (mis)translation of words, specifically *ekporevetai* and *procedentem*, and the then ensuing misunderstanding, but nonetheless legitimacy, of the concepts they express.

In this article I wish to do three things. Firstly, I will summarize the main points of this document and, in so doing, raise some questions and concerns that I believe arise from it. Secondly, I will offer what may be possible solutions to the concerns raised, and in so doing, thirdly, offer what I believe to be a reconception of the Trinity which could possibly advance a theological consensus between the East and the West on the doctrine of the Trinity.

The document first notes that, in the final report on *The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity* unanimously approved on 6 July 1982, both Churches affirmed:

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 1:23).

While this statement, and the entire present document, rightly stresses that the Spirit proceeds from the Father as "the sole source" in the Trinity, the first question I wish to ask, and will address later, is: what is the trinitarian (theological) reason for why the Spirit "reposes," in time and especially in eternity, upon the Son?

The document then emphatically declares:

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.²

In the light of the Creed of Constantinople the document, therefore, unequivocally asserts that the Spirit "takes his origin from the Father" (*to ek tov Patros ekporevomenon*). The Father "alone is the principle without principle (*archē anarchos*) of the two other Persons of the Trinity, the sole source (*pēgē*) of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, therefore, takes his origin from the Father alone (*ek monov tov Patros*) in principle, proper and immediate manner."³ Thus, the document emphatically upholds the Monarchy of the Father as expressed in the East and equally, it believes, in the West, for Augustine states that the Spirit takes his origin from the Father "*principaliter*," that is, as principle.⁴

The document specifies that within the Greek tradition there is a distinction between *ekporevōsis* and *proienai*. The former is specific to the Holy Spirit and designates that the Holy Spirit finds his origin in the Father, while the latter is a term common to the Son and the Holy Spirit. While both the Son and the Holy Spirit proceed from the Father, only the Holy Spirit proceeds by way of *ekporevōsis*. Thus, as the document notes twice, the East and even the West, in its use of the Greek Constantinopolitan Creed, have refused the formula *to ek tov Patros kai tov huiov ekporevomenon*.

It is here that I wish to raise another theological query. While the East, and even the West, wish to apply *ekporevōsis* exclusively to the Holy Spirit, how does it differ from *proienai*? The document stresses throughout that *ekporevōsis* traditionally specifies that the Holy Spirit finds his "origin" within the Father as the sole source. However, do not both the Son and the Holy Spirit find their origin from the Father as well as proceed from the Father? What note of difference is there, then, between *ekporevōsis* and generation? The document quotes St. Gregory of Nazianzus as making a distinction between the two, but it is un-

²Later the document makes again the same resolute declaration.

³In a footnote the document states that "These are the terms employed by St. Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 36, a. 3."

⁴*De Trinitate* XV, 25, 47 (PL 42:1094-95). The document later states that the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), the Second Council of Lyons (1274), and the recent *Catechism of the Catholic Church* assert that the Father, "principle without principle," is the origin of the Holy Spirit.

clear what the distinction is.⁵ I am seeking a concept that *ekporevsis* expresses which distinguishes its specific sense of “originating” from that of the common procession and the filial generation. I am not convinced that either the tradition or this document has clearly answered this question. I will also address this issue later.

The document next states that the Orthodox do not deny all relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Son. It states that the East has given us “a happy expression” to this relationship with the formula *dia tov huiov ekporevomenon* (who takes his origin from the Father by or through the Son). The document quotes St. Basil,⁶ St. Maximus the Confessor,⁷ St. John Damascene,⁸ and the Ecumenical Patriarch, St. Tarasius,⁹ at the Council of Nicaea in 787. Even though this formula—that the Holy Spirit takes his origin (proceeds) from the Father through (*dia*) the Son—is ancient and venerated, I am not convinced it is “a happy expression,” if left to itself.

“Through the Son” was primarily used, in the first instance, to express the economic Trinity, that is, that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and is given to us through the Son. However, within the immanent Trinity the exact meaning of this formula, I believe, has never adequately been given. What does “through the Son” mean? How does proceeding “through” the Son affect the Holy Spirit? Could “through the Son” mean that this process, in some way, constitutes the Spirit as Spirit? Does “through the Son” affect the Son and so, in some manner, constitute him as Son? What is the purpose or function of this “through the Son”? How does it help constitute and give expression to the trinitarian relationships?¹⁰ I believe the formula as it stands, when applied to the immanent Trinity, contains within it the noxious residue of Platonic emanationism, that is,

⁵Gregory writes: “The Spirit is truly the Spirit proceeding (*proion*) from the Father, not by filiation, for it is not by generation, but by *ekporevsis*” (Discourse 39, 12 [SC 358:175]).

