

# The Early Church Fathers on The Filioque Clause

Contrary to the claims of the Orthodox Churches, Catholics did not invent the idea that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. Scripture teaches this in several places. For instance: "He saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:5-6). And then there is the evidence from nature. In Genesis 1:26 God says: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." And God created Adam. And from Adam's side he created Eve. And through Adam and Eve He produced Children. So, Eve proceeds from Adam and children proceed from Adam and Eve. Thus, man was made in the image and likeness of God. There is more to it of course as man would come to receive some of the other attributes of God.

## Tertullian

I believe that the Spirit proceeds not otherwise than from the Father through the Son (*Against Praxeas* 4:1 [A.D. 216]).

## Origen

We believe, however, that there are three persons: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; and we believe none to be unbegotten except the Father. We admit, as more pious and true, that all things were produced through the Word, and that the Holy Spirit is the most excellent and the first in order of all that was produced by the Father through Christ (*Commentaries on John* 2:6 [A.D. 229]).

## Maximus the Confessor

By nature, the Holy Spirit in his being takes substantially his origin from the Father through the Son who is begotten (*Questions to Thalassium* 63 [A.D. 254]).

## Gregory the Wonderworker

[There is] one Holy Spirit, having substance from God, and who is manifested through the Son; image of the Son, perfect of the perfect; life, the cause of living; holy fountain; sanctity, the dispenser of sanctification; in whom is manifested God the Father who is above all and in all, and God the Son who is through all. Perfect Trinity, in glory and eternity and sovereignty neither divided nor estranged (*Confession of Faith* [A.D. 265]).

## Hilary of Poitiers

Concerning the Holy Spirit . . . it is not necessary to speak of him who must be acknowledged, who is from the Father and the Son, his sources (*The Trinity* 2:29 [A.D. 357]).

## Didymus the Blind

As we have understood discussions . . . about the incorporeal natures, so too it is now to be recognized that the Holy Spirit receives from the Son that which he was of his own nature. . . . So too the Son is said to receive from the Father the very things by which he subsists. For neither has the Son anything else except those things given him by the Father, nor has the Holy Spirit any other substance than that given him by the Son (*The Holy Spirit* 37 [A.D. 362]).

## Epiphanius of Salamis

The Father always existed and the Son always existed, and the Spirit breathes from the Father and the Son (*The Man Well-Anchored* 75 [A.D. 374]).

## Basil the Great

[T]he goodness of [the divine] nature, the holiness of [that] nature, and the royal dignity reach from the Father through the only-begotten [Son] to the Holy Spirit. Since we confess the persons in this manner, there is no infringing upon the holy dogma of the monarchy (*The Holy Spirit* 18:47 [A.D. 375]).

#### **Ambrose of Milan**

The Holy Spirit, when he proceeds from the Father and the Son, does not separate himself from the Father and does not separate himself from the Son (*The Holy Spirit* 1:2:120 [A.D. 381]).

#### **Gregory of Nyssa**

[The] Father conveys the notion of unoriginate, unbegotten, and Father always; the only-begotten Son is understood along with the Father, coming from him but inseparably joined to him. Through the Son and with the Father, immediately and before any vague and unfounded concept interposes between them, the Holy Spirit is also perceived conjointly (*Against Eunomius* 1 [A.D. 382]).

#### **The Athanasian Creed**

[W]e venerate one God in the Trinity, and the Trinity in oneness. . . . The Father was not made nor created nor begotten by anyone. The Son is from the Father alone, not made nor created, but begotten. The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, not made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding (A.D. 400).

#### **Augustine**

Why, then, should we not believe that the Holy Spirit proceeds also from the Son, when he is the Spirit also of the Son? For if the Holy Spirit did not proceed from him, when he showed himself to his disciples after his resurrection he would not have breathed upon them, saying, 'Receive the Holy Spirit' [John 20:22]. For what else did he signify by that breathing upon them except that the Holy Spirit proceeds also from him (*Homilies on John* 99:8 [A.D. 416]).

#### **Cyril of Alexandria**

Since the Holy Spirit when he is in us effects our being conformed to God, and he actually proceeds from the Father and Son, it is abundantly clear that he is of the divine essence, in it in essence and proceeding from it (*Treasury of the Holy Trinity*, thesis 34 [A.D. 424]).

#### **Council of Toledo**

. . . The Spirit is also the Paraclete, who is himself neither the Father nor the Son, but proceeding from the Father and the Son. Therefore, the Father is unbegotten, the Son is begotten, the Paraclete is not begotten but proceeding from the Father and the Son (A.D. 447).

#### **Fulgence of Ruspe**

Hold most firmly and never doubt in the least that the same Holy Spirit who is Spirit of the Father and of the Son, proceeds from the Father and the Son (*The Rule of Faith* 54 [A.D. 524]).

#### **John Damascene**

And the Holy Spirit is the power of the Father revealing the hidden mysteries of his divinity, proceeding from the Father through the Son in a manner known to himself, but different from that of generation (*Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 12 [A.D. 712]).

I say that God is always Father since he has always his Word [the Son] coming from himself and, through his Word, the Spirit issuing from him (*Dialogue Against the Manicheans* 5 [A.D. 728]).