

# GREAT BASILIUS' TREATISE ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

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## Resumen

La contribución de San Basilio a la pneumatología se comprende mejor en el contexto histórico de la controversia arriana que dominó gran parte del Imperio Romano del siglo IV, tanto en el marco religioso como en el político. Este estudio se centra en cómo Basilio entendió el papel y la Persona del Espíritu Santo, particularmente en su tratado a *Amphilochius Iconium* sobre el Espíritu Santo. El carácter distintivo del Espíritu Santo se puede definir a la luz de la relación trinitaria del Espíritu. Basilio, como Atanasio, define el carácter distintivo del Espíritu Santo en términos de su relación con Dios el Padre y el Hijo. El estado y la posición en su relación definen el carácter distintivo de cada miembro de la Trinidad. Esta definición ocupa la mayor parte del tratado de pneumatología de Basilio, que no puede entenderse; sin embargo, ajena a sus pensamientos sobre la salvación y el bautismo, unidos entre sí. El argumento de Basilio sobre la divinidad del Espíritu Santo funciona al ilustrar lo que hace el Espíritu Santo. El Espíritu Santo ilumina y santifica a los bautizados, completa y perfecciona la creación desde el principio de los tiempos hasta su fin e ilumina la mente del creyente para comprender su mensaje. El Espíritu Santo inspira las Escrituras y gobierna su entendimiento en la Iglesia. Sin pretender conocer la esencia de Dios, Basilio tampoco deja ninguna duda de que el Espíritu Santo ha revelado su divinidad a través de sus acciones. Solo Dios hace lo que solo Dios puede hacer.

## Palabras clave

Basilio de Cesarea, Espíritu Santo, Pneumatología, Homoousios, Amphiloquio de Iconium, Controversia Arriana, Enseñanza Trinitaria.

## Abstract

St. Basilus's contribution to pneumatology is best comprehended within the historical milieu of the Arian controversy that pervaded much of the fourth century Roman Empire religiously and politically. It is a study which focuses on Basilus's understanding of the role and the Person of the Holy Spirit, particularly as found in his treatise to Amphilochius Iconium on the Holy Spirit. The distinctive character of the Holy Spirit can be defined in the light of the Trinitarian relationship of the Spirit. Basilus, like Athanasius, defines the distinctiveness of the Holy Spirit in terms of His relation to God the Father and the Son. The status and position in their relationship defines the distinctiveness of each member of the Trinity. The definition of this kind occupies the major part of Basilus's treatise of pneumatology. Basilus's pneumatology cannot be understood; however, apart from his thoughts on salvation and baptism, which themselves are bound together. Basilus's argument for the divinity of the Holy Spirit works by illustrating what the Holy Spirit does. The Holy Spirit illumines and sanctifies the baptized. The Holy Spirit completes and perfects creation from the beginning of time to its end and illumines the mind of the believer to understand the message of its order. The Holy Spirit inspires the Scriptures and governs their understanding in the church. Making no claim to know the essence of God, Basilus also leaves no doubt that the Holy Spirit has revealed his divinity through his actions. Only God does what only God can do.

## Keywords

Basilus of Caesarea, Holy Spirit, Pneumatology, Homoousios, Amphilochius of Iconium, Arian Controversy, Trinitarian Teaching.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. *The historical environment of Basilus's of Caesarea era*

Basilus of Caesarea is one of the most important fathers of the Christian Church of 4<sup>th</sup> century. He is a significant and authoritative theologian who supports the Nicene Creed and confronts the heretics of his own time but also the heresies of the early Christian Church, fighting against all, Monarchianism Arianism, Euno-mianism, Appolinasism and Pneumatomachoi.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Papadopoulos, 1990, pp. 356-62.

Basilios was born in 329 or 330. In 325 AD, the Church had confronted the Arian controversy by the First Ecumenical Council. Arius' teaching was condemned as heretic. Arius and his followers were excommunicated. Fathers who took part in the Council rejected Arius' doctrine that the Son is not true God but a creature, that He was not begotten of the substance of the Father but was made from nothing, that He was not eternal but rather that "there was a time when He did not exist".<sup>2</sup>