⁶Basil, *Treatise on the Holy Spirit* XVIII, 45 (SC 17: 408).

⁷Maximus the Confessor, *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* LXIII (PG 90:672C).

⁸John Damascene, *Dialogus contra Manichaeos* V (PG 94:1512B; cf. PG 94:848-49).

⁹Tarasius, *Mansi* XII, 1122D.

¹⁰The document does later offer an explanation of how this formula is to be understood. However, as will be seen, I am not convinced it is entirely the proper one.

that the Spirit proceeds/emanates out from the Father through the Son in a linear fashion. This jeopardizes both the unity of the Godhead and the equality of the Persons. In the past, when attempts have been made to address these concerns, something like the *filioque* springs up. The Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son and back again to the Father.

The document turns next to the West's use of the *filioque*. It wishes to demonstrate that it is compatible with the Constantinopolitan Creed, and so in no way jeopardizes the Monarchy of the Father nor the origin of the Spirit from him. It argues that within an Arian climate, which was still virulent in the West (especially in Spain), "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." Moreover, it notes that the *filioque*, founded upon Tertullian, had become the common tradition of the West following Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine, and Leo the Great.¹¹

What the document fails to note, but which I believe to be important, is that the *filioque* was proposed, especially by Augustine and later by Aquinas, as a way of distinguishing the procession of the Spirit from that of the Son.¹² The Spirit was not another Son nor a Grandson (as one might conjecture from the formula "through the Son") because he proceeds from the Father as the love of the Father for the Son and the love of the Son for the Father. Thus the West was able to give more precise and specific noetic content to the procession of the Spirit which distinguished his procession, and so his distinct subjectivity, from that of the Son. In a sense the West was attempting, probably unwittingly, to give specific content to the concept of the Greek *ekporevōsis*. (While I am in basic agreement with the West's *filioque*, I am not, as will be seen, in *total* agreement.)

The document proceeds to explain that the heart of the problem lies both in the translation of words and in the concepts that these words express.

Since the Latin Bible (the Vulgate and earlier Latin translations) had translated John 15:26 (*para tou Patros ekporevomenon*) by "*qui a Patre procedit*," the Latins translated the *ek tou Patros ekporevomenon* of the Symbol of Nicaea-

¹¹For relevant references to the above Fathers on this development, see the document's fn. 2.

¹²See St. Augustine, *De Trinitate* V, 12, 13; VI, 5, 7; VII, 3, 6; XV, 17, 27, 30-31, 37, 47-48; and St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, 36.

Constantinople by "*ex Patre procedentem*" (Mansi VII, 112B). In this way, a false equivalence was involuntarily created with regard to the eternal origin of the Spirit between the Oriental theology of the *ekporevsis* and the Latin theology of *processio*.

While *ekporevsis* signifies the relationship of origin from the Father alone, *processio* signifies 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."¹³ Thus the document claims that the Latin use of "*ex patre procedentem*" implicitly contained the *filioque* which was then made explicit in its later Creeds.¹⁴ Moreover, the document notes that a similar development had taken place in Alexandria with Cyril.¹⁵

It would seem from the above that the document is stating that historically, while the Greek *ekporevsis* specifies that the Holy Spirit finds his origin in the Father, that is, that the Holy Spirit comes forth from the Father, the Latin *procedere* specifies the trinitarian process which ensues from that origin, that is, that the Holy Spirit, having come forth from the Father, proceeds from the Father and the Son. Thus *ekporevsis* specifies from whom the Spirit originates and *processio* specifies the trinitarian process of communion by which all the Persons of the Trinity are consubstantially one.¹⁶

Personally, I wonder whether too much is being made over the difference between *ekporevsis* and *procedere* and the history of their translation. It must be remembered that, while there is a difference in emphasis between the two, yet the West has always said that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son and never that the Spirit proceeds from the Son and

¹³The document, in fn. 3, references Tertullian, Ambrose, Augustine, and Aquinas.

¹⁴The document provides a short history of how the *filioque* came to be inserted into the Latin Creed.

