

# Will the Vatican destroy the *filioque*?

by Augustinus

Next October at Riva del Garda near Trento, there will be a large international meeting organized by the European Bishops' Conference. The object of the conference, in which hundreds of representatives of the Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches will participate, will be the elimination of the *filioque* from the Creed. This machination is the climax of a Jesuit-Orthodox conspiracy to kill the *filioque*, and thus the basis of Judeo-Christian civilization on which Western civilization has been based since the time of Saints Augustine and Ambrose.

In other times, such an attempt would have merited the activation of the Congregation of the Holy Office and of the tribunal for crimes against the faith.

## In defense of the *filioque*

The Catholic Creed, as well as the Protestant, contains the wording, "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and from the Son. . . ." ("ex . . . filioque"). The Creed of the Orthodox church defines, on the contrary, the Son as a mere medium through which the Holy Spirit passes. The Eastern wording, according to which the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father "through the Son" ("*per filium*"), degrades the Son from a cause of the same quality as the Father, to a mere carrier of emanation.

The controversy over the *filioque* between the Latin and Eastern churches dates back to the epoch in which the Western Augustinian school introduced the *filioque* into the Nicene Creed of Constantinople which did not contain it, at the Council of Toledo in the mid-seventh century.

In the Latin version, the suffix *que* indicates that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father *and* (in Latin, *que* = *et*) from the Son, and not otherwise. The *que* is not therefore, as asserted by the conspiracy, purely a phonetic and literary issue, but expresses the substantial concept as it was explained clearly and signed in the declaration of dogma elaborated by common agreement at the Ecumenical Council of Florence of 1439. In the declaration (copies of which anyone can read in Florence or Rome, signed by all the representatives of all the churches who participated there—that being the last Ecumenical Council in the history of Christianity), the churches established the words of the *filioque* in the Creed

as the unique doctrine for every Christian on earth. No one can rewrite the doctrine of the Ecumenical Council, not even a bishops' conference or Synod, only a new Ecumenical Council representing the same churches that participated in the Florence Council can do this.

The *filioque*, referring to the Person of the Trinity who is both God and Man, provides the effective basis for real human knowledge, as well as for efficient human action on the order of nature and society. It is the divine quality of man which allows him to pursue God's act of creation continuously through history, in statecraft, science, and the building of civilization. Without the *filioque*, man is left as a clever beast in the lap of an unchanging Mother Nature.

## Attacks on the *filioque*

For centuries, and above all during and after the Second Vatican Council, the anti-*filioque* factions in the Christian world, especially the Russian-Greek Orthodox Churches supported by the Jesuits and other orders, spread the false argument that the *filioque* is nothing more than an antiquated formal difference between the churches, a useless differentiation hindering a union between the Western and Eastern churches. To eliminate the *filioque* would facilitate the solution to more serious disputes.

Accepting the theses of the Easterners, according to which the addition of the *filioque* to the Creed by the Latin church was a fraudulent act, the Roman Curia is killing the *filioque* as a means of enacting an "appeasement" between East and West.

How can one fail to see in such a move the atrocious final step toward an accommodation with Moscow and with its true leadership, of which one of the fundamental components is the Russian Orthodox Church and its Patriarch Pimen?

Even conceding a certain epistemological and theological ignorance on the part of the Catholic hierarchy, the pretended innocence of those who affirm that the *filioque* is purely a nominal issue is unconvincing. The rage, suspicion, and reticence *EIR* encountered in discussions with representatives of the Roman Curia, and the irrepressible glee of the elements linked to Moscow, indicate that the authors of the plot understand perfectly the stakes of the game: Western

civilization as we have known it in the works and deeds of St. Augustine, Nicolaus of Cusa, and Leibniz.

### A Council of Florence in reverse

In Trent—seat of the Council of Trent of the Counter-Reformation, Central European city par excellence, and dominated by the Venetian family of the princes Thurn und Taxis—Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant theologians will meet for discussions, prayers, and meditation. After hours of debate in which we can imagine the zero-growth theologians Hans Küngs, the von Baltasars, the Karl Rahners, and the Yves Congars will participate, European bishops and theologians will recite the Creed without the *filioque* and thus eliminate the *filioque* from Catholic doctrine.

