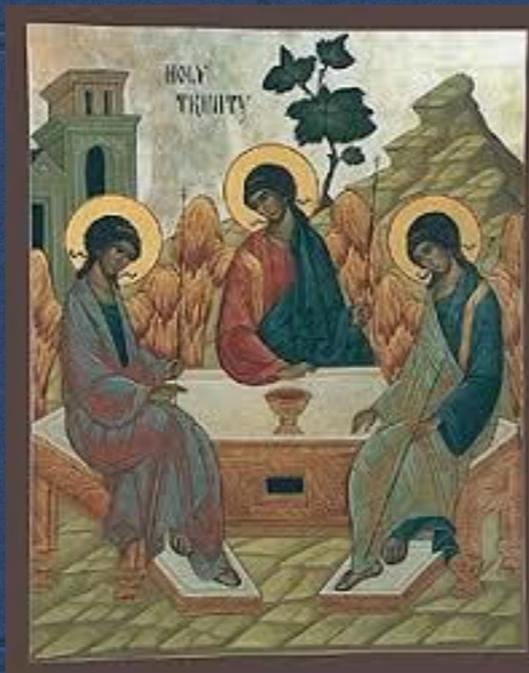


The history of the Filioque Problem





- *Nicene Creed or Creed of Nicaea*
- *Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed*
- *Icon/Symbol of Faith*
- *Profession of the 318 Fathers*
- *Profession of the 150 Fathers*



- *The Many Sided Question of the Filioque*
 - *language problem*
 - *addressing the problem of Arianism*
 - *liturgical problem*
 - *theological problem*

- *What has recent scholarship shown us about the development of the Creed:*
- *the relationship of the Creed or Creeds to Baptismal Formulas*
- *the relationship of the Creed of Nicaea to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed*
- *the influence of the Apostles Creed?*

St. Augustine of Hippo (Aurelius Augustinus 354-430)

- ✦ *“One related charge that has come especially from Orthodox theologians is that Augustine’s theology is insufficiently personal. This critique alleges that, because Augustine focuses so strongly on the unity of God, he fails to be attentive to the Father’s status as personal foundation of the divine communion. In the strongest of these critiques Augustine’s doctrine of filioque stands as proof that he saw the Trinity founded in the unitary essence.” (from *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, by Lewis Ayres, Oxford Univ. Press, 2004)*

- ✦ *In De Fide Et Symbolo (On Faith and the Creed), Augustine makes two points about the Holy Spirit:*
 - ✦ *The Spirit is not begotten like the Son. The Father is the ultimate source of the Spirit.*
 - ✦ *The Spirit is the love between the Father and the Son, and is called the love of God because He enables humans to follow Christ.*

- ✦ *Augustine's idea of the filioque is part of his attempt to explain the divine unity and simplicity of God, by understanding the three Persons.*
- ✦ *He says the Son and the Spirit proceed principally from the Father and the Spirit proceeds also from the Son, because this is given to Him by the Father. That is the Spirit is the joint communion between the Father and the Son.*
- ✦ *Augustine cautions that our temporal language can not be applied temporally to God. Whatever is said about the relational being or nature of God in three Persons is eternal not temporal.*

Eastern Christian Responses

- ✦ *Photios I of Constantinople, Gregory Palamas, and Mark of Ephesus (the Three Pillars of Orthodoxy) condemned the filioque as heretical.*
- ✦ *Gregory of Nyssa c.335-c.400. The Spirit is manifested by means of the Son. The Son seems to have a causal role in the procession of the Spirit, such that the Son is prior to the Spirit in terms of the order of causation.*
- ✦ *Maximos the Confessor c.580-662. In a context other than the Creed he felt it was a legitimate variation of the formula that the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son”.*

