

THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF DIALOGUE AT THE COUNCIL OF FERRARA-FLORENCE (1438-39)

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INTRODUCTION

The Council of Ferrara-Florence, or the Council of Union, was thought to be at its time a great gift granted by Christ to His Spouse, the Catholic Church.¹ Unfortunately, the darkness returned and covered this light of union not long after it started to shine. In spite of this great deception, however, and notwithstanding the dispute between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches on the validity of the decrees of Ferrara-Florence, the Council represents a corner-stone in the history of the theological dialogue between the two Churches. During the debates there was a full disclosure of arguments from both sides; that is why no one can ignore them or the outcome of the debates.

Moreover, the union of Florence served as a model for the Eastern Orthodox Churches that entered the union with Rome in the XVIIth century, for nothing else was required from them but to accept the decisions of this Council. That is why these Churches – pejoratively called “Uniate,” and their union with Rome “Uniatism” – were always, and still are, a thorn in the side of the Eastern Orthodox Churches. Their very existence is a message saying that the theological dialogue at Council of Ferrara-Florence did accomplish the union with Rome and its conclusions can be regarded as normative by the Eastern faithful.

In this study, which is in fact the substantial part of a greater work to be published soon, we will analyse the theological principles of the dialogue with the Eastern Orthodox Churches at this Council. The fundamental difference between a Christian theological dialogue (like the one at the Council in discussion) and a profane dialogue is that the former is based *principally* on divine authority and only secondarily on reason, while the latter, even if it sometimes makes use of authoritative voices, does not ultimately depend on them (their claim can be challenged any time by anyone). That is why we shall treat in a separate chapter the theological principles dealing with the divine authority (*Holy Scripture*, the *Fathers* and the *Ecumenical Councils*), and only after having fulfilled this task will we treat in the next chapter of the theological principles that deal with the use of *ratio theologica*.

For the bibliography, we used the wonderful collection of documents published by the Pontifical Oriental Institute under the care of Fr. G. Hofmann, *Concilium Florentinum: Documenta et Scriptores* (in eleven volumes), especially the *Latin Acts* (vol. 6, *Andreas de Santacroce, advocatus consistorialis. Acta Latina Concilii Florentini*) and the *Greek Acts* (vol. 5, *Que supersunt actorum graecorum Concilii Florentini*). Very helpful to our study was the excellent book of Fr. Gill, *The Council of Florence*, book that even now, after fifty years since it was written, remains actual and is considered by all Catholic scholars to be the best on the subject. We used also the book of Ivan N. Ostroumoff, *The History of the Council of Florence* (in its Romanian translation, see bibliography), in order to weight better the Orthodox position with respect to the debate in discussion. Finally, we want to remember here the helpful collections of treatises, letters and orations in *Patrologia Graeca* and *Patrologia Latina* of Migne and in *Patrologia Orientalis* (vols. 15 and 17), and some excellent observations in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* (the article on the Council of Florence).

¹ See *Decretum unionis graecorum*, AL 154 R, p. 260. The same text in *Definitio Sanctae Oecumenicae Synodi Florentinae*, AG, 460-61. Also in Fant., 95 and Epist. Pont., II, 70. This decree, called usually *Laetentur Coeli*, was formally announced in the cathedral of the city of Florence on 6 July, 1439. The original is still preserved in the *Laurentian Library* at Florence.

I. PRINCIPLES REGARDING THE DIVINE AUTHORITY

(SCRIPTURE, FATHERS AND THE COUNCILS)

1. Theological principles of dialogue regarding the authority of the Holy Scriptures

During the debates at the Council of Ferrara-Florence nobody questioned the *authority* or the *authenticity* of the texts quoted from the Holy Scriptures – the Old Testament and the New Testament. For both the Latins and the Greeks these texts constituted the inspired written Word of God revealed to men and handed down faithfully from generation to generation. This would be almost inconceivable in the Modernist biblical approach that has become more and more influential in the last two centuries, although the Eastern Churches have been less disturbed by this irreverent textual criticism.² However, if the authority of the Holy Scriptures is destroyed, the authority of the Fathers is undermined as well, for the Fathers and the Councils of the Church have but unfolded the doctrine contained in Scripture. That is why the arguments presented by both sides during the debates of the Council always referred to the divinely inspired texts as their fundamental justification. Moreover, there were no textual problems, such as different versions of the same writings, or writings that the other party would consider non-canonical.

The texts most quoted belong to the Holy Gospels,³ although there are quotations from almost the entire New Testament and from most of the books of the Old Testament as well.⁴ The Latins and the Greeks disagreed on the interpretation of some of these texts, and in order to support their interpretation they had to make use either of the texts of the Fathers commenting on the disputed passages or of the *ratio theologica*. That is why the arguments based on the Holy Scriptures were reduced finally to the patristic or rational arguments. The Greeks, however, accepted that the Latin arguments based on Scripture were solid enough; in one of his speeches, Scholarius affirmed that “not only truly by the Saints, but even by the sayings of Scripture this concord is handed over.”⁵ He insisted on the necessity of an inclination to see things as harmonious, and not to fight over isolated passages; this is in fact a criterion for a healthy interpretation not only of the Scriptures, but also of any text.

In order to portray how the arguments based on Scripture were finally reduced to patristic or rational arguments, we think it appropriate to give an example. In a summary prepared by John of Montenero,⁶ he counted *five scriptural arguments* from which he said one can deduce the procession of the Holy Spirit also from the Son.

First, he referred to some passages from the letters of Saint Paul in which the Apostle speaks about the “Spirit of the Son” (Gal. 4: 6, Rom. 5: 5; 8: 9) and to another passage from the Acts of the Apostles (16: 7), where St. Luke speaks of “the Spirit of Jesus.” From this he inferred that “of the” (more precisely, the use of the Genitive case) means possession, and since in the Trinity there is no possession of one Divine Person by another Divine Person, the only explanation that remains is that the Spirit takes His being from the Son, that is, proceeds from the Son.

Second, he referred to the passages in which it is said that the Son sends the Spirit (Jn. 15: 26), or the Father sends the Spirit in the name of the Son (Jn. 14: 26). But, he said, in the Holy Trinity no Person can be sent by another Person unless He proceeds from the One by whom He is sent. Therefore, he concluded, the Spirit proceeds from the Son.

Third, the Spirit makes us to be in the likeness of the Son (I Cor. 1: 22 in the light of Rom. 8: 29, also Gal. 4: 6), thus He must be *the image of the Son*. Here some Fathers were also named, who said that the Son is the image of the Father and the Spirit is the image of the Son (St. Basil, St. Athanasius).⁷ Therefore, Montenero concluded, the Spirit cannot be the image of the Son unless He takes His being from the Son, thus He proceeds from the Son.

² Of course, we do not mean that all textual criticism is irreverent, but we refer here to that sort of textual criticism which *excludes* the theological virtue of faith.

³ The *Gospel according to Saint John* for the dispute on the procession of the Holy Spirit, the *Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (though those according to Saint John and Saint Luke as well) for the dispute on the primacy of the Roman pontiff.

⁴ See the *Index* of the scriptural quotations used in the debates of the Council, in AG and AL.

⁵ PG 160, 521-22. See *ibidem*, 389-90; 393-94.

⁶ See AL, pp. 197-200.

⁷ For the texts of these Fathers, see notes 31 and 35 in this chapter.

Fourth, he quoted the words of the Lord, who said “He [the Holy Spirit] will take from Me” (Jn. 16: 14). But, he continued, in the Trinity this is possible only by way of procession from the other; at this point he quoted St. Augustine⁸ and St. Basil,⁹ who said that the Son is second in the order of dignity.

Fifth, Montenero quoted the passages in which it is said that the Son works through the Holy Spirit (Heb. 9: 14). He used then the example of the emperor who works through the king, in order to distinguish again the order of dignity implied by the preposition “through”; likewise, he argued, the Son works through the Spirit, that is, He gives the operating power and the divine essence to the Spirit. He continued with an explanation of the Greek formula *per Filium*, reminding his listeners that no Doctor ever said that the Son receives His being *from* or *through* the Spirit. To say *per Filium* and deny *ex Filio* is to contradict oneself, Montenero argued, and in support of his claim he made a comparison with the hand moving a stone through a staff, and he gave also the example of Jacob coming from Abraham through Isaac.

It is thus evident that these passages of the Scripture, considered by themselves, did not provide an immediate argument for the doctrine under discussion. They needed further rational interpretation or patristic support. In a similar way, the passage from the Holy Gospel according to John in which our Lord says that the Spirit proceeds from the Father (Jn. 15: 26), could not be used by the Greeks to deny that the Spirit proceeds also from the Son. The weight of the arguments in the debates of the Council rested therefore on the Fathers and on the *ratio theologica*.

2. Theological principles of dialogue regarding the authority of the Fathers

In his letter to Lascaris, Bessarion, commenting on his own behaviour during the Council, wrote: “The words (of the Fathers) by themselves alone are enough to solve every doubt and to persuade every soul. It was not syllogisms or probabilities or arguments that convinced me, but the bare words (of the Fathers).”¹⁰ He was not the only one among the Greeks to think in this way. As Fr. Gill observes:

Their approach to theology, and particularly the theology of the Blessed Trinity, was on purely patristic lines and that in the simplest way. It is noteworthy that even Mark Eugenicus was content for the most part with quoting the words of his authorities, adding only the barest commentary, and he was one of the best theologians among them.¹¹

A legitimate question may be asked at this point: who were the Fathers? Whom did the participants at the Council consider to be the authoritative voices of the Tradition? Whom did they trust? In reading the documents of the Council, one may note that some common words used to designate those who enjoyed this authority were “the Saints,” “the Doctors,” “the Fathers,” and “the Teachers.” Most of them were those who won their fame in the disputes of the first seven Ecumenical Councils, and others were known for their famous writings and for their holy life. Of course, the Greek participants were by far more familiar with Greek Saints and writings than with the Latin. However, even by them, names like Leo the Great, Hilary, Jerome, Damasus, Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory Dialogus could not be disregarded,¹² though their writings were only known from isolated quotations used by some Greek authors. “Till now,” declared the Greeks, “we never knew the Latin Saints nor read them.”¹³ This ignorance of the Latin Fathers was the source of many difficulties, for the Greeks were inclined rather to believe that the writings of the Latin Saints were not authentic, than to accept their doctrine, which seemed different from that of their Saints.