¹⁵Stemming from Athanasius, Cyril of Alexandria could maintain: "The Spirit proceeds (*proēsi*) from the Father and the Son; clearly, he is of the divine substance, proceeding (*proion*) substantially (*ousiōdōs*) in it and from it" (*Thesaurus* [PG 75:585A]). In fn. 4 the document makes reference to Athanasius, Epiphanius of Salamis and Didymus the Blind.

¹⁶I have one question that takes us to a side issue, but one that could be sticky. By saying that the Vulgate brought in "a false equivalence" in translating *ekporevetai* by *procedentem*, has the document inadvertently admitted that the Vulgate contains a mistranslation of doctrinal significance? The Council of Trent did say that the Vulgate is the official Scripture of the Catholic Church. See, Denz.-Schön., n. 1506.

the Father. The *filioque* itself contains within it the Monarchy of the Father.¹⁷ It seems to me that the heart of the problem, as intimated previously, is how one upholds the Monarchy of the Father and, simultaneously, how one specifies the differentiation of the coming forth of the Spirit from that of the Son.

The controversy over the *filioque*, according to the document, arose in the seventh century when the East translated the Western Creed into Greek using *ekporevsis* for *procedere*, and so condemned it. The document notes that Maximus the Confessor wrote a letter from Rome to Marin of Cyprus attempting to reconcile the two approaches.

According to St. Maximus, echoing Rome, the *filioque* does not concern the *ekporevsis* of the Spirit issued from the Father as source of the Trinity, but manifests his *proienai* (*processio*) in the consubstantial communion of the Father and the Son, while excluding any possible subordinationist interpretation of the Father's Monarchy.¹⁸

Following from all of the above, the document proceeds to summarize the differences between the East and the West and their complementarity.

The Catholic Church understands that the Eastern tradition expresses first that it is characteristic of the Father to be the first origin of the Spirit. By confessing the Spirit as he "who takes his origin from the Father" (*ek tou Patros ekporevomenon* [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)

Whether or not the East will be satisfied that this document has shown that the Western understanding of the *filioque* is in har-

¹⁷This is similar to the *homoousion* doctrine of Nicaea. It is always the Son who is *homoousion* with the Father and never the Father who is *homoousion* with the Son.

¹⁸The actual words of Maximus are: "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 of the Gospel of St. John. On this basis they showed that they themselves do not make the Son Cause (*aitia*) 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 *ekporevsis*—but they explained that the latter comes (*proienai*) through the Son, and they showed in this way the unity and the immutability of the essence" (*Letter to Marin of Cyprus* [PG 91:136A-B]).

mony with the Symbol of 381 and is complementary to its own trinitarian tradition is yet to be seen. I believe that, while such a document can be helpful, something more radical is needed in order to break through the *filioque* impasse. There is some attempt at this in the latter part of the document.

The last part of the document—which is where it is probably the most theologically creative, and equally where, I believe, it also expresses the theological weakness of both the East and the West—argues that a proper order must be maintained within the Trinity. I too believe that a proper order must be maintained within the Trinity, but it is in response to the document's understanding of this order that I wish to propose my own reconception of the Trinity that may hopefully contribute, in some small way, to a consensus between the East and the West, and so overcome the *filioque* impasse.

The document states that the Holy Spirit is "consecutive to the relationship between the Father and the Son, since he takes his origin from the Father as Father of the only Son." Thus, it is through the Holy Spirit that the proper relationship between the Father and the Son is perfected.

The Father generates the Son only by breathing (*proballein* in Greek) through him the Holy Spirit and the Son is begotten by the Father only insofar as the spiration (*probolē* 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.

The Spirit, the document states, "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. But the spiration of the Spirit from the Father takes place by and through [the two senses of *dia* in Greek] the generation of the Son." Quoting John Damascene, the document states that the Spirit "proceeds from the Father and reposes in the Word."¹⁹

Here the document seems to be attempting to clarify some of the questions I have raised earlier, namely, the specific nature of the *ekporevsis*, the proper understanding of the formula "through the Son," and also why the Spirit "reposes" upon the Son. If I understand the document correctly, it is saying that the Spirit comes forth (*ekporevetai*) from the Father as the Fa-

¹⁹*De Fide Orthodoxa* I, 7 (PG 94:805B); *Dialogus contra Manichaeos* V (PG 94:1512B).

ther generates the Son, that is, in the act of generating the Son the Father breathes forth the Spirit through him. It is as Father of the Son that the Father breathes forth the Spirit through him. The Son is the only begotten, then, because it is through him that the Father breathes forth the Spirit and thus the Spirit reposes upon the Son since it is through him that the Father breathes the Spirit forth.