Yves Congar, o.p. (1904-1995)

friar, priest, theologian, Cardinal

- ✦ *“In the Orthodox interpretation, a distinction is made between the economy, in which Christ gives the Spirit causally, and theology. ..The Latin Tradition, on the other hand, has stressed an ontological continuity between the economic relationship of the communicated Spirit and the eternal relationship between the Spirit and the Word. ...Theologians in the West have habitually turned to Scripture when dealing with the relationship between the Spirit and the Word. Thomas Aquinas for example ...” (from *The Word and the Spirit*, Yves Congar, Harper and Row Publishers, 1986)*

• Congar suggested that Union might possibly be achieved between East and West in a profession of the same central dogmatic core and a mutual recognition of two different, but not contradictory theologoumena” (Congar, *The Word and the Spirit*)

• Congar felt this had been exemplified by Saint John Paul II: ... “in a letter written by Pope John Paul II, dated 25 March 1981 and entitled *A CONCILIO CONSTANTINOPOLITANO*, in which the Pope said: ‘The teaching of the First Council of Constantinople still is and always will be the expression of the one common faith of the Church and the whole of Christianity’. ... This Creed was cited by the Pope significantly without the interpolation of the Filioque.” (from *The Word and the Spirit*)

Yves Congar on theological

- Congar examined the Eastern criticism of a lack of Pneumatology in the history of Latin Catholicism. He felt that there was indeed a validity to the criticism to some degree when speaking of the theologies concerning the Eucharist, grace, the Mystical Body, and ecclesiology.
- He writes: “Then there is the question of the Church. Its structures and its life were described with a fine Trinitarian balance in the great classical period from the third to the fourth centuries. From the end of the apostolic period onwards, however, there has been a tendency to lose sight of the Pauline teaching that the Holy Spirit is, through his gifts, present and active in all believers.” (from, *The Word and the Spirit*)

- ✦ *Congar felt that the pattern of “one God, one bishop, and one faith unanimously professed, can already be seen in the writings of St Ignatius of Antioch.” (from The Word and the Spirit) This stress on the unity of God he felt was influenced by the Old Testament, Hellenistic Philosophy and Stoic Philosophy; “by which the early church was surrounded and which saw in the unity of the cosmos a reflection and a consequence of the unity of God. ...The pattern according to which there could not be ‘unum corpus,’ one Body, without ‘unum caput,’ one Head, finally came to dominate the Western Church’s ecclesiological thinking.” (from The Word and the Spirit)*

- ✦ *Congar felt there was very little deviation from this position by western Catholic theologians until Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838) in his work Die Einheit in der Kirche (The Spirit in the Church) and Blessed John Henry Newman (1801-1890).*
- ✦ *Finally, while Congar felt that the verdict of Christomonism was to a certain degree true; that since the Second Vatican Council work had been done to change it. He especially he cites the agreed text of the Catholic and Orthodox International Commission of July 1982, 'mystery of the Church and the Eucharist in the light of the mystery of the Holy Trinity'.*

✦ *He ends his reflections by writing: “To return to the question of the decisive and universal impact of the Filioque, I would agree that the criticism of ‘Christomonism’ in Western Catholicism is to some extent right, but...the differences between the two traditions are the result of two different approaches and two different constructions of the relationships between nature and what I would call the supernatural. There is also the problem of different anthropological understandings of the image and likeness of God. Finally, the theologies of the East and of the West have different philosophical orientations - towards Plato or Aristotle, and thus either towards participation or towards causality.” (from *The Word and the Spirit*)*

**THE NORTH AMERICAN NORTHODOX CATHOLIC
The Filioque: A Church Dividing
THEOLOGICAL CONSULTATION, OCTOBER 25, 2003
Issue?: An Agreed Statement**

