

The Procession of the Holy Spirit

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Part I

An Oriental Orthodox Perspective on The Procession of the Holy Spirit

I- Introduction

As you shall see, my paper will touch on some theological aspects which are deeply affecting the relations between the churches in East and West.

Our Oriental Orthodox Churches were apart from the debate that occurred between East and West in the Eleventh Century, causing the famous schism in the Chalcedonian family. But now we are no longer apart from any theological dialogue. Even bilateral dialogues sometimes indirectly form multilateral dialogues, since they reflect on each other in one way or another.

In the past, Saint Cyril of Alexandria called the Antiochene the 'brethren in the East'. Now in the international official theological dialogue between the two families of Orthodox Churches, the Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches call themselves 'The Orthodox Church' and our churches are called 'The Oriental Orthodox Churches'.

Where is the East and West now? This is a question which we are facing in such a changeable world.

II- The Holy Trinity in the Writings of the Holy Fathers

In order to describe the Holy Trinity Saint Gregory of Nazianza said, "*Let us confirm ourselves within our limits, and speak of **The Unbegotten** and **The Begotten** and **That which Proceeds from the Father**, as somewhere God the Word Himself saith.*"¹

He also gave a very simple description, "*This is what we meant by Father and Son and Holy Ghost. The Father is **the Begetter and The Emitter**; without passion, of course, and without reference to time, and not in a corporeal manner. The Son is **The Begotten**, and the Holy Spirit is **The Emission**.*"²

In the same line he also said, "*...the very fact of being **Unbegotten** or **Begotten**, or **Proceeding** has given the name Father to the First, of the Son to the Second, and of the Third, Him Whom we*

¹ Phillip Schaff & Henry Wace, *Nicene & Post Nicene Fathers*, Vol. VII Second Series, St. Gregory of Nazianza, 3rd Theological Oration Article II Eerdmans Publishers, June 1995, P.301

² *ibid*, 3rd Theological Oration (on the Son), Article II, p.301

*are speaking, of the Holy Ghost that the distinction of the Three Persons may be preserved in the one nature and dignity of the Godhead. For neither is the Son the Father; for the Father is One, but **He is** what the Father **is**; nor is the Spirit Son because He is of God, for the Only-begotten is One, but He is what the Son is. The Three are One in Godhead, and One Three in properties.”*³

Saint Basil the Great wrote, “*Worshipping as we do God of God, we both confess the distinction of the Persons, and at the same time abide by the Monarchy. We do not fritter away the theology in a divided plurality, because one Form, so to say, united in the invariableness of the Godhead, is beheld in God the Father, and in God the Only begotten. For the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son; since such as is the latter, such is the former, and such as is the former, such is the latter; and herein is the Unity. So that according to the distinction of Persons, both are one and one, and according to the community of Nature, one. How, then, if one and one, are there not two Gods? Because we speak of a king, and of the king’s image, and not of two kings. The majesty is not cloven in two, nor the glory divided. The sovereignty and authority over us is one, and so the doxology ascribed by us is not plural but one; because the honor paid to the image passes on to the prototype.*”⁴

Saint Athanasius in his discourses against the Arians wrote to explain the divinity of the Son, and in his letter to Serapion, he wrote to emphasize the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

About the Son he wrote, “*And so since they are one, and the Godhead itself one, the same things are said of the Son, which are said of the Father, except His being said to be Father...For 'all things,' says the Son Himself, 'whatsoever the Father hath, are Mine;,' and again, 'And Mine are Thine'... and why are the attributes of the Father ascribed to the Son, except that the Son is an Offspring from Him?*”⁵

Concerning the Holy Spirit he wrote, “*It is clear that the Spirit is not a creature, but takes place in the act of creation. For **the Father creates all things through the Word in the Spirit**; for where the Word is, there is the Spirit also, and the things which are created through the Word have their vital strength out of the Spirit from the Word. Thus it is written in the thirty-second Psalm: “By the Word of the Lord the heavens were established, and by the spirit of His mouth is all their power.”*⁶