Nevertheless, and we may say fortunately, in defending their doctrine the Latin theologians brought forth not only the writings of Latin Saints, but many of the writings of the Greek Fathers as well. St. Epiphanius, St. Athanasius, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. John Chrysostom, St. Cyril of

⁸ *On the Trinity*, Book IV, ch. 20. See AL, p. 199, the complete text in P.L., 42, p. 908.

⁹ For the text, see note 19 in this chapter.

¹⁰ *Letter to Alex. Lascaris*, PG 161, 360 B, apud Gill, 227.

¹¹ Gill, 227-28.

¹² See Gill, p. 230. During the fifth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople II), the participants have declared: “We follow in everything the Holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church Athanasius, Hilary, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, Augustine, Theophile, John, Basil, John of Constantinople, Cyril, Leo, Procul, and accept everything which they explained about the true faith and the condemnation of heretics” (*Concilio V, actio I*, Mansi IX, 183 A-B, apud AL, 226-27).

¹³ AG, 427. See also Gill, 256. George Scholarius was perhaps the only one among them who was familiar with the Western authors.

Alexandria, St. John of Damascus and St. Maximus the Confessor were quoted at length, and this was more convincing for the Greeks than the proofs from the Latin Fathers.

Another important principle was that a single voice of the Tradition would not have been regarded as authoritative, had it not been accompanied by similar teachings of the other Fathers. In their first answer to the apology of the Latins for Purgatory,¹⁴ the Greeks said:

Only one Father remains, Gregory, the blessed priest of Nyssa, who seems to be saying more on your behalf than does any of the other Fathers. Guarding the whole honour due to this Father, we cannot prevent ourselves from saying that he was a mortal man as well, and a man, however great the degree of holiness he may have reached, can be mistaken at any time, especially in such things that have not been inquired before or decided by the Fathers in a general Synod. . . (. . .) . . [The orthodox teachers conclude by saying that] we must keep in mind the general teaching of the Church and to take as law the Holy Scripture, not paying attention to what each one writes in his proper name.¹⁵

In a similar way, the Latins rejected the unique voice of Theodoret, who attacked St. Cyril for having said that the Holy Spirit proceeds also from the Son,¹⁶ and who rejected even the possibility that the Spirit would proceed *through* the Son; there was no other who had gone so far, thus his voice was not to be trusted. The *Tradition* was considered to be represented by the *common teaching* of the Fathers, and not by the isolated voice of one.

The *authenticity* of the writings of the Fathers, used to support the opinion of one side or the other, was also a very important issue during the Council. Those texts were of course manuscripts, written on parchment or papyrus, and their antiquity differed from case to case. The different copies of the same text were not always identical, and therefore it was hard to know which was the right version, especially when there was a difference in meaning. Facing such a dilemma, one should have referred to the antiquity of the codex, to the context, to the other writings of the same author, to the number of copies that agreed with the one under discussion, to the writings of other authorities, or to other writings in which the text was quoted. Sometimes some of these criteria were in favour of a certain version, while other criteria were in favour of a different version, thus it was not easy at all to decide which version was most accurate. For example, sometimes the counterfeit copies, which were newer, were more numerous than the good copies, which were usually older. However, the final criterion was always the *consensus Patrum*, for a writing would have had no authority, had it been found alone in teaching a certain doctrine, or even worse, had it been opposed to the common teaching of the Fathers.

Both the Latins and the Greeks accused the other party, during the debates, of using corrupted texts. John of Montenero was accused, for example, of having used some writings of the Fathers taken from the Latin translations of Traversari, translations considered to be of poor quality.¹⁷ He also used the text of the dialogue of Athanasius with Arius (during the Council of Nicaea), but it seems that this text does not have St. Athanasius as author.¹⁸ But the most disputed text during the debates in Florence was a text written by Saint Basil, from *Against Eunomius*, III:

Τίς γὰρ ἀνάγκη, εἰ τῷ ἀξιώματι καὶ τῇ τάξει τρίτον ὑπάρχει τὸ πνεῦμα, τρίτον εἶναι αὐτὸ καὶ τῇ φύσει; ἀξιώματι μὲν γὰρ δεύτερον τοῦ υἱοῦ, παρ' αὐτοῦ τὸ εἶναι ἔχον, καὶ παρ' αὐτοῦ λαμβάνον, καὶ ἀναγγέλλον ἡμῖν.¹⁹

This famous text, almost without comparison on account of its clarity, played an important role in all the discussions, and they constantly came back to it. Not being able to find any reasonable interpretation other than the obvious sense of the text, Mark of Ephesus launched a different critique

¹⁴ The issue was then not so much centred on Purgatory as such, but whether the purifying sufferings occur by fire or by something else. See AG, 22 et seq.

¹⁵ Ostrumov, p. 51.

¹⁶ See AG, 380-81. The text (Theodoret of Cyrus, *Letter 172, To John of Antioch*) can be found in PG 83, 1484 BC.

¹⁷ See AL 83v, p. 137 and Ostrumov, 86.

¹⁸ Ostrumov, 95, note 2 and AL 97r, p. 164. The entire text can be found in PG 38, 480.

¹⁹ "Even if the Holy Spirit is third in dignity and order, why need he be third also in nature? For that He is second to the Son, *having His being from Him and receiving from Him and announcing to us.*" The Greek text was taken from DTC, VI, col. 35. It can also be found in PG 29, 655 C (note 79), even though it is not included in the main version of the text. See the comments below.

(which he used with respect to other texts cited by the Latins as well): this text was, according to him, *not authentic*, being in fact *interpolated* into the original in order to defend the *Filioque*.²⁰ He brought another copy of the same treatise, which was different from the one read by Montenero. Fr. Gill gives the two different versions of the text²¹ in two parallel columns:

TEXT UPHELD BY THE LATINIS	TEXT UPHELD BY THE GREEKS
PG 29, 653B	
Even if the Holy Spirit is third in dignity and order, why need He be third also in nature? For that He is second to the Son, <i>having his being from Him and receiving from Him and announcing to us and being completely dependent on Him,</i> <p style="text-align: center;">pious tradition</p> recounts; but that His nature is third we are not taught by the Saints nor can we conclude logically from what has been said	Even if the Holy Spirit is third in dignity and order, why need He be third also in nature? For that He is second <p style="text-align: center;">pious tradition perhaps</p> recounts; but that His nature is third we are not taught by the Saints nor can we conclude from what has been said
PG 29, 656A	
so that, although the Holy Spirit is behind the Son <i>in order and dignity,</i> <p style="text-align: center;">all the same He would not be</p> considered as of another nature,	that although He is subordinated to the Son, <p style="text-align: center;"><i>let us make this supposition,</i></p> still it does not follow that he is also of another nature,
PG 29, 657C	
so, namely, although the Holy Spirit is below in dignity and order, <p style="text-align: center;">for we have received</p>	so, therefore, although the Holy Spirit is below in dignity and order, <i>as they say,</i> for we have received and hold

In a surprising manner, most of the extant codices contain the Greek, and not the Latin variant of the text,²² and therefore Eugenicus' critique seems to be justified.²³ Moreover, Ostrumov claims that the variant used by the Latins appeared for the first time in a Latin treatise against the Greeks written by Hugo Eterianus (the middle of XIIth century).²⁴ Nevertheless, in spite of these apparent proofs, there are serious arguments that support the Latin position. John of Ragusa replied that the codex brought from Constantinople by Nicholas de Cusa, written *before* the controversy on the *Filioque* started (it was at least six hundred year old), contained the same text. Also, he said, the corruption of texts was more widespread in the East than in the West, and he reminded the listeners of St. Cyril of Alexandria warning John of Antioch against the possible falsification of his

²⁰ See AG, 296; 401. Also in AL 92R, p. 155.

²¹ The comparative table, in which the texts disputed were reconstructed from the frequent quotations made by Montenero and Eugenicus *passim* in the debates, is taken from Gill, p. 199.

²² Par. 1618, t. ii, p. 78; Venet. 1535, fol. 87; Basiliae, 1551, p. 676; 1565, p. 139; 1566, p. 339; Paris, 1566, p. 218. See Zoernikov, *Tractatus Theolog.*, p. 219 et seq., apud Ostrumov, p. 91, note 2. See the explanation given in PG 29, 655C (note 79) and in Ostrumov, pp. 91-2, note 2. Out of seven versions of the text of Saint Basil, only one corresponds to the text used by the Latins during the debates of Florence. That is why PG contains the Greek, and not the Latin version.