Throughout the early centuries of the Church, the Latin and Greek traditions witnessed to the same apostolic faith, but differed in their ways of describing the relationship among the persons of the Trinity. The difference generally reflected the various pastoral challenges facing the Church in the West and in the East. The Nicene Creed (325) bore witness to the faith of the Church as it was articulated in the face of the Arian heresy, which denied the full divinity of Christ. In the years following the Council of Nicaea, the Church continued to be challenged by views questioning both the full divinity and the full humanity of Christ, as well as the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Against these challenges, the fathers at the Council of Constantinople (381)

affirmed the faith of Nicaea, and produced an expanded Creed based

probably been finished some six years earlier. The Creed of Constantinople affirmed the faith of the Church in the divinity of the Spirit by saying: “and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life, who proceeds (*ekporeuetai*) from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.” Although the text avoided directly calling the Spirit “God,” or affirming (as Athanasius and Gregory of Nazianzus had done) that the Spirit is “of the same substance” as the Father and the Son – statements that doubtless would have sounded extreme to some theologically cautious contemporaries - the Council clearly intended, by this text, to make a statement of the Church’s faith in the full divinity of the Holy Spirit, especially in opposition to those who viewed the Spirit as a creature. At the

same time, it was not a concern of the Council to specify the

text of its Creed was quoted and formally acknowledged as binding, along with the Creed of Nicaea, in the dogmatic statement of the Council of Chalcedon (451). Within less than a century, this Creed of 381 had come to play a normative role in the definition of faith, and by the early sixth century was even proclaimed in the Eucharist in Antioch, Constantinople, and other regions in the East. In regions of the Western churches, the Creed was also introduced into the Eucharist, perhaps beginning with the third Council of Toledo in 589. It was not formally introduced into the Eucharistic liturgy at Rome, however, until the eleventh century – a point of some importance for

unity of all three persons within the single divine Mystery (e.g., Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 4 and 5). Tertullian, writing at the beginning of the third century, emphasizes that Father, Son and Holy Spirit all share a single divine substance, quality and power (*ibid.* 2), which he conceives of as flowing forth from the Father and being transmitted by the Son to the Spirit (*ibid.* 8). Hilary of Poitiers, in the mid-fourth century, in the same work speaks of the Spirit as ‘coming forth from the Father’ and being ‘sent by the Son’ (*De Trinitate* 12.55); as being ‘from the Father through the Son’ (*ibid.* 12.56); and as ‘having the Father and the Son as his source’ (*ibid.* 2.29); in another passage, Hilary points to John 16.15 (where Jesus says: “All things that the Father has are mine; therefore I said that [the Spirit] shall take from what is mine and declare it to you”), and wonders aloud whether “to receive from the Son is the same thing as to proceed from the Father” (*ibid.* 8.20). Ambrose of Milan, writing in the 380s, openly asserts that the Spirit “proceeds from (procedit a) the Father and the Son,” without ever being separated from either (*On the Holy Spirit*

King Reccared at the local Council of Toledo in 589. This regional council anathematized those who did not accept the decrees of the first four Ecumenical Councils (canon 11), as well as those who did not profess that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (canon 3). It appears that the Spanish bishops and King Reccared believed at that time that the Greek equivalent of *Filioque* was part of the original creed of Constantinople, and apparently understood that its purpose was to oppose Arianism by affirming the intimate relationship of the Father and Son. On Reccared's orders, the Creed began to be recited during the Eucharist, in imitation of the

explicitly affirmed its faith as conforming to the five Ecumenical Councils, and also declared that the Holy Spirit proceeds “in an ineffable way (*inenarrabiliter*)” from the Father and the Son. By the seventh century, three related factors may have contributed to a growing tendency to include the *Filioque* in the Creed of 381 in the West, and to the belief of some Westerners that it was, in fact, part of the original creed. First, a strong current in the patristic tradition of the West, summed up in the works of Augustine (354-430), spoke of the Spirit’s proceeding from the Father and the Son. (e.g., *On the Trinity* 4.29; 15.10, 12, 29, 37; the significance of this tradition and its terminology will be discussed below.) Second, throughout the fourth and fifth centuries a number of credal statements circulated in the Churches, often associated with baptism and catechesis. The formula of 381 was not considered the only binding expression of apostolic faith. Within the West, the most widespread of these was the Apostles’ Creed, an early baptismal creed, which contained a simple affirmation of belief in the Holy Spirit without elaboration. Third, however, and of particular significance for later Western theology, was the so-called Athanasian Creed (*Quicumque*). Thought by Westerners to be composed by Athanasius of Alexandria, this Creed probably originated in Gaul about 500, and is cited by Caesarius of Arles (+542). This text was unknown in the East, but had great influence in the West until modern times. Relying heavily on Augustine’s treatment of the Trinity, it clearly affirmed that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. A central emphasis of this Creed was its strong anti-Arian Christology: speaking of the Spirit as proceeding from the Father *and*

