

The Filioque Controversy: Analysing Theological Differences between the Western and Eastern Churches

Andrej Krivda¹ and Dávid Rodziňák²

Abstract

The Filioque is a theological issue that has caused a divide in the Christian Churches, with the Western Churches (Latin Church) and Eastern Churches having different understandings of the procession of the Holy Spirit. The Western Churches believe that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, while the Eastern Churches believe that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone. The Western Churches have a strong emphasis on the one divine nature, while the Eastern Churches have a strong focus on the monarchy of the Father. This difference in theological perspective has created complications in the theological dialogue between the two regions. Despite these differences, the two theological traditions share the same faith perspective and can bear valuable fruit in theological thinking. The Filioque debate has been a longstanding issue in the Christian Churches, and despite efforts to regain unity, the problem remains unresolved.

Keywords: *Filioque, Trinitarian theology, Christian Churches, Holy Spirit*

INTRODUCTION

One of the most painful moments in the history of the Church was the division in the year 1054. This historical event, known as the Great Schism, caused a separation between the Latin and Eastern theological traditions. One of the points of divergence in the traditions of the Churches was the different theology regarding the problem of the procession of the Holy Spirit. This problem, known as the Filioque, was not the decisive point that caused the rupture between the churches. Still, it has remained a theological-dogmatic problem until now, and despite many centuries of reflection, the churches have not been able to regain their lost unity.

Motivations for researching the Filioque question are twofold. On the one hand, we will analyse the churches' considerations regarding the Filioque issue. In the Western and Eastern traditions, we find a great deal of common ground in theology but also small nuances in theological thinking that can lead to different conclusions. On the other hand, we will study the history of attempts to regain unity and today's situation in the dialogue with the Orthodox.

This paper aims to present the decisive points that entered the theological debate and, unfortunately, accelerated the division of churches. We will analyse the dogmatic considerations in the Western and Eastern traditions, concluding with a presentation of theological thought in the East and the West.

As a result, we will be able to summarise the decisive points concerning the Filioque question, which to this day remains unclear and is a part of the ecumenical dialogue between the Western Church and the Eastern Church.

Theological Understanding of the Procession of the Holy Spirit in the Western Church and the Eastern Church

The problem of different understandings of the Trinity in Western and Eastern theology has caused a complication in the theological dialogue between the churches. The different ways one tries to explain the mystery of the Trinity also create problems on the level of theological explanation. The Western Church in the theological tradition emphasised the importance of the one divine nature of divine Persons, while Eastern theology emphasised the significance of the monarchy of the Father (Congar, 2013, pp. 524–525).

¹ SL.L., PhD., Catholic University in Ruzomberok, Theological Faculty, Hlavna 89, 04121 Kosice, Slovakia, E-mail: andrej.krivda@ku.sk

² ST.L., Catholic University in Ruzomberok, Theological Faculty, Hlavna 89, 04121 Kosice, Slovakia, E-mail: david.rodzinak422@edu.ku.sk

The Difference Between the Western Trinitarian Conception and the Eastern Trinitarian Conception

St. Augustine was one of the great thinkers of the Latin Church, and his thoughts strongly influenced its later development. His theology was developed during scholasticism, which gave clear limits to thinking about theology. For the Eastern Church, the theology of the Cappadocian fathers was of decisive importance. For these reasons, Latin theology emphasised the one divine nature as the starting point. However, starting from one nature, the distinction for the opposition of the eternal relations of origin occurs (Cozzi, 2013, p. 581). In Western conception, the Father is understood as unbegotten, the Son as generated, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from both. In the tradition of Eastern theology, following the example of the Cappadocian fathers, we start from the Father, the source and fullness of divinity. Starting from the Father, we also understand the Son, who proceeds from the Father by generation, and the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father by spiration (Cozzi, 2013, p. 582). The author Antonio Staglianò, in his work *The Mystery of the Living God*, also confirms this difference: "In the East, we start from the oneness of the substance of the Father to arrive at the Trinity of persons, in the West from the unity of nature to the Trinity of persons" (1996, p. 552).