And generally speaking he stressed the oneness of God, although believing in three hypostaseis, “*Neither can we imagine three Subsistences separated from each other, as results from their bodily nature in the case of men, lest we hold a plurality of gods like the heathen. But just as a river, produced from a well, is not separate, and yet there are in fact two visible objects and two names. For neither is the Father the Son, nor the Son the Father. For the Father is Father of the Son, and the Son, Son of the Father. For like as the well is not a river, nor the river a well, but both are one and the same water which is conveyed in a channel from the well to the river, so the Father's deity passes into the Son without flow and without division. For the Lord says, 'I came*

³ *ibid*, 5th Theological Oration (on the Holy Spirit), Article IX p. 320

⁴ *ibid*. Vol. VIII, Second Series, St Basil, The Book of Saint Basil on the Spirit, Chapter 18, p. 28

⁵ *ibid*. Vol. IV, St. Athanasius, Four Discourses Against the Arians- Discourse III, points 4 & 5

⁶ Athanasius, letter to Serapion, iii Shapland, 174; quoted by Stanely Burgess, The Spirit & the Church: Antiquity, Hendricksons Publishers- P.118

out from the Father and am come' (John 16: 28). But He is ever with the Father, for He is in the bosom of the Father, nor was ever the bosom of the Father void of the deity of the Son.”⁷⁷

III- The Terms Ousia, Physis, Hypostasis and Prosopon

These Greek terms have at times caused misunderstandings between Eastern and Western theologians. But we shall try to define them in a comprehensible way based on the teachings of Saint Cyril of Alexandria and Saint Gregory of Nazianza.

- (i) **Ousia** is used in the meaning of essence; the reality of constitution of being.

The essence of gold is what gold is.

God indicated His special name as Yehwa = Jehova, indicating that His essential being was not brought into existence by another creator.

Gold can be formed as a ring, a chain, a key, or in any other form, but in all cases **the essence** of all these things is gold regardless of its shape, function, volume, etc.

The essence of each person of the Holy Trinity is one and the same, regardless of their distinct hypostatic properties. The Father, being the source, does not mean that He is different in essence from the Son begotten of Him, or the Holy Spirit who proceeds from Him.

- (ii) **Physis** is used in the meaning of nature. We can define the nature as the sum of qualities of a certain essence or being.

Gold has the properties of being resistant to corrosion (almost unchangeable), an excellent conductor of electricity, precious, yellow in colour, bright in appearance, beautiful, etc.

Physics is the name of the science which studies the behavior of different materials under different conditions of temperature and electrical or magnetic influence, that is to say the term physics is derived from the term “physis”.

- (iii) **Hypostasis** is the term used to denote the essence or the nature, together with the person (prosopon) who owns it.

It is a great mistake and danger to try to apply it to the simple meaning of person (prosopon) alone.

When we speak about “hypostatic union”, we are speaking about the union of two or more natures in one simple person (prosopon).

⁷⁷ Phillip Schaff & Henry Wace, *Nicene & Post Nicene Fathers*, Vol. IV, Second Series, St. Athanasius Expositio Fidei (Statement of Faith) P. 84,85, Eerdmans Publishing Company, Sep. 1978

But we can never speak about a union of persons to form one person, because **this is logically impossible** as we shall see when we define the term ‘person’. And at the same time, this can lead us to **the Nestorian Heresy** which speaks about union of persons resulting in ‘the person of union’ in Jesus Christ.

According to Saint Cyril, ‘hypostatic union’ can be applied to both the union of body and spirit in a human being, and the union of humanity and divinity in Jesus Christ.

- (iv) **Prosopon** was mostly used early in the past to denote the face. But in the Christology of the holy fathers of the Church it became used as the first pronoun, that is, to denote the “person”.

The person is what enables us to differentiate between two individuals carrying the same essence and the same nature.

We can say that the person of Saint Peter is the thing which makes him distinct from Saint Paul, although they were co-essential or had the same human nature.