century, both in discussions between the Frankish theologians and the see of Rome and in the growing rivalry between the Carolingian and Byzantine courts, which both now claimed to be the legitimate successors of the Roman Empire. In the wake of the iconoclastic struggle in Byzantium, the Carolingians took this opportunity to challenge the Orthodoxy of Constantinople, and put particular emphasis upon the significance of the term *Filioque*, which they now began to identify as a touchstone of right Trinitarian faith. An intense political and cultural rivalry between the Franks and the Byzantines provided the background for the *Filioque* debates throughout the eighth and ninth centuries.

Charlemagne received a translation of the decisions of the

Charlemagne convened a council in Aachen in 809-810 to affirm the doctrine of the Spirit's proceeding from the Father and the Son, which had been questioned by Greek theologians. Following this council, Charlemagne sought Pope Leo's approval of the use of the creed with the *Filioque* (Mansi 14.23-76).

A meeting between the Pope and a delegation from Charlemagne's council took place in Rome in 810. While Leo III affirmed the orthodoxy of the term *Filioque*, and approved its use in catechesis and personal professions of faith, he explicitly disapproved its inclusion in the text of the Creed of 381, since the Fathers of that Council - who were, he observes, no less inspired by the Holy Spirit than the bishops who had gathered at Aachen - had chosen not to include it. Pope Leo stipulated that the use of the Creed in the celebration of the Eucharist was permissible, but not required, and urged that in the interest of preventing scandal it would be better if the Carolingian court refrained from including it in the liturgy. Around this time, according to the *Liber Pontificalis*, the Pope had two heavy silver shields made and displayed in St. Peter's,

A new stage in the history of the controversy was reached in the early eleventh century. During the synod following the coronation of King Henry II as Holy Roman Emperor at Rome in 1014, the Creed, including the *Filioque*, was sung for the first time at a papal Mass. Because of this action, the liturgical use of the Creed, with the *Filioque*, now was generally assumed in the Latin Church to have the sanction of the papacy. Its inclusion in the Eucharist, after two centuries of papal resistance of the practice, reflected a new dominance of the German Emperors over the papacy, as well as the papacy's growing sense of its own authority, under imperial protection, within the entire Church, both western and eastern.

the Eastern and Western Churches meeting in Constantinople.

Within the context of his anathemas against Patriarch Michael I Cerularios of Constantinople and certain of his advisors, Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida, the legate of Pope Leo IX, accused the Byzantines of improperly deleting the *Filioque* from the Creed, and criticized other Eastern liturgical practices. In responding to these accusations, Patriarch Michael recognized that the anathemas of Humbert did not originate with Leo IX, and cast his own anathemas simply upon the papal delegation. Leo, in fact, was already dead and his successor had not been elected. At the same time, Michael condemned the Western use of the *Filioque* in the Creed, as well as other Western liturgical practices. This exchange of limited excommunications did not lead, by itself, to a formal schism between Rome and Constantinople, despite the views of

advances of the Turks, and Pope Gregory X (1271-1276) enthusiastically hoped for reunion. Among the topics agreed upon for discussion at the council was the *Filioque*. Yet the two Byzantine bishops who were sent as delegates had no real opportunity to present the Eastern perspective at the Council. The *Filioque* was formally approved by the delegates in the final session on July 17, in a brief constitution which also explicitly condemned those holding other views on the origin of the Holy Spirit. Already on July 6, in accord with an agreement previously reached between papal delegates and the Emperor in Constantinople, the reunion of the Eastern and Western Churches was proclaimed, but it was never received by the Eastern clergy and faithful, or vigorously promoted by the Popes in the West. In this context it should be noted that in his letter commemorating the 700th anniversary of this council (1974), Pope Paul VI recognised this and added that “the Latins chose texts and formulae expressing an ecclesiology which had been conceived and developed in the West. It is understandable [...] that a unity