²³ In support of his critique he referred also to the beginning of the book in question (Saint Basil, *Adversus Eunomium*, Lib. III, PG 29, 653 B), but Montenero took the text word by word and showed that it can have a different interpretation (See AL 106rv, pp. 181-82); there is another text in St. Basil (*Liber de Spiritu Santo*, ch. 18. par. 47 - PG 32, 154D) in which the Saint refutes the argument that infers the order of dignity from the order of enumeration; this refutation supports Mark's argument, namely, that St. Basil accepted Eunomius' claim (*pious tradition recounts*) only as a concession for the sake of the argument. Thus the words *perhaps*, or *let us make this supposition*, or *as they say*, would be most likely part of the original text. However, even St. Basil, though according to Mark he would not have agreed with the saying that pious tradition considers the Spirit third in order and dignity, did not completely deny this claim, but he would have seemed only to hesitate. This text from *On the Holy Spirit* was not, however, used by Mark during the dispute.

²⁴ See Ostrumov, p. 92, note 2.

letters²⁵ and repeating the same caution to Acacius by recounting the story of the letter of Athanasius.²⁶ In his turn, Mark Eugenicus came up with a similar accusation, related to Pope Zossimus, who, he claimed, tried to impose on the Council of Carthage a false document, attributed to the Council of Nicaea. He had, however, no proofs. Continuing the debate, they tried to prove that this or that version of the text is the true one by referring to the context, but after many days they still did not reach any agreement.²⁷ During this inflamed discussion, Cardinal Cesarini asked to see the manuscript that Dorotheus of Mitylene had in his hands.²⁸ In a very surprising manner, that manuscript was similar to the one quoted by John of Ragusa, containing the same disputed text, being thus different from the text quoted by Mark of Ephesus.²⁹ It is easy to imagine the stupefaction and agitation that this discovery caused in the assembly. Moreover, Bessarion, in one of his letters to Alexis Lascaris, tells an even more astonishing story:

Firstly five exemplars, then six, were found in this Council. Four were written on parchment and very ancient, two others on silk. From the two writings on silk, one was the property of our powerful Emperor, the other of the sacred Patriarch. Five of these six exemplars had the text as I quoted it, that is, they were affirming that the Holy Spirit takes His being from the Son, and that He depends on this same cause, that is, on the Son. But one only, the copy of the Patriarch, was different: someone had cut off the text and had afterwards added and retrenched certain things. Later, after the Council, after it was suggested to me that I should examine almost all the books of these monasteries, I found that in the most recent ones, that is, in those that were written after this great quarrel, the passage was cut out. By contrary, all those that were by a more ancient hand, and that were composed before the quarrel of the Greeks between them, all those ones have remained healthy and complete and they are, however, in the same great number as the corrupted texts... Meanwhile, I have found among other books, in the monastery of Christ-Saviour in Pantepoptos, two copies of Saint Basil, one, on a very ancient parchment, judging by the sight..., the other, on paper, that was dated at least three hundred years old, for the date was written at the end. These two copies have the passage of Saint Basil; only these audacious men, and by an even more audacious hand, have cut out the passage. But the place has remained empty and half of the syllables subsists, which does not but betray the trickery and show forth even better the truth. In another book, an erasure was put on the phrase: «receiving being from Him and depending in a unique way on Him as on His cause.»³⁰

It is evident that such things raised questions about the good faith of the Greeks. Moreover, the passage used by the Latins was in complete agreement with similar ones in St. Athanasius (*Letter to Serapion I*),³¹ St. Gregory of Nyssa (*Letter to Ablabius*),³² St. Epiphanius (*Anchoratus, Against Heresies III*),³³ St. Cyril of

²⁵ PG 77, 181 B, apud Gill, 200.

²⁶ Ibidem, 200 C, apud ibidem.

²⁷ See AL, 92r-114r, pp.154-196. Also in Gill, pp. 200-205. The debate on this subject was very long, and it was ended by the reply of John of Ragusa, Mark of Ephesus being absent. In fact, there was no public debate any more after this event, so the dispute could not continue.

²⁸ AL 98R, p. 165.

²⁹ Idem, 99v, p. 168. Mark objected that the codex was written by the same hand, an objection then proven to be false. There was a *maxima differentia* (ibidem).

³⁰ *Letter of Bessarion to Alexis Lascaris*, PG 161, 319 sq., quoted by Vast, p. 81-82, apud DTC, VI, col. 36. See also Gill, 203 and especially 223-24, and note 48 of this chapter. It is therefore easy to understand why most of the actual codices do not contain the Latin version of the text, but the Greek one: the codices we have now follow the versions that have survived, that is, the Greek ones. On the other hand, L. Lohn, in his article 'Doctrina S. Basilii M. de processionibus divinarum Personarum' in *Greg. X* (1929), pp. 329-64, 461-500, especially pp. 461-84, argues on palaeological, historical and theological lines for the authenticity of the Latin text – Gill, 224, note 1.

³¹ “τοιούτην τάξιν καὶ φύσιν ἔχει τὸ Πνεῦμα πρὸς τὸν Υἱὸν οἷαν ἔχει ὁ Υἱὸς πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα” - *Such order and nature has the Spirit to the Son as the Son has to the Father (Ep. 1 ad Serap., PG 26, 580 B)*. Montenero refers to it few times (see AL, 97r, 165; 99r, 167 and AG, 318; 337).

³² It is usually found under a different name, namely, *That there are not three Gods*. See *Quod non Sint tres dii*, P.G. 45, 136. A similar idea in *Oratio de Pater Noster*, III, PG 44, 1160 B. This passage was quoted by Andrea of Rhodes during the fifth session of the Council (see AG, 125), and it contains a very powerful definition: **coming directly from the Father, without anything interposed, is proper to the Son as Divine Person.**

³³ See *Anchoratus* in PG 43, 148 AB. Here St. Epiphanius clearly speaks about the Spirit as “φῶς τρίτον παρὰ Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱοῦ” - *the third light from the Father and the Son, “παρὰ ἀμφοτέρων” - from both [the Father and the Son]*. In idem, 157 A, we read: “καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα ἐκ Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱοῦ πνέει” - *and the Spirit breathes out from the Father and the Son*. Similar passages in idem, 25 C; 29 C; 31 C; 152 B; 153 A. For *Against Heresies III* see PG 42, 480 D.

Alexandria (*Thesaurus, Commentary on the Gospel of John*),³⁴ and even with some other passages in St. Basil himself (*On the Holy Spirit, Against Eunomius V*).³⁵ It was therefore reasonable to consider it authentic.

In fact, the most important principle that ruled the debates and that led to the final acceptance of the Latin doctrine, especially the doctrine on the *Filioque*, was the *consensus Patrum* (the consensus of the Fathers). Bessarion, in his *Oratio Dogmatica*, gave an excellent summary of what *consensus Patrum* means:

All Doctors are inspired by the same Holy Spirit; they must, therefore, all be in agreement among themselves and there can be no real opposition between them, so that if there is any apparent contradiction we must try to conciliate their different statements. It is clear that the words of those who spoke more obscurely should be interpreted by the clear utterances of others, which in the present case means to explain the Greek Fathers by the Latins. Still for Easterns the eastern Fathers have most weight, so the task is to prove from these that they agree with the western Saints.³⁶

Likewise, referring explicitly to the Latin Doctors, Isidore of Kiev said that the books of the saints of the Latin Church should be read and harmonized because they *are* in fact harmonious, since the Saints always write in agreement with each other, seeing that the Holy Spirit speaks in them.³⁷ As regards the *Filioque*, for example, the Latin Fathers taught this doctrine unanimously;³⁸ thus the Greek Fathers cannot be found in opposition to them.

It is very surprising that some Orthodox theologians go so far as to say that the Latin Fathers of the first eight centuries taught that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone!³⁹ A similar claim can be found in a writing of Manuel the Great Rhetorician, a disciple of Mark of Ephesus and Gennadius Scholarius,⁴⁰ who had a very strange manner of approaching the Latin Fathers, forcing their texts to fit his arguments. Mgr. Louis Petit was perplexed when he heard a monk from Mount Athos, in August 1901, saying that St. Augustine was an irreducible opponent of the *Filioque*, a claim that no serious Orthodox theologian would dare to make.⁴¹ Mark Eugenicus had a similar reaction towards the Western Saints: not being able to give a different interpretation to the texts brought forth by the Latins, he considered them corrupted:

³⁴ See *Thesaurus* in PG 75, 575 B: “οὐδεμίαν ἄρα φύσεως οἶδε διαφορὰν τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ Πνεύματος, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ φυσικῶς ὑπάρχον” - *Therefore no difference is known of the Son and the Spirit, but just as if from Him and in Him naturally existing*. Likewise, in idem, 585 A: “πρόεισι δὲ καὶ ἐκ Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱοῦ, πρόδηλον ὅτι τῆς θείας ἐστὶν οὐσίας, οὐσιωδῶς ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς προϊόν” - [the Spirit] *proceeds from the Father and the Son, thus it is evident to be from the divine substance, proceeding substantially in it and from it*. Also, *In Joannis Evangelium*, PG 74, 257 C; 444 BD; 452 D; 453 D.