The person is the owner of the nature and the owner of the decision. He is the owner of the capabilities of his nature and the user of it according to his own personal will. The **natural will** is the desire, but the **personal will** is the decision; and they do not necessarily coincide with each other in every person and in every case.

The person (prosopon = **pro,swpon**) is **the one looking towards another** (the Greek word **pro,swpon** consists of **pro,j** meaning ‘toward, and **w;y** meaning face)

He exchanges love, and that is why the wife and the husband, though united together can form only **one body** but **not one person**, otherwise how can they love each other?

Even the three persons of the Holy Trinity, the supreme model of oneness, although having one and the same essence, nature, mind and will are identical in every divine property of essence, but **can never become one person**, since “God is love” (1Jn 4: 8,16). Without the distinction of persons (prosopa) they can never love each other and this can mean that God is no longer the eternal loving Triune God; otherwise speaking we shall loose God.

IV- Properties of Essence, Hypostatic Properties, and Distinction in the Holy Trinity

As we have seen in the previously stated sayings of the holy fathers, the properties of essence are identical for the three hypostaseis of the Holy Trinity.

The distinction between them is merely by hypostatic property which is confined to each of them.

Fatherhood as being the origin or the cause is the special property of the Father who is the Begetter and Emitter.

Sonship is the special property of the only begotten son (Monogenes).

Procession or Emission is the special property of the Holy Spirit.

It is impossible to mingle the three hypostatic properties or any two of them, otherwise the distinction of the three persons of the Holy Trinity can be dropped, and thus confusion in the Godhead can occur.

Saint Gregory of Nazianza spoke very clearly about this fact saying, *“Christ... What great things are there in the idea of God which are not in His power? What titles which belong to God are not applied to him, except only Unbegotten and Begotten? For it was needful that the distinctive properties of the Father and the Son should remain peculiar to Them, lest there should be confusion in the Godhead which brings all things, even disorder itself, into due arrangement and good order.”*⁸

He was also very clear in distinguishing between generation and procession, so that the procession of the Holy Spirit has no relation to the generation of the Son. Consequently, the Son can never be a secondary cause in proceeding the Holy Spirit from the Father. Saint Gregory stated, *“Now these are names common to the Godhead, but the proper Name of the Unoriginate is Father; and that of the Begotten without beginning is Son, and that of **the un-begottenly Proceeding or going forth** is The Holy Ghost.”*⁹

V- Ousia and Energia in Trinitarian Concept

Procession of the Holy Spirit according to essence is from the Father alone, while energetic procession of Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son. This means that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are Trinitarian gifts from the Father through the Son in the Spirit.

Saint Athanasius: “The Father does all things through the Word in the Spirit.”¹⁰

⁸ ibid, 5th Theological Oration on the Holy Spirit P.327.

⁹ ibid, 4th Theological Oration (2nd on the Son), Articles XIX, p.316.

¹⁰ Shapland, *Concerning the Holy Spirit*, 1st Letter to Serapion, chapter 28, 134-135

Saint Gregory of Nyssa: “Every operation which extends from God to the creation and is named according to our variable conceptions of it, has its origin from the Father, and proceeds through the Son, and is perfected in the Holy Spirit.”¹¹

Whenever the holy fathers spoke of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, they meant the gifts of the Holy Spirit which are confined to *energia* (energy).

VI- Between Procession and Sending of the Holy Spirit

Some Western theologians claim that *economy* (**economia**) is an image of theology (**theologia**), and since the Father and the Son have sent the Holy Spirit, this would mean to them that the Father and the Son are proceeding the Holy Spirit according to essence.

Our reply to this (according to the teaching of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III) is from the book of Isaiah “*From the time that it was, I was there. And now **the Lord God and His Spirit have sent me***” (Is. 48: 16).

According to this verse, the Son is sent by the Father and the Holy Spirit, and it is well known that the Son is begotten only from the Father. This means that *economy* is not always an image of theology, otherwise we would suppose that the Son is generated from the Father and the Holy Spirit and no one can accept this.