Rome and the Churches of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, to discuss a wide range of controversial issues, including papal authority and the *Filioque*. This Council took place at a time when the Byzantine Empire was gravely threatened by the Ottomans, and when many in the Greek world regarded military aid from the West as Constantinople's only hope. Following extensive discussions by experts from both sides, often centered on the interpretation of patristic texts, the union of the Churches was declared on July 6, 1439. The Council's decree of reunion, *Laetentur caeli*, recognized the legitimacy of the Western view of the Spirit's eternal procession from the Father and the Son, as from a single principle and in a single spiration. The *Filioque* was presented here as having the same meaning as the position of some early Eastern Fathers that the Spirit exists or proceeds "through the Son." The Council also approved a text which spoke of the Pope as having "primacy over the whole world," as "head of the whole church and father and teacher of all

Christians." Despite Orthodox participation in these discussions, the

communion with Rome, led to a deepening of the schism, accompanied by much polemical literature on each side. For more than five hundred years, few opportunities were offered to the Catholic and Orthodox sides for serious discussion of the *Filioque*, and of the related issue of the primacy and teaching authority of the bishop of Rome. Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism entered into a period of formal isolation from each other, in which each developed a sense of being the only ecclesiastical body authentically representing the apostolic faith.

A new phase in the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church began formally with the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the Pan-Orthodox Conferences (1961-1968), which renewed contacts and dialogue. From that time, a number of theological issues and historical events contributing to the schism between the churches have begun to receive new attention. In this context, our own North American Orthodox-Catholic Consultation was established in 1965, and the Joint

both traditions clearly affirm that *the Holy Spirit is a distinct hypostasis* or person within the divine Mystery, equal in status to the Father and the Son, and is not simply a creature or a way of talking about God's action in creatures; although the Creed of 381 does not state it explicitly, both traditions confess the Holy Spirit to be God, *of the same divine substance (homoousios)* as Father and Son;

both traditions also clearly affirm that *the Father is the primordial source (archē) and ultimate cause (aitia) of the divine being*, and thus of all God's operations: the "spring" from which both Son and Spirit flow, the "root" of their being and fruitfulness, the "sun" from which their existence and their activity radiates;

both traditions affirm that *the three hypostases or persons in God are constituted* in their hypostatic existence and distinguished from one another solely *by their relation ships of origin*, and not by any other characteristics or activities;

accordingly, both traditions affirm that *all the operations of God* - the activities by which God summons created reality into being, and forms that reality, for its well-

These differences cannot simply be explained away, or be made to seem equivalent by facile argument. We might summarize our differences as follows:

1) Terminology

The *Filioque* controversy is first of all a controversy over words. As a number of recent authors have pointed out, part of the theological disagreement between our communions seems to be rooted in subtle but significant differences in the way key terms have been used to refer to the Spirit's divine origin. The original text of the Creed of 381, in speaking of the Holy Spirit, characterizes him in terms of John 15.26, as the one "who proceeds (*ekporeuetai*) from the Father": probably influenced by

the usage of Gregory the Theologian (Or. 31.8) the Council

emphasize that the “coming forth” of the Spirit begins “within” the Father’s own eternal hypostatic role as source of the divine Being, and so is best spoken of as a kind of “movement out of (*ek*)” him. The underlying connotation of *ekporeuesthai* (“proceed,” “issue forth”) and its related noun, *ekporeusis* (“procession”), seems to have been that of a “passage outwards” from within some point of origin. Since the time of the Cappadocian Fathers, at least, Greek theology almost always restricts the theological use of this term to the coming- forth of the Spirit from the Father, giving it the status of a technical term for the relationship of those two divine persons. In contrast, other Greek words, such as *proienai*, “go forward,” are frequently used