The bishop of Caesarea manages to explain that the God Father, God Son and God Holy Spirit are coeternal, entirely unique, concrete and distinct as to who they were, yet indissolubly identical in what they were – namely, truly divine. Basilios avoids the temptation to understand the Trinity as three separate Gods. Any persons of the Trinity exist at all. God is being in communion. Basilios analyses this dogmatic truth underlying that the unity of the Godhead lies in His essence- *ousia* and not to logic or to mathematics: "In delivering the formula of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,<sup>3</sup> our Lord did not connect the gift with number. He did not say into First, Second, and Third, nor yet into one, two, and three, but He gave us the boon of the knowledge of the faith which leads to salvation, by means of holy names. So that what saves us is our faith. Number has been devised as a symbol indicative of the quantity of objects... Count, if you must; but you must not by counting do damage to the faith. Either let the ineffable be honoured by silence; or let holy things be counted consistently with true religion. There is one God and Father, one Only-begotten, and one Holy Ghost. We proclaim each of the hypostases singly; and, when count we must, we do not let an ignorant arithmetic carry us away to the idea of a plurality of Gods".<sup>4</sup> For the bishop of Caesarea, the divine Persons exist in a *perichoresis* -interpenetration or a "community of nature".<sup>5</sup> The Triune God is simultaneously both One and Three. Besides this community of nature in the Trinity, there is the communion of the Godhead.<sup>6</sup> The three persons constitute the Godhead. Of course, the term *perichoresis* isn't exist as word in the dogmatic teaching of Great Basilios, but it is described by the development of his theological thought.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, p. 114.

<sup>3</sup> Mat. 28:19

<sup>4</sup> Basilios of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit* (1895, XVIII, 44, PG 32, 148CD, 149A).

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, XVIII, 45, PG 32, 149AB.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>7</sup> Artemi, 2017, pp. 22-23.

Ellen T. Charry underlines for the bishop of Caesarea: “Basil of Caesarea, a theologian-bishop like Athanasius, helped forward the Cappadocian formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity by inferring that since the Holy Spirit transforms lives, he is as important as the Father and the Son. Basil wrote *On the Holy Spirit* in about 375, amid the protracted and complex trinitarian controversies of the 4th century, whose third quarter focused on the dignity of status of the Holy Spirit. This chapter highlights Basil's pastoral concerns: to stimulate his flock's growth in Christian piety, especially as effected in worship, through engaged understanding of the Trinity; to use the experience of spiritual transformation in support of the equality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son; to legitimate Episcopal authority to develop church practices that promote proper knowledge of the truth and goodness of God; and to set forth the pastoral responsibilities of theology”.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.2. *Amphilochius of Iconium and Basilus of Caesarea, a supportive friendship*

Basilus of Caesarea as a man, as a bishop and as a theologian had a very important and strong character. He helped to provide the church with some of the terminology that would eventually make up the orthodox definition of the Trinity: “one essence, but three persons”.<sup>9</sup> As bishop, Basilus was a courageous and heroic champion of the Catholic faith against the Arian heresy. His strong character and his education besides the passion for Christian life transformed him as a burning lamp during his time. With the light of his Christian personality and of his rich education he led the other Christians and became an example for many bishops as Amphilochius of Iconium.

In every phase of ecclesiastical activity he showed superior talent and zeal. He was a great theologian, a powerful preacher, a gifted writer, the author of two rules for monastic life, a reformer of the Oriental liturgy. He died in 379, hardly forty-nine years old, yet so emaciated that only skin and bones remained, as though he had stayed alive in soul alone.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, Amphilochius of Iconium was disciple of Basilus as far as the theological teaching, but he cannot compare with his great teacher. His work is less than Basilus'. Amphilochius didn't want to become bishop, because he

<sup>8</sup> Charry, 1999, pp. 101-102.

<sup>9</sup> Jones, 2014, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p. 15.

knew that he didn't have the theological knowledge that he gave him the ability to defend the teaching of the Church against heretics. Basilus was persuaded that his disciple would manage to become a good shepherd and to protect his sheep from the heretics with the help of Basilus and Gregory of Nazianzen. So in his epistle to Amphilochius, Basilus wrote: "that you may catch men for the Lord, and draw the devil's prey from the deep into the light, i.e. for God's will".<sup>11</sup>

## 2. IS THE HOLY SPIRIT GOD OR NOT? THE QUESTION THAT WAS RAISED, AFTER THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL AND THE AFFIRMATION OF LOGOS' DIVINITY

A major heresy that arose in the fourth century and denied the divinity of Jesus Christ was Arianism. Arius (256-336), a priest of Alexandria, denied that there were three distinct divine Persons in God. For Arius, there was only one Person, the Father. According to Arius's theory, the Son was created,

If the Father begot the Son, he that was begotten had a beginning of existence: and from this it is evident, that there was a time when the Son was not. It therefore necessarily follows, that he had his substance from nothing.<sup>12</sup>

Christ was thus a son of God, not by nature, but only by grace and adoption.<sup>13</sup> This theory logically emptied the doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Christ of all meaning: if God did not become man, then the world has not been redeemed and the faith itself eventually dissolves. Arianism was formally condemned in 325 by the first ecumenical Council of Nicaea, which formulated and promulgated the original version of the Nicene Creed; but Arianism and Semi-Arianism nevertheless continued to prevail in its original form in many areas for more than a century. Arianism was combated by the great St. Athanasius of Alexandria (296-373) among others; but the heresy nevertheless persisted, especially among the barbarians, for several centuries.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Basilus Casareae, *Amphilochio, ordinato Episcopo* (1895, Epistula 161, PG 32, 629A).