This point in the conception of the Trinity is a decisive moment in the Filioque debate. The different starting points in considering the Trinity create complications in the theological dialogue between the churches. As Bruno Forte notes: "Two worlds, two forms of spiritual experience, two paradigms of theologising are compared" (2010, p. 127). However, this difference should not hinder the dialogue between theological traditions. In contrast, different approaches can also bear valuable fruit in theological thinking on both sides. Although dogmatic constructions are different, they translate the same perspective of faith (Congar, 2013, p. 440). Both thoughts speak of the same mystery of God but present this mystery from two different perspectives. One of the things that strongly influenced the difference in the development of theological thought was the heresies that the churches had to battle with. Eastern Trinitarian theology had to take a stand against Modalism, while Latin theologians were forced to oppose the late forms of Arianism and Priscillianism polemically (Müller, 1999, p. 556). These difficulties in the West led theology to the strong affirmation of the equality of the divine Persons, which also finds a particular expression in the Filioque that was inserted into the creed upon the strong insistence of Charlemagne (Hrabovecky, 2020b, s. 16). We can speak of two different theological approaches to the mystery of the Trinity, which could be characterised as personalist and essentialist approaches (Rossum, 2011, pp. 95–96).

Greek thought was influenced by the two rules that the Eastern tradition had received from the Fathers, namely the use of the resources of reason and the fight against the heresy of Eunomius and the Anomeans, who defended an entirely homogeneous and accessible knowledge of God. To think about the mystery of the Trinity correctly, the Greeks were convinced that it was necessary to follow the Scripture, the Fathers and the Councils (Congar, 2013, p. 442). It should be noted here that at the time of the Filioque dispute between the Latins and Photius, who denied thinking about the Filioque in his work *The Mystagogical Discourse on the Holy Spirit*, Photius criticised it by reasoning (Congar, 2013, p. 443). The way of theological thinking by reasoning developed first in the West during the time of scholasticism with the great theologians such as St. Anselm and St. Thomas Aquinas. On the other hand, in the East, more or less at the same time, Gregory Palamas developed his doctrine, which defended the unknowability of the divine essence, which is supernatural and utterly different from rational intuition. For the Greeks, the theological method of scholasticism represented an intolerable means of drowning oneself in the mystery of God.

Western Theology of the Procession of the Holy Spirit

Western theology on the Filioque issue finds its assurance in Holy Scripture (John 16:7; 14:16.26) (Ladaria, 2012, p. 421). The writings of the Fathers also confirm that in the New Testament, we see the statement that the Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son (Müller, 1999, p. 556). Like the Orthodox Church, the Latin Church also maintains that the Father is the source of divinity. However, in Latin conception, theological contemplation focuses not on the Father's monarchy but on God's one divine nature. All three divine Persons are equal by one essence, the starting point for Western Trinitarian reflection (Staglianò, 1996, p. 553). The divine Persons in the Trinity are constituted and differentiated by their opposite relationships

(Congar, 2013, p. 523). Despite Western conviction, the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and Son does not erase the principality of the Father. G. L. Müller also states this in his book:

For the Father always remains "*ordo relationis*" "*principium sine principio*," while the Son is "*principium de principio*" of the Spirit's procession. The Spirit does not proceed from the divine nature of the Son but also from the personal property granted to the Son. Thus, in the Holy Spirit, the circle of divinity is closed since the Holy Spirit is the bond between the Father and the Son (1999, p. 557).

St. Ambrose was the first Western theologian to affirm the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. However, it needs to be clarified whether he was referring to the procession in the immanent Trinity or to the event of the giving of the Spirit (Ladaria, 2012, p. 426). The importance of starting in the formulation of Trinitarian theology from the one divine nature was present in the Latin tradition, starting with the theological thought of St. Augustine (Congar, 2013, p. 552). He expressed the unity of the Trinity in his psychological theory. In this image, St. Augustine expressed their ineffable communion by saying that God is the absolute and most perfect Spirit who realises his own essence by thinking and willing himself (Staglianò, 1996, pp. 553–554). We find St. Augustine's theological thinking on the Trinity in his work *De Trinitate*, where we can recognise the influence caused by his polemic with Arianism (Congar, 2013, p. 521). This debate with the Arians forces the author to emphasise one and the same substance of God. In this argument, St. Augustine could defend the equality of the divine Persons. In St. Augustine's thought, the relations between the divine Persons can exist within one and the same substance in which the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one to the other. To express this distinction between the divine Persons, St. Augustine uses the word *alius*, which means the difference of subjects, and not the word *aliud*, which would mean the difference on a substantial level (Congar, 2013, pp. 522–523).