translate a number of other Greek theological terms, including *proienai*, and is explicitly taken by Thomas Aquinas to be a general term denoting “origin of any kind” (*Summa Theologiae* I, q. 36, a.2), including – in a Trinitarian context - the Son’s generation as well as the breathing-forth of the Spirit and his mission in time. As a result, both the primordial origin of the Spirit in the eternal Father and his “coming forth” from the risen Lord tend to be designated, in Latin, by the same word, *procedere*, while Greek theology normally uses two different terms. Although the difference between the Greek and the Latin traditions of understanding the eternal origin of the Spirit is more than simply a verbal one, much of the original concern in the Greek Church over the insertion of the word *Filioque* into the Latin translation of the Creed of 381 may well have been due – as

Maximus the Confessor explained (*Letter to Marinus*: PG 91, 133-136)

a) Theological:

If “theology” is understood in its Patristic sense, as reflection on God as Trinity, the theological issue behind this dispute is whether the Son is to be thought of as playing any role in the origin of the Spirit, as a hypostasis or divine “person,” from the Father, who is the sole ultimate source of the divine Mystery. The Greek tradition, as we have seen, has generally relied on John 15.26 and the formulation of the Creed of 381 to assert that all we know of the Spirit’s hypostatic origin is that he “proceeds from the Father,” in a way distinct from, but parallel to, the Son’s “generation” from the Father (e.g., John of Damascus, *On the Orthodox Faith* 1.8). However, this same tradition acknowledges that the “mission” of the Spirit in the world also involves the Son, who receives the Spirit into his own humanity at his baptism, breathes the Spirit forth onto the Twelve on the evening of the resurrection, and sends the Spirit in power into the world, through the charismatic preaching of the Apostles, at Pentecost. On the other hand, the Latin tradition since Tertullian has tended to assume that since the order in which the Church normally names the persons in the Trinity places the Spirit after the Son, he is to be thought of as coming forth “from” the Father “through” the Son. Augustine, who in several passages himself insists that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father,” because as God he is not inferior to the Son (*De Fide et Symbolo* 9.19; *Enchiridion* 9.3),

generating the Son: “the Holy Spirit, in turn, has this from the Father himself, that he should also proceed from the Son, just as he proceeds from the Father” (*Tractate on Gospel of John* 99.8).

Much of the difference between the early Latin and Greek traditions on this point is clearly due to the subtle difference of the Latin *procedere* from the Greek *ekporeuesthai*: as we have observed, the Spirit’s “coming forth” is designated in a more general sense by the Latin term, without the connotation of ultimate origin hinted at by the Greek. The Spirit’s “procession” from the Son, however, is conceived of in Latin theology as a somewhat different relationship from his “procession” from the Father, even when – as in the explanations of Anselm and Thomas Aquinas – the relationship of Father and Son to the Holy Spirit is spoken of as constituting “a single principle” of the

Spirit’s origin, even in breathing forth the Spirit to rather according to

the other is from the cause; and in that which is from the cause, we recognize yet another distinction: one is immediately from the first one, the other is through him who is immediately from the first one.” It is characteristic of the “mediation” (*mesiteia*) of the Son in the origin of the Spirit, he adds, that it both preserves his own unique role as Son and allows the Spirit to have a “natural relationship” to the Father. (*To Ablabius: GNO III/1, 56.3-10*) In the thirteenth century, the Council of Blachernae (1285), under the leadership of Constantinopolitan Patriarch Gregory II, took further steps to interpret Patristic texts that speak of the Spirit’s being “through” the Son in a sense consistent with the Orthodox tradition. The Council proposed in its *Tomos* that although Christian faith must maintain that the Holy Spirit receives his existence and hypostatic identity solely from the Father, who is the single cause of the divine Being, he “shines from and is manifested eternally through the Son, in the way that light shines forth and is manifest through the intermediary of the sun’s rays.” (trans. A. Papadakis, *Crisis in Byzantium* [St. Vladimir’s, 1996] 219) In the following century, Gregory Palamas proposed a similar interpretation of this relationship in a number of his works; in his *Confession* of 1351, for instance, he asserts that the Holy Spirit “has the Father as foundation, source, and cause,” but “reposes in the Son” and “is sent – that is, manifested – through the Son.” (*ibid.* 194) In terms of the transcendent divine