³⁵ St. Basil, in his book *On the Holy Spirit*, ch. 18, par. 45 says: “ἐν δὲ καὶ τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα, καὶ αὐτὸ μοναδικῶς ἐξαγγελῶμενον, δι’ ἐνὸς Υἱοῦ τῷ ἐνὶ Πατρὶ συναπτόμενον” - *One, moreover, is the Holy Spirit, and we speak of Him singly, conjoined to the one Father through the one Son* (PG 32, 149 C-152 A); in par. 47 he continues: “Ἡ τοίνυν ὁδὸς τῆς Θεογνωσίας ἐστὶν ἀπὸ ἐνὸς Πνεύματος διὰ τοῦ ἐνὸς Υἱοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν ἕνα Πατέρα. Καὶ ἀνάπαλιν, ἡ φυσικὴ ἀγαθότης, καὶ ὁ κατὰ φύσιν ἀγιασμός, καὶ τὸ βασιλικὸν ἀξίωμα ἐκ Πατρὸς διὰ τοῦ Μονογενοῦς ἐπὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα διήκει.” - *Thus the way of the knowledge of God lies from One Spirit through the One Son to the One Father, and conversely the natural Goodness and the inherent Holiness and the royal Dignity extend from the Father through the Only-begotten to the Spirit* (PG 32, 153 BC). Similar passages in *Adversus Eunomium*, Lib. V – PG 29, 737 B; 763 AB. And in the same book: “Εἰκὼν μὲν Θεοῦ Χριστὸς, Ὅς ἐστι, φησὶν, εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου εἰκὼν δὲ Υἱοῦ τὸ Πνεῦμα, καὶ οἱ τούτου μεταλαμβάνοντες υἱοὶ σύμμορφοι, κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον” - *The icon of God is Christ, . . . The Icon of the Son is the Holy Spirit* . . . and here follows Rom. 8: 29 (PG 29, 724 C). To see what St. Basil means by “icon” in these passages, see his fourth book of *Against Eunomius* (PG 29, 676 B). **As the Son is the icon of the Father, so the Spirit is the icon of the Son.** Similar passages (speaking about the Spirit as the icon of the Son) can be found in the same Book V: PG 29, 732 AB; 753 B. St. Basil is not the only one to speak of the Spirit as the image of the Son; so do St. Damascene (*De Fide orthodoxa*, Lib. I, cap. 13 – PG, 94, p. 856; *Oratio de imaginibus*, Lib. III – PG, 94 1340B) and St. Cyril of Alexandria (*De Sanctissima Trinitate, Dialogus VII* – PG 75, 1089, and *Thesaurus*, assert. 33 – PG 75, 572).

³⁶ Summary in *Oratio Dogmatica* in Gill, p. 240. The original text can be found in PG 161, 543-612.

³⁷ See AG, 426. Also Gill, p. 255.

³⁸ See AL, pp. 200-8.

³⁹ See Ostrumov, op. cit., p. 114, note 1. He refers to Adam Zoernikov, *Tractatus*, IV.

⁴⁰ He is in fact George Scholarius, but Gennadius is the name he chose as Patriarch of Constantinople.

⁴¹ See the introduction to the works of Mark Eugenicus written by Mgr. Louis Petit, Latin Archbishop of Athena, in PO, 17, 331. In fact, in our days, St. Augustine is disregarded by many Orthodox theologians precisely for this reason, namely, for having taught the doctrine of *Filioque*.

The words of the western Fathers and Doctors, which attribute to the Son the cause of the Spirit, I never recognise (for they have never been translated into our tongue nor approved by the Ecumenical Councils) nor do I admit them, presuming that they are corrupt and interpolated. . . .⁴²

Likewise, Syropoulos, rendered distrustful, he said, by the episode of the interpolated copy of the Acts of the seventh Council that the Latins had put forth in Ferrara,⁴³ would also accept only those Latin writings as genuine that were in agreement with the letter of St. Maximus and the words of St. Cyril, the rest he rejected as spurious.⁴⁴

This position was, however, considered to be absurd by the Greeks themselves, as we can see in the following dialogue and in the professions of faith that the other Greeks wrote or recited:

Bessarion: “God, be propitious to me! And the Saints saying this are heretics? Dumb be the deceitful lips, speaking against the saints; but you listen wisely. The western and the eastern Saints do not disagree, but the same Spirit spoke in all the Saints; and if it pleases you, compare their works with one another, and thus the saints will be found harmonious.” “But,” said **Ephesus**, “who knows if the books have not been falsified by them?” “If,” replied **Bessarion**, “we remove all such words from the books – whole homilies, commentaries on the Gospels, complete treatises on trinitarian theology – there will be nothing left but blank pages.”⁴⁵

In fact, after this dialogue, Dorotheus of Mytilene and Methodius of Lacedaemon were so scandalized by Mark's attitude that they were almost ready to attack him physically.⁴⁶ The majority of the Greeks (of those who had the power to vote in the Council) could not doubt the authenticity of the text of the Latin Fathers; moreover, the Latins had furnished sufficient arguments proving that the Greek Fathers taught the same doctrine, even though in a more obscure way. That is why the Greeks were embarrassed. On one occasion, Bessarion wrote:

They brought forward passages not only of the western teachers but quite as many of the eastern... to which we had no reply whatsoever to make except that they were corrupt and corrupted by the Latins. They brought forward our own Epiphanius as in many places clearly declaring that the Spirit is from the Father and the Son:

⁴² *Confessio Fidei*, in PO 17, 438 (300). English text from Gill, 226.

⁴³ Nobody could bring a proof against the authenticity of that copy, see AG, pp. 85; 87. However, the Greeks were inclined to consider it spurious (see note 60 in this chapter).

⁴⁴ See Gill, p. 256. In the *Letter to Marinus*, St. Maximus said that the Latins did not assert that the Son is the cause of the Spirit, but they showed the identity of essence by saying that the Spirit proceeds through the Son (see PG 91, 133 D- 136 A; also in AG, p. 392). This letter was very important in the evolution of the debates, for in it St. Maximus affirms that the Latins *did* teach the *Filioque* in accord with the writings of St. Cyril (see *In Joannis Evangelium*, Lib. X, PG 74, 444 B and idem, Lib. XI, 452 D). Also, in his saying “the Latins did not assert that the Son is the cause of the Spirit,” the word cause (*αἰτία*) is to be understood in the light of Saint Augustine's *principaliter*: the Son receives from the Father the power to breathe forth (Lat. *spirare*) the Holy Spirit, although the Spirit proceeds *principaliter* from the Father (see AG, p. 385; St. Augustine, *On the Trinity*, XV, cap. 26 – PL 42, 1094). See also the excellent explanation of the Latins in AG, p. 412: “we assert one cause to the Son and to the Spirit, the Father . . . but in order to signify the communion and equality of essence, we assert also the procession through the Son and the inseparability of the substance from the hypostasis . . . and because [the Spirit] is substantially of the Father and of the Son, and the substance is not separated from the hypostasis, it follows that the Holy Spirit is also from the hypostasis of the Son . . .” These words follow very closely the explanation of St. Cyril himself: Οὐ γὰρ ἀλλότριον τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Μονογενοῦς τὸ ἅγιον νοεῖται Πνεῦμα, πρόεισι δὲ φυσικῶς ἐξ αὐτῆς - *For the Holy Spirit is not understood as alien to the substance of the Only-begotten, but He proceeds naturally from it* (PG 74, 444 B); and likewise, λαμβάνειν τε οὕτω τὸ Πνεῦμά φαμεν, ἐκ τε τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ τὰ αὐτῶν - *Thus we say that the Spirit receives, from the Father and the Son those things which are theirs* (idem, 452 D).

⁴⁵ Ὁ ΝΙΚΑΙΑΣ. Ἰλεῶς μοι θεέ· καὶ οἱ ἅγιοι οἱ λέγοντες τοῦτο αἰρετικοὶ εἰσιν; Ἄλαλα γεννηθῆτω τὰ χεῖλη τὰ δόλια, τὰ λαλοῦντα κατὰ τῶν ἁγίων· ἀλλ’ ἀκούσατε ἡμεῖς νουνεχῶς. οἱ δυσικοὶ καὶ ἀνατολικοὶ ἅγιοι οὐ διαφωνῶσιν, ἀλλὰ τὸ αὐτὸ Πνεῦμα ἐλάλησεν ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἁγίοις, καὶ εἰ θέλετε, συγκρουσάσθωσαν τὰ συγγράμματα αὐτῶν ἀπ’ ἀλλήλων, καὶ οὕτως εὐρεθήσονται ὁμογνώμονες οἱ ἅγιοι.

Ὁ ΕΦΕΣΟΥ. Καὶ τίς οἶδεν, εἰ ἐφθάρησαν αἱ Βίβλοι παρ’ αὐτῶν;

Ὁ ΝΙΚΑΙΑΣ. Καὶ τίς ἔχει τοῦτο τολμήσαι εἰπεῖν, ὁμιλίας ὀλοκλήρους, ἐρμηνείας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, θεολογίας ἀκεραίας περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν. ἐὰν γοῦν ἀπαλείψωμεν ταῦτα ἀπὸ τῶν Βιβλίων, οὐδὲν ἀπομεινεῖ ἄλλον ἐν αὐτοῖς εἰ μὴ μεμβρᾶναι λευκαί.

(AG, 401). See also Gill, p. 235.