Latin theologians did not consider participation in the procession of the Spirit from the Son only in the dimension of salvation history and thus of the economic Trinity. There was always the conviction that the expression of the Trinity in the economy of salvation must be analogously grounded in the mystery of the immanent Trinity (Cozzi, 2013, pp. 600–601). In the economic Trinity, the Holy Spirit is the Gift from the Father and the Son given to humanity and proceeds from both. In the immanent Trinity, the Father in the generation of the Son gives him everything, enabling him also to participate in the procession of the Holy Spirit by continuing to be the sole source of the divinity of the Trinity (Ladaria, 2012, p. 427). The thought of the Filioque has been present in Western theological thought throughout history. Richard of St. Victor favoured the procession of the Spirit from the two. According to him, this procession takes place through the communion of love. St. Bonaventure also developed arguments in his theology to defend the doctrine of the Filioque. For him, the Holy Spirit is realised as a gift (proceeds from the one who gives it – Father), as love (proceeds from the one who loves – Son), and as a nexus (proceeds from the two extremes) (Ladaria, 2012, p. 428).

St. Thomas defends the Filioque and his decisive reason comes from the doctrine of relations because the divine Persons are distinguished from one another through them. To maintain the proper distinction between relationships in the Trinity, these relationships must be opposed. The contraposition of relations is only possible if it finds its basis in the origin. This argument leads St. Thomas to the conclusion that the opposed relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit originates in the procession of the Spirit from the Son. For this reason, St. Thomas defends the Filioque. His other argument was that the Spirit proceeds as love and is the Spirit of both. St. Thomas's argument leads to this conclusion.

Love proceeds from the Word because we cannot love a thing except insofar as we grasp it by mentally conceiving it. The Holy Spirit proceeding from love must have a relationship of origin concerning the Word (Ladaria, 2012, p. 430).

St. Thomas also reflects on the linguistic problem that caused the misunderstanding between Latin and Greek theologians. This was the problem with the verb "*ἐκπορεύεσθαι*," which the Greeks did not attribute to the procession of the Spirit from the Son, although they recognised a specific intervention of the Son in the procession of the Spirit. The Greeks attributed this term only to the Father because he is the original source.

St. Thomas also affirms that the Father is the original source of divinity and notes that the verb "*proceed*" is used in Latin to name any kind of origin. At the same time, this does not mean that the Spirit does not proceed from the Father and the Son as from a single principle (Ladaria, 2012, p. 430).

We see that Latin theology attaches great importance to the doctrine of the Filioque. In the East, we find some theologians who speak of a specific intervention of the Son in the procession of the Holy Spirit, but they have always expressed themselves with great caution. This is also represented by the formulation "*a Patre per Filium*." In the West, theologians have transitioned from economic Trinitarian theology to immanent Trinitarian theology, believing that everything the Trinity does in salvation history must find its foundation in the mystery of the immanent Trinity (Ladaria, 2012, p. 431).

The Eastern Theology of the Procession of the Holy Spirit

The Eastern tradition is more sensitive to the incomprehensibility of the immanent Trinitarian life. This is why we speak of the apophatic approach in Trinitarian theology. The Greeks start only from the Father as the source, origin, and cause of divine life. From him proceeds the Son through generation and the Holy Spirit through spiration. The Greeks persevere more in considering the relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit. In their opinion, our knowledge and divine revelation in the Holy Scriptures and history do not allow us to penetrate the ineffable mystery (Cozzi, 2013, p. 586). The importance of Eastern thought in emphasising the monarchy of the Father as the sole "*arché*" principle has its roots in the theology of the Cappadocian fathers (Cozzi, 2013, p. 599). On the relationality between the Son and the Spirit, we can only reason on the level of the economic Trinity. However, the scriptural statements do not allow us to conclude the level of the immanent Trinity. In this Eastern vision, the monarchy of the Father (origin and source of divinity) is decisive because this monarchy holds the unity of the entire Trinity (Staglianò, 1996, p. 552).

The characteristic points that cause different understandings in theological research are notable. Among these, spiritual experience with a solid aesthetic emphasis is of great value for Eastern theology (Cozzi, 2013, p. 587). If we stand before the created reality, enclosing the mystery of God and creation in rational concepts is impossible. Only a contemplative approach allows us to open up to a broader horizon. This opening to the mystery is possible through contemplation because knowledge is not enough when encountering lived experience (Lossky, 2006, p. 38). Only in contemplation as humans can we reach a deeper understanding of the mysteries of revelation (Cozzi, 2013, p. 589). Orthodox theology also relies on Scripture, which states that we are partakers of the divine nature. From the Eastern view, God is, in essence, inaccessible, but he is communicable to created beings through participation in his divine nature (Cozzi, 2013, p. 589). This divinisation theology finds its great foundation in the theology of Gregory Palamas.

