



The Unexpected God: How Christian Faith Discovers the Holy Spirit

THE DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
7TH ANNUAL
HOLY SPIRIT LECTURE AND COLLOQUIUM

**SEPTEMBER 23, 2011
POWER CENTER BALLROOM**

Featuring Special Guest

Fr. Brian E. Daley, S.J.

The Catherine F. Huisking Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame, IN



**DUQUESNE
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For the Mind, Heart and Spirit



The Spirit in the New Millennium:

“The Spirit in the New Millennium: The Duquesne University Annual Holy Spirit Lecture and Colloquium” was initiated in 2005 by Duquesne University President Charles J. Dougherty as an expression of Duquesne’s mission and charism as a university both founded by the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and dedicated to the Holy Spirit. It is hoped that this ongoing series of lectures and accompanying colloquia will encourage the exploration of ideas pertaining to the theology of the Holy Spirit. Besides fostering scholarship on the Holy Spirit within an ecumenical context, this event is intended to heighten awareness of how pneumatology (the study of the Spirit) might be relevantly integrated into the various academic disciplines in general.

This lecture may be read online at www.duq.edu/holy-spirit. You can contact us at holyspirit@duq.edu. Radu Bordeianu, Ph.D., serves as the director.

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- Dr. Elizabeth Dreyer
Professor of Religious Studies, Fairfield University

BIOGRAPHY LECTURER

Fr. Brian Daley, S.J., is a 1961 graduate of Fordham University. He studied at Oxford from 1961 to 1964 as a Rhodes Scholar, then entered the Society of Jesus. After theological studies in Frankfurt, Germany, and ordination to the priesthood in 1970, he returned to Oxford, to pursue a D. Phil.

Fr. Daley then taught historical theology for 18 years at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Mass., before moving to Notre Dame in 1996. He is the author of *The Hope of the Early Church* (1991, 2002), *On the Dormition of Mary: Early Patristic Homilies* (1998), and *Gregory of Nazianzus* (2006) as well as numerous articles and book chapters. He is also the translator of Hans Urs von Balthasar's, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor* (2003).

The Unexpected God: How Christian Faith Discovers the Holy Spirit

Fr. Brian E. Daley, S.J.

In the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, St. Luke tells us of Paul's second arrival in the great city of Ephesus, on the west coast of Asia Minor, probably shortly after the year 50. Other early disciples, including Paul, had been there briefly before, and had entered into discussions with local synagogue members about whether Jesus was the Messiah, the fulfillment of Israel's age-old hopes. Apollos, a well-educated Alexandrian Jew who had himself come to believe Jesus was the fulfillment of God's saving plan, apparently had spent some time in Ephesus before Paul, and had argued impressively that Jesus was truly the Messiah Israel had been waiting for. He seems to have found some receptive listeners. But Apollos was, in some ways, a self-taught Christian, and although a deeply committed one, had some odd ideas and religious practices; for example, Luke tells us, "he knew only the baptism of John" – that expression of conversion and moral readiness for the Kingdom of God that Jesus himself had received at the Baptist's hands. So Paul, on his second arrival in the city, got in touch again with the small community of followers of Jesus there – converts of Apollos, perhaps, numbering some twelve in all – and asked them, in the course of their discussion, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?" Their answer was marked by disarming directness: "No, we have not even heard that there *is* a Holy Spirit."¹ Paul had work to do, and we read that he began by re-baptizing them "in the name of the Lord Jesus," and laying hands on them so that they would receive the Holy Spirit as well. The result was a charismatic outpouring of spiritual gifts that became a familiar feature of the early Christian experience of faith.²

Despite the fact that Jesus talks about the Holy Spirit with some frequency in the Gospel of John, and that Paul, in his letters, speaks of the Spirit as the one who enables the believer to call Jesus "Lord" and to cry out to God, "Abba, Father!"³ – as the giver of the spiritual gifts that bind the community together as Christ's living body⁴ – many Christians through the ages might in all honesty, echo what the Ephesians said. It has often been remarked, for instance, that Western theology since the high Middle Ages has shown an underdeveloped awareness of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. While this is not universally true, surely it does seem right to say that the devotion and theological understanding of most ordinary

Catholic and Protestant lay people, as well as those of most catechists and Sunday preachers, have been focused far more on the person of Jesus than on the Spirit he gives us.⁵ In a powerful piece published in a German Catholic newspaper at Pentecost in 1970, Karl Rahner suggested that this tendency to ignore the Holy Spirit in the Church's daily life may be due not simply to ignorance or inattention, but also to a pervasive, if largely unarticulated *fear*:

We in the Church would be able to discover and experience the Spirit of the Lord more easily and more powerfully if we were not afraid of him. He is in fact the Spirit of life, of freedom, of confidence, of hope and joy, of unity, and thus of peace. We might suppose that humans long for the Holy Spirit more than anything else. But this is the Spirit who constantly breaks through all frontiers in order to give us these gifts, who seeks to deliver up everything to the incomprehensibility which we call God... It is not surprising that we are afraid of him. For we always want to know what we are involved in, we want to have the entries in our life's account-book clearly before us and to be able to add them up to a figure that we can clearly grasp. We are frightened of experiments whose outcome cannot be foreseen... We are afraid of the Spirit. In a word, he is too incalculable for us.⁶

Rahner surely has a point, not only in indicating the psychological unease experienced by Church leaders before the unpredictable impulses and insights that Christian faith, since Paul, has seen as works of the Spirit – what we might call the “charismatic” or unstructured side of Christian experience. He also seems right in suggesting that this dynamic dimension of our life of faith, this mighty divine “wind, that blows where it will”⁷ and that rushed on the disciples at Pentecost, is all the more mysterious, and thus all the more fearful for us, because it is rooted in God's own fundamental incomprehensibility: in what the Truth at the heart of things really *is*.

In a famous article first published in 1948, “The Procession of the Holy Spirit in Orthodox Trinitarian Doctrine,”⁸ Vladimir Lossky argues that the divergent understandings of the personal origin of the Holy Spirit within the Mystery of God, which have developed in classical Orthodox and Catholic theology since the time of St. Photius and the Carolingians – the dispute over the word *Filioque* in the Latin version of the Creed of Constantinople, and the differing theological assumptions behind it – are “the sole dogmatic grounds for the separation of East and West.”⁹ Although, to most readers, Lossky's understanding of the Western doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit “from the Father and the Son” seems excessively slanted today, because it is

so dependent on the Western treatments of the Trinity in post-Reformation scholastic handbooks and on the characterization of Eastern and Western Trinitarian theology popularized by Théodore de Regnon at the end of the 19th century,¹⁰ Lossky's underlying critique of much Western pneumatology seems, in one respect, at least, well-taken: in attempting to express how the unknowable God of Israel, and Jesus the Lord, and the Spirit sent forth by Jesus on the Church, are all a single divine substance, differentiated by geometrically conceived "relations of opposition" that alone allow them to define each other in reciprocal terms, Latin scholastic theology ran the risk of transforming our awareness of the holy Trinity into a logical conundrum about unity and multiplicity, "the God of the philosophers and savants."¹¹ The Spirit, for many Western Christians, has been unintentionally distanced from the experience of the faith that "seeks understanding." And if it is true that theology, like the wider life of faith, wants to "know what it is involved in," to get a handle on its accounts,¹² then the Holy Spirit, the one who personally realizes the inconceivable presence of God in each and in all of us, constantly reminds us that such control of the infinite lies beyond our grasp. That itself may be the Spirit's greatest gift to his Church.

My argument here is simply that our consciousness of the Spirit's immediacy to us as graced creatures - our sense of his differentiated, supremely "personal" relationship both to us and to the unknowable God, along with our inability to fit the Spirit into either historical or philosophical categories - is really what most distinguishes this "person" of the Trinity within our feeble, struggling attempts to make sense of the Mystery of God. In the Spirit, we come face to face with God as uncontrollable reality. And this very closeness and elusiveness, I suggest, presents us with the Spirit's crucial importance for our faith as Christians.