⁴⁶ Syr. IX, 5, p. 256, apud Gill, p. 235.

corrupt we said they were. They read the text mentioned earlier in Basil's work against Eunomius: in our judgement it was interpolated. They adduced the words of the Saints of the West: the whole of our answer was 'corrupt' and nothing more. We consider and consult among ourselves for several days as to what answer we shall make, but find no other defence at all but that. . . (. . .) . . We found ourselves deprived of a just case in every direction. So we kept silent.⁴⁷

Also, in his letter to Alexis Lascaris, speaking about the disputed text from Saint Basil's *Against Eunomius* III, he says that the phrases were "so typically Greek that a Latin could hardly have written them and inserted them so neatly, and to quote earlier witnesses to the text as it was read in previous centuries."⁴⁸

Scholarios, in his turn, addressing the Greek assembly, said:

But you all see that the Latins have contended brilliantly for their faith so that no one with a sense of justice has any reason to reproach them. . . . They brought forward from the common Fathers of the Church the six most renowned in dignity, wisdom and the struggles for the faith (I pass over the others) as witnesses of their doctrine, each of whom must be judged the equal of all the men in the world, and those not just incidentally and casually but as if they were for us judges of the present dispute. They argued so precisely and clearly, expressing the question in exact words and as befits teachers, appending also the reasons and the texts of the Holy Scripture from which they had drawn that doctrine as an inevitable conclusion, just as they culled others from other texts. . . . Besides, they put forward others from the common Fathers, those of the East I mean, adorned with an equal wisdom and honour who said, they too, just the same as those others, though not so plainly, if their words are examined in a spirit of truth and wisdom, and they offered in proof of their doctrine neither merely specious reasoning, nor coercion, but everything straightforwardly and as flowing from the divine Scriptures and the Fathers. On our part nothing was said to them to which they did not manifestly reply with wisdom, magnanimity and truth, and we have no Saint at all who clearly contradicts them. If indeed there were such, he should in some fashion or manner be made to harmonize with the majority much more justly than that the multitude of the Teachers would be forced into the mould. . . . Nor shall we say that the Doctors are mutually contradictory, for this is to introduce complete confusion and to deny the whole of the faith. Who is so simple-minded as to believe that the Latins wish to destroy the faith and to adulterate the trinitarian theology of all the Doctors? Surely *a man who affirms this deserves nothing but ridicule*, for no accusation would be disproved by more numerous, more weighty and more truthful arguments than this one.⁴⁹

Facing this dilemma, the Protosyncellus asked therefore the Greeks:

What can we answer? We can say that some of their quotations are false and others corrupt; that we know nothing of some and reject others, which is unreasonable. What then is left? To reply with lies? That is unbecoming.⁵⁰

They had, Dorotheus of Mitylene said, two possibilities: either to agree with the saints and unite with the Latins, or to stigmatize them and depart. He proposed the words written by St. Maximus the Confessor as a formula of agreement: "The Holy Spirit proceeding substantially from the Father through the ineffably generated Son,"⁵¹ but finally he accepted completely the Latin formulation of the doctrine.

Furthermore, at a meeting of the Greeks, after the reception of the Latin *cedula*, Isidore of Kiev brought a treatise written by Beccus and read some of the patristic quotations it contained,⁵² in order to support the idea

⁴⁷ PG 161, 358 CD, apud Gill, 224.

⁴⁸ Gill's summary of PG 161, 324-8, apud ibidem. See also note 30 in this chapter.

⁴⁹ *On the Need of Aiding Constantinople*, Schol. I, pp. 297-98, 299, apud Gill, p. 225-26 – the English translation was slightly corrected (emphasis is ours). The original text can be found also in PG 160, pp. 387-92, passim.

⁵⁰ Καὶ τί δυνάμεθα ἀπολογεῖσθαι πρὸς ταῦτα; τὰ μὲν λέγομεν τῶν γραφῶν ὅτι εἰσὶ φευδῆ, τὰ δὲ νόθα εἰσὶ· καὶ τὰ μὲν λέγομεν ἄγνωστα ἡμῖν, τὰ δὲ ὅτι οὐ στέργομεν, ἀλόγως πως. τί ἔτι λείπεται λοιπόν; ἀπολογεῖσθαι φευδῆ; καὶ οὐδὲν πρέπει ἡμῖν. (AG, 406). See also Gill, 237. The "Protosyncellus" is the name used in the Greek Acts for Gregory Mammas.

⁵¹ Πῶς οὐδὲν ἔχομεν τι εἰπεῖν; οὐ διαλεγόμεθα; οὐκ ἔχομεν ἀγῶνα; ἔχομεν, δέσποτά μου, εἰπεῖν πλήρης πολλά, τὰ δὲ εἰσὶν ἵνα ποιήσωμεν ἐκ τῶν δύο τὸ ἓν, ἢ ἵνα συμφωνήσωμεν τοῖς ἁγίοις καὶ ἐνωθῶμεν [τοῖς] Λατίνοις, ἢ ἵνα ὀβελίσωμεν αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀπελευσώμεθα· ὅμως στέργετε τὸν μέγαν Μάξιμον, εἴ τι διακελεύεται; ἀπεκρίθησαν καὶ εἶπον ὅτι στέργουσιν αὐτόν. ὁ δὲ λέγει· ὁ μέγας Μάξιμος τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, φησὶν, ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς οὐσιωδῶς, διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ γεννηθέντος ἀφράστως, ἐκπορευόμενον. (AG, 402). For St. Maximus' words see PG 90, 972C. See also Gill, p. 235.

⁵² See Gill, p. 249. Beccus was a Patriarch of Constantinople who favoured the union made under Michael VIII at the Council of Lyons (1274), and he suffered a serious persecution (imprisonment, trials by the Synod). His treatise,

that the Western and the Eastern Saints agreed with one another. And so, little by little, the Greek prelates were convinced, and a final agreement on the genuineness of the Latin writings was reached on May 28th.⁵³ As Fr. Gill observes:

It is important to appreciate this conviction of the Greeks, that the Saints could not err in the faith and therefore must agree, for it is both the explanation and the justification of their accepting union (which they did accept) without being open to a true charge of insincerity and inexcusable moral cowardice. It was for them an axiom and it was accepted by all without exception.⁵⁴

3. Theological principles of dialogue regarding the authority of the Ecumenical Councils

We have seen that the *consensus Patrum* constituted, for all the participants at the Council of Ferrara-Florence, an undisputed principle in defining the doctrine that enjoyed divine authority. But the highest expression of this *consensus* was preserved in the decrees (and sometimes in the acts) of the Ecumenical Councils;⁵⁵ therefore, these decrees were regarded as the highest authority after the Holy Scriptures, both by the Latins and by the Greeks. They referred to these texts especially during the dispute on the addition of the *Filioque* to the Creed (when many decrees from all seven Councils were read⁵⁶), and also in the debate on the primacy of the Roman See.⁵⁷

The Greeks recognized seven Ecumenical Councils, while the Latins considered that there were eight Ecumenical Councils in common with the Greeks. However, they made a concession to the Greeks, namely, not to bring into the discussion the decrees of what they called “the Eighth Ecumenical Council,”⁵⁸ for they had already sufficient proofs from the previous ones and from the Fathers. Moreover, there were no problems with the *authenticity* of the texts brought forth by the Greeks, for the Latins had them as well. The Greeks, however, were circumspect regarding some documents brought forth by the Latins, for they had never heard of them. For example, the Latins had another codex, very ancient, in Latin, which contained the decree of the Seventh Council, which, speaking about the divinity of the Holy Spirit, contained the words *qui ex Patre et ex Filio procedit*.⁵⁹ The text was shown to the Greeks, inspected by them, and nothing could be objected as to its authenticity.⁶⁰ Likewise, the Latins used the book of Hermias Sozomenus, on the history of the Church,⁶¹ not known by the Greeks. They pointed also to the professions of faith written by Charisius, Sophronius and Tarasius,⁶² professions that the Greeks knew about, but which they considered private, not common (binding on all). Particularly important was the profession of faith written by Tarasius, the Patriarch of Constantinople,

Epigraphae, can be found in PG 141, pp. 613-723, and he has also a treatise against Photius' book on the Holy Spirit, see PG 141, pp. 725-764. He was a good theologian and his patristic arguments have never been refuted by his opponents. The most powerful quotation used by Isidore from Beccus' treatise was a text from St. Cyril of Alexandria, which spoke about the Spirit who is “substantially from both, that is flowing forth from the Father through the Son. [Gr. τὸ οὐσιωδῶς ἐξ ἀμφὸν, ἥγουν ἐκ Πατρὸς δι’ Υἱοῦ προχέομενον Πνεῦμα]” – see *De Adoratione in Spiritu et Veritate*, PG 68, 148 A, and *Epigraphae* of Beccus in PG 141, 617 B.

⁵³ See Gill, 258; also AG, 427; 432-36.

⁵⁴ Gill, p. 231. Mark Eugenicus himself had nothing to say against this principle (*consensus Patrum*).

⁵⁵ See AG, 66.

⁵⁶ See idem, 68-86. They referred again and again to some of these texts, arguing over the true meaning of “another faith – ἕτεραν πίστιν” – see AG, 111-185, passim, and below in this chapter.

⁵⁷ See AL, pp. 232-35; 241-46.

⁵⁸ See AG, 90-91. Mark explicitly rejects any appeal to the VIIIth Council – Constantinople IVth, 869-870 AD, since its legitimacy was denied by the Greeks (during this Council *Photius*, the Patriarch of Constantinople and the beginner of the theological dispute with the Latins, was condemned).

⁵⁹ “Who proceeds from the Father and the Son” – the doctrine of the *Filioque*.

⁶⁰ See AG, 85, and also 122; 133. Bessarion, however, not seeing its agreement with the decrees of the other Councils, argued that it should not be taken to mean something against the prohibition of Ephesus, and promised to treat of it in a different place, *which he never did* (see AG, 147). Later on, Syropoulos confessed to have become suspicious with respect to the authenticity of the Latin manuscripts precisely on account of this “interpolated” document of the seventh Ecumenical Council (see Gill, p. 256).

⁶¹ See AG, 129-30.

⁶² See idem, 133; 199; 412.

during the Council of Nicaea II; in it he said that the Spirit proceeds from the Father *through* the Son (Gr., διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ), and this document had a strong impact on the Greek assembly.⁶³

Since more or less the two parties in dispute were referring to the same texts, the weight fell on their *interpretation*. However, this interpretation was not so much reduced to *ratio theologica*, as in the case of the interpretation of the texts from the Holy Scripture (although the rational arguments had some place in the debate as well),⁶⁴ but it involved mostly a clarification of the meaning of the texts in the light of the historical facts themselves. The most disputed subject, rooted almost exclusively in the decrees and acts of the Ecumenical Councils, was the legitimacy of the addition of the *Filioque* to the Creed.