Other characteristics also derive from this conception of God: the monarchy of the Father, an inaccessible source, and the focus on personal properties rather than on relations of origin and their order. Personal properties are, in Trinitarian theology, ineffable and incommunicable. For this reason, processions must remain a mystery to us (Cozzi, 2013, p. 593).

The doctrine of the Filioque creates a problem for Eastern theology that sees in this view the betrayal of the monarchy of the Father and, at the same time, the complication in the relationship between the divine Persons where the Spirit seems to become inferior. For this reason, Eastern theologians cannot say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son but prefer that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, which is not quite Photius' reaffirmation. He sought to endorse the belief that the Spirit proceeds only from the Father (Müller, 1999, p. 556).

To explain relationality in the Holy Trinity, Eastern theology used the metaphor of breathing accompanying the spoken word. In this image, the Father pronounces his Word (Son), but to pronounce the word, he needs to breathe (Holy Spirit). In this image, the Father is decisive in bringing forth the Spirit. It affirms his absolute origin in the Father and does not posit a dependence of the Spirit on the Son (Staglianò, 1996, p. 554). Orthodox tradition also recognises the difference in the procession at the terminological level. The procession of the Spirit from the Father is expressed with the verb "*ekporeúesthai*," while the procession of the Son from the Father uses the verb "*proiēnai*" (Staglianò, 1996, p. 555). This tradition of linguistic difference is not reflected in the Western

tradition, where the word "*processio*" means the communication of the consubstantial divinity of the Father to the Son and of the Father through the Son or with the Son to the Holy Spirit (Staglianò, 1996, p. 555).

In Search of a Filioque Solution Between the Western Church and the Eastern Church

After the Great Schism that caused the loss of unity between the Western Church and the Orthodox Church in the past, we can see numerous attempts to regain lost unity. However, the Filioque problem is not the only cause of the Church losing its visible unity. As we uncover history, we see the diversity of reasons that caused the division. Political reasons and the question of power also played an important role. Unfortunately, these wounds are a part of the Church's history.

On the theological level, regarding the question of the Filioque in the Western Church, despite its different dogmatic formulation from that in the Eastern Church, both formulations can be lawfully equivalent and legitimate and express the same faith (Staglianò, 1996, p. 557). By seeing the difference in the theological approach and terminological diversity, we understand even better the possibility of the coexistence of the two theological formulations.

For Western theology, the Filioque formula has been essential in Trinitarian understanding, where the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son who has received everything from the Father, recalling that the Father alone is the primary source of divinity, places the distinction between the person of the Son and the person of the Spirit. This fact allows one to think of the mystery of the Holy Trinity. However, this explanation creates difficulties in Eastern thought, where the importance of the monarchy of the Father is emphasised (Cozzi, 2013, p. 602). Regarding the terminological difficulty in the question of the theological understanding of the processions in the Trinity, we cite the author, Y. Congar:

The first difference, not to say difficulty, comes from vocabulary. Latin translates with the same verb, proceed – Augustine also says *exire – proeiri* or *erchomai* (John 8:42) and *ekporeuomai* (John 15:26). At the same time, the Greeks make a difference between these terms: the latter, reserved for the "procession" of the Holy Spirit, refers to the Father as the source. After Gregory of Nazianzus, who did not put any polemical nuance into it, the Greeks remarked countless times that Latin does not attain the subtlety of Greek. In theological Latin, the term "procession" means coming from another, in the most general sense. Thus, it encompasses the Greek *ekporeusis*, but without expressing the nuance of this term, the procession from an original and absolute principle (2013, pp. 530–531).

Union Councils

Although today we understand these differences in terminology and theological approach, the churches had to make, and still are making, a journey towards unity. Throughout history, there have been some attempts to regain unity, and one of the decisive points was the attempt to explain the diversity of views regarding the Filioque question.