Gregory of Nazianzus, the Patristic age's greatest promoter of a conception of God who is at once both a single, transcendent reality - the source and ground of all that is - and the three distinct, timelessly related personal forces whom we call Father and Son and Holy Spirit,¹³ confessed his own embarrassment at being unable to specify the personal characteristics and the mode of origin of the Spirit as clearly and unambiguously as that of the Son. The relationship of Father to Son, after all, is presented to us first of all in the description of Jesus in the Gospels: Jesus prays to the God of Israel as "Father," and urges his followers to pray in the same way;¹⁴ he claims to have received from his Father, the "Lord of heaven and earth," unique personal knowledge and a unique role as revealer of God's identity.¹⁵ In the Fourth Gospel, he speaks of himself as dwelling *in* the Father and having the Father dwelling *in* himself,¹⁶ and also as being in the world in order to reveal the Father and demonstrate the Father's love for the disciples;¹⁷ he brings about

perfect unity between his disciples and his Father, modeled on his own unity with him as Son.¹⁸ By contrast, God's Spirit – whom Gregory clearly identifies as the Holy Spirit of the Trinity – is presented in the Scriptures in much less concrete terms: a breath of God moving over the primeval waters,¹⁹ the energy enabling skilled craftsmen to carry out God's design for the Tabernacle,²⁰ the inner force that comes suddenly on human beings to enable them to move and speak, ecstatically, as God wills.²¹ So Gregory begins his longest treatment of the Spirit – his *Fifth Theological Oration* – with what he suggests is the criticism of the opponents of the Nicene, and so (for him) the Trinitarian, conception of God: "What would you tell us, they say, about the Holy Spirit? From what source do you thrust on us a strange and unscriptural God (*xenon theon kai agraphon*)?"²² The Gospels do not offer us the same sort of concrete images that it provides to help us understand how Jesus, the prophet and wonder-worker, might be related to Israel's God as Son to Father. The Spirit, in the Gospels, is mainly a promise for the future, a comforter for the disciples when Jesus is no longer with them,²³ a counselor sent from the Father who will bear witness to what Jesus has taught,²⁴ a continuing guide who will glorify Jesus in his absence by taking up the divine truth Jesus has received from his Father and "declaring it" to them.²⁵ But who and what is this comforter and guide? How shall we imagine him? In comparison with the familiar, human figure of the Savior in Scripture, the Spirit appears to many, Gregory concedes, as "a strange and interpolated (*parengrapton*) God," a force whose divine status and personal identity, conceived by him and his contemporaries as somehow on a par with Father and Son, has in fact simply been read into the sources of revelation by a seemingly expansionist piety.

It is important to keep in mind that Gregory's oration on the Holy Spirit is the fifth and final part of a *series* aimed at affirming the conception of God affirmed by the Council of Nicaea in 325, and hotly contested over the fifty years that followed. This Nicene faith affirmed that Jesus, the Lord, was not simply God's unique representative, the divine agent of creation and savior of the universe (which Arians of every stripe would have conceded); in addition, it made it clear that Jesus, as Son of the Father, is *God* in the same sense that the Father is: "from the substance of the Father," "of the same substance with the Father;" the *same thing* that the only God of Israel is! Jesus is "God with us."

In these discourses on the Trinity, Gregory, too, clearly affirms the Nicene understanding of Christ the Son:

He seems to me, after all, to be called Son because he is the same thing in essence (*tauton... kat'ousian*) as the Father is. And not only

this, but because he is *from* him. He is an ‘only Son,’ not because he is the only one from the only One, and only that, but because he is this in a unique way, and not as bodies [are from bodies]. And he is “Word,” because he is related to the Father in the way a word is related to a mind: not just because of the passionless character of his generation, but also because he is continuous with him, and proclaims him.²⁶

Gregory then provides a quick summary of all the Biblical titles applied to Jesus, in his role as revealer of God and Savior of fallen humanity, much as Origen had done at the start of his *Commentary on John*; in response, he urges his readers to enter into the process of contemplating these titles, for the sake of their own salvation: “Walk through them,” he says, “through those that are lofty, in a divine way; through those that have a bodily ring, with human compassion; or rather, walk through all of them in a divine way, that you may become God, ascending on high from here below, through him who has come down from on high for our sakes.”²⁷ Asserting the full divinity of Christ the Son, in other words, depends on meditating, with the guidance of the Church’s confessions, on what the Scriptures tell us about Jesus – taking a leisurely stroll through their images and puzzling formulations, learning from them his true identity through careful and reverent personal reflection.

So at the start of his next and final piece in the series – the *Fifth Theological Oration* – Gregory turns with undoubted daring to apply this same method of contemplative argument to the third agent named in the baptismal formula: the third “member” of the triune God, whose unity and distinction and reciprocal balance has come, for him, to constitute the final summation of apostolic faith in the saving divine Mystery. He writes:

We are so confident in the divinity of the Spirit – the one whom we honor – that we even begin our account of the divinity from there, applying the same terms to the Trinity, even if this may seem bold to some. The Father ‘was the true light, which enlightens every human being coming into the world.’²⁸ The Son ‘was the true light, which enlightens every human being coming into the world.’ The ‘other Advocate’²⁹ was ‘the true light, which enlightens every human being coming into the world.’ ‘Was’ and ‘was’ and ‘was’ – but it *was* one thing! Light and light and light: but *one light*, and one God! This is what David imagined long ago, when he said, ‘In your light we shall see light.’³⁰ Now we have seen and proclaim: from the light of the Father we grasp the Son as light, in the light of

the Spirit – a concise and simple account of what God is as Trinity (*tēs Triados theologian*).³¹

After fourteen centuries of confessing God as Trinity in the Churches of East and West – of taking the baptismal formula attested in the last chapter of Matthew’s Gospel as a conceptual model for understanding the ultimate reality of God at the heart of all things – all of this surely will sound familiar, even formulaic, to most of us. It was anything but this at the end of the fourth century, however; Gregory’s acknowledged genius as an interpreter of theological traditions and a shaper of theological phrases rests, above all, on his success at bringing together for the Church this staggeringly simple summary of what Biblical faith is really about. This is why he is called “Gregory the Theologian” – Gregory, who teaches us how to talk about God! To see his achievement in perspective, and to grasp how, in the process, he engages the very vagueness of what Scripture has to say about the third *hypostasis* in our confession, the mysterious “Spirit of God,” we must take a quick look backward at the discussions that led up to his original attempt to formulate a distinctively Christian *theologia*.

I. BEFORE NICAEA

Since the time of Matthew’s Gospel, at least, Christians baptized new members of the community “into (*eis*) *the name* [meaning power, presence, mysterious reality] of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” teaching them to observe all Jesus’ commands (Matt. 28.19-20) within the community of faith. Faith in Jesus seems from the beginning to have affirmed, in a real and profound sense, that Jesus was and is the divine Savior of humanity, and that he has sent on his church the life-giving, prophetic Spirit who personally enables the faithful to call Jesus “Lord,” and to address God as “Father.” Yet, as John Henry Newman observes in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* in 1845, it would be a serious misreading of early Christian authors to assume that they had, before the last quarter of the fourth century at the earliest, the same unifying, formally cohesive sense of how these divine agents interact that we find articulated by Gregory in his *Orations*.³²

In the first or second decade of the third century, for instance, Tertullian of Carthage – the first major Latin-speaking theologian – wrote an entire treatise against someone he calls “Praxeas” (suggesting, perhaps, “trickster” in Greek), who apparently was promoting a radically unitary conception of the God who has created and redeemed us. Using all his rhetorical and lexically creative skills, Tertullian insists that although there is certainly only one God, and one *oikonomia* or divine “plan of management” within human

history, still Christians believe

that this one, only God has also a Son, his Word, who proceeded from himself, by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made. Him we believe to have been sent by the Father into the Virgin, and to have been born of her, being both Man and God...; who sent also from heaven from the Father, according to his own promise, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, the sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Spirit... [The Church's rule of faith holds] that all are *of One*, namely by unity of substance; while the mystery of the economy is still guarded which distributes the unity into a trinity, setting forth Father and Son and Spirit as three: three, however, not in quality but in sequence, not in substance but in aspect, not in power but in manifestation, yet of one substance and one quality and one power, seeing it is one God.³³

Tertullian's language here anticipates, in many ways, what will later become main features of the orthodox understanding of God in both East and West. Yet his main purpose – which is to argue that the causal unity or *monarchia* of God is not contradicted by the Church's affirmation that the Father is distinct from the Son, the Son other than the Spirit – is achieved according to the material model of a living organism, or of the distribution of fluid. The position of the Son within the flow of existence, as receiving his “substance” from the Father, is precisely what enables him to pass that substance on to the Holy Spirit, and to maintain both their unity and their distinct order.