The Greeks, taking very strictly the prohibition of the Council of Ephesus (repeated in a similar form by the decrees of the subsequent Ecumenical Councils), and some letters of St. Cyril and some other Fathers, rejected the legitimacy of any change whatsoever in the text of the Creed. In the acts of the Council of Ephesus it was written:

When therefore these things had been read out, the Holy Synod enacted that it is lawful for no one to put forward, that is to write or compose, another faith [ἑτέραν πίστιν] than that defined by the holy Fathers congregated in the Holy Spirit in Nicaea. Those who dared either to compose or to proffer or put forward another faith [πίστιν ἑτέραν] to those wishing to return to the acknowledgement of the truth whether from paganism or from Judaism or from any heresy whatsoever, such, if they were bishops or clerics should be alienated, bishops from the episcopacy and clerics from the clergy; but if laymen they should be under anathema.⁶⁵

Furthermore, St. Cyril, in a letter to John of Antioch, said:

In no way do we allow that determined faith to be upset by anyone, that is the symbol of faith of our holy Fathers who assembled once in Nicaea. Nor indeed do we permit either ourselves or others to change a word of what is laid down there or to transgress even one syllable, mindful of the text: 'Do not remove the ancient boundaries which your fathers set.' For it was not they who spoke but the Spirit of God and Father, who proceeds from Him, yet is not alien to the Son in respect of His substance.⁶⁶

Taking *ad litteram* these texts, the Greeks paid little attention to the context and produced a simplistic interpretation, which they tried to defend using other similar texts. That is why they were in fact *using*, not *interpreting* the texts. Their first way of proceeding was to read a certain text, after which Mark gave a short interpretation of it.⁶⁷ His conclusion was that, out of veneration and obedience to their Fathers, the Greeks could not accept any addition to the Creed.⁶⁸ He remained unchanged in his opinion even at the end of the public debates in Florence (after five months of debates):

But since in the first case the Fathers did not remember the Son when they showed forth the cause of the procession, but they remembered Him in the second place, when they showed forth the equal honouring and His co-substantiality, it is clear that they were not accepting the procession of the Holy Spirit also from the Son. . . . The fact that this interpretation is perfect, and not half-perfect, as you say, is proved from this, that none of the later Synods gave a new form to the interpretation and added that the Holy Spirit proceeds

⁶³ See the reference to the speech of Bessarion, after the speech of Dorotheus of Mitylene, in AG, 402-3; also the observation in AG, 412.

⁶⁴ The Latins argued that *Filioque* was not an addition in the proper sense, but just an explanation (see AG, 92 and AL, p. 41); however, the Greeks disagreed, and the parties tried to argue back and forth making use of different syllogisms (see, for ex., some arguments of the Latins in AG, 92-95; 101-6; 111-15, and the reply of the Bessarion on behalf of the Greeks in AL, pp. 46-50 and AG, 140-58). Of course, in their syllogistic arguments they had to make use of the decrees of the Councils, Scripture and the writings of the Fathers (it was not a controversy reduced to a mere abstract argumentation).

⁶⁵ Council of Ephesus, act. VI, in Mansi, 4, 1361 D, apud AG, 69. The English translation was taken from Gill, p. 149. The same prohibition was repeated almost word for word in the fifth act of the Council of Chalcedon (see Mansi 7, 116 C, apud AG, 77), and by the Council of Constantinople III, act. XVIII (see Mansi 11, 640 B, apud AG, 82).

⁶⁶ *Letter to John of Antioch*, Mansi, 5, 308 E, apud AG, 73. The English translation, taken from Gill, p. 147, was slightly corrected.

⁶⁷ We refer here to Mark of Ephesus' exposition of the Greek argument, see AG, 69-86. Later, Bessarion replied to the arguments of Andrew of Rhodes in the same fashion as the Latin orator (see AG, 138-60).

⁶⁸ AG, 86.

from the Son. By contrary, all Synods have stopped and have condemned the addition through their decisions, as if prophetically they would have seen beforehand what was going to happen among you.⁶⁹

On the other hand, the Latin theologians were more discerning in their approach to these texts. They were careful about the *entire* historical or textual context, keeping always in mind a perspective of the whole, reading each text in the light of this perspective, showing a capacity for seeing everything in harmony. That is why they were not *using*, but truly *interpreting* the texts, and their principles of interpretation were sound. In their reply to the Greeks, their argument was *fourfold*: first, the *Filioque* was not an addition (coming from outside), but an explanation of what was already in the Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople; second, this explanation was not forbidden; third, this explanation was useful, necessary and true; and fourth, that all Christians had to accept these truths.⁷⁰

As to the *first*, Andrew of Rhodes pointed out that the Fathers gathered at the Council of Constantinople I added some explanations to the Creed formulated at Nicaea, explanations which were contained implicitly in that Creed. He went on giving some examples of the Greek and Latin Fathers who understood the words “from the Father” as containing implicitly “from the Son,”⁷¹ the latter expression being therefore an explanation of the former. He offered also some arguments from theology, using them to explain the sayings of the Fathers.

As to the *second*, quoting Saint Paul (II Cor. 3: 6), he argued that one should follow not the letter of the decrees of the Councils, but their spirit. The Fathers of Nicaea, in composing the symbol of faith, added their explanations to the Symbol of the Apostles, although St. Paul warned that “even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a Gospel different from that which we preached to you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1: 8). Andrew quoted, with the same meaning, some other authorities, including even Gregory Palamas, who said that he did not fight against the words, if the things expressed by them were convenient.⁷² The Latins from the very beginning recited the Creed in a slightly different form from that of the Greeks, and nobody condemned them for that. That is why the prohibition of the Council of Ephesus (and of the subsequent Councils) referred to additions and not to explanations. He reminded his listeners of a very important principle: the power that the Church has received from the Lord abides in her forever (Mat. 28: 20), until the end of the world, thus she can explain doctrine further, if necessary. This was exactly what the Councils had done in the past.

As to the *third*, Andrew concentrated upon the meaning of the words ἑτέραν πιστίν - “other faith,” something which both the Latin and the Greeks disputed until the end of the sessions in Ferrara. He took the texts quoted by Mark one by one, showing that the Fathers understood by “other faith” not a different formulation of the same faith, but a different (heretical) teaching,⁷³ since professions of faith different in formulation (though not in content) have been accepted from those who were received into the communion of the Church. Since he had proved that the Fathers taught the *Filioque* – that is, the doctrine is not ἑτέραν πιστίν - the prohibitions of the Councils do not refer to it. Later, Andrew quoted the epistles of Pope Agathon.⁷⁴ In one letter, the Pontiff referred very strictly to the prohibition under discussion; however, in his profession of faith, which is included in the acts of the seventh Ecumenical Council, he added some words that were not in the Nicene Creed, and omitted other words that the Creed contained. He showed in this way that ἑτέραν πιστίν referred not to different formulations, but to different teaching. The words of St. Paul: “For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved” (Rom. 10: 10) show clearly that there is an intrinsic unity between the content of the faith and its formulation in words; therefore, since the *Filioque* was true, it was legitimate to express it in the Creed.

The Fathers inserted explanations into the Creed when a great necessity *compelled* them to do so, as in the case of Arius the heretic; the latter, for example, was misinterpreting a verse of the Scriptures: “My Father is greater than I” (Jn. 14: 28), and the Fathers had to add ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρὶ - *consubstantial with the Father* – in order to stop the spreading of the error. That is why the Fathers, in the decrees of the Councils, anathematized

⁶⁹ AG, 377. Ostrumov also refers to it, p. 102.

⁷⁰ *idem*, 92; 97. On page 97, Andrew omitted the fourth part of the argument, namely, that all Christians had to accept these truths, but later he came back to it (see p. 107).

⁷¹ *Idem*, 95-101.

⁷² *Idem*, 103.

⁷³ *Idem*, 110-23.

⁷⁴ AG, 120-21. Also on 82-83 (the texts can be found in Mansi, 11, 236 D and 289 A). Pope Agathon’s letters were accepted and considered as normative by the Fathers of the Sixth Ecumenical Council.

not only those who added or subtracted something to or from the Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople, but also those who rejected their necessary explanations, formulated in those decrees.⁷⁵

Finally, regarding the *fourth* part of the argument, Andrew spoke of the authority of the Roman Church, and of the necessity that compelled her to add the *Filioque* in the Creed.⁷⁶ He concluded his oration with a quotation from another letter of Pope Agathon,⁷⁷ in which the Pontiff asserted very explicitly that, if there is a doubt concerning the faith, it belongs to the Pope to clarify the issue and to decide what is to be believed.

Of course, the Greeks tried to reply to these arguments, first through Bessarion, afterwards through Mark Eugenicus. Their reply, however, could not dismiss the arguments brought forth by Andrew of Rhodes, or later on by Cardinal Cesarini. Astonished by Mark's his inexplicable obstinacy, Cesarini addressed him as follows:

As a prudent and learned man you will consider those things that are written, from which I knew, for my part, that by the interdiction nothing else is prohibited, than those things contrary and different from the faith. Wherefore I ask your reverence not to hold off the consensus by listening to reasons of no importance, which even children can refute.⁷⁸

In fact, the dispute over the legitimacy of the addition of the *Filioque* to the Creed was finally reduced to the dispute over the doctrine itself, for the Greeks were not yet convinced that it was in harmony with the faith. Nevertheless, as we have seen, they were convinced at last by the *consensus Patrum*, and therefore they finally accepted the legitimacy of the addition to the Creed as well.