The Council of Lyons (7 May - 17 July 1274)

In 1274, the Second Council of Lyons was held under the leadership of Gregory X (Franzen, 2009, p. 253). The council aimed to find the lost union between the Western and the Eastern Church (Ladaria, 2012, p. 434). Many theologians participated in the council including St. Bonaventure, who defended the "fontal fullness" of the Father in the Trinity. St. Thomas could not attend the council because he had died on his way to Lyons. The union with the Greek Church, based on Greeks' agreement to Roman Church's requests, had been decreed in the fourth session. It must be strongly emphasised that the act of this union was not caused by a deep and mature theological dialogue, but was accepted more for political reasons under pressure from the Greek emperor, who was aware of the resistance of the Orthodox pastors. The majority of clergy were against union unless an open dialogue was held (Siecinski, 2010, p. 135).

In 1283, peace between the churches was again lost, and the wound became even more profound. The dogmatic constitution signed at the council clarifies the question of the Spirit's spiration. The Spirit proceeds from the

Father and the Son "as from one principle and by one spiration."³ This expression clarifies the difficulty that Photius saw in double spiration (from the Father and the Son) (Cozzi, 2013, p. 605). After this clarification, it is clear that the spiration comes from a single principle, the Father, and that the Son is not another principle of divinity but has received everything from the Father ("a single principle... a single spiration"). Despite the council's clarification, questions still need to be answered. One hypostasis must proceed from the other hypostasis because if it proceeded from the common nature, this would mean that the Spirit also proceeds from itself or that it is inferior to the Father and the Son. This required a deeper theological clarification.

The Council of Florence (26 February 1439 - August 1445)

The council started in Basel (1431-1437), moved to Ferrara (1438) and finally ended in Florence. Its primary objective was to regain the union with the Orthodox Church that had been lost for so long (Congar, 2013, p. 623). The Greek emperor and the patriarch of Constantinople also participated in the council, and during one period, the pope himself was present (Franzen, 2009, p. 263). It must be said that the interests of the Eastern Church included regaining unity with the Latins and seeking military aid against the ever-growing enemy, the Ottomans. At the end of the council, the decree of union *Laetentur coeli* (6 July 1439) was signed, which even mentioned the primacy of the Church of Rome and the Filioque. Unfortunately, after a short period, this agreement again lost its value under political circumstances (the East did not receive military aid from the West) (Franzen, 2009, p. 263).

Although political interest played a prominent role, theological disputes that dealt with the Filioque addition also occurred. The discussion on adding the Filioque had already begun in Ferrara (1438) (Congar, 2013, p. 624). Although some Greek fathers were very critical of the Latins for adding the Filioque, the letter of Maximus the Confessor helped to unblock the misunderstanding among theologians (Ladaria, 2012, p. 435). For the Greeks, Latin thought seemed heretical, as Y. Congar explains in his book: "Instead of the Triad, the Latins seemed to place two dyads: the Father – Son, and the Father Son – Holy Spirit" (2013, p. 625). In the end, an agreement was reached between the churches, recognising the legitimacy of adding the Filioque because the Orthodox Church defended the truth and the recognition of the validity of both theological formulations. Even the Orthodox formulation "from the Father through the Son" contains the dimension of Son's participation in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. For the Latins in a sense of "*beginning*" and for the Greeks in a sense of "*cause*" (Cozzi, 2013, p. 610). It is also stated that both traditions recognise the Father as the sole source of divinity. The Father is the principle without any principle, while the Son is the principle from the principle.

Many later authors criticised Council's conclusion that it strongly favoured Western position despite a certain recognition of both theological formulations (Ladaria, 2012, p. 435). However, it must be emphasised that the Council did not require Orthodox churches to add the Filioque to the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol because it was not a question of substantial enlargement but of clarifying faith in the Trinity (Müller, 1999, p. 557). Finally, on 6th July 1439, the Emperor and thirty-nine Orientals signed the act of union (Ladaria, 2012, p. 435).

Unfortunately, this union remained valid for a short time and only on paper. The decisive point in losing hope for the union was the siege of Constantinople (1453) when the West failed to provide military aid to the East. In 1472, the union was formally revoked (Franzen, 2009, p. 264).