For the Spirit is third with God and his Son, as the fruit out of the shoot is third from the root, and the irrigation canal out of the river third from the spring, and the illumination point out of the beam [of light] third from the sun: yet in no respect is he alienated from that origin from which he derives his proper attributes. In this way the three (*trinitas*), proceeding by intermingled and connected degrees from the Father, in no respect challenges the monarchy, while it conserves the quality of the economy.³⁴

A Greek-speaking contemporary of Tertullian, whose identity and works have long been shrouded in uncertainty, was a certain Hippolytus, probably a native of Asia Minor who came as a presbyter to Rome at the end of the second century.³⁵ His little treatise *Against Noetus*, perhaps written

between 210 and 215, seems to be taking issue with the same radically unitary understanding of God's agency in history that Tertullian had rejected, although that theology was clearly fashionable in Roman circles at the time. Hippolytus' work is intended to affirm that the singleness of God, grounded in Biblical faith, is not incompatible with God's being in some sense manifold, as well.

For God was not Word-less nor Wisdom-less nor Power-less nor Mind-less. But everything was in him, and he was himself the All... For everything that has come into being he contrives through Word and wisdom – creating by Word and setting in due order by Wisdom. So it is that he made [things] in accordance with his will... This Word, which he has in himself and is invisible to the world that is being created, he makes visible. In uttering what was formerly a sound, and in bringing forth light out of light, he sent forth in the creation, as its Lord, his own Mind, which previously was visible to himself alone... And so it is that another took his stand beside him. Now when I say 'other', I am not saying there are two gods. But it is like light out of light, or like water out of a spring, or like a sunbeam out of the sun. For there is a single Power that comes out of the All. But the All is the Father, and the Power that comes out of him is the Word.³⁶

For Hippolytus, the relation of Son or Word to God is described here in mental, anthropological terms, as well as in the images of material flow that Tertullian uses; nothing is said explicitly here about the Holy Spirit. A few paragraphs further on, however, Hippolytus cautiously tries to include the Spirit in his description of this same divine "management" or "economy" by which God forms history. He does this now in clearly personal terms:

While I will not say that there are two gods – but rather one [he insists] – I will say there are two "persons" (*prosōpa* though the Father is one, there are two persons – because there is the Son as well; and there is a third thing, too – Holy Spirit... For the one who commands is the Father, the one who obeys is the Son, and the one who promotes mutual understandings is the Holy Spirit. He who is Father is over all things, and the Son is through all things, and the Holy Spirit is in all things.³⁷

Basing his argument on Jesus' language in the Gospels, Hippolytus seems to have no difficulty in speaking of Father and Son as two individuals

in relationship with each other: two “persons,” like two characters in an ancient play. But the Holy Spirit is not so clearly profiled in Scripture, and Hippolytus prefers to speak of the Spirit simply in terms of what this unifying force of God achieves in the world after Christ, as “a third economy” which we experience simply in the grace God gives us.

II. THE NICENE CONTROVERSY

Most of the fierce debates that occupied the Church’s attention in the middle of the fourth century centered on the status of the Son, whom Christians recognize as incarnate in Jesus, and on the character of the Son’s unity with the God of Israel, whom he called “Father.” The familiar creed formulated at the Council of Nicaea in 325 – doubtless an expanded form of an earlier baptismal creed used in Antioch and Palestine – is mainly focused on giving a more precise definition of how the Son is related to the Father, without being simply identical with him. In the context of the debates between Arius and the bishops who opposed him, it seemed sufficient simply to add at the end, without further explanation, “and [I believe] in the Holy Spirit.” By the late 350s, however, as consensus gradually formed around the appropriateness of confessing the Son to be *substantially* one with the Father, attention turned again to the Spirit. What “substantial” status, what ontological role, could orthodox faith understand the Spirit to have? Does the Spirit operate in history as a distinct agent – a character in the drama of salvation, a *persona*? Or is the Spirit better conceived as Hippolytus seems to have conceived of him (or it): as grace, as God’s sanctifying operation, as an initiative or “economy” that need not be thought of as having personal status.

The first hint we have of a new reflection on the Spirit as an active and distinct aspect of the divine reality emerges in Athanasius’ correspondence with bishop Sarapion of Thmuis, an Egyptian friend and supporter, who is also an important source for our knowledge of early Christian liturgical prayer. Athanasius, during his third exile from his see (356-361), received a letter from Sarapion, probably in 359 or early 360, telling him of a group in the Egyptian Church who were promulgating the notion that “the Spirit of God,” spoken of in the Bible, is simply a way of talking about God’s gracious activity, or perhaps even about a noble creature, differing only in degree from other spirits or angels; in any case, the Spirit must be thought of as completely *unlike* the Son, who is the Savior – an agent of God’s work in the world. Language in the Scriptures referring to the Spirit as accomplishing the works of God on his own initiative is to be taken, the group seems to have taught, as simple “figures of speech” – *tropoi*; hence the condescending label Athanasius uses for them, the *Tropici*.

Athanasius' response to Sarapion has come down in the form of four letters,³⁸ in which he argues from the Scriptures, and from the traditional Christian understanding of the Spirit's role in baptism and in the life of the Church, that the Spirit clearly plays a distinctive role in the salvation of believers, which is coordinate with that of the Father and the Son, as a full and active collaborator in the continuing drama of human divinization. Athanasius' line of argument is similar to what he employs to establish the full Godhead of the Son in his pro-Nicene writings: if the Spirit is a creature, or a simple force or instrument of Father or Son, how can he be presented in so many parts of Scripture as a distinct agent, as one who plays an active role in uniting believers to the Son, and through the Son to the Father? Paul and John suggest, for instance (Rom 8.9-11; John 17.21), that it is the Spirit who makes the Son present in us, just as the Son makes present the Father; similarly, the Spirit is said to "glorify" the Son (John 16.14), as the Son "glorifies" the Father (John 17.4).³⁹ Just as the Son definitively reveals "what he has heard from the Father" to the world (John 8.26), the Spirit will "take from what belongs to the Son" and declare it to his disciples after Jesus' glorification (John 16.14).⁴⁰ Athanasius even suggests that the Spirit is the "image" of the Son, just as the Son is the "image" of the Father. As a result, the Son is "in" the Spirit in the same way that the Father is "in" him: as an original or archetype is "in" what represents it.⁴¹ So Jesus' statement that the Spirit of Truth "proceeds from the Father" (John 15.26) is only true "because it is from the Word, who is confessed to be from the Father, that [the Spirit] shines forth and is sent and is given."⁴²

Athanasius' point here is not so much to offer a way to think about the Spirit's origin as something mediated by the Son, as to insist that the Spirit is, in some way, a personal agent in the work of salvation, just as the Son is, and that the Spirit must therefore be "proper (*idion*) to the Son and not alien (*xenon*) to God."⁴³ The analogy Athanasius draws is really centered on his conviction that the Son – and therefore the Spirit the Son sends – must both truly be divine agents if they are to work human enlightenment and renewal. He writes:

If, in regard to order (*taxis*) and nature (*physis*), the Spirit bears the same relation to the Son as the Son does to the Father, will not he who calls the Spirit a creature necessarily hold the same to be true also of the Son? For if the Spirit is a creature of the Son, it will be consistent for them to say that the Son is a creature of the Father.⁴⁴

Given the sayings of the New Testament about the Spirit and his relation to Jesus, Athanasius considers it imperative that Christian faith regards the

Spirit, too, as an uncreated agent who collaborates in the saving work of God.