If correct, I can accept this interpretation. What I do have difficulty with, and it is a difficulty that appears to undermine or weaken the above understanding, is the document's insistence on the sequentialism within the trinitarian process. It insists that the *ekporevsis* of the Spirit is "consecutive to the relationship between the Father and the Son, since he takes his origin from the Father as Father of the only Son." Later it states: "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." This means that only "after" the Father begets the Son does the Spirit come forth because the Spirit comes forth from the Father and the Father is only Father as a consequence of begetting the Son. In a footnote the document quotes St. Gregory of Nyssa: "The Holy Spirit is said to be of the Father, and it is attested that he is of the Son (cf. 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." Likewise the document quotes St. Maximus: "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."²⁰

I argue in my book, *The Father's Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity*,²¹ that while there is an order of origin and derivation among the Persons of the Trinity, there is not an order of priority, precedence and sequence. This order of priority, precedence and sequence, which the tradition and this doc-

²⁰See fn. 9. The quotation from Gregory is taken from Fragment *In orationem dominicam*, quoted by St. John Damascene (PG 46:1109B-C). The quotation from Maximus is taken from *Quaestiones et dubia* (PG 90: 813B).

²¹T. Weinandy, *The Father's Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd., 1995). I, obviously, cannot present here the entire argument of my book. Nonetheless, I will briefly attempt to summarize the relevant points.

ument insist upon, seems to me to be, again, the poisonous residue of Platonic emanationism, reinforced in the West by Aristotelian epistemology, that is, that something must first be known before it can be loved, and thus the Son must first be begotten by the Father before he is then loved in the Spirit. A proper understanding of the Trinity can be obtained only if all three Persons, logically and ontologically, spring forth in one simultaneous, nonsequential, eternal act in which each Person of the Trinity subsistently defines, and equally is subsistently defined by, the other Persons. The Trinity is one simultaneous and harmonious act by which the Persons are who they are, and they are who they are only in the one act of being interrelated.

Thus, to clarify and correct the document, I would argue that the Father begets the Son in or by the Holy Spirit, that is, that the Spirit proceeds (*ekporevetai*) simultaneously from the Father as the one in whom the Son is begotten. The Spirit, then, who proceeds from the Father as the one in whom the Father begets the Son, both conforms or defines (persons) the Son to be the Son and simultaneously conforms or defines (persons) the Father to be the Father.²² The Holy Spirit, in proceeding from the Father as the one in whom the Father begets the Son, conforms the Father to be Father for the Son and conforms the Son to be Son for (of) the Father and is equally conformed, defined (personed) by the Father (*principaliter*) and the Son to be the Spirit of both.

The image here is not that the Father sequentially breathes forth the Spirit through the Son, as the document seems to maintain, but rather that the Father speaks forth (begets) the Son by the breath of the Holy Spirit. The Father spirates (breathes forth) the Spirit, and it is in or by the breath of the Spirit that the Father speaks his Word. The Father speaks his eternal Word by the breath of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. It is this breath (this spirating of the Spirit), then, which conforms the Father as the Word/Truth Speaker (the Father), and it is by this

²²I do not want to collapse the “begetting” and the “proceeding.” My fear is that to do so would verge on modalism and also depersonalize the Spirit to a mere process—that of begetting. Therefore, I want to say that the Spirit proceeds from the Father in the begetting of the Son and that the Son is begotten in or by the Spirit. The begetting and the spirating are simultaneous but distinct acts of the Father. The Father begets the Son and conforms him to be Son by the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father as the one in whom the Son is begotten. This distinction may be subtle, but I believe it is necessary and, hopefully, clear.

same breath that the Word is conformed into the true Word (Son). The Son in turn breathes forth the Spirit as he cries out "Abba!" Thus the Holy Spirit is the common breath (life) shared by the Father and the Son.²³

This does not imply that the Spirit has now taken precedence over the Father and the Son. The order within the Trinity is still maintained. The Father is the unbegotten source of the Son and the Spirit. But the order within the Trinity now completely transcends an emanationist view which implies not only an order of origin and derivation, but also an order of priority, precedence and sequence, which undermines the eternal nature of the one trinitarian act and, thus, the divine equality of the Persons. While the Spirit "persons" the Father as Father and the Son as Son, he does so only because he is equally and simultaneously "personed" by the Father and the Son, since it is by proceeding from them that the Spirit becomes the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Thus the Spirit principally proceeds from the Father as the love in which the Father begets the Son and so conforms the Father as Father for the Son, and equally, but derivatively, proceeds from the Son as the Spirit who, in conforming the Son as Son, is the Spirit by which the Son loves the Father.