<sup>12</sup> Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* (1890, I, 5, 6, PG 67, 41B).

<sup>13</sup> Athanasius Alexandrinus, *Orationes adversus Arianos* (1890, I, 5,6, PG 26, 41B).

<sup>14</sup> Among the barbarians, Arianism took on a life of its own. Christianity in its Arian form became somewhat unique, distinct even from native Roman Arianism. The new kingdoms also became religiously-layered, with the Germanic aristocracy being Arian with the majority Roman population being Catholic (with a minority of Arians among the Romans). This chagrined the Catholic hierarchy, and they feared repression. But generally the barbarian kings tolerated the Cath-

Some years later after the First Ecumenical Council, the heresy of Pneumatomachians, “fighters against the Spirit” appeared who denied the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit with the Father in the divine Trinity. Generally, although Arius’ argument for the uniqueness of the Father’s ousia implied that the Spirit, like the Son, was not the Father’s ontological equal, the real dispute was between pro-Nicenes and a faction of Homoeousians called Pneumatomachians who were followers of Macedonius of Constantinople.<sup>15</sup>

He and his followers denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit: the Spirit was declared by them not to proceed from the Father but to be a creation of the Son. The Holy Spirit is a divine energy diffused throughout the universe, and not a person distinct from the Father and the Son. So he underlined with emphasis that the Holy Spirit is not consubstantial with the Father and the Son in divinity. If the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and was sent by the Father and the Son, and was a messenger, He is not equal with Them. Therefore, He is subordinate to Them.<sup>16</sup>

Since this heresy had spread throughout the Eastern Churches, 150 Bishops were assembled in Constantinople in 381. At this great Council, the Holy Fathers quoting from the Old and New Testaments officially proclaimed, that even though the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father, He is equal with the Father and the Son in nature, divinity and glory.<sup>17</sup> After explaining this at great length, they ascertained the divinity of the Holy Spirit and they vehemently condemned Macedonius and his heretical teaching.<sup>18</sup> The defence of the deity of the Spirit was based mostly on the theology of Gregory of Nazianzen and on Basilus of Caesarea. The latter didn’t use the term “homoousion” and for the Holy Spirit, although he defended the divinity of the third Person of the Holy Trinity. Moreover, in 372 when he was accused of not accepting the Holy Spirit as God,<sup>19</sup> he

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olics in their lands; they did, however, intervene when the Catholics targeted Arianism. The kings often sheltered outspoken Arians, giving this heresy something of a haven and allowing it to persist even in places they did not control. Nofziger, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* (1890, II, 45, 1-23, PG 67, 357BC-360AB).

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>17</sup> Romanides, 1960, p. 242. And Ps. 33:6, Is. 6:3, Acts 28:25.

<sup>18</sup> Papadopoulos, 1990, pp. 536-537, Feidas, 1992, pp. 520-521).

<sup>19</sup> Gregorius Nazianzinus, *Funebris oratio in laudem Basilii Magni Caesareae in Cappado* (1894, LXIX, PG 36, 589A-C): “That he, no less than any other, acknowledged that the Spirit is God, is plain from his often having publicly preached this truth, whenever opportunity offered, and eagerly confessed it when questioned in private. But he made it more clear in his conversations with me, from whom he concealed nothing during our conferences upon this subject. Not content with simply asserting it, he proceeded, as he had but very seldom done before, to imprecate upon himself

took oath and affirmed the divinity of the Holy Spirit in to his friend Gregory Nazianzen.<sup>20</sup>

### 3. THE TREATISE OF BASILIUS ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

Basilios of Caesarea, the illustrious doctor and intrepid champion of the church was ordained as deacon by bishop Meletius of Antioch in 362. Eusebius the bishop of Caesarea who stood in need of such an eloquent and prudent assistant, had for that purpose raised him to the priesthood. So did he summon Basilios to Caesarea and ordained him as presbyter of the Church there in 365. Ecclesiastical entreaties rather than Basilios' desires thus altered his career path.<sup>21</sup>

When Eusebius died in 370, Basilios became bishop of Caesarea and henceforth worked tirelessly to rid the church of heterodoxies and end the factionalism that threatened its survival. He openly defied the Arian emperor Valens and other powerful opponents, established important connections with Western bishops, and consolidated his authority in the East by appointing orthodox adherents to important positions in his diocese.<sup>22</sup>