The situation in Asia Minor in the mid-370s, when the great Cappadocian Fathers were developing their own way of understanding the Spirit and his work, seems to have been somewhat different from what Athanasius had confronted in Egypt twenty years before. Usually ancient sources identify opposition to the identification of the Holy Spirit as a divine agent with Macedonius, the bishop of Constantinople who was forced to resign from his see in 360, apparently under pressure from the radical wing of the anti-Nicene or “Arian” party led by Eunomius of Cyzicus.⁴⁵ Macedonius seems to have sympathized, in the late 350s, with the “homoiousian” group associated with Basil of Ancyra, who sought to find a middle ground between the supporters and opponents of Nicene theology by speaking of the Son as “like the Father in substance”; according to the historian Sozomen, Macedonius originally also regarded the Holy Spirit, encountered in baptism and the other “mysteries” or sacramental actions of the Church, as essentially subordinated to the Son, a “minister and servant” in the realization of God’s gracious work.⁴⁶ Whatever his own original position, Macedonius seems to have been basically a moderate in the developing discussion of how the three divine agents or “hypostases” in the work of salvation are all God - unwittingly lending his name to the so-called “Spirit-fighters” of Asia Minor, as they were categorized in the 360s. “Macedonianism” later became the designation for a heresy Macedonius himself may not have directly promoted.⁴⁷

III. THE CAPPADOCIAN FATHERS AND THE TRINITY

The earliest influential work to argue directly against these Asian doubts about the status of the Spirit was Basil of Caesarea’s famous treatise *On the Holy Spirit*, which was probably completed in its present form about 375. The origin of the first part of this work was apparently a long theological discussion Basil had had the previous year with a friend and former mentor, Eustathius, bishop of Sebaste in Eastern Asia Minor. A charismatic and influential ascetic, Eustathius – like his protégé Macedonius – seems also to have assumed that Father, Son and Holy Spirit referred to an ordered ranking of actors within God’s saving work. Though both Eustathius and Macedonius were willing to affirm that Christ, presented in the Gospels as Lord and Son, is “like the Father in all things,” even “substantially like” the Father, the character of the Spirit who comes on Jesus, and whom Jesus promises to his followers – the Spirit’s “personality,” one might say, and way of working – was less clear in Scripture and tradition. The Spirit, Eustathius and his followers agreed, is our own means of union with the Lord Jesus, our own access to the transcendent God. But precisely because the Spirit is so centrally involved

in Christian experience, so interior to holy individuals and to the Church – and particularly because the form of monastic life for men and women that Eustathius energetically fostered probably understood itself as thoroughly driven by the Spirit of God – Eustathius seems to have identified the Spirit as part of God’s gracious *work* of transformation within creatures, rather than as *part of the Divine Mystery* itself.

Basil’s treatise on the Spirit apparently used the notes of his own formal conversation with Eustathius about the Spirit’s status – largely a discussion of the implications of the various doxologies and prayers in which Father, Son and Holy Spirit are invoked, with their connecting prepositions – as the first eight chapters of a much longer reflection on just what the tradition of Christian faith and worship, drawing from the Scriptures, implies about the faces we discern in God. Basil clearly wants to affirm that the Spirit is, in some sense, a coordinate agent, along with Jesus and the one Jesus calls “Father,” in accomplishing the transforming and deifying work of God in human history; the Spirit, too, is called “Lord” in II Cor. 3.17, and is given glory in the Church’s prayer alongside Father and Son. If the Father is the *originating source* (*archē*) of all that is, the Son is the instrument or “*creative cause*,” and the Spirit the “*perfecting cause*.”⁴⁸ So Basil points to the implied unity of action and nature shared by the three, although – unlike Athanasius fifteen years before – he noticeably stops short of applying to the Spirit the term *homoousion*, “of the same substance,” that Nicaea had ascribed to Son and Father.⁴⁹ Gregory of Nazianzus, his friend and associate in ministry, in a celebrated exchange of letters from the late 370s, criticizes Basil for “managing” the Truth in an overly diplomatic way, by avoiding this inflammatory term.⁵⁰

In the *Fifth Theological Oration*, which we have discussed above, Gregory of Nazianzus himself is much less hesitant to affirm that Father, Son and Spirit are distinct agents who nevertheless share a single, if transcendent, substance. Unlike the multiple gods assumed by the Greeks to be at work in nature, he writes, “each of them has unity with what is joined to it as much as it does with itself: by identity of substance and of power.”⁵¹ Gregory is primarily concerned throughout this essay to affirm that the Spirit, for whom the Scriptures do not provide the same kind of unambiguous personal profile that they do for the Son, is clearly a being who exists and acts for himself, yet always within the unique reality of God. If the Spirit is simply an activity (*energeia*) ascribed to God, how can he be described in Scripture as himself speaking and acting and being “grieved”;⁵² “but if he is a creature, how is it that we believe in him, or that we are perfected in him?”⁵³ But Gregory then raises the inevitable conundrum implied by such Scriptural evidence: if the Spirit is God and not a creature, how do we imagine and speak of his place,

his *origin* within the divine Mystery?

Surely he is either unbegotten or he is begotten. But if he is unbegotten, there are two beings without cause. But if begotten, you will make a further distinction: either this Spirit is out of the Father, or out of the Son. And if he is out of the Father, there are two Sons, who are brothers... But if he is from the Son, then God the Grandson has appeared before us!⁵⁴

Apparent problems abound, but Gregory insists here, amidst abundant ironic comment on his critics, that we must seek for “some higher form of relationship” by which Son and Spirit are related to the Father and to each other, free from images of gender and physical relationship.⁵⁵ Relying for his paradigm on John 15.26 in which Jesus refers to “the Spirit, who proceeds (*ekporeuetai*) from the Father,” Gregory goes on to suggest that “the proceeding one” (*to ekporeuton*) should not himself be thought of in terms of fatherhood or sonship, but should somehow be conceived of as *between* the Father, who has no source, and the one who is begotten as Son:

Insofar as he proceeds from him he is not a creature; but insofar as he is not begotten, he is not a Son; and insofar as he is between (*meson*) the Unbegotten one and the Begotten, he is God... What, then, is ‘procession’? You tell me what the unbegottenness of the Father is, and I will explain in natural terms the begetting of the Son and the procession of the Spirit, and we will both be driven out of our minds for trying to peer into the Mystery of God! Who are we to do these things, we who cannot know what lies just under our feet...?⁵⁶

For Gregory here, to speak of the Spirit as “proceeding” from the Father is to leave his relationship appropriately undefined, but to suggest it is different from, even in some way prior to, the begetting of the Son whom we recognize, in his incarnate existence, as Jesus.⁵⁷

In May and June of 381, an assembly of Eastern bishops was called together by the Emperor Theodosius at Constantinople, under the leadership of the aged bishop Meletius of Antioch, to confirm what had by then become a pro-Nicene consensus in the Eastern Churches, which seem to have been weary by now with decades of wrangling over the likeness or unlikeness of Son to Father. The creed produced by the Council of 381 (which many modern Christians simply know, imprecisely, as “the Nicene Creed”) was essentially the formula of 325, in slightly simplified terms, with an expanded

final section dealing with the role of the Spirit in history and in the being of God. Following Basil's cautious example, it stops just short of calling the Spirit "God" or affirming he is "consubstantial" with Father or Son; it emphasizes simply that the Spirit is "adored and glorified" along with them, and that he is given to God's people in charisms – he "spoke through the prophets." By appending to this brief description phrases on the unity and sanctity of the Church, on baptism, and on Christian hope for everlasting life, the Creed also suggests that the Spirit lies at the root of these core Christian experiences of common life and hope. In itself, the creed of 381 seems not to have been intended to define the Spirit's relationship to either Father or Son, or to affirm or deny any detailed understanding of the Spirit's origin; alluding to John 15.26, as Gregory had done, it simply affirms that the Spirit "proceeds from the Father." God the "source without source (*archē anarchos*)" is ultimately the one who gives the Spirit his substantial and individual being.