This reconception of the Trinity, I believe, has distinct advantages.

(1) It maintains and clarifies the Monarchy of the Father and specifies the manner, different from that of generation, by which the Spirit originates (*ekporevsis*) from the Father of the Son. The Spirit principally comes forth from the Father as the one in whom the Son is begotten. Thus the Spirit comes forth from the Father as the Father of the Son.

(2) It equally clarifies why the Spirit proceeds through and reposes upon the Son, since the Son is conformed to be Son in or by the Spirit.

(3) It clarifies and, more importantly, transcends the *filioque* debate in that the Spirit now derivatively proceeds from the Son (to the Father) only as the one in whom he has been begotten. The Love (Spirit) in whom the Father begets the Son is the same Love (Spirit) in whom the Son loves the Father.

²³It seems to me that this is what the document wishes to say, as outlined above, about the Father breathing forth the Spirit through the Son so that the Spirit reposes upon the Son, but could not clearly or consistently do so because of its mistaken notion of sequentialism within the trinitarian order.

(4) It also, and very importantly, allows the Holy Spirit to play an active role within the immanent Trinity, a role that was lacking in both East and West. Thus, one is better able to grasp why the Holy Spirit is a distinct subject/Person in his own right within the Trinity since he now, along with the Father and the Son, is an equally active partner within the constitution of the trinitarian relationships.

(5) Moreover, because of the active role of the Spirit, there is now more harmony and symmetry among the Persons of the Trinity. The one act by which the one God is a Trinity of Persons is the Father begetting the Son in the Spirit, in which act both the Father and the Son are conformed to be Father and Son for one another in the Holy Spirit.

(6) Lastly, this reconception of the Trinity purges the former trinitarian conceptions of the East and the West of Platonic emanationism and Aristotelian epistemology. In so doing it is able to conform more closely to the New Testament revelation of the Trinity where the paradigm for the present reconception is found and upon which it is based. In the New Testament the Father conceives the Son as man in the womb of Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit; the Father declares Jesus to be his Son at his baptism through the descent of the Holy Spirit; and the Father raises Jesus from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit, and so declares him to be Son of God in glory. Moreover, Christian believers are transformed into sons and daughters of the Father, in the likeness of the eternal Son, through the Holy Spirit. Thus, the present reconception of the Trinity more closely aligns the immanent Trinity with how the Persons of the Trinity actually reveal themselves within the history of the economy.²⁴

In conclusion, while I believe the document makes a good attempt at clarifying why the Latin Creed is in conformity with the Symbol of 381, and while it clarifies some of the reasons for the historical debate, and, in turn, seeks to demonstrate the complementarity of the different emphases within the East and the West, yet I believe the debate will continue precisely because there still remain theological questions yet to be ad-

²⁴The document concludes by showing that the role of the Spirit in the economy of salvation mirrors the immanent Trinity. "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."

dressed, and that they will not be overcome until a reconception of the Trinity is achieved. I am confident, through the work of the Holy Spirit, that the Orthodox and Catholic Churches will achieve full union. For this to happen, though, I believe that the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches need to formulate a new common Creed, one that embodies the past, but equally one that transcends or goes beyond the past. Thus together, the East and the West must achieve a true development of the doctrine of the Trinity, comparable to the doctrinal development obtained at Nicaea and Constantinople. This development specifically pertains to the place of the Holy Spirit, the bond of all unity, within the Trinity.

I conclude by making bold to offer what the new Creed might contain:

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord the Giver of Life, who comes forth (*ekporevetai*) from the Father as the one in whom the Son is begotten and who proceeds (*proēsi*) from and through the Son in communion with the Father, and together with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.