On the other hand, we do not deny that because of the oneness of essence, the Holy Spirit is not alien from the Son, and is in the Son. The Son also is not alien from the Holy Spirit and is in the Holy Spirit.

VII- Conclusion

The Oriental Orthodox Churches are preserving the original text of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed and faith of the early undivided church that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. As a matter of fact this was revealed in the Holy Scriptures, “*But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.*” (Jn 15:26).

It is insufficient to permit the removal of the addition of “*filioque*” from the Creed, but we need in our search for church unity to confess the same Trinitarian faith together. **“One is the all Holy Father, one is the all Holy Son, One is the all Holy Spirit, Amen.”**

¹¹ N. & P. N. Fathers, series 2, Vol. V, Gregory of Nyssa, Eerdmans Pub. 1978, p. 334

Part II

Theological Controversy on The Procession of the Holy Spirit

Our Oriental Orthodox Churches believe, in accordance with the text mentioned in the Bible (John 15:26), that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. Other Churches on the other hand, believe that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. Consequently, the expression ‘and the son’ was appended (added) to their Creed of Faith at the section on the procession of the Holy Spirit.

Henceforth we shall clarify this doctrine:

First : The Biblical Evidence

In the Gospel of our teacher Saint John the apostle, our Lord Jesus Christ says, “Otan e;lqh| o` para,klhtoj o]n evgw. pe,myw u`mi/n para. tou/ patro,j(to. pneu/ma th/j avlhqei,a] o] para. tou/ patro.j evkporeu,etai”. *“But when the helper (comforter) comes whom I shall send to you from the Father the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father”* (John 15: 26).

Those who believe that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son use this phrase “*whom I shall send to you*” saying that since the Lord Jesus Christ is the One Who will send the Holy Spirit, then the Holy Spirit proceeds from Him. However, we realize that the Lord Jesus Christ said, “*Whom I shall send to you from the Father*”. Then He continues, “*Who Proceeds from the Father*” (John 15:26).

The procession is one thing and the sending is another; the procession is eternal while the sending is temporal. The procession concerns the essence or being of the Holy Spirit, but sending Him is something concerning His work in the Church.

The Lord Jesus Christ also said, “*But the helper the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you*” (John 14:26). Here we recognize that He says: “*the Father will send*”. So, on one occasion He says, “*Whom I shall send*” and at another “*Whom The Father will send*”.

Nevertheless, concerning the procession He only said that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. If the sending was exactly the procession, how can we explain the following verse which the Lord Jesus Christ said in the Book of Isaiah, “*And now the Lord God and His Spirit have sent Me*” (Is. 48: 16).

If the sending was always an image of the relationship of the hypostasis (person) to the Father Who is the source, consequently the sending of the Son would then be an image of His eternal begetting.

Linguistically, we realize that the expression “*and His Spirit*” (Is. 48: 16) is in the nominative case (subject) and not the accusative (object). Meaning that the Lord Jesus Christ was sent from the Father and the Holy Spirit. Should the Son then be born before all ages, from the Father and the Holy Spirit? Or is the eternal begetting one thing and the temporal sending another?

Both the procession and the begetting are eternal, but the sending is temporal; that is, an incident which occurred at a certain point of time. Whereas, the procession and begetting are beyond time, the sending was in the fullness of the time. Thus, it is written in the Bible, “*But when the fullness of the time had come, God send forth His Son*” (Gal. 4: 4).

The Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples, “*It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority But you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria and to the end of the earth*” (Acts 1:7-8).

“*He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father which, He said You have heard from Me*”. (Acts 1:4). To wait for the promise of the Father, implies that the sending of the Holy Spirit is temporal. Therefore the descent of the Holy Spirit is temporal, and the promise of the Father is temporal as ‘*waiting*’ indicates that it is something temporal. The Lord Jesus Christ here was speaking of ‘*times and seasons*’. The coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples at Pentecost was temporal, as is the promise of the Father. However, no one waits for the **procession** because it is beyond time and before all ages.