IV. AFTER THE CAPPADOCIANS

During the decades surrounding the Council, approaches to formulating the mysterious character of the Spirit's origin within the Mystery of God varied widely. For instance Didymus the Blind – the Alexandrian exegete and theologian – in his own treatise *On the Holy Spirit* (roughly contemporary with Basil's), insists that the Spirit shares both the substance and the saving will of Father and Son, because of the radical, ordered simplicity of God: "For the Son is nothing else but what has been given him by the Father, and the Spirit is no other substance besides that which has been given him by the Son."⁵⁸ Another treatise *On the Holy Trinity*, ascribed to Didymus and probably from the same Alexandrian milieu (whether or not it is actually Didymus' work), argues that even though different terms – "begetting" and "proceeding" – are used in Scripture for the origins of Son and Spirit, both terms suggest that the two share equally in the work of creation and renewal, "for all begetting and proceeding are realized by beings that are equal and like each other."⁵⁹

Cyril of Alexandria, in his works on the Trinity as well as in a number of polemical writings on the person of Christ, has a great deal to say about the Holy Spirit, as well. He insists that the Spirit is truly divine and proper (*idion*) to the divine substance – "as it were, a quality of his holiness."⁶⁰ Using the Eusebian image of the fragrance that makes perfume present to the senses, even though it is materially distinct from the perfume itself, Cyril affirms that the Spirit, who is "as it were, the fragrance of God's substance," gives to creatures "a share in that substance which is above all things."⁶¹ In fact, Cyril seems to conceive of the distinctive role of the Spirit in the world to be its intimate, internal presence within intelligent creatures, enabling them to

participate in the inner life of God; from our perspective as creatures, at least, the Spirit is thus “the completion (*sympplērōma*) of the holy Trinity.”⁶² So in his seventh *Dialogue on the Trinity*, Cyril has his interlocutor ask whether the Spirit is consubstantial with Father and Son, and answers: “Certainly, since it is not otherwise possible for the holy ones to be enriched by participating in God than by receiving the Spirit. For we are made perfect by becoming ‘sharers in the divine nature’.”⁶³ The Spirit involves us in the life of God, and in that sense plunges us personally into God’s ineffable and indefinable life; for humans, salvation and the fulfillment of God’s creative design require no less. In perfecting us, he perfects the very Mystery of God.

Before leaving this quick tour of Patristic reflections on the Holy Spirit, it seems essential at least to look briefly westwards at Augustine of Hippo’s approach to the Mystery of the Spirit’s person and deity, if only because Augustine is often identified by modern theologians, of East and West, as being the originator of a style of thought that so emphasizes the substantial unity of Father, Son and Spirit that their personal distinctions are lost from view. It would be impossible to discuss Augustine’s theology of the Holy Spirit, or his original, often highly speculative engagement with the Mystery of the triune God, with any adequacy here. Still, it is important to note that while Augustine does, in several sections of his monumental treatise *On the Trinity*, affirm that the Spirit “proceeds” from both the Father and the Son together, as some of the Latin Fathers had done before him, he also states clearly, in both his early address *On the Faith and the Creed* (393), and his late *Handbook (Enchiridion) on Faith, Hope, and Love* (421) that the Spirit is “the Spirit of the Son” but proceeds only from the Father.⁶⁴

In the *De Trinitate*, as readers sometimes forget, Augustine begins his reflections with the Scriptures and the Church’s traditional faith. So he affirms, near the start of the first book, that

According to the Scriptures Father and Son and Holy Spirit, in the inseparable equality of one substance, present a divine unity; and therefore there are not three gods but one God; although indeed the Father has begotten the Son, and therefore he who is the Father is not the Son; and the Son is begotten by the Father, and therefore he who is the Son is not the Father; and the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son, but only the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, himself coequal to the Father and the Son, and belonging to the threefold unity.”⁶⁵

The Holy Spirit, he goes on to insist, is certainly not a creature, but “true God”,⁶⁶ equal to Father and Son eternally, sharing in the ineffable reality or

“substance” of all that it is to be God. In Book 2 of the same work, Augustine reflects on John 16.13, where Jesus tells the disciples the Spirit, in time to come, “will glorify me, because he will receive of mine and will tell it to you,” adding immediately that “all that the Father has is mine; that is why I said, ‘He will receive of what is mine and will tell it to you’.” Augustine points out that this depiction does not make the Spirit any less than the Son in status, “since both the Son is from the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father”; yet they are not two sons, because, in a way impossible to explain fully, in God being a Son is different from “proceeding.”⁶⁷

In Book 5, Augustine is directly engaging the recently-coined Cappadocian terminology of universal and individual, substance or essence and hypostasis or “person,” as such language is applied to the Mystery of God. He further reflects on how the Father can be the source of both Son and Spirit without having generated two sons. He concludes that Scripture suggests the Spirit “comes forth” in a different way: “he comes forth, you see, not as being born but as being given, and so he is not called son, because he was not born like the only-begotten Son, nor made and born adoptively by grace like us.”⁶⁸ Augustine identifies the characteristic feature of the Spirit’s existence here, in other words, as the fact that he is *given* rather than begotten or created. As “God the gift,” he exists eternally within the divine Mystery, given by Father to Son and returned by Son to Father in a structured sequence of causation beyond time, and ultimately given by both of them to creatures, as the center of our divinization. It is that characteristic of being *given* that, for Augustine, provides us with the sharpest clue to who the Spirit uniquely is, and how the Spirit uniquely works. And since the Scriptures present Jesus both as speaking about the Spirit as “sent by the Father” in his name (John 14.26) and as given by Jesus himself “from the Father” (John 15.26) to the disciples and the Church, Augustine concludes that both Father and Son must be seen (although in different ways) as his givers, and so as the source of this powerful gift. He writes:

If therefore what is given also has him it is given by as its origin, because it did not receive its proceeding from him from anywhere else, we must confess that the Father and the Son are the origin of the Holy Spirit; not two origins, but just as Father and Son are one God, and – with reference to creation – one creator and one Lord, so, with reference to the Holy Spirit they are one origin...⁶⁹

Yet Augustine makes it clear that this ability to be, with his Father, the giver and personal source of the Spirit, belongs to the Son in a way that is itself derived in his generation, along with his very Sonship: bestowed by

the Father eternally on the Son as part of begetting him. So he specifies, in Book 15:

In this triad only the Son is called the Word of God, and only the Holy Spirit is called the gift of God, and only the Father is called the one from whom the Word is born and from whom the Holy Spirit principally proceeds. I added 'principally,' because we have found that the Holy Spirit also proceeds from the Son. But this too was given the Son by the Father...⁷⁰

Part of the reason for future misunderstandings between East and West, surely, is the slightly different understandings of the word “proceed” that developed in the context of Trinitarian thought. For Augustine, it is a generic notion implying movement from one point to another, as from source to goal; for the later Greek tradition, it came to have a more technical yet less positively defined meaning, based exclusively on John 15.26: origin within God that is *not* generation. Yet both Augustine and his Greek contemporaries recognize that the Holy Spirit’s way of coming forth from God is not such as to make the Spirit a second son of the Father, let alone a grandchild; and all of them recognize that it is the coming of the Spirit into the world, as the one sent from God by the risen Christ, as from Christ’s own divine fullness, that gives us the only glimpse we have of the relationships that constitute the Mystery of God.

In the centuries that followed the Council of 381, as most of us know, Christians of East and West became increasingly embroiled in debate over the precise relationship of the Spirit to Father and Son in his origin, and on the legitimacy of the insertion of the word *Filioque* – “and from the Son” – into the Biblical statement of the Creed of 381 that the Spirit “proceeds from the Father.” This fateful addition first appeared in the Latin translation of the Creed that was probably promulgated for Spanish use by the Third Synod of Toledo in 587 – a translation that was later promoted as the only orthodox profession of faith by the Emperor Charlemagne and his theological advisors at the end of the eighth century. From that point on, what had begun as a small but characteristic difference in theological terminology and homiletic idiom quickly grew into a difference of how East and West conceived Christian orthodoxy – and the *Filioque* controversy came menacingly into its own!⁷¹

V. IMAGINING THE SPIRIT TODAY

My argument here, in the perhaps overabundant sketch I have offered of the beginnings of a Christian theology of the Spirit Christ has given us, is that the question of the Spirit’s “hypostatic” origin within the divine

Mystery – whether the Spirit “proceeds” forth eternally from the Father alone and is sent out into creatures, in time, by the Son, as Photius and the Eastern tradition would argue, with increasing intensity; or whether the Spirit “proceeds” from Father and Son together, although in differentiated ways, and is first of all the personal expression of their mutual love and communion, as Carolingian and medieval theologians in the West, inspired by Augustine, would insist – is really not the issue that mainly caught the attention of theological writers either in East or West during the formative, pre-medieval centuries. For the Fathers, as I have tried to show here, the abiding question was *how to conceive of the Spirit* at all. Scripture tells us often about “the Spirit of God,” working in the prophets and people of Israel, sent by God on Jesus at his baptism, given to the Apostles and their hearers in Jerusalem on the first Christian Pentecost. But of what and of whom is the Bible speaking? Is this Spirit an instrument of God’s saving work on earth? Is it a way of talking about God’s actions of sanctification and illumination in created minds – God’s power, God’s creative grace? Is “the Spirit of God,” perhaps, a mediating creature itself – a kind of angel? Can this Spirit itself be *God*? And if it is, can it be truly *distinct* from the transcendent Father, from whom all reality flows forth? Can it be truly *distinct* from the risen Lord, who sends it?