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that most terrible fate of separation from the Spirit, if he did not adore the Spirit as consubstantial and coequal with the Father and the Son. And if anyone would accept me as having been his fellow labourer in this cause, I will set forth one point hitherto unknown to most men. Under the pressure of the difficulties of the period, he himself undertook the economy, while allowing freedom of speech to me, whom no one was likely to drag from obscurity to trial or banishment, in order that by our united efforts our Gospel might be firmly established. I mention this, not to defend his reputation, for the man is stronger than his assailants, if there are any such; but to prevent men from thinking that the terms found in his writings are the utmost limit of the truth, and so have their faith weakened, and consider that their own error is supported by his theology, which was the joint result of the influences of the time and of the Spirit, instead of considering the sense of his writings, and the object with which they were written, so as to be brought closer to the truth, and enabled to silence the partisans of impiety. At any rate let his theology be mine, and that of all dear to me! And so confident am I of his spotlessness in this respect, that I take him for my partner in this, as in all else: and may what is mine be attributed to him, what is his to me, both at the hands of God, and of the wisest of men! For we would not say that the Evangelists are at variance with one another, because some are more occupied with the human side of the Christ, and others pay attention to His Divinity; some having commenced their history with what is within our own experience, others with what is above us; and by thus sharing the substance of their message, they have procured the advantage of those who receive it, and followed the impressions of the Spirit Who was within them”.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, *Epistola 48 – Basilio*, PG 37, 97B-100B.

<sup>21</sup> Papadopoulos, 1990, p. 390, Quasten, 1986, p. 205).

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, p. 390.

Basilius was clearly aware of the intimate connection between Christology and Pneumatology; therefore he never failed to realize that the new heresy of Macedonianism – Pneumatomachians, against the *homoousion* of the Holy Spirit was really an offshoot of Arianism.<sup>23</sup> In 375, he managed to write a treatise to his friend Amphilochius of Iconium for the holy divinity of Spirit.<sup>24</sup> Part of this treatise, the chapters 10-27 were written in 373. This work is an indubitable defence of the divine essence of the Holy Spirit.

As for Amphilochius of Iconium, was a learned and eminent father of the fourth age, an intimate friend of Basilius of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa though much younger than Basilius was. He is thought to be the cousin of the Cappadocian Father Gregory of Nazianzus.<sup>25</sup> Amphilochius often consulted Basilius upon difficult points of doctrine and discipline, which the other answered with extraordinary modesty, showing that he rather sought an opportunity of receiving instructions himself.<sup>26</sup> Early in 374, Amphilochius was bishop of the important see of Iconium, probably placed there by Basilius, whom he continued to aid in Cappadocian ecclesiastical affairs until Basilius' death in 379.<sup>27</sup> That period of time, a difficult doctrine topic was the divinity of the Holy Spirit. So Basilius dedicated the treatise for the Holy Spirit to him, one of his greatest theological contributions. Amphilochius' theology typically followed in the footsteps of his Cappadocian peers, and he defined the Trinity by the hypostatic properties of the Son as generation and the Spirit as procession. He did, however, innovate in designating the hypostases with a new phrase, "mode of being".<sup>28</sup> This expression had not been used by the Cappadocian Fathers and was a step toward understanding the Trinity with language not aimed at essence, but relations. By the beginning of the fifth century, this phrase was generally accepted in theological uses.<sup>29</sup>

This treatise was the response for the accusation that the doxology St. Basil used in public worship, "glory be to the Father with the Son together with the Holy Spirit"<sup>30</sup> was an innovation. His opponents preferred, "glory be to the Fa-

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 391.

<sup>24</sup> Basilius Caesareae, *De Spiritu Sancto* (1895, PG 32, 68-217).

<sup>25</sup> Blomfield, 2004, IX, Papadopoulos, 1990, p. 637.

<sup>26</sup> Florovsky, 1987, pp. 234 - 235.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>28</sup> Amphilochius Iconiensis Episcopi, *Ad Seleucum Trojani praetoris nepotem*, XV, PG 39, 112B, 112D.

<sup>29</sup> Florovsky, 1987, pp. 234-35.

<sup>30</sup> Basilius Caesareae, *De Spiritu Sancto* (1895, I, 3, PG 32, 72C).

ther through the Son in the Holy Spirit"<sup>31</sup> which was a traditional formula. The second doxology was supposedly superior in that it expressed more precisely what these contenders saw as the distinct levels of glory appropriate to the three persons of the Holy Trinity.<sup>32</sup> Against this, Basilus affirmed that the Church knew and used both formulas, each having its own context and meaning. Basilus analyzed both doxologies and their respective usages, as well as the theological underpinnings of each. Basilus argued that there was no conflict between the two doxologies and he proved that the prepositions *through*, and *in* do not subordinate the persons of Son and Spirit, as his opponents claimed.<sup>33</sup> Also he had to prove that also the preposition *with* has the same meaning with the conjunction *and* and there is no real difference between these two words.<sup>34</sup> When he set forth the theological implications underlying this confrontation, this treatise became a powerful defense of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Six years later, this work served as a source for St. Ambrose, bishop of Milan (c. 339-397) in his work, *De Spiritu Sancto*.<sup>35</sup> Through this channel many of Basilus' ideas came to influence the Christian West.<sup>36</sup>