II. Response by Paul McPartlan

The Vatican document on *The Greek and Latin Traditions Regarding the Procession of the Holy Spirit* shows that, between West and East, Catholics and Orthodox, there is indeed what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* calls “a legitimate complementarity” of trinitarian formulations, which “does not affect the identity of faith in the reality of the same mystery confessed” (CCC, n. 248). It demonstrates the remarkable espousal of what we may perhaps call an “effective *filioque*” by such outstanding Eastern Fathers as St. Basil, St. Cyril of Alexandria and St. Maximus the Confessor, who profess that the Spirit has eternal origin from the Father *through the Son*.

I find it slightly alarming to realize that what Fr. Weinandy proposes in his paper is not that this fundamental agreement is a good thing that we should rejoice in, but rather that it is a bad thing that should embarrass us, because we have all—Basil, Cyril and Maximus included—been wrong! It is the tradition as a whole, both West and East, that he is seeking to correct, by maintaining that both sides, effectively, give priority to the generation of the Son over the procession of the Spirit in the Trinity and that this contradicts the necessary simultaneity of the three divine Persons in the archetypal *koinonia* of the Trinity.

Fr. Weinandy complains that we set up an unacceptable linear sequence by stating that the Spirit proceeds from

the Father and the Son or from the Father through the Son, and urges instead that "the Father begets the Son in or by the Holy Spirit." I can see that this scheme improves the simultaneity of the three Persons—there is a single trinitarian act of "the Father begetting the Son in the Spirit" but the scheme still seems to me to be *linear*: "the Father and Son are conformed to be Father and Son for one another in the Holy Spirit." Is not the Spirit here ultimately still the rather go-between figure that we perhaps find in Augustine, as the bond of loving communion between the Father and the Son, rather than being fully recognized as a *third Person* who is in loving communion *with* the Father and the Son?

In other words, I wonder whether the trinitarian *koinonia* actually emerges any the better from the alternative Fr. Weinandy proposes. As I read his paper, I increasingly felt the presence of Karl Rahner, enunciating his famous *Grundaxiom*: "the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and *vice versa*."²⁵ Turning to Fr. Weinandy's book, I found that he credits Rahner with having been the first to emphasize "in contemporary theology the need to model the immanent Trinity upon the economic,"²⁶ and adds that almost all contemporary trinitarian theologians have followed him in this rigid two-way identification. Almost all, perhaps, but there are two very prominent dissenters from the Rahnerian *vice versa* in the shape of Yves Congar and John Zizioulas, and I suspect that we cannot fully do justice to the Trinity as three fully acknowledged Persons in communion until we do in fact free ourselves from the grasp of Rahner's axiom.

Rahner invites us to accept not just that it is truly the one eternal Trinity that is active in the economy (that half of the principle is fine), but also that the immanent Trinity is fully and truly displayed in the economy, such that the data of the economy can be read back faithfully as details of the immanent Trinity—hence his "*vice versa*." Now the fact is that the economy shows us *two* models of the relationship between Christ and the Spirit. We are familiar with the Easter evening scene of Christ breathing the Spirit upon the apostles: "Receive the Holy Spirit" (Jn 20:22), he says. This seems to give him priority over the Spirit, and there are those who think that the *filioque* results

²⁵Cf. Karl Rahner, "Remarks on the Dogmatic Treatise *De Trinitate*," *Theological Investigations IV* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966), 87; *The Trinity* (London: Burns & Oates, 1970), 21-22.

²⁶Weinandy, *The Father's Spirit of Sonship*, 4, fn. 9.

from a reading back of this priority into the immanent Trinity. On the other hand, as the Catechism richly emphasizes, wanting to redress the traditional imbalance, Christ is the *Christ*, the *anointed one*, only because the Spirit has first been poured out upon *him* by the Father, at his conception and at his baptism (CCC, nn. 690, 727). Fr. Weinandy rightly highlights the latter, complementary data from the Scriptures in his paper, but then by reading *this* half of the data back into the immanent Trinity and restructuring it accordingly, which is what he explicitly does, he is in danger, I suggest, of being just as unilateral as the *filioquists* are when they build the immanent Trinity around the other half.

From their scriptural data, the *filioquists* favor the line, Father-Son-Spirit; from his, Fr. Weinandy favors the line, Father-Spirit-Son. We cannot escape from linearity and foster true *koinonia*, it seems to me, until we give up the whole enterprise of reading the data from the economy directly back into the immanent Trinity and appreciate the gulf of unknowability that in fact separates the two. In the final volume of his great trilogy, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Congar seriously queries whether "the free mystery of the economy and the necessary mystery of the Tri-unity of God" can be identified,²⁷ as the Rahnerian vice versa implies. Interestingly, he says: "If all the data of the Incarnation were transposed into the eternity of the Logos, it would be necessary to say that the Son proceeds from the Father and the Holy Spirit—a *Patre Spirituque*."²⁸ That, for him, is sufficient indication that the task is impossible.