The Scriptures, Gregory of Nazianzus reminds us, really offer us little direct help in answering these questions. Both in the Old Testament and the New, the God of Israel reveals himself increasingly as the *only God*, the sole creator, the one companion and guide of Israel, “a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,” but who holds all people responsible for their moral actions (Ex 34.6-7). This God is unique and beyond depicting, yet he has a decided personality. Jesus, the man from Nazareth whom Christians call Lord and Son of God, ultimately came to be recognized by mainstream Christians – by the mid-fourth century, at least – as also *God* in the full sense of the word, sharing in the very substance, the inconceivable reality, of the one he calls “Father”: in the words of the creed of Nicaea, he is “God from God, light from light, true God from true God.” But the Spirit of God, the Spirit sent by Christ, is surely much more difficult for the faithful reader of Scripture to characterize and identify; the Spirit does the work of God, but seems to lack a “face” – a *prosōpon*; the Spirit is a gift, a force, but seems not to have the individual concreteness that Greek philosophy referred to by the term *hypostasis*. So Gregory depicts his opponents as arguing against him – against his radical affirmation that the Holy Spirit, too, is fully divine, and is part of a Trinity of equal “persons” – that such a notion of God is “strange” and “unscriptural,” something “read into” Biblical faith. His own efforts, as well as those of his

contemporaries Athanasius and Didymus, Basil and Augustine, are precisely to argue on the basis of Scripture and of the Church's continuing experience of prayer and baptism and inner transformation, that the Spirit given to us is also God, also "personal" in the mysterious yet central sense of that word – that the Spirit must also be active, powerful, unpredictable, yet capable of defining personal relationships within the Mystery of God – if the salvation promised us in the Gospels is to come to realization.

The problem with the Spirit, for early Christian writers and, I suspect, for us still, is that he – or she, or it! – is simply *too close to us*, too much involved in our own lives of faith, to be adequately conceived or imagined. The Father, as transcendent source of all that is, lies beyond our imagining, yet is gradually revealed in the Hebrew Bible as having a distinctive and complex profile; he is a majestic character who spoke to Abraham and Moses, whose judgments and promises are sketched out by the prophets. The Son stands next to us in the fullness of Jesus' human form, speaks our language, hangs on the cross in the fullness of his human vulnerability, is transfigured on Mount Tabor to reveal the fullness of human, as well as divine, beauty. The Spirit, by contrast, descends on the prophets and Jesus in inner power, appears over the heads of the Twelve as "tongues of fire" (Acts 2.3), and sweeps them on into a new age of human history "with the sound like the rush of a mighty wind" (Acts 2.2). Like any favorable wind, the Spirit is behind us, the fire brightens our lives from above, the power transforms us within; yet none of these figures is really objective and visible as an actor before us; none of them has a "face." Cyril of Alexandria speaks of the Spirit simply as "the one who brings the Trinity to its completion (*to symplērōtikon tēs triados*),⁷² and who for that reason "brings the renewal of creation to fulfillment," as well.⁷³ In the work and by the presence of the Spirit, the involvement of God in our world enfolds us and communicates to us mysteriously, beyond ideas, the structure of God as God is. So Gregory of Nazianzus – in an oft-cited passage from the *Third Theological Oration* that truly stretches the limits of Biblical discourse – remarks of the distinctive Christian conception of God:

For this reason the Monad, set in motion from the beginning into a Dyad,⁷⁴ has come to rest in a Triad. And this, for us, is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The one is begetter and emitter, but I mean this in a way beyond passion and time and bodies. Of the other two, one is begotten, the other emitted – or however else one wants to speak of them, when all visible connotations are completely removed.⁷⁵

What we want to say about God, on the basis of the Scripture and the

experience of living faith, has a direction and an order (*taxis*), a “movement,” which can only be regarded as complete when the Spirit of God is understood to be God’s hypostatic and consubstantial completion. But the character of his coming-forth from God and within God is beyond imagining.

In an article published in French in 1981, the distinguished Romanian Orthodox theologian Dumitru Staniloae reflects on the Christian belief that the Holy Spirit, as the one who brings the Trinitarian life of God to its fullness and completion, is really the one who allows Father and Son to experience each other as persons in communion: to find completion in each other, to “rejoice” in each other, without dominating each other or competing with each other. For precisely that reason, it is the Holy Spirit of God *in us* who enables us, too, to move beyond human individualism and isolation, and to discover the unity in love, the “transparency” to God and to each other, that is the foundation of personal relationships and of Christian community. Fr. Staniloae writes:

By the Spirit, we become conscious of our unity with Christ, and among ourselves as the Body of Christ. By the experience of the Spirit’s power, Christ becomes transparent for us. It is also by the Holy Spirit that God sustains the world, acts within it, and – by means of the mystery of the Church – leads it to its goal (*telos*), to its realization. It is by the Holy Spirit that he realizes his project of salvation and of the divinization of the world... So just as in the Trinity the Holy Spirit reveals that the Father and the Son are distinct yet one in essence, united by love, so the Holy Spirit consecrates us as distinct persons, while building us into a Church, uniting us by the joy of full communion. By the Holy Spirit, we enter into the love of Father and Son...⁷⁶

Perhaps this powerful yet undefinable, unimaginable drive of the Spirit within us towards communion with God and with each other is really the main reason we modern Christians tend to be, as Rahner reminds us, *afraid* of the Spirit, resistant to his power. As believers living in a Church, we want to be able to define ourselves over against one another, to hold onto – or retrieve – doctrines and practices that give us identity, to find our own distinctive profile within a resistant or indifferent world. Yet, right as this instinct is, the Spirit seems to urge us on beyond it: towards freedom, towards the “new law” of “the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge” (Eph 3.19),⁷⁷ towards a new, spiritually unified creation that is, at the very least, exciting, but also unfamiliar and threatening. As Cardinal Walter Kasper wrote in the 1970s, “The Spirit is, both within God and between God and

the world, the bond of unity: a unity in love which, in that it unifies, also sets us free. He is the freedom and the overflow of the love of God... He is the creative, renewing power, which irresistibly leads all reality, through Jesus Christ, to its eschatological fulfillment."⁷⁸ And it is that eschatological unity in love, that final communion founded on God's freedom and creative power, which appears to all of us, at once so inviting and so dangerous.

For the last hundred years and more, Christians have talked increasingly about our need for unity in Christ: a unity that can accept differences in theology and practice and Church structure, that can speak and pray and preach in a wide range of voices, because it is founded on common faith and on a common share in the love of God. This is what we mean by Christian reunion. As Catholics and Orthodox especially, we see all the things we share in our long tradition of faith and spirituality, of Church leadership and sacramental practice, and are moved to question whether or not the considerable theological and ecclesial differences that do still divide us are significant enough, real enough, to prevent us from sharing the Eucharist together, and from finding a unity within our differences that will sustain a common mission to the world. Charismatic leaders – spirit-filled representatives of our Churches – like Patriarch Athenagoras and Pope Paul VI in the mid-1960s, have occasionally taken bold steps towards making such Christian reunion a fact, in ways we still find hard to imagine. And yet those spontaneous ecumenical gestures of a half-century ago seem today to be bearing little obvious fruit. As someone who has taken part in Catholic-Orthodox dialogue for thirty years, I know there are good reasons for our ecumenical hesitation; a sense of responsibility towards our ancestors calls us to be true to our respective identities, towards our ways of formulating truth and participating in the Mystery of God's life. But the reason we hold so tightly onto our differences, I suspect, is also at least partly because we, too, are still afraid to discover for ourselves the dynamic divine reality of the Holy Spirit: afraid to let go of our control of the life of faith and its hallowed formulas, and of the institutional structures in which we have learned them, and to live in the freedom of a yet-unimaginable new creation – afraid to become more like God as God is. As we stand hesitating before the brink of communion, let us at least pray that this Spirit – God's own internal bond of love and joy – might be a new and unexpected discovery for all of us in our day, the guiding force for the world's transformation. And as we reach forward into the Christian unknown, let us boldly make our invocation, our epiclesis, together: "Come, Holy Spirit!"