Second : The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of Faith

The Creed of Faith formulated by the Fathers states the following, “Truly we believe in the Holy Spirit the life-giving Lord, **who proceeds from the Father**”.

The phrase ‘and the Son’ which is “**Filioque**” in Latin (‘Filio’ means ‘**son**’ and ‘que’ means ‘**and**’, in its entirety meaning ‘and the Son’) was officially added, adopted and recited by the Roman Catholic Church in its Creed of Faith since 1054 A.D. However, the Filioque doctrine is not acquiesced by all the Orthodox Churches (Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian).

Further Arguments and Answers:

First : Ownership of the Father and the Son

The Lord Jesus Christ in His commune with the heavenly Father said, “*All Mine are Yours and Yours are Mine*” (John 17: 10). So, if the Father is the emanator of the Holy Spirit, and that simultaneously all what is the Father’s is the Son’s, then the Son also should be an emanator of the Holy Spirit.

In answer to this, we say that the Lord Jesus Christ mentioned this statement in His prayer to the Father when He was speaking about the souls of His disciples. He said, “*They are Yours, You gave them to Me*” (John 17: 6), “*And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine*” (John 17: 10).

There is no relativity between the Heavenly Father’s ownership of men, or that of the Lord Jesus Christ to His saintly disciples, on one hand, and the Son as being an emanator of the Holy Spirit on the other. The essence is one thing and the ownership is another.

The **relationship** of the Father to the Holy Spirit is one of existentialism, that is, **the existence of the Holy Spirit from the Father since the Father is the origin and the source in the Holy Trinity**. It is not a relation of ownership, because the Holy Spirit is not one of the belongings of the Father, but He has One being with the Father and the Son. The Divine Essence of the Holy Trinity would never exist without the Holy Spirit.

Contemplation : [We were owned by God, but when we sold ourselves to Satan and slavery, the Lord Jesus Christ came and bought us by His own blood. As an illustration we give the following example: a person cherished vehicle is stolen, he finds it exhibited for sale at a car auction. Because he loved it so much, and was fond of it, he enters the auction and re-purchases it a second time even though it originally belonged to him.

We belong to God; we are by Him and for Him. We sold ourselves by our own will. In spite of this fact, Christ, because He was about to purchase us by His own blood, said to the Father, “*They were Yours, you gave them to Me*” (John 17: 6). He bought us from the grave and saved us from death. Since they belong to the Father, He will offer them to the Father at the declaration of the Kingdom of God; so that God would be all in all].

Even if we assumed in a debate that this verse could be generalized until we reach the essence of God Himself, it would never mean in this case, more than saying that **the essence of the Son is the same as that of the Father**. It would never mean that the Son has the Fatherhood like the Father. There is only one Father in the Divine Essence.

The derivation of the word Father in Aramaic or Syrian means ‘origin’, not only ‘begetter’. It includes both meanings (begetter and emanator).

In the Holy Bible we read the following, “...*the Spirit of Truth Who proceeds from the Father*” (John 15: 26). If the Lord Jesus Christ –as the eternal Son- owns all that the Father owns, this means no more than His possession of all the attributes of the Divine Essence, eg. perpetuity, truth, wisdom, love, might, omnipresence, omnipotence, creation (the ownership of creation is derived from this point)...etc.

However, this does not mean that He shares the Fatherhood with the Father, for **how could He be a Son and Father simultaneously**. If He shared the Fatherhood with the Father, the result would be that the Son would be the begetter of Himself.

From another point of view, Sabilius who was ex-communicated by the church, said that the Son was the Father. We do not accept absolutely, that the hypostasis of the Son is that of the Father. There is true distinction in spite of the oneness according to essence between the Father, the Son

and the Holy Spirit. God is one essence having three hypostaseis. If we abolished the Trinitarian dogma, we would no longer be Christians.

Moreover, we should keep in mind that the Lord Jesus Christ said to the Father, “...*And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine*” (John 17:10). **Does this mean that the Father also has the attribute of Sonship**, and is begotten from the Son?! This is neither accepted nor rational.