Amphilochius received the copy of this dogmatic work of Basilus in 375. It was not long before Amphilochius was able to put the theology found in Basilus' theological treatise to good use, for at the synod of Iconium in 376 he took a stand against the Macedonians, a group also referred to as Pneumatomachi, i.e., "fighters against the Spirit". The result of this synod was the commissioning of Amphilochius to compose a letter defending the deity of the Holy Spirit to the see of Lycia. This particular letter is the least disputed literary work of Amphilochius, in it he contended for the deity and consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit by employing arguments that are also found in Basilus' famous work.<sup>37</sup>

Basilus started this work trying to make a revision to the deity of Christ. In chapters one to eight, he showed why Christians believe in the coeternal divine nature of Christ.<sup>38</sup> Then he devoted the basic part of this treatise, chapters nine to twenty seven,<sup>39</sup> to demonstrating from Scripture why the Spirit is to be glorified

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>32</sup> Quasten, 1986, p. 207.

<sup>33</sup> St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, (1980, p. 12).

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>35</sup> Ambrosius Mediolanensis, *De Spiritu Sancto*, libri tres, PL 16, 703-817.

<sup>36</sup> Quasten, 1986, pp. 210-211.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem, p. 297.

<sup>38</sup> Basilus Caesareae, *De Spiritu Sancto* (1895, I- VIII, PG 32, 67A- 105D).

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem, IX- XXVII, PG 32, 108B-196A.

together with the Father and the Son and thus implicitly recognized as God.<sup>40</sup> In chapters twenty eight to thirty, Basilios supported that the heretics refused to concede in the case of the Spirit the terms which Scripture used in the case of men, as reigning together with Christ.<sup>41</sup> Also, the cappadocian father explained the enumeration of the illustrious men in the Church who in their writings had used the word “with”.<sup>42</sup> Finally, in the thirtieth chapter, he exposed the present state of the Churches.<sup>43</sup>

As conclusion it can be said that Basilios’ this work for the Holy Spirit is a very important treatise for clearing up all doubt as to the true doctrine of the Third Person of the Triune God. Basilios’ explained the divinity of the Holy Spirit, although he didn’t use the term *homoousios* for Him. David Anderson underlines that: “despite this book’s polished rhetoric and elaborately – constructed syllogisms, it is essentially a treatise written in *tempore belli*, St. Basilios is using his talents to help steer the Church away from imminent shipwreck”.<sup>44</sup>

#### 4. THE DIVINITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The focus of Basilios’ pneumatology rested on demonstrating the deity of the Holy Spirit. His deity is argued by stressing His unity with God the Father and the Son.<sup>45</sup> The pattern of this argumentation governed the form and content of Basilios’ pneumatology. His pneumatology was neither formulated for itself, nor an independent doctrine from others. Its presentation and argument adopted “a tight trinitarian logico-theological pattern”.<sup>46</sup> It was designed to claim the deity of the Holy Spirit from His trinitarian unity. Basilios formulated pneumatology in the light of the doctrine of the Trinity in order to defend this doctrine. His pneumatology was the integral component of the doctrine of the Trinity. Its ori-

<sup>40</sup> Haykin, 2003, p. 76.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Basilios Caesareae, *De Spiritu Sancto* (1895, XXVIII-XXX, PG 32, 196B-218C).

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem, XXIX, PG 32, 200B- 209B.

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem, XXX, PG 32, 209D-218C.

<sup>44</sup> St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, (1980, p. 7).

<sup>45</sup> Basilios Caesareae, *De Spiritu Sancto*, (1895, X, 24, PG 32, 112A): “he charged His disciples to baptize all nations in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost”. Matt. 28:19.

<sup>46</sup> Basilios Caesareae, *De Spiritu Sancto*, (1895, X, 24, PG 32, 112AB): “If the Lord did not indeed conjoin the Spirit with the Father and Himself in baptism, do not let them lay the blame of conjunction upon us, for we neither hold nor say anything different. If on the contrary the Spirit is there conjoined with the Father and the Son, and no one is so shameless as to say anything else, then let them not lay blame on us for following the words of Scripture”.

entation and formation was highly trinitarian.<sup>47</sup> “There is one God and Father, one Only-begotten, and one Holy Spirit. We proclaim each of the hypostases singly; and, when count we must, we do not let an ignorant arithmetic carry us away to the idea of a plurality of Gods”.<sup>48</sup>