some tension with each other on the fundamental issue of the Spirit's eternal origin as a distinct divine person. By the Middle Ages, as a result of the influence of Anselm and Thomas Aquinas, Western theology almost universally conceives of the identity of each divine person as defined by its "relations of opposition" – in other words, its mutually defining relations of origin - to the other two, and concludes that the Holy Spirit would not be hypostatically distinguishable from the Son if the Spirit "proceeded" from the Father alone. In the Latin understanding of *processio* as a general term for "origin," after all, it can also be said that the Son "proceeds from the Father" by being generated from him. Eastern theology, drawing on the language of John 15.26 and the Creed of 381, continues to

understand the language of "procession" (*ekporeusis*) as de

theologically with each other.

b) Ecclesiological:

The other issue continually present since the late eighth century in the debate over the *Filioque* is that of pastoral and teaching authority in the Church – more precisely, the issue of the authority of the bishop of Rome to resolve dogmatic questions in a final way, simply in virtue of his office. Since the Council of Ephesus (431), the dogmatic tradition of both Eastern and Western Churches has repeatedly affirmed that the final norm of orthodoxy in interpreting the Christian Gospel must be “the faith of Nicaea.” The Orthodox tradition sees the normative expression of that faith to be the Creeds and canons formulated by those Councils that are received by the Apostolic Churches as “ecumenical”: as expressing the continuing and universal Apostolic faith. The Catholic tradition also accepts conciliar formulations as dogmatically normative, and attributes a unique importance to the seven Councils that are accepted as ecumenical by the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. However, in recognizing the universal primacy of the bishop of Rome in matters of faith and of the service of unity, the Catholic tradition accepts the authority of the Pope to confirm the process of conciliar reception, and to define what does and does not conflict with the “faith of Nicaea” and the Apostolic tradition. So while Orthodox

Spirit discussed above, this divergence of understanding of the structure and exercise of authority in the Church is clearly a very serious one: undoubtedly Papal primacy, with all its implications, remains the root issue behind all the questions of theology and practice that continue to divide our communions. In the continuing discussion of the *Filioque* between our Churches, however, we have found it helpful to keep these two issues methodologically separate from one another, and to recognize that the mystery of the relationships among the persons in God must be approached in a different way from the issue of whether or not it is proper for the Western Churches to profess the faith of Nicaea in terms

underdeveloped region of Christian theological reflection. This seems to hold true even of the issue of the origin of the Holy Spirit. Although a great deal has been written about the reasons for and against the theology of the *Filioque* since the Carolingian era, most of it has been polemical in nature, aimed at justifying positions assumed by both sides to be non-negotiable. Little effort has been made, until modern times, to look for new ways of expressing and explaining the Biblical and early Christian understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit, which might serve to frame the discussion in a new way and move all the Churches towards a consensus on essential matters that would be in continuity with both traditions. Recently, a number of theologians, from a variety of Churches, have suggested that the time may now be at hand to return to this question together, in a genuinely ecumenical spirit, and

Gregory Nazianzen reminds us, in his *Fifth Theological Oration* on the divinity of the Holy Spirit, that the Church's slow discovery of the Spirit's true status and identity is simply part of the "order of theology (*taxis tēs theologias*)," by which "lights break upon us gradually" in our understanding of the saving Mystery of God. (Or. 31.27) Only if we "listen to what the Spirit is saying to the Churches" (Rev 3.22), will we be able to remain faithful to the Good News preached by the Apostles, while growing in the understanding of that faith, which is theology's task.