The Son is God the Word, the Holy Spirit is God the Life-giving, and the Father is the origin or source in the Trinity. In spite of the tenet of the one God, God the Father is not God the Word, but the Word and the Father are the one God. The Father is the begetter, and the Son is begotten, but the essence of the Father is that of the Son.

As water flows from a fountain and runs into a channel, so does the essence of the Divinity i.e. it pours from the Father to the Son. Water comes out from a fountain and runs into the stream; the water of the stream is that of the fountain. The essence of both the Father and the Son is one, but we could never say that the begetter is the begotten. The Begetter is Father, the Begotten is Son, so the father is the Father and the son the Son. It is not permissible to mingle between both although they have one existence for the Holy Trinity, one divine essence, one triune will, one divinity and one nature.

Even –linguistically- the Lord Jesus Christ said, “...*all things that the Father has are Mine*” (John 16: 15), so He singles out the Father by His private appellation, setting aside what is private from what is general. If for instance, as a student I said: ‘All what belongs to the teacher is mine’. The teacher is a teacher and I am a student, even if we shared all other aspects. Therefore we differentiate between: the properties of essence belonging to all the hypostaseis, and the hypostatic properties that specifies each hypostasis distinctly; and that which no hypostasis shares with another so that the hypostaseis would not mingle with one another. Fatherhood for the Father, Sonship for the Son, and Procession for the Holy Spirit.

The Father is begetter and emanator, since He is considered the origin and source.

The Son is begotten, since He is the Word of God and His Image, Who manifests the Father, and informs about the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth, Who proceeds from the Father and inspires about the Father and His only-begotten Son.

Faith in the Trinity is the mystery of life. Christianity is life and its entrance is baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Second : The Spirit of the Son or the Spirit of Christ the Lord

□ “*If indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the **spirit of Christ**, he is not His*” (Rom.8:9).

□ “*Your prayer and the supply of **the spirit of Jesus Christ***” (Phil. 1:19).

- “And because you are sons, God has *sent forth the Spirit of his Son* into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba Father!’” (Gal. 4:6).

The argument is that: if the Spirit of the Son is the Spirit of the Father then He should ultimately proceed from Both.

In answer we give the following notes:

1. The above-mentioned verse speaks about the sending of the Holy Spirit and not the procession, “God has *sent forth*” (Gal. 4:6).
2. It says, “*into your hearts*”. In our hearts we have the gifts and talents of the Holy Spirit and not the essence of the Hypostasis. If we had the essence of the Hypostasis we would have become the Holy Spirit Himself. The gifts and talents are temporal and not eternal. What dwell in our hearts are the temporal gifts and not the Divine Essence. If we had the Divine Essence in us, we would have been Gods in the full sense of Divinity.
3. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Son because the Holy Spirit has the same essence of the Son and of the Father. He is the Spirit of the Son due to the oneness of the Divine Essence and not due to the procession emanating from the Son.
4. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ the Lord because He is the One Who anointed Him, “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed me*” (Luke 4: 18). He rested upon Him and in Him when He became incarnate and accepted the anointment for our salvation, because He was declared the Christ (anointed one) of the Lord and the Head of the Church.
5. The Holy Spirit is called the “*spirit of wisdom*” (Eph. 1:17), “*spirit of understanding*” (Is. 11:2), “*Spirit of holiness*” (Rom. 1: 4), “*Spirit of faith*” (2 Cor. 4:13), “*spirit of revelation*” (Eph. 1:17), “*Spirit of counsel*” (Isa.11: 2). Does this mean that the Holy Spirit proceeds from all of these?! It is written in the Bible, “*there shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord*” (Is. 11:1,2). Does the Holy Spirit proceed from the fear of God since eternity?!! Our teacher St. Paul says, “*But since we have the same **spirit of faith**, according to what is written, I believed therefore I spoke*” (2 Cor. 4:13). It is known that there is no relationship between this expression “*the spirit of faith*” and the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father. Accordingly, the spirit of fear or knowledge ... etc. The Spirit of Christ the Lord, **is an appellation** which does not mean that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son.
6. The Holy Spirit is also **called the “...spirit of His Son” or the “...spirit of Christ” because it witnesses to Christ** as written in the Bible that: “*Every Spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God*” (1 John 4:2). Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ said, “*But the **Helper**, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you*” (John 14:26). The

phrase, “...**Will send in my name**” indicates that His name is “*the Spirit of Christ*” or “*the spirit of the Son*”.