Basilius of Caesarea avoided using the phrase that *the Holy Spirit is God*, in his treatise *On the Holy Spirit*. That this is done on purpose conclusion is beyond doubt, however. This is plainly analyzed by his beloved friend Gregory of Nazianzenus. The latter underlined in his *Funeral Oration on the Great S. Basil, bishop Caesarea in Cappadocia*: “He postponed for the time the use of the exact term, begging as a favour from the Spirit Himself and his earnest champions, that they would not be annoyed at his economy, nor, by clinging to a single expression, ruin the whole cause, from an uncompromising temper, at a crisis when religion was in peril. He assured them that they would suffer no injury from a slight change in their expressions and from teaching the same truth in other terms”.<sup>49</sup>

The nature of the Holy Spirit is as equal in divinity to the Father and to the Son. In order to show this, Great Basilus employed Scripture and opposed to Arian and neo-Arian misuse of Biblical terminology about the Holy Spirit. He underlined the Spirit's role in the Sacrament of Baptism, and the relationship between the three persons of the Trinity. Basil highlighted that the full divinity of the Holy Spirit is truly found in Scripture, to which liturgical language based on Scripture also was held by Basilus to verify.

The divinity of the Holy Spirit is found not only in the Scriptures but also in the unwritten tradition of the Church Fathers.<sup>50</sup> By this way, he accepted that Scripture is doctrinally sufficient and equivalent to the unwritten tradition, because the written tradition can be though the writings of Fathers and the creeds and canons of Nicene Council in 325 and other local councils.

He pointed out that the Holy Spirit has his origin directly in God. One of his proofs for the natural community between the Father and the Holy Spirit derives from the fact that he is said to be “of God”,<sup>51</sup> “not indeed in the sense in which all things are of God, but in the sense of proceeding out of God, not by generation,

<sup>47</sup> Ibidem, X, 26, PG 32, 113C: “to keep the Spirit undivided from the Father and the Son”.

<sup>48</sup> Ibidem, XVIII, 44, PG 32, 149A.

<sup>49</sup> Gregorius Nazianzinus, *Funebris oratio in laudem Basilii Magni Caesareae in Cappado*, (1894, LXVIII, PG 36, 588C).

<sup>50</sup> Basilus Caesareae, *De Spiritu Sancto*, (1895, IX, 22, PG 32, 108A).

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem, XVIII, 46, PG 32, 152B.

like the Son”, “but as Breath of His mouth”.<sup>52</sup> It is called “Spirit of God, Spirit of truth which proceeds from the Father, right Spirit, a leading Spirit”.<sup>53</sup>

Generally, Basilios’ argument for the divinity of the Holy Spirit worked by illustrating what the Holy Spirit does. The Holy Spirit helps the believers to understand the truth for God, because He gives them the illumination of their mind: “Just as when a sunbeam falls on bright and transparent bodies, they themselves become brilliant too, and shed forth a fresh brightness from themselves, so souls wherein the Spirit dwells, illuminated by the Spirit, themselves become spiritual, and send forth their grace to others”.<sup>54</sup> The Holy Spirit illumines and sanctifies the baptised. By this way, the Holy Spirit pours in the quickening power, renewing the baptised’s soul from the deadness of the sin unto their original life and gives the ability to them to enlighten their mind and to obtain the divine knowledge.<sup>55</sup>

Finally, the Holy Spirit accomplishes and enhances creation from the beginning of time to its end and brightens the mind of the believer to realise the message of its order. Also, Basilios explained that to worship in the Spirit implies that men’s intelligence has been enlightened<sup>56</sup> “worship ought to be offered in Spirit and in Truth,<sup>57</sup> plainly meaning by the Truth, Himself. As then we speak of the worship offered in the Image of God the Father as worship in the Son, so too do we speak of worship in the Spirit as showing in Himself the Godhead of the Lord. Wherefore even in our worship the Holy Spirit is inseparable from the Father and the Son. If you remain outside the Spirit you will not be able even to worship at all; and on your becoming in Him you will in no way be able to dis sever Him from God – any more than you will divorce light from visible objects”.<sup>58</sup> The Holy Spirit inspirits the Scriptures and governs their understanding in the Church, by this way there will be any misunderstanding or wrong interpreting of them and if someone support heretical things, the Holy Spirit will help illustrious men to reveal and say the truth.

To sum up the Holy Spirit is undoubtedly God. He had an active role in creation with the Father and the Son. He illuminates the mind of baptised to realise the deep meaning of the Scriptures and of the unwritten tradition. Also He

<sup>52</sup> Ibidem, XVIII, 46, PG 32, 152D-153A. 2 Cor. 1:12.

<sup>53</sup> Ibidem, IX, 22, PG 32, 108A. Ibidem, XVI, 38; XVI, 40, PG 32, 136C, 144A. Jn 15:26

<sup>54</sup> Basilios Caesareae, *De Spiritu Sancto*, (1895, IX, 23, PG 32, 109C).

<sup>55</sup> Ibidem, XV, 35, PG 32, 129CD, 132A.