The Roman Clarification of 1995

A great rediscovery of the pneumatological dimension of the faith of the Western Church occurred at the end of the nineteenth century and during the twentieth (Groppe, 2004, p. 101). A significant author who developed a broad and deep thought of pneumatology was a French theologian and cardinal Yves Congar. According to him, pneumatology and ecclesiology were inseparable in patristic theology (Groppe, 2004, p. 100). Also, due to

³ CONSTITUTIONS OF THE SECOND COUNCIL OF LYONS (Tanner, 1990, s. 314): "We profess faithfully and devotedly that the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son, not as from two principles, but as from one principle [*tantum ab uno principio*]; not by two spirations, but by one single spiration ... this is the unchangeable and true belief of the orthodox fathers and doctors, Latin and Greek alike ... With the approval of the sacred council, [we] condemn and reprove all those who presume to deny that the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son, or rashly to assert that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as from two principles and not as om one."

the effort made in the field of pneumatology, it was possible to better understand the different traditions of the churches and to see why they emphasised some specific aspects of the mystery of the Trinity. This deepening of knowledge helped the ecumenical dialogue to find new solutions to affirm the legitimacy and complementarity of both traditions. A remarkable step took place on 13th September 1995 after Pope John Paul II requested the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity to publish the document *The Greek and Latin Traditions Concerning the Procession of the Holy Spirit* (Cozzi, 2013, p. 622).

The document did not aim to take up the whole issue of Trinitarian doctrine but focused on a mission of ecumenical dialogue. The document offers a perspective that both theological traditions deal with the same faith, but the circumstances in which these traditions were developed cause changes in the understanding of the Trinitarian mystery. The first contribution we find in the text is the affirmation of the monarchy of the Father, the one true principle of divinity. The text also explains the terminological difference of the term "proceeding," which is expressed in the case of the procession from the Father with the word "*ekporeúsis*" and in the case of the procession of the Spirit from the Son with the term "*proiēnai*" (Siecieski, 2010, p. 210). This fact of the terminological differentiation was present in the theological tradition among authors such as Athanasius, Cyril, and Maximus the Confessor (Cozzi, 2013, pp. 622–623).

Another significant contribution to the church dialogue concerns the affirmation of the one principle of the Holy Spirit. The document denies orthodox preoccupation that the doctrine of the Filioque contains the doctrine of the two principles of the Spirit (Cozzi, 2013, p. 623). The Spirit proceeds from the Father as such, but the Father, in relationship with the Son, engages him in the procession of the Spirit (Siecieski, 2010, pp. 210–211). In addition, the third important note in the text of the document is the specification of the Spirit's role in the mystery of the Trinitarian life. The doctrine of the Filioque seemed dangerous to the Greeks because of the diminished importance of the Spirit, who appeared passive in comparison with the Father and the Son, who are active in their spiration of the Spirit. Author A. Cozzi, also affirms:

In truth, the declaration clarifies that it is in the Spirit that the relationship between Father and Son draws its "Trinitarian perfection." However, in the Trinitarian order, the Spirit is "consecutive" to the relationship between Father and Son (2013, p. 624).

It must be remembered that a sign of the fruit that the publication of the document bore was the very positive reactions of the Eastern Churches. One of the points most appreciated by the Orthodox was the terminological distinction of the terms "*ekporeuesthai*" and "*proiēnai*" in the Vatican document (Siecieski, 2010, p. 211).

We can conclude that the document *The Greek and Latin Traditions Concerning the Procession of the Holy Spirit* issued by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity represented a remarkable step by the Western Church towards the Eastern Churches:

- Affirming the normative and dogmatic value of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol of 381;
- By better explaining terminological and theological nuances that also depend on historical circumstances;
- By using the language of dialogue and openness to the other;
- Inviting a deeper search for the mystery of the Trinity, particularly the Person of the Holy Spirit.

All of this creates a sufficiently wide space for the dialogue and, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for the walk towards the truth with brothers and sisters in faith.

The Issue of The Procession of The Holy Spirit in Our Time

Even if the Filioque issue does not play such a decisive role in a state of division in the contemporary Church, we cannot confirm that the Filioque issue is entirely resolved (Ladaria, 2012, p. 436). Congar, in his book *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, emphasised that the most important thing to be done between the churches in order to proceed in the ecumenical dialogue is to recognise the unity of the faith and, at the same time, to accept the legitimate difference of dogmatic expressions dealing with the Trinitarian mystery (Congar, 2013, p. 641). Although Catholic theology seeks to recognise a complementarity of both expressions within the framework

of Orthodox theology, many authors still struggle to accept the Latin view despite the given explanations. Luis F. Ladaria also confirms the possibility of the coexistence of these two traditions:

In this sense, the "*per Filium*" is an explanation of the symbol that is for no reason contrary to it, just as the "*Filioque*" must not be contrary to the monarchy of the Father, the source of the entire Trinity, the sole origin of the Son and the Holy Spirit (Ladaria, 2012, p. 438).