Third : The Breath of the Holy Spirit

The argument mentions that the Lord Jesus Christ breathed the Holy Spirit upon His disciples after the resurrection, therefore the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son.

The answer is that the Lord Jesus Christ did not breath the essence of the Hypostasis of the Holy Spirit Himself on them, but His authority and gift of loosening, binding and forgiveness of sin (eg. the breath of the high priest in the ordination of priests).

Thus, when the Holy Bible mentions the hypostasis of the Holy Spirit –Himself- it is clearly mentioned having a definite article (to. pneu/ma to. a[gion) as :

† o` de. para,klhtoj(to. pneu/ma to. a[gion(o] pe,myei o` path.r evn tw| ovno,mati, mou “*But the helper the **Holy Spirit** whom the Father will send in My name*” (John 14: 26).

† Otan e;lqh| o` para,klhtoj o]n evgw. pe,myw u`mi/n para. tou/ patro,j(to. pneu/ma th/j avlhqei,aj o] para. tou/ patro.j evkporeu,etai “*But when the helper comes whom I shall send to you from the Father the **Spirit of truth** whom proceeds from the Father*” (John 15:26).

However, when the Holy Spirit is mentioned as regards to His **talents, authority, and gifts**, He is mentioned without a definite article “pneu/ma a[gion”.

Therefore, the correct translation for the statement of the Lord when He breathed on His disciples, according to what is mentioned in John 20: 22, would be la,bete pneu/ma a[gion “*receive a holy spirit*”. What is meant here is the gift of priesthood which is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church.

Even the High Priest does the same thing in ordaining a new priest. Christ is the greatest High priest, so it was most proper that He gives the gift of priesthood to His disciples before ascending into heaven, after He had fulfilled the redemption upon the cross and victoriously resurrected from among the dead. He emphasized the role of the Holy Spirit in appointing pastors and offering the gifts of the priesthood when He said, ‘*receive a holy spirit*’

One of the Byzantinian Orthodox theologians in answer to the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son said, ‘On the day of Pentecost as in other cases, when the Lord Jesus Christ offered the Holy Spirit, He did not offer the hypostasis of the Holy Spirit, but rather His talents (Charismata) were transferred’.

Lastly we say:

Who is the origin of existence of the Holy Spirit? The Father or the Son? Or the Father alone? The answer is that the Father is the origin but this origination is without a beginning. It is eternal beyond the range of time, where there was neither predecessor nor successor. It is like a fire that has no start, the heat emitting from it simultaneously would have no start. Is the originator of the hypostasis of the Holy Spirit the Father or the Son? Sure, the originator is the Father and from Him the Holy Spirit proceeds.

Concerning the Procession of the Holy Spirit, the following are some theological expressions useful to scholars.

υιοπατρια	son-fatherhood	ουσια	essence
αιτιον	cause	γεννησις	generation-begetting
αιτιατα	caused	ο μονογενης υιος	only begotten son
υικη αιτια	sonly cause	εκπορευσις	procession
πατρικη αιτια	fatherly cause	τροπος της υπαρξεως	mode of existence
αρχομενη	originated	υποστασις	personal being
αναρχος	unoriginated	ενεργεια	energy, activity

The following is a Greek statement professed by one of the Constantinopolitan Fathers in answer to the assertion that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. Gregory Patriarch of Constantinople in his debate with John Fiscus said:

[Ο Πατηρ Θεογονος Θεοτης και πηγαια Θεοτης και μονη πηγη; της ολης Θεοτητος]¹²

[The father **only** is the begetting deity and divine source and the only source of the whole deity].