<sup>56</sup> Ibidem, XXVI, 64, PG 32, 185B.

<sup>57</sup> Jn 4:24

<sup>58</sup> Basilios Caesareae, *De Spiritu Sancto*, (1895, XXVI, 64, PG 32, 185B).

supervises the Church. The latter can face up difficulties because of the heretics but the dogmatic truth will shine like a real pearl in front of the Sun.

5. "SPIRIT OF TRUTH WHICH PROCEEDS FROM THE FATHER":<sup>59</sup> THE *HOMOOUSION* OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WITH THE GOD FATHER AND THE GOD SON

St Basil supported the everlasting unity between the Father and the Son, so too did he insist the same with regards to the Spirit of God. He wrote: 'in everything the Holy Spirit is indivisibly joined to the Father and the Son'.<sup>60</sup> The Holy Spirit is worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son.<sup>61</sup> Beyond affirming the divinity of the Holy Spirit, Basilianus also taught that the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father; yet was sent into the world, within time, by the Son of God to continue the salvific work of God.<sup>62</sup> There is, therefore, an important distinction made in Basilianus' theology between the Holy Spirit's eternal procession and existence, and his temporal mission. That is to say, whereas the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father only, He is sent into the world, in time, through the incarnate Son of God. Basilianus' position is based upon John mainly 15:26: "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify on my behalf". The text clearly shows that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father since the Father alone is the source and beginning of the Godhead.<sup>63</sup>

The fathers of the fourth century taught that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are entirely *other* in who they are – that is, three concrete and distinct persons or hypostases – but indissolubly identical in what they are. In order to intimate what of God Father, God Son and God Holy Spirit, the fathers of the Church employed the term *essence*. The attributes of God are known to people but His essence is beyond any creature's understanding, including men's mind. Basilianus wrote in his other writing: "We know the greatness of God, His power, his wisdom, his goodness, his providence over us and the justness of his judgments; but not his essence... We know our God from his operations, but do not undertake to approach near his essence. His operations come down to us, but his essence

<sup>59</sup> Jn. 15:26.

<sup>60</sup> Basilianus Caesareae, *De Spiritu Sancto*, (1895, XVI, 37, PG 32, 133A).

<sup>61</sup> Ibidem, XI, 27, PG 32, 116B.

<sup>62</sup> Ibidem, XVI, 38, PG 32, 136C.

<sup>63</sup> Ibidem, XIX, 49, PG 32, 160A.

remains beyond our reach”.<sup>64</sup> The two phrases that undoubtedly prove that the Holy Spirit is God involves the following story with Ananias, his wife Sapphire, and the apostle Peter: “Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God”.<sup>65</sup>

The Holy Spirit has the same essence with God Father and God Son, the names<sup>66</sup> and activities.<sup>67</sup> In Holy Bible the Spirit is called *Lord*<sup>68</sup> so the believers lead to glorify the Spirit with the Father and the Son, one God in three persons.<sup>69</sup> Despite the acceptance of the Holy Spirit as God, Basilus refuses to state that the Spirit is *homoousios* with the Father and the Son, preferring to say that the Spirit is *homotimos*, insisted that equal honor has to be given to equals—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the word *homotimos* “equal in honor” is Basil’s own coinage.<sup>70</sup> He used this term also for Son.<sup>71</sup>

The Holy Spirit has common *ousia* with the other two persons of the Trinity but different *hypostasis*: “So that according to the distinction of Persons, both are one and one, and according to the community of Nature, one”.<sup>72</sup> The relationship between *ousia* and *hypostasis* was the same as the relationship between the common *koinon*<sup>73</sup> and the particular *idion*.<sup>74</sup> The word *idion*: specific is used to show the relationship between the persons of the Triune God, and not their common nature. For this reason the names Father, Son and Holy Spirit are referred to their relationship, and not to *ousia*: essence. Also these names, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, do not show the actions of the Holy Persons, because they are com-

<sup>64</sup> Basilus Caesareae, *Epistula 234 – Amphilochio qui eum consuluerat*, (1895, I, PG 32, 867CD-869A).

<sup>65</sup> Basilus Caesareae, *De Spiritu Sancto*, (1895, XVI, 37, PG 32, 133C). Acts. 5:4-5, 9.

<sup>66</sup> Basilus Caesareae, *De Spiritu Sancto*, (1895, XIX, 48, PG 32, 155AB).