Due to this difficulty in accepting the Western formulation of the Filioque, theologians are trying to find the most appropriate expression for the procession of the Spirit from the Son in order to proceed in ecumenical dialogue with the Orthodox Churches (Cozzi, 2013, p. 601). Some Latin authors have even proposed removing the addition of the Filioque from the Creed. Although these authors recognised the doctrine of the Filioque as theologically correct, they state that its introduction to the Symbol was canonically irregular, and the suppression of the Filioque could be a sign of humility and fraternity in dialogue with the Eastern Churches (Congar, 2013, pp. 643–645). Among the authors who proposed the suppression of the Filioque from the Symbol was Y. Congar.

However, some theologians have the opposite view. Among these, we can name W. Kasper, who sees no point in renouncing the Western tradition if the Orthodox Churches recognise the legitimacy of the doctrine of the Filioque (Kasper, 2018, pp. 296–297). Kasper is in harmony with John Henry Newman's understanding of development of doctrine who insists upon the catholic doctrine being historically developed from the apostolic teaching and who sees this development as expected and positive (Hrabovecky, 2020a, s. 121-122). On the part of the Latin Church, symbolic steps have also been taken to regain unity with the Orthodox world. During some Latin celebrations, the Symbol was recited without adding the Filioque. Among these occasions, we could mention the solemn celebration in St. Mary Major Basilica in 1981 (John Paul II), the celebration in St. Peter's Basilica (John Paul II) on 29th June 1995 with the presence of Bartholomew I (Patriarch of Constantinople), and later in 2008 Pope Benedict XVI also repeated this sign with the presence of Patriarch Bartholomew I himself (Ladaria, 2012, pp. 441–442). Indeed, also on the Orthodox side, there have been attempts to move closer to the West. V. Bolotov played a notable role. He does not consider the doctrine of the Filioque to be heretical, even though in his opinion, it is canonically incorrect. At the same time, in the Orthodox Churches, he proposes to distinguish between the dogma (of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father) and the theologoumena (Photius' addition "from the Father alone") (Cozzi, 2013, p. 633).

CONCLUSIONS

As for the conclusions of the issue we are dealing with, we can see that, thanks to the profound research and theological reflection the churches have carried out over the centuries, they are on a way to unity. We have discovered that the history of division is also strongly connected with politics, and the question of power has decisively played a role in history. This rift has not been healed entirely so far. Delving deeper into the theological reflections of East and West, we have discovered that both traditions seek to protect the same truths of faith. However, the historical circumstances they encountered throughout history affected their theological thinking differently. The search for answers in different contexts causes an original position in theological thought. For this reason, we have also discovered different nuances in the theological traditions in the Filioque problem.

This diversity should not be a sign of disagreement, but rather a sign of the theological richness of different traditions that seek to protect the same truth of the faith. Indeed, despite the rupture within the Church, pastors have never lost the will to recover unity, as evidenced by their attempts towards regain the lost unity. Even if they have not completely solved the problem, we can safely say that these meetings between the churches were an excellent enrichment for both parties. Particularly in recent years, the fruit of dialogue leading towards an attitude of acceptance and a language of love has manifested itself. The Roman Declaration from 1995 is one of the most visible fruits of the dialogue.

Of course, we still have a long way to go before giving a clear conclusion without question marks. Numerous Catholic and Orthodox authors have already expressed consideration for future research in the field of the dogmatic problem of Filioque. The starting point for rediscovering unity must be a deep understanding of the

other. It means understanding the historical context, recognising the value of theological development over the centuries, and appreciating the tradition preserved so far. Only by listening to each other, we can walk together towards the intact unity found in Christ. For now, we must be able to bear the burden of humanity stained by the power of sin that causes division. Despite all the difficulties the Church has encountered over the centuries, she must preserve this attitude of trust and hope towards her Lord, who always reveals his eternal mystery to her in truth. Thus, we can witness the words of Jesus: "I have told you these things so that you may have peace in me. You will have tribulations in the world, but have confidence; I have overcome the world!" (John 16:33).

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