Zizioulas seizes on what he regards as Congar's "brilliant" exposé of the dangers of Rahner's axiom and maintains with great seriousness himself that Rahner's vice versa risks hitching God and the world so closely together that we endanger "the absolute ontological freedom of God, i.e., his transcendence,"²⁹ and veer towards the sort of monism espoused by Plato and Aristotle, the very people from whose influence both he and Fr. Weinandy want to liberate the gospel!

It may well be asked, how in that case do we have any insight at all into the immanent Trinity? In a sense, my book

²⁷Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* III (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1983), 13.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 16.

²⁹Cf. my book, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd., 1993), 157-58.

on de Lubac and Zizioulas, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*,³⁰ is an extended attempt to answer that question. Zizioulas acknowledges that God has come to us linearly in history, according to a scheme that we could envisage either as Father-Son-Spirit or Father-Spirit-Son, and that we belong to the Church because of his call. However, he maintains that we are not to seek God and information about him by searching *backwards*, down the line of the historical, economical process. Rather, we are to seek *forwards*, towards our destiny, which is to see God as he is, in the immanent Trinity.

The Eucharist is the place where that destiny is revealed to us and tugs upon us in the present, an utterly privileged moment when God is revealed to us not linearly but communally. As long as history holds sway in our understanding of the Eucharist, the linearity of our models means we are bedeviled by the individualism that relates each of us separately to God in Christ. If, however, eschatology is allowed the upper hand, then we appreciate that we gather for that celebration around the bishop (or the priest), in a truly communal image of the gathering of the multitudes around Christ in the heavenly Jerusalem, and more deeply still, in a truly communal image of the primordial gathering of the Son and the Spirit *with* the Father in the immanent Trinity. In this case, the customary linear doxology, "Glory be to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit," is eclipsed by St. Basil's alternative doxology, "Glory be to the Father with the Son, with the Holy Spirit," which Zizioulas considers speaks of God "in terms of liturgical and especially eucharistic experience."³¹

In conclusion, I would simply reiterate my caution about the axiom highlighted above. God is freer than Rahner's vice versa allows and God's children are better free of its grasp.

III. Concluding Comments by Stratford Caldecott

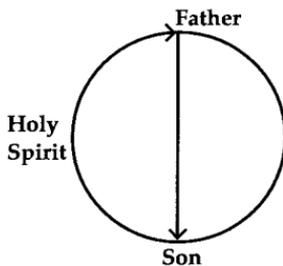
I believe Fr. Weinandy's proposal for a "reconception" of the Trinity deserves more attention than Fr. McPartlan suggests. It does not reject the tradition of speaking about the Spirit as originating from the Father "through the Son" (stemming from Basil, Cyril and Maximus, along with the Western

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., 159, 177-78, 248.

councils) as simply *erroneous*, but calls for a development of doctrine to enable us to escape a linear or sequential understanding of that relationship. Fr. McPartlan views Weinandy's own position as excessively "linear," but this may be a misinterpretation. At any rate, I wish to propose a non-linear model of the Trinity that seems to me to be in accord with Fr. Weinandy's proposal and which I hope will remove much of the force of the criticism.

Language—theological language included—is, as we know, a tissue of metaphors. Behind our most seemingly abstract thinking there usually lies a visual image or concrete analogy that has its effect in shaping our understanding. Indeed, it is often only by grasping an idea by means of an image (which may be implicit or partially suppressed) that we feel we understand it. This is something to "watch out for," if you will pardon the metaphor, especially in discussions of the Trinity. The trinitarian disputes between East and West seem in part to reflect the clash of two incompatible *image-systems*. Put crudely, the West thinks in terms of one straight line drawn from the Father to the Spirit *via* the Son; the East thinks of two straight lines from the Father, one to the Son and the other to the Spirit. We can break the deadlock by a very simple innovation. Instead of thinking entirely in straight lines, we can think in terms of a straight line within a circle. Whereas the *generation* of the Son is still represented by a straight line from the Father, the *spiration* of the Holy Spirit is represented by a circular motion. This circle begins and ends with the Father, and at its furthest point from the point representing the Father passes "through" the Son, represented by the extreme end of the diameter.