II. PRINCIPLES REGARDING THE USE OF *RATIO THEOLOGICA*

We have seen, in the previous chapter, that scholastic reasoning was often used when the Latin theologians wanted to disclose the meaning or theological implications of a statement in the writings of the Fathers, in the Holy Scriptures, or in the decrees of the Ecumenical Councils. Reason is the handmaid of faith, *ancilla fidei*, and the Fathers of the first centuries, both the Latin and the Greek, used it with great skill and wisdom, in defining, explaining and defending the faith of the Church. It was therefore not only legitimate or acceptable to make use of *ratio theologica* in the debates of the Council, but even necessary and in full harmony with the Tradition of the Church. In this chapter, as we promised in the introduction to the previous chapter, we intend to treat of the theological principles of dialogue that deal with the use of *ratio theologica*.

1. Openness towards the use of the *ratio theologica*

The first thing we want to discuss is the *difference in attitude* between the Latins and the Greeks as regards their openness to the use of rational arguments. The Latins often had recourse to scholastic reasoning, while the Greeks showed a great distrust towards this kind of argumentation, as Scholarios, in his address to the oriental Synod, confirms:

I know that you, O Greeks, in matters of this sort have no confidence in proofs from reason but consider them suspect and misleading; much more then will you both keep clear of syllogising *per impossibile* and be on your guard against others who do that.⁷⁹

Likewise, Isidore of Kiev, commenting towards of the Council on the frequent Latin use of syllogisms, said: "I say with regret that they have rather deepened the schism and have made the disagreement greater and stronger."⁸⁰ Scholastic argument was often taken as synonymous with "sophism," or at least "intellectual speculation"⁸¹ in the pejorative sense. Syropoulos (and with him most of the philo-Orthodox historians and

⁷⁵ Idem, 116; 118.

⁷⁶ Idem, 130-37.

⁷⁷ Idem, 137. Text also in Mansi, 11, 241 DE.

⁷⁸ Idem, 205.

⁷⁹ *Oratio III ad Synodum*, PG 160, 492 D – 493 A. The English text was taken from Gill, 227.

⁸⁰ Cod. Vat., Gr. 706, 12r—22r, apud Gill, 227.

⁸¹ This anti-scholastic attitude is still present among most of contemporary Orthodox theologians. For example, Ostrumov

theologians as well) disapproved with sarcasm and irony the power of the Latin arguments, as if they would be worthy more of laughter than of serious consideration, although most of them remained completely unanswered by the Greeks. The attitude of Syropoulos is in fact absurd, given the fact that the Latin theologians taking part in the debates surpassed by far the Greeks in their mastery of philosophy and theology. This is not an arrogant and mischievous Catholic calumny, but an undisputed fact acknowledged by those most educated among the Greeks; George Scholarius, for example, considered the Latin theologians involved in the debate to be “true masters of every human skill in dialectic and in every science, and of all in the most distinguished theology most trained,”⁸² and he admired their science so much that, he said, “it would truly provoke in him a great surprise if men otherwise so learned were mistaken in those things.”⁸³ Of the Greeks, however, he had a very different opinion: they were

men of no great capacity to vie with the Latins in theology and philosophy, owing to the sad state of our affairs, because of which those in the highest positions attain to just so much of theology and philosophy as merely not to seem utterly uneducated, since institutions of learning are lacking, ambition for study and letters is quenched and everything is done under the pressure of need and necessity.⁸⁴

In 1451, having become the head of the anti-unionist party, in a letter to Notaras, the same Scholarius wrote some ironical comments about Patriarch Joseph II's scholarship:

. . . as if *διὰ* meant, as the late futile Patriarch said, 'cause', and having said it without further ado he died. For he had no right to go on living after philosophising so brilliantly about the preposition and cause, and arrogating to himself pre-eminence in three sciences, namely grammar, philosophy and this quintessence of theology, about which he never hoped even in his dreams to have the courage to make any pronouncement.⁸⁵

Likewise, Syropoulos, the historian of the Council of Ferrara-Florence who is most trusted by Orthodox historians and theologians, replied once to the Patriarch:

I know the prelates and, with one or two exceptions, the rest – what are they worth? Or do you bid me follow the one who said: «I affirm the *Filioque* provided that the Holy Trinity be preserved unharmed», and, being interrogated three times, three times he repeated the same unchanged and made everybody laugh, having fallen into opposition with his chorus-leader. No, I said, it is not for me to follow prelates whose theology is of that standard.⁸⁶

Moreover, on two different occasions (speaking to Cardinal Cesarini and later speaking to the Pope), the Emperor himself excused the lack of precision of the Greek prelates on account on their lack of learning.⁸⁷ During a private meeting of the Greek Synod he also addressed himself to Antony of Heraclea, one of the leaders of the anti-unionist party, saying:

Do you not know your own limitation and the extent of your knowledge? But because you are uneducated and a rustic you put yourself forward to say such things. . . . Because you are ignorant and uneducated and vulgar and a rustic and don't know or realise what you are saying.⁸⁸

The Emperor was aware of the lack of learning of the Greek prelates long before the Council started, for Mark Eugenicus, Bessarion, Isidore and Dionysius were only consecrated on the eve of the Council,

considers the orations of John of Montenero to be “nothing but a show of scholastic reasoning” (Ostrumov, 86).

⁸² *Adhortatio ad Synodum (On the Need of Aiding Constantinople)*, PG 160, 388 B.

⁸³ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, 392 D – 393 A. The English translation was taken from Gill, p. 228.

⁸⁵ *Letter to Notaras*, Schol. III, p. 142, apud Gill, 228.

⁸⁶ Syr. IX, 14, p. 274, apud Gill, p. 229. This reaction proves that there were problems in trusting the Greek hierarchy, and it explains at the same time why it was so easy for the Greeks to reject even the decisions of a true Ecumenical Council. There was no true submission of intellect and will to those appointed as the successors of the Apostles, the recalcitrant Greeks following rather their own opinion than the directions received from their hierarchs.

⁸⁷ See AG, 418, 421.

⁸⁸ Syr. VIII, 5, p. 224, apud Gill, 228.

“to be present as champions in the Synod.”⁸⁹ But even with them, the leaned men among the Greeks were very few. With respect to that, Fr. Gill makes an interesting observation:

Why did the Emperor think it necessary to bring the aged, neo-pagan Gemistus, the probably religiously-sceptical Amiroutzes, the judge Scholarius as advisers except because they had a reputation as philosophers which the prelates lacked? The six orators of the Greeks at the sessions included none of the older prelates but three of those lately consecrated, Eugenius, Bessarion and Isidore, with two Staurophoroi and the lay philosopher Gemistus.⁹⁰

Therefore, it is easy to understand why scholastic reasoning was so annoying to most of the Greek participants in the Council; they understood very little of what was said, and on account of that they were so tired, frustrated, and exasperated that they refused to continue attending the public sessions. That is why the use of *ratio theologica* had “rather deepened the schism and made the disagreement greater and stronger,”⁹¹ as Isidore of Kiev said; for, instead of enlightening the Greeks, the Latin use of subtle distinctions and arguments brought them into a state of greater confusion. Even Bessarion, one of the most learned and perhaps the most well-intended among them, showed a certain reticence towards rational arguments: “it was not syllogisms or probabilities or arguments that convinced me,” he said, “but the bare words [of the Fathers].”⁹²

2. Use of the *ratio theologica*

Nevertheless, in spite of this distrustful attitude of the Greeks towards rational argumentation, the Latins (and sometimes the Greeks, in their reply to them)⁹³ followed the Fathers themselves in making use of many philosophical or speculative-theological considerations, even appealing a few times to the authority of Aristotle.⁹⁴ As we have said above, it was impossible to argue on these delicate matters by simply using quotations from the Holy Scriptures and from the Fathers; these texts needed further theological interpretation, especially when some of the sayings were obscure, or when they appeared to contradict one another.⁹⁵

At the beginning of our previous chapter, we saw that arguments from the Holy Scriptures (dealing with the debate on the *Filioque*) were in fact reduced to *ratio theologica*: there is no possession of one Person by the other Person in the Holy Trinity, but language of possession is to be understood as referring to procession;⁹⁶ in the economy of the Holy Trinity, mission follows procession; to be a natural image of something means to be caused in some way by that thing, and in the Holy Trinity this is possible only by way of procession; in the Holy Trinity no Person can take something from another Person unless He proceeds from that Person; working through another means a transfer of dignity and authority, and in the Holy Trinity this is possible only by way of procession.⁹⁷

Likewise, the Greek Fathers had written that the Holy Spirit proceeds naturally *through* the Son (διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ), or *from His substance* (πρόεισι φυσικῶς ἐξ αὐτῆς, οὐσιωδῶς ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς προΐόν), or *from both* the Father and the Son (παρὰ ἀμφοτέρων), or *breathes* from the Father and the Son (ἐκ Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱοῦ πνέει), or *is* from the Son (ἐκ τοῦ Υἱοῦ), or *is conjoined to the Father through the Son* (δι’ Υἱοῦ τῷ Πατρὶ

⁸⁹Syr. II, 15, p. 59, apud Gill, 229.

⁹⁰Gill, p. 229.

⁹¹ See note 80 in this chapter.

⁹² *Letter to Alex. Lascharis*, PG 161, 360B, apud Gill, 227. We preferred to repeat this quotation (it appears in the second part of the previous chapter as well), since in the present chapter it appears in a different light and completes the image of the whole Greek assembly.

⁹³ They were compelled to do so in order to answer the Latin arguments. See, for example, the dialogue during the third session in Florence, on substance and hypostasis in the Holy Trinity, in AG, 276-95.

⁹⁴ See AL, 53; 68-69; 163, and AG, 64; 93; 103; 108; 143; 288; 314. They quoted passages from *Posterior Analytics*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Metaphysics*, *On the heavens* and *On generation and corruption*.