NOTES

¹Acts 19.2.

²Acts 19.5-6.

³I Cor 12.3; Rom 8.15.

⁴I Cor 12.4-13; 14.1-2; etc..

⁵For a discussion of the traditional Orthodox critique of “Christomonism” among Latin Catholics, see Yves Congar, “Pneumatologie ou ‘Christomonisme’ dans la tradition latine?” in *Ecclesia a Spiritu sancto edocta* (Gembloux, 1970), 41-63. See also Walter Kasper, “Die Kirche als Sakrament des Geistes,” in Walter Kasper and Gerhard Sauter (eds.), *Kirche – Ort des Geistes* (Freiburg: Herder, 1976) 14-55, esp. 14-25.

⁶Karl Rahner, “Fear of the Spirit: Thoughts for Pentecost,” in *Opportunities for Faith: Elements of a Modern Spirituality* (trans. Edward Quinn; New York: Seabury, 1974) 41-42.

⁷John 3.8.

⁸Original French pamphlet: *La Procession du Saint-Esprit dans la doctrine trinitaire Orthodoxe* (Paris: Editions Setor, 1948). English translation by George Every, *The Eastern Churches Quarterly* 7 (1948) 31-53; reprinted in Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s, 1974) 71-96.

⁹*In the Image and Likeness of God* 71.

¹⁰Théodore de Regnon, *Études de théologie positive sur la sainte Trinité* (Paris: Retaux, 1898); in criticism, see Michel R. Barnes, “De Régnon Reconsidered,” *Augustinian Studies* 26 (1995) 51-79. For a careful summary and critique of Lossky and other 20th-century Orthodox approaches to the question, see Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* 3 (trans. David Smith; New York: Seabury, 1983) 72-78; 208-212. See also André de Halleux, “Orthodoxie et Catholicism: du personnalisme en pneumatologie,” *Revue théologique de Louvain* 6 (1975) 3-30.

¹¹*In the Image and Likeness of God* 88; see also *ibid.*, 85, 89.

¹²See Rahner, “Fear of the Spirit” (above, n. 6).

¹³See, for example, such classic summaries of the Church’s emerging conception of God as Trinity as Or. 20.5-11; Or.29.2; Or. 42.24. Attempts to express the notion of God as radically three and yet inseparably one, three hypostases or concrete individuals in distinctive relationships with each other that in themselves form our ability to recognize them, are a constant theme repeated by Gregory in a variety of elegant, subtle, yet theologically profound ways. An example appears in his

Oration 20, "On Theology, and the Appointment of Bishops," which sketches out Gregory's understanding of the notion of God that is implied by the Nicene creed – for him a touchstone of the Orthodox faith that ought to be professed by all in positions of Church leadership: "So we adore the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, dividing their individualities (*hypostases*) but uniting their godhead; and we neither blend the three into one thing, lest we be sick with Sabellius' disease, nor do we divide them into three alien and unrelated things, lest we share Arius' madness... In this way, according to my argument, the unity of God would be preserved, and Son and Spirit would be referred back to one original cause, but not compounded or blended with each other; their unity would be based on the single, self-identical movement and will of the divine being, if I may put it that way, and on identity of substance. But the three hypostases would also be preserved, with no amalgamation or reduction or confusion conceived in our thought..." (Or 20. 5, 7)

¹⁴See Matt 6.9; Luke 11.2.

¹⁵Matt 11.25-27.

¹⁶John 14.10.

¹⁷John 16.25-28.

¹⁸John 17.20-23.

¹⁹Gen 1.2.

²⁰Ex 31.3.

²¹Sam 10.10; 19.20.

²²Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 31.1 (SC 250.276).

²³John 14.26.

²⁴John 15.26.

²⁵John 16.13-15.

²⁶Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 30.20 (SC 250.266).

²⁷*Ibid.* 21 (SC 250.274).

²⁸John 1.9.

²⁹John 14.16.

³⁰Psalms 35.10 (LXX).

³¹Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 31.3 (SC 250.278-280).

³²Newman writes, "Let us allow that the whole circle of doctrines, of which our Lord is the subject, was consistently and uniformly confessed by the Primitive Church, though not ratified formally in Council. But it surely is otherwise with the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity. I do not see in what sense it can be said that there is a consensus of primitive divines in its favour... Of course the doctrine of our Lord's divinity itself partly implies and partly recommends the doctrine of the Trinity; but implication and suggestion belong to another class of arguments which has not yet come into consideration... The Creeds of that early day make no mention in their letter of the Catholic doctrine at all. They make mention indeed of a Three; but that there is any mystery in the doctrine, that the Three are One, that They are coequal, coeternal, all increate, all omnipotent, all incomprehensible, is not stated and never could be gathered from them. Of course we believe that they imply it, or rather intend it. God forbid we should do otherwise! But nothing in the mere letter of those documents leads to that belief. To give a deeper meaning to their letter, we must interpret them by the times which came after." (*An Essay on the Development of Doctrine*, in James Gaffney [ed.], *Conscience, Consensus, and the Development of Doctrine* [New York: Doubleday, 1992] 55-56.)

³³*Against Praxeas* 2 (trans. E. Evans [London: SPCK, 1948] 132 [altered]).

³⁴*Ibid.* 8 (Evans 140). Evans translates *trinitas* here simply as "Trinity," but this may be suggesting a conceptualization of Father, Son and Spirit as a single God that is more ontologically advanced than Tertullian was ready to affirm.

³⁵On the complex problem of the date and origin of the various treatises from the third century attributed to Hippolytus, see most recently J. A. Cerrato, *Hippolytus between East and West: The Commentaries and the Provenance of the Corpus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

³⁶Hippolytus of Rome, *Contra Noetum* 10.1 – 11.1 (trans. Robert Butterworth [London: Heythrop Monographs, 1977] 68-70).

³⁷*Ibid.* 14 (Butterworth 74) [altered].

³⁸SC 15. For an English translation of these letters, with introduction and commentary, see C. R. B. Shapland, *The Letters of Saint Athanasius concerning the Holy Spirit* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951). Shapland dates the letters to sometime between 356 and 362, and suggests that letters 2 and 3 probably originally formed a single letter. Letter 4 seems to be a brief summary of the earlier three. Letter 1, in any case, is clearly the most substantial. For the dating and circumstances of the letters, see Shapland 16-18; for a summary of their theology of the Spirit, see 34-43.

³⁹Athanasius, *To Sarapion* 1.20 (Shapland 113).

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

⁴¹To *Sarapion* 1.21 (Shapland 119).

⁴²To *Sarapion* 1.20 (Shapland 117),

⁴³To *Sarapion* 1.25 (Shapland 128).

⁴⁴To *Sarapion* 1.21 (Shapland 118-119).

⁴⁵See Shapland 25, following Loofs.

⁴⁶Sozomen, HE 4.27; see also 4.13; 4.22; Socrates, HE 4.25.

⁴⁷For brief attempts to situate Macedonius' way of conceiving the Spirit within fourth-century controversy, see Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 214-218; Khaled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: the Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011) 24-26.

⁴⁸*On the Holy Spirit* 16.37-38. In 16.37, he draws on I Cor 12.5-6 to make this distinction.

⁴⁹Athanasius, by contrast, does apply this inflammatory adjective a few times to the Holy Spirit in his *Letters to Sarapion*. Contrasting the Spirit to the many angels and other spiritual forces carrying out God's work in creation, he concludes: "It is obvious that the Spirit does not belong to the many, nor is he an angel. But because he is one, and, still more, because he is proper to the Word who is one, he is proper to God who is one, and one in essence (*homoousion*) with him." (1.27; trans. Shapland 133; see also *Letter* 2.3 and 2.5; 3.1) It is striking that for Athanasius here, the reason we can say the Spirit is of the same substance as God is that he is "proper (*idion*)" to the Son, and therefore identified with the divine substance in the same way the Son is.