The Father generates the Son as his own eternal Image. The distance measured by the diameter between them is as wide as the gulf between Self and Other, I and Thou. All of creation (we might say with Balthasar) takes place within this space

and is enfolded by this distance. Yet the Son does not cease to be one in being with the Father, despite the difference between the two Persons. Nor do the Father and the Son cease to be of one being with the Spirit, for it is the same divine and undivided nature that is poured out in the "Person-Gift" of the Spirit by the Father and received by the Son, the Gift of the Father to the Son that becomes the Gift of the Son to the Father. The pope beautifully expresses the mutuality of this eternal act of love in a catechesis of 20 November 1985: "The Father who begets *loves* the Son who is begotten, and the Son loves the Father with a love that is identical with that of the Father. In the unity of the divinity, love is on the one side paternal and on the other filial. At the same time the Father and the Son are *not only* united by that mutual love as two Persons infinitely perfect, but their mutual Gratification, their reciprocal Love, proceeds in them and from them as a Person: the Father and the Son 'spirate' the Spirit of love consubstantial with them. . . . The Spirit is also called *Gift*."

In the terms of our diagram, the Father "breathes forth" the Holy Spirit as a circular movement that by definition returns to him. The Spirit traverses the same "distance" as the Son (the distance from Self to Other, thus constituting a third, distinct Person), but in a different way, the way of *spiration*. In a sense it is the Spirit who brings the Son back to the Father, overcoming otherness in the communion of love. It might equally be said that the Spirit leads the Son away from the Father "before" leading him back. At any rate, the Spirit is one with the Son at his own most extreme departure from the Father, before the curve starts to bend back. That unity is the communion of love that overcomes without destroying the distance of personal distinction.

The diagram, it seems to me, encodes many of the statements we might wish to make about the Trinity:

- * the Father is the unbegotten Source of Son and Spirit,
- * the Spirit originates from the Father as sole principle,
- * the Spirit proceeds from the Father,
- * the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son,
- * the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son,
- * the Son returns the love of the Father in the Spirit,
- * the Son is begotten by the Father in the Holy Spirit.

The Father, in our model, remains (eternally, not temporally) "prior" both to Son and to Spirit. The processions are rooted in him alone, as Source and fount of the Holy Trinity. Yet the Son

is generated "in" the Spirit, for as the Son "sets out" from the Father the circle of the Spirit expands by the same "distance." The Spirit comes from the Father, yet his motion passes through the Son, and in the return journey of the Spirit he perfects the image of the Father in the Son even to the extent of appearing to proceed from him—Christ's breathing out (to the Father) of his last breath from the cross, and his sending of the Holy Spirit upon his disciples, being the earthly reflections of this eternal relationship. The model captures both halves of the scriptural "data" to which Fr. McPartlan refers. And so, with Fr. McPartlan we may conclude that, as the Trinity exists in itself, so it reveals itself in the economy of salvation. Yet we must side with Congar and Zizioulas against the apparent implication of Rahner's "vice versa"—for the self-revelation of the Trinity cannot be exhaustive of the divine mystery.

As Balthasar writes in *Elucidations*: "Woe to the lover who, by whatever means, were to seek to tear from the loved one his or her final mystery! Not only is such an attempt impossible, but also by it the life of love is killed. Only that which is given by the unsearchable freedom of love has revelatory value. And so analogously (the similarity is overruled by the greater dissimilarity!) the free self-disclosure of the divine heart sheds over all our existence, thought, loving and action an incomparable light; and yet it comes from the God 'who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see' (1 Tim 6:16). And yet we are to draw near to the inaccessible one 'in boldness and confidence through our faith in Jesus Christ' (Eph 3:12) who has 'expounded' to us the inaccessible God 'whom no one has seen' (Jn 1:18)."³²

Whether my diagram proves helpful or not is, of course, of little importance. What is important, and worth praying for, is that the Holy, Undivided Trinity bless our work and forgive our sins, so that we may have some hope of overcoming the divisions that today prevent Christians from sharing the same communion of love.* □

³²Cited in *The Von Balthasar Reader* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 187.

*The next Kairos Symposium takes place in Oxford on Saturday, 16 November 1996, and will focus on the function of the papacy in the thought of Vladimir Solovyev.