ο	the	Masculine singular definite article in the nominative case
πατηρ	father	Masculine singular noun in the nominative case
θεογονος	begetting deity	Masculine adjective in the nominative case
θεοτη	deity	Masculine singular noun in the nominative case
και	and	conjunction

¹²De Processione Spiritus Sancti P.G [Patriologia Greka] 142, 271 AB ".

πηγαία	source	Adjective in the nominative case
μονή	only	Adjective in the nominative case
πηγή	source	Noun in the nominative case
της	of	Definite article in the accusative case
ολης	whole	Accusative case
θεοτητος	deity	Noun in the genitive case

He means that the Father is the only source Who begets and emanates.

Θεογονος Θεοτης = begetting deity of the deity (the hypostasis of the Father)

μοναρχία = monarchy = single or one principle

The Greek term αρχή means: head, principle, beginning or cause, meaning the origin. It is related to :

1. The Father in His relationship to the other two hypostases

Πατρική αρχή = Fatherly Principle

2. The Trinity in their relationship with the creation

Τριαδική αρχή = Triadic Principle = economy

The case of the Holy Spirit as a whole is summarized in the procession or the (ekporevsis) εκπορευσις and the patriarchy πατριαρχή of the Father. These are the two terms that express our doctrine in the Procession of the Holy Spirit.

The difference is as follows:

- ❖ Within the Holy trinity there is only one monarchy. Thus we call it Πατρική αρχή or the monarchy of the Father.
- ❖ Τριαδική αρχή : This relates to the creation, meaning that the Trinity is the cause of its existence not only the Father.

Economy means that **God economized the creation and managed everything.**

According to interpretations of the Fathers as regards to the Trinitarian Dogma, there is a known theological principle stating that “**Everything which comes out commonly from the Divine Essence is energy and not Hypostasis (divine hypostasis)**”.

- ❖ Every energy or work comes from the Trinity.
- ❖ **Every gift is from the Father through the Son by the Holy Spirit.**
- ❖ The gift of the Holy Spirit is from the Father through the Son by the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ Every good gift, and every perfect talent, descends to us from above, from the Father of lights, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ The act of creation : The Father created the world by His Word and Spirit. *“In the Beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void and the darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters, Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light”* (Gen.1: 1-3). In other words the Father created the world by His Word and Spirit.

The saints repeated the same concept saying “Every gift is from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit” or “Every gift originating from the Father, is transferred through the Son and fulfilled by the Holy Spirit.

Examples of sayings of the Fathers:

- **Saint Gregory of Nyssa:** “Every operation which extends from God to the creation and is named according to our variable conceptions of it, has its origin from the Father, and proceeds through the Son, and is perfected in the Holy Spirit.”¹³
- **Saint Athanasius** wrote: *“The Father does all things through the Word in the Spirit.”*¹⁴
- There is a nice excerpt also written by **Saint Athanasius** on the Divinity of the Holy Spirit clarifying how God gave life to the creation: *“It is clear that the Spirit is not a creature, but takes place in the act of creation. For **the Father creates all things through the Word in the Spirit**; for where the Word is, there is the Spirit also, and the things which are created through the Word have their vital strength out of the Spirit from the Word. Thus it is written in the thirty-second Psalm: “By the Word of the Lord the heavens were established, and by the spirit of His mouth is all their power.”*¹⁵

Offering the Divine energy is a common or general act shared by the Holy Trinity. It starts from the Father, comes through the Son and is fulfilled in the Holy Spirit.

¹³ N. & P. N. Fathers, series 2, Vol. V, Gregory of Nyssa, Eerdmans Pub. 1978, p. 334

¹⁴ Shapland, *Concerning the Holy Spirit*, 1st Letter to Serapion, chapter 28, 134-135

¹⁵ Athanasius, letter to Serapion, iii Shapland, 174; quoted by Stanley Burgess, *The Spirit & the Church: Antiquity*, Hendrickson Publishers- P.118