<sup>67</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibidem*, XXI, 52, PG 32, 161A.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibidem*, XXVII, 68, PG 32, 196A.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*, XVII, 42, PG 32, 145C.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibidem*, VI, 15, PG 32, 89C: “Sit on my right hand; when the Holy Spirit bears witness that he has sat down on the right hand of the majesty of God; we attempt to degrade him who shares the honour and the throne, from his condition of equality, to a lower state? Standing and sitting, I apprehend, indicate the fixity and entire stability of the nature, as Baruch, when he wishes to exhibit the immutability and immobility of the Divine mode of existence, says, For you sit for ever and we perish utterly. Moreover, the place on the right hand indicates in my judgment equality of honour. Rash, then, is the attempt to deprive the Son of participation in the doxology, as though worthy only to be ranked in a lower place of honour”. Hebr. 8:1.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibidem*, XVIII, 45, PG 32, 149C.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibidem*, XVIII, 45, PG 32, 149B. Artemi, 2013, pp. 63-83.

mon. Thus as three particular men with their own distinguishing characteristics or properties were hypostases sharing the same common humanity, so the three particular *hypostasis* in the Trinity, each with his distinguishing characteristics or properties, shared the same common substance of deity.<sup>75</sup>

As a conclusion, it should be underlined that “the Spirit is organically united with God,” the bishop of Caesarea Basilius explained, “not because of the needs of each moment, but through communion in the divine nature”.<sup>76</sup> The Holy Spirit is divine; he is not a creature. “The Lord has delivered to us a necessary and saving dogma”, he declared, “the Holy Spirit is to be ranked with the Father”.<sup>77</sup> The Spirit deserves equal honour *homotimos* and glory *homodoxos*, according to Basilius. The Spirit is seen, on the one hand, as a gift from God to believers and to baptized and on the other, as a mode of God’s being. As God the Spirit is the source of holiness, a spiritual light, and he offers his own light to every mind to help it in its search for truth. By nature the Spirit is beyond the reach of our mind, but we can know him by his goodness. The power of the Spirit fills the whole universe, but he gives himself only to those who are worthy, acting in each according to the measure of his faith. Finally, the Holy Spirit originates, has his cause for existence or being -manner of existence- from the Father alone.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

For a Christian the rejection of the deity of the Spirit is a declination to the perfection of the Trinity but also to his own perfection or completion as a Christian. Undoubting, the Spirit initiates and sustains a radical new way of relating to God. The time of Great Basilius the problem for the deity of the Holy Spirit was very significant. Many opinions were about the Holy Spirit not only among heretics but also among Christians.

Basilius didn’t use the term *homoousios* for the Holy Spirit, because he tried to reconcile the Semi-arians to the formula of Nicaea Council (325) and to show that their term “homoiousios” –“Son is like in substance to the Father” had the same implications as the Nicene “homoousios”: “of one substance”. He explained that the Spirit is God and has divine essence, common with the other two persons of Godhead.

<sup>75</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>76</sup> Basilius Caesareae, *De Spiritu Sancto*, (1895, XIII, 30, PG 32, 121A).

<sup>77</sup> Ibidem, X, 25, PG 32, 112C.

The Holy Spirit possesses a relation to the Father and to the Son. He proceeds from the nature of Father. This is His perfect mode of being. The Holy Spirit as the Son originates from the Father, he is coeternal with the Father and he illuminates the whole creation. He deserves to be worshipped as God, the third Person of Trinity. Basilus highlighted that despite that the term God is not used for the Holy Spirit in Holy Scripture, it is easily found as indisputable name of Him based on his divinity essence and his unity with God Father and God Son by the testimony of the texts of Bible, the written tradition of the Church Fathers' books and the unwritten, too. If Christians have taken into account everything the Bible says about what the Spirit does, they will realize Holy Spirit's deity. He cannot be a creature. He cannot do what he does if he were only a creature; he cannot give what he gives if he were only a creature. The various activities of the Spirit imply his Godhood. A faithful heart will see the reasonableness of the inference.

Finally the Holy Spirit, according to Basilus can lighten the mind and the heart of Baptized people in the Holy Trinity to accept the commandments of God; and to put into practice the covenant which he made with God during the christianization- their baptism. Also the Holy Spirit helps the Church to be united with her own members and to defend Itself against the heresies.

In his treatise on the Holy Spirit, that is an epistle - response to Amphilochius's questions about moral and canonical issues, Basilus expresses one of his principal apologetic concerns relates to the issue of the identity and nature of the Holy Spirit. As a real theologian, he underlined the divinity of the Holy Spirit and confronted the heretic teaching of Pneumatomachians, because he was anxious to return from the heresy to the salvation:

As for our opponents, what will they have to say? What defense will they have for their blasphemy? They have neither shown reverence to the honor which the Lord paid to the Spirit, nor have they feared His threats. They are responsible for their own actions; they can change their minds if they wish. For my own part, I fervently pray that the good God will make His peace to reign in everyone's heart, so that these men who are swollen with pride and who bitterly rage against us may be calmed by the Spirit of gentleness and love.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Basilus Caesareae, *De Spiritu Sancto*, (1895, XXIX, 75, PG 32, 209B).

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