⁹⁵ This is, in fact, the task of theology itself as a sacred science – see St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, q.1, a. 8, corpus. Also, see the *reductio ad absurdum* argument of John of Montenero in AL, 217-19, by which he proved the necessity of making certain qualifications when dealing with some sayings of Scriptures.

⁹⁶ The Holy Spirit is the “Spirit of Jesus,” the “Spirit of the Son,” the “Spirit of Truth” (Jesus is the Truth – Jn. 14: 6).

⁹⁷ John of Montenero supported his theological interpretations with some quotations from the Fathers as well. See the beginning of our previous chapter for the references to the texts in the Holy Scriptures that led to these theological arguments and for the references to the Fathers quoted by Montenero.

συναπτόμενον), or is *the icon of the Son* (εἰκὼν Υἱοῦ) as the Son is the icon of the Father.⁹⁸ The Latin Fathers, on the other hand, explicitly said that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (*ex Patre Filioque procedit*, or *ex Patre ac ex Filio*).⁹⁹ Therefore, it was necessary, on account of the *consensus Patrum*,¹⁰⁰ that the sayings of the Greek Fathers be explained in harmony with the teaching of the Latin Fathers, and this was again the task of *ratio theologica*. Discussions about the meaning of “to be from another,”¹⁰¹ generation,¹⁰² the order among the three Persons of the Holy Trinity,¹⁰³ the distinction between substance and hypostasis,¹⁰⁴ and the distinction between *proprietas personales* and *proprietas personae*:¹⁰⁵ all these were necessary in order to prove the true meaning of less explicit teachings or to show the implications that could be drawn from them.

Moreover, on a few occasions, the Latins used rational arguments that were not based on authority (*non modo auctoritatibus, sed rationibus*), although these arguments had either been used already by some of the Saints, or they were at least in full agreement with the Tradition. For example, John of Torquemada wrote a summary¹⁰⁶ of the arguments of this kind used during the debate on the *Filioque*:

- 1) the order in the Trinity – the Trinitarian harmony implies a direct affinity (Lat., *germanitas*) between the Divine Persons, an affinity which is impossible if the Spirit does not proceed also from the Son;
- 2) the perfection of the communication of the one generating to the generated, who receives from him everything which by itself is not repugnant to the property [of the one who receives]. Thus the Son, being the perfect image of the Father, should necessarily have everything the Father has;
- 3) The Persons in the Trinity can be distinguished only with respect to their origin and relations;
- 4) the very properties of the Holy Spirit, who is said to be the reciprocal love of the Father and the Son. Here could be added a *ratio congruentiae*, namely, that the human soul is conformed to the image and likeness of the Trinity, thus the Spirit proceeding *per modum amoris* depends on the Son as well.

Another subject that required long discussions based on rational argumentation was the legitimacy of the addition of the *Filioque* to the Creed. The Latins and the Greeks disputed the meaning of “addition,” whether it is simply “something added” or rather “something added from outside” (Lat., *extrinsecus*).¹⁰⁷ Agreeing on the fact that addition means something *extrinsecus*, they continued the debate by saying that an *explanation* is not from outside, and so it is not an addition.¹⁰⁸ But, the Latins argued, the *Filioque* was an explanation, therefore not an addition; this, however, had to be proven. Andrew of Rhodes brought forth some arguments, partly from Tradition, partly from *ratio theologica*,¹⁰⁹ but they were considered insufficient. That is why, in the end, the participants decided to discuss the doctrine of the *Filioque* itself.

It is evident, from the examples given above, that the use of *ratio theologica* was not something superfluous, but essential for the theological debates during the Council. For even though the Greeks declared that they were convinced “not by syllogisms or probabilities or arguments, but by the bare words of the Fathers,”¹¹⁰ such declarations cannot deny the role that “syllogisms,” “probabilities” or “arguments” played in the process of dialogue. True, the words of the Fathers were the corner-stone in this process; but, as a corner-stone or any stones by themselves do not make a building, so these words alone would have led to no agreement

⁹⁸ For more extended quotations and for the references to the texts of the Fathers see notes 33-35 and 44 in our previous chapter.

⁹⁹ See Montenero's exposition of their doctrine in AL, 200-11, passim. He quoted St. Damasus, St. Hilary, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine and St. Leo the Great.

¹⁰⁰ See our previous chapter.

¹⁰¹ See AL, 139-41; 171-73.

¹⁰² Ibid., 142; 153.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 161; 166; 163.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 140-43; 147; 151-53.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 219.

¹⁰⁶ Ioannes de Torquemada O.P., *Apparatus super Decretum Florentinum Unionis Graecorum*, in *Conc. Flor.*, vol. 2, pp. 52-55.

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, the oration of Andrew of Rhodes, in AL, 53 and AG, 93.

¹⁰⁸ Bishop John of Forli's syllogism: *Omne additamentum extrinsecus fit. Declaratio autem non est extrinsecus. Ergo declaratio non est additamentum* (AL, 57).

¹⁰⁹ They can be found in AG, 95; 97-101.

¹¹⁰ Bessarion's confession, see note 92 in this chapter.

without the cement and the art of theological and even philosophical reasoning. However, ultimately, *ratio theologica*, insofar as it is *theologica* (that is, based on divinely revealed truths), depends on Scripture and the Fathers, though its arguments follow the principles of natural reason. As St. Thomas says, “grace does not take away nature, but perfects it,” thus “it is necessary that natural reason should serve faith.”¹¹¹

CONCLUSION

As we have seen in the first chapter of this study, the most important theological principle of the dialogue at Ferrara-Florence was the *consensus Patrum*; Mark Eugenicus himself accepted this principle, and his only argument for rejecting the teaching of the *Filioque*, for example, was that he did not trust the authenticity of the texts of the Latin Fathers provided by the Latins.¹¹² We wonder what he and his followers would have said facing the evidence that we have now, since this authenticity can no longer be denied.¹¹³

At the end of this study we want to consider a very important question, namely, whether the dialogue at the Council of Ferrara-Florence is relevant or not to the present theological dialogue with the Eastern Orthodox Churches. Yes, we think that it is relevant, for the four points discussed at the Council (the *Filioque*, Purgatory, the primacy of the Roman Pontiff and the proper matter for the Eucharist) are still the core of the dispute. Moreover, the principles of this theological dialogue are still valid, and the arguments as well. Since the Eastern Orthodox Churches did not provide yet an acceptable answer to these arguments, it is evident that in the theological dialogue with their representatives the Catholic theologians will have to repeat to a great extent the arguments brought forth at the Council of Ferrara-Florence.¹¹⁴ That is why the theological debate of this council should be carefully studied, as one that led to the union of the Eastern Orthodox Churches with Rome.

We want to pray to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who promised that “there shall be one flock and one shepherd” (Jn. 10: 16), through the intercession of His Most Loving and Most Pure Mother, to send down His Holy Spirit and gather all those who believe in His name into the visible unity of His Church, so that His Bride may appear again in all Her splendour, to the honour and glory of the Most Holy Trinity! Amen.

¹¹¹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, q. 1, a. 8, ad secundum.

¹¹² See his *Confessio Fidei* in PO, 17, 438.

¹¹³ Of course, there were a few texts that now are regarded as suspicious, but the most of them are generally accepted as authentic. According to Mgr. L. Petit, however – see his observations in the first chapter of this study – some Orthodox theologians go so far as to mutilate the teaching of the Latin Fathers to such an extent that St. Augustine is portrayed as a “fierce adversary of the *Filioque*.”

¹¹⁴ We firmly disagree with those Catholic theologians who, out of sympathy towards the Eastern Orthodox Churches, disregard the Tradition of the Catholic Church and dismiss the dogmatic nature of the definitions of the Council of Florence. For example, the document called “An Agreed Statement of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation” from October 25, 2003 recommends the removal of the *Filioque* from catechetical and liturgical use and suggests a reconsideration of the authority of the Councils held after the schism of 1054. This is completely unacceptable. *Lumen Gentium*, the dogmatic constitution on the Church of the Vatican II Council that clarified the dogmatic basis for ecumenism, calls the Council of Florence *sacrum*, together with Nicea II and Trent (§ 51) and repeats the definition of Florence on the papal primacy (§ 18).

ABBREVIATIONS

- AG** - *Concilium Florentinum: Documenta et Scriptores: Que supersunt actorum graecorum Concilii Florentini*, 2 vols. ed. J. Gill (Romae, 1953)
- AL** - *Concilium Florentinum: Documenta et Scriptores: Andreas de Santacroce, advocatus consistorialis. Acta Latina Concilii Florentini*, ed. G. Hofmann (Romae, 1955)
- CF** *Concilium Florentinum. Documenta et scriptores*, ed. Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome 1940- (the entire collection).
- DTC** *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, Paris 1903-1950.
- Dvornik** - Dvornik, Francis, *The Ecumenical Councils* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1961)
- Epist. Pontif.** - *Concilium Florentinum: Epistolae pontificiae ad Concilium Florentinum spectantes*, 3 vols. ed. G. Hofmann (Romae, 1940)
- Fant.** - *Concilium Florentinum: Fantinus Valaresso. Libellus de ordine generalium conciliorum et unione Florentina*, ed. B. Schultze (Romae, 1944)
- Gill** - Gill, Joseph S.J., *The Council of Florence*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959)
- Ostrumov** - Ostrumov, Ivan N., *Istoria Sinodului de la Florența*, see bibliography.
- PG** J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 162 vols. Paris 1857-1866.
- PL** J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 221 vols. Paris 1844-1864.
- PO** – *Patrologia Orientalis*

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