Decisive actions of this kind had been already taken in the preceding months by heretical elements of the U.S. Catholic hierarchy around the Jesuits' Georgetown University, the hotbed of Kissinger's cronies. On Feb. 4, the Pope celebrated the Mass in the Byzantine rite with the Patriarch of the Melchites of Antioch, Hakim Maximos V, together with another 13 prelates of the Eastern-rite churches. It was a long, heavy ceremony during which the Creed was recited without the *filioque*.

Simultaneously, a conference was held in Rome on the Christian significance of pain, during which the rector of the Lateran University, Monsignor Rossano, already an outstanding spokesman for the Secretariat for Non-Christians of the Holy See, affirmed publicly, as reported by the newspaper of the Italian Bishops' Conference, *Avvenire*, that Catholics must return to Eastern theology and abandon the *filioque*.

In discussions with *EIR*, Monsignor Rossano confirmed his public repudiation of the *filioque*.

There seems to be a general agreement in the Roman Curia and among the orders to eliminate the *filioque* without much fanfare. The archbishop of Trento, Monsignor Gottardi, who will host the counter-Council of Florence declared to *EIR*, "It will be sufficient to drop the *filioque* and a Catholic can simply deduce what happened without mentioning it. The *filioque* is obsolete both theologically and from the point of view of ecumenicism. It is the result of a series of misunderstandings. We must return to the original Nicene Creed," Monsignor Gottardi concluded, affirming that "this conference will be something historic."

It was Mons. Roest Crollius, director of the Middle East section of the Jesuit Gregorian University in Rome, who told *EIR* that the elimination of the *filioque* "is not impossible since there will be in the next period a Council of Florence in reverse.

"On the *filioque*," continued Monsignor Crollius, "there is no real difference whether a Catholic pronounces it or not, why should it be necessary in the Creed? . . . After all, the *filioque* is nothing but a belated addition to the Creed of Constantinople inserted in the 9th century. . . . There are already many Catholic churches in the East which no longer

use the *filioque* in the Creed. Why bother with it? Why fight over a word?" Monsignor Crollius thereby Jesuitically confirmed that the elimination of the *filioque* is one of the points on which the Society of Jesus is insisting in pushing for "cultural pluralism."

### 'The *filioque* is old hat. . . .'

Another Jesuit, Father Rulli, director of the foreign affairs section of the Jesuits' *La Civiltà Cattolica*, asserted to an *EIR* journalist, "The *filioque*. . . is old hat. We recently published an article on this subject and there was a conference in Rome. I can understand the idea of an East-West accord against the *filioque*. We should drop the differences between us. In time, I can foresee that the *filioque* will be taken out of the Creed. The Eastern churches will be very happy. But, I don't see that it really makes any difference," Father Rulli concluded, asserting that the time is ripe for printing Catholic missals without the *filioque*.

The fact that Pope John Paul II has recited the Creed without the *filioque* more than once in celebrations with the Byzantine rite seems to be an argument often employed by the authors of the plot against the *filioque*. Monsignor Führer, secretary of the European Council of Bishops' Conferences, officially told *EIR* that "the *filioque* no longer represents an insurmountable difficulty. . . . Even the Pope recited the Creed without the *filioque*. This does not mean that there is an accord between the Eastern and Western churches, but it is a significant fact. In Trento, we will recite the Creed together without the *filioque*. . . it is a fact, not an accord."

There is, however, an accord, and it was prepared by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Switzerland. Professor Popescu, delegate of the Romanian Orthodox Church to the WCC, spoke to *EIR* about it. Popescu was recently cited by *Le Monde* for having attacked the *filioque* during a conference in Copenhagen two years ago.

A gloating Popescu stated that the dialogue between the Christian churches is developing very well. "I spoke yesterday with the Catholics and they were ready to return to the Nicene Creed without any more reference to the *filioque*. It is a great opening. . . it is not a question of a change, the *filioque* was an arbitrary transformation of the Nicene Creed. Now we are returning to the origin. This will occur at the Trento conference."

The real effect and the political conclusions of the machinations against the most important principle of the Christian doctrine were addressed by a theologian of the Scottish church: "The elimination of the *filioque* is a signal to the East on the fact that they, the Third Rome, were always right, and that we, the Latins, were always mistaken. It will reinforce Russian messianism. . . . In the West those who favor the *filioque* fear that its elimination will open the Latin Church to every mystic infiltration, to fanatical sects which, like Khomeini in Islam, will provide the basis for the birth of a 'blood and soil' movement within Catholicism."