⁵⁰See Gregory Nazianzus, Letter 58, and his somewhat apologetic allusion to Basil's anger over the implied accusation of dishonesty, in Letter 59.

⁵¹Or. 31.16 (SC 250.306). In late antique philosophy, it is assumed that every substance has the "power" (*dynamis*) to act (*energein*) in specific ways. In his Epiphany oration, *On the Holy Lights*, Gregory develops his understanding a little more fully: "For 'there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things' (I Cor 8.6), and one Holy Spirit, in whom are all things; yet these words 'of,' 'by,' and 'in' do not denote a difference of nature..., but they characterize the individualities (*hypostaseis*) of a nature which is one and unconfused... There is, then, one God in three, and these three are one, as we have said." (Or 39.12). On the role played by the idea of "power" in Cappadocian thought, see Michel René Barnes, *The Power of God. Dynamis in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2001).

⁵²Gregory seems to be alluding here to passages such as Matt 12.20; John 14.26; Acts 13.2; Eph 4.30; Job 4.9.

⁵³Or. 31.6.

⁵⁴Ibid. 7.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Or. 31.8.

⁵⁷The main inspiration for this idea that the Spirit is in some way prior to, and responsible for, the being of the Son may simply be his role in the conception of the Son in human form by the Virgin Mary: see Luke 1.35.

⁵⁸Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 165-166 (SC 386; Paris: Cerf, 1992, pp. 284-6). This work, probably composed around 375, has only survived in a translation by Jerome, made at least ten years later. Didymus also argues here that the Spirit is sent by God, just as the Son is, yet not precisely as a Son; so he is “joined to the Son in unity” and is called, in Scripture, “the Spirit of the Son.” Ibid. 139 (SC 386, p. 272).

⁵⁹*On the Trinity* 2.2.22 (ed. Ingrid Seiler; Meisenheim: Hain, 1975, p. 28). For the debate about the authorship of this work, see Louis Doutreleau, “Le ‘De Trinitate’ est-il l’oeuvre de Didyme l’Aveugle?” *Recherches de science religieuse* 45 (1957, pp. 514-557 [against Didyman authorship]), but also Doutreleau’s note in his edition of Didymus’ *On the Holy Spirit* (SC 386; 204-205), where he changes his mind. See also C. Bizer, *Studien zu den pseudoathanasianischen Dialogen* (Bonn 1970) [against Didyman authorship] and Alasdair Heron, *Studies in the Trinitarian Writings of Didymus the Blind: His Authorship of the Adversus Eunomium IV – V and the De Trinitate* (Diss. Tübingen, 1972) [in favor of Didymus as author].

⁶⁰Commentary on John 14.23 (ed. Pusey 2 [Oxford, 1872; repr. Brussels: *Culture et Civilisation*, 1965] 499). For a much more detailed consideration of Cyril’s treatment of the Holy Spirit, see my article, “The Fullness of the Saving God: Cyril of Alexandria on the Holy Spirit,” in Thomas G. Weinandy and Daniel A. Keating (eds.), *The Theology of St. Cyril of Alexandria* (London: T. and T. Clark, 2003) 113-149.

⁶¹Commentary on John 16.15 (ed. Pusey 2.639). This image of fragrance and the perfume from which it comes recalls Eusebius of Caesarea’s image of the Word’s relationship to the Father, as well as of God’s gift of the Spirit to make all of his people “Christ’s”: see *Demonstratio Evangelica* 4.15 (trans. William Ferrar, repr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981) 194-196.

⁶²*Thesaurus* 34 (ed. Pusey [Oxford] 608b).

⁶³*Dialogues on the Trinity* 7 (Pusey 637bc).

⁶⁴*De fide et symbolo* 9.19; *Enchiridion* 9.3. On Augustine's "subtle" and carefully nuanced conception of the origin of Son and Spirit within the Mystery of God, see the important article by Gerald Bonner, "St. Augustine's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," *Sobornost* 4 (1960) 51-66, esp. 60-66. While conceding significant differences between the classic positions of the Orthodox and Catholic traditions on this point, Bonner writes: "it seems to me that Augustine's doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit is a great deal less revolutionary, and a great deal closer to the thought of the Greeks, than he has usually been given credit for, whether for praise or blame. As I read it, his teaching of procession 'from the Father and the Son' is equivalent to 'from the Father through the Son,' and certainly does not imply that the mode of the procession is the same in both cases." (Bonner 65)

⁶⁵Augustine, *On the Trinity* 1.7 (trans. Edmund Hill; New York: New City, 1991) 69.

⁶⁶*Ibid.* 1.13.

⁶⁷*Ibid.* 2.5 (Hill 100).

⁶⁸*Ibid.* 5.15 (Hill 199).

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

⁷⁰*Ibid.* 15.29. In his late treatise *Contra Maximinum Arianum* from 427-428, Augustine insists that while Christians must hold that the Spirit "proceeds from both" the Father and the Son, he himself is not at all sure what the difference really is between "being born" and "proceeding". "Not everything that proceeds is born," he observes, "although everything that is born proceeds." "Proceeding," for him, is clearly the more general term for "coming forth from," and does not bring with itself any further precise implications. Augustine does go on, however, to insist that in the Christian understanding of God, the Spirit proceeds *principaliter* (i.e., "as from an ultimate source" or *principium*) from the Father, and "proceeds from the Son by the gift of the Father; for the origin (*auctor*) of his procession is the Father, who begot such a Son, and in begetting gave him [the status] that the Holy Spirit might also proceed from him." (*Contra Maximinum Arianum* 2.14.1)

⁷¹With his characteristic eirenism, Maximus Confessor already recognized, in a work sent to the Cypriot priest Marinus in the mid-640s, that when the Latins of even that period speak of the "procession" of the Spirit from Father and Son, "they are not making the Son into the cause of the Spirit. They recognize the Father as the unique source of the Son and the Spirit... But they are trying to show that the Spirit proceeds *through* the Son, and therefore that there is a community of essence." He goes on to add that the disagreement of Latins and Greeks on this point is simply terminological: "It is impossible for them to express their thought adequately in another formulation, in another language, in the same way that they do in their own language, their mother tongue; we, after all, are in the same situation with *our* language!" (Maximus, *Opusculum* 10, *To Marinus*; PG 91.133-136).

For a discussion of the origins and development of this central controversy between Orthodox and Western Christians, along with theological reflections and practical suggestions on how to move beyond it, see the 2003 joint statement of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Consultation, "The Filioque: a Church-Dividing Issue?" See also my two-part article, "Revisiting the *Filioque*," *Pro Ecclesia* 10 (2001) 31-62; 195-212.

⁷²Thesaurus 34 (PG 75.608d).

⁷³See also Cyril's *Commentary on John* 1.1 (Pusey I, 25): "...So when the Holy Spirit is added to the number [of Father and Son], and is called God along with them, the holy and adorable Trinity possesses its own proper fullness (*plērōma*);" and *ibid.* 14.25-26 (Pusey II, 507): like the human will that brings the mind's purposes to fulfillment, the Holy Spirit is "not other by nature, but a kind of part that brings the whole to completion and exists within it."

⁷⁴See John 1.1: "In the beginning was the Word..."

⁷⁵Gregory of Nazianzus, Oration 29.2 (SC 250.180).

⁷⁶Dumitru Staniloae, *Prière de Jésus et expérience du Saint-Esprit* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1981) 101-102.

⁷⁷See Thomas Aquinas, ST I-II, Q106, a. 1: "That which is preponderant in the law of the New Testament, and whereon all its efficacy is based, is the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is given through faith in Christ. Consequently the New Law is chiefly the grace itself of the Holy Spirit, which is given to those who believe in Christ." (trans. English Dominican Province [Westminster, MD: Christian Classics 1981] 2.1004)

⁷⁸Walter Kasper, "Die Kirche als Sakrament des Geistes," in Walter Kasper and Gerhard Sauter, *Kirche – Ort des Geistes* (Freiburg: Herder 1976) 34-35.

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