

The Problem of the Place of the Person of the Holy Spirit in Orthodox Ecclesiology of the 20th Century (on the example of Eucharistic ecclesiology of Nicholas Afanasiev)

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The question of the place of the Holy Spirit in the Orthodox Ecclesiology is not a new one, but it still remains open. In this article special attention is devoted to the Eucharistic Ecclesiology of Nicholas Afanasiev, in which he has tried to give to the Person of the Holy Spirit an essential place, and to the ecclesiological ideas of George Florovsky, who in his theological constructions has been extreme Christocentric and has avoided to give a special place to the oikonomia of the Spirit. A particular remark is made also about the possibility of using the neo-patristic synthesis in the discussion (with special reference the texts of St. Basil the Great, St. Athanasius of Alexandria and Didymus the Blind).

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Introduction

The ecumenical movement of the 20th century as a search for visible unity of divided Christians has raised the question about the nature of the Church – one of the most discussed issues in theological circles. The Orthodox theologians have also become a part of this discussion and have made several attempts to give their own answers to this question, although they differ in some aspects from one another.

One of the first attempts to describe the Orthodox ecclesiology was made by Vladimir Lossky (1903-1958), who was too rash and too loud, but has put forward a hypothesis that the eastern theology is a pneumatological one while the western theology is in its essence Christocentric¹. That is why when the pneumatological questions had come to light, it was expected that the Orthodox theologians could make a major contribution to this issue. But in reality they could not cope with this responsible task. I think that John Zizioulas was absolutely right saying the following: “Orthodox theology has

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¹ Vladimir Lossky, *Essai sur la théologie mystique de l'Eglise d'Orient*, Paris 1990, 248p. In English: Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, Crestwood, NY 1976, 252p.

not yet worked out the proper synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology. Without this synthesis it is impossible to understand the Orthodox tradition itself or to be of any real help in the ecumenical discussion of our time.”²

The questions about the role and the place of the Holy Spirit in the Church remain urgent and unsolved also for Orthodox ecclesiology. Although from the very beginning it should be acknowledged that there have always been Orthodox theologians who have tried to give a special place in their ecclesiological constructions to the Person of the Holy Spirit and to the work of the Spirit in the church. The most famous among them have already been mentioned: Vl. Lossky³ and Sergij Bulgakov⁴ (1871-1944). But the ecclesiological views they had offered did not get such recognition and reception as the ecclesiology of Nicholas Afanasiev⁵. The ecclesiological model Afanasiev offered is known as “Eucharistic” and sometimes is considered to be the official ecclesiology of the Orthodox Church. Based on the example of Eucharistic theology it can be clearly shown that the pneumatological aspect of the Orthodox teaching about the Church remains a relevant problem for Orthodox theology to the present day.

Ecclesiological views of Nicholas Afanasiev

Nicholas Afanasiev (1893-1966) is one of the most outstanding Orthodox theologians of the 20th century, who is known by many as the father of Orthodox Eucharistic theology. His influence on the development of Ortho-

² John D. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church*, Crestwood, NY 1997, p. 139.

³ No one speaks so openly and distinctly about the Person of the Holy Spirit as he does. His ecclesiology is really one of the most pneumatological, but at the same time is one of the most polemical and ideological. Losskij tries to reduce all theological differences between the Catholics and the Orthodox to the Filioque-controversy. And on this basis he gives a shape to the orthodox ecclesiology. It makes him preconceived and does not let him to take into account the facts that do not pass to his ecclesiological constructions.

⁴ Sergij Bulgakov, officially condemned by the Russian Orthodox Church, provides a unique theological system, which is often misunderstood and misinterpreted, but which at the same time provides a special place for the oikonomia of the Spirit: the Holy Spirit is an essential part of his teaching about the Divine Sophia – the heart of the theological thought of S. Bulgakov.

⁵ The second and more famous representative of the Orthodox Eucharistic Ecclesiology is John Zizioulas, but because of the lack of space his ideas cannot be discussed here. The preference was given to N. Afanasiev as to the founder of the Eucharistic theology. Besides in the case of the comparative consideration of both authors the special questions should be raised and discussed: to what extent is the interpretation of the ideas of Afanasiev by Zizioulas correct? And if not, is his criticism always justified? etc. These questions require a special examination.

dox theological thought can never be overestimated because it is his ecclesiological model that Orthodox theologians use most often when they speak about Orthodox ecclesiology.

The key argument that runs through the entire theology of Afanasiev insists that our understanding of the Church should be based upon our understanding of its liturgical life and particularly upon our teaching about the sacrament of the Eucharist. That is why this ecclesiology turns out to be a reflection on the Eucharist. "It is impossible to create the teaching about the church that is independent from the teaching about the Eucharist"⁶.

Afanasiev frankly expresses from the very beginning his dissatisfaction with contemporary liturgical praxis. It has endured considerable changes in the long historical process in which something old has been lost and something new has been added.⁷ Nevertheless the established basis of liturgical life, although modified has really been preserved in the life of the church till today. To discover this is not easy; so a special historical and theological research should be undertaken. Afanasiev sees the main task of his theological occupation to find the permanent basis of liturgical life which should also be the invariable basis for Orthodox ecclesiology.

It is possible for him to point out one event in the history of Christianity that introduced into liturgical practice irreversible changes and also had negative consequences for the self-understanding of the church; which is the Edict of Milan (313). The mass conversion of people to Christianity, often without sincere faith and without true repentance, has led to the decline of morality among Christians themselves, and to transformations in the liturgical practice of initiation, and therefore to transformations in the teaching about the church⁸.

It means for Afanasiev that this permanent basis of liturgical life and of Orthodox ecclesiology can be found only in the texts of the New Testament

⁶ See his work (Russian): Nikolai Afanasiev, *Трапеза Господня* [Trapeza Gospodnia], Paris 1952, p. 6.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

⁸ See his work (Russian): N. Afanasiev, *Вступление в Церковь* [Vstuplenie v Cerkov'], Moskva 1993, 203p. The following quotation describes his attitude to the transformed practice of Christian initiation (*all translations from Russian in this article are mine*): "When the main goal of missionary preaching of the Ancient Church [the Church till 313] was to awake the genuine faith and to renew people through repentance for a new life in the Church, the missionary work after the time of Constantine [the Great] - using all sorts of possible means - was longing only for bringing everyone to the baptistery. There was no need to check out if a person, who was seeking to become a member of the Church, has sincere piety or at least a desire. The Church' authorities were aware, that by forcing cannot be anything of that, but were sure that everything appears after the Baptism".

and in the works of the early Christian writers (up to the 4th century). Afanasiev acknowledges the fact, that the number of such sources is limited and that they do not deal with ecclesiological questions, but nevertheless he believes that on the basis of the knowledge about the church that we already have, it is possible to reconstruct the missing elements. But the problem of hermeneutics which includes the possibility of various interpretations remains unsolved.

The true ecclesiology is the ecclesiology of the early church, and Afanasiev restores and describes it in this way. The church was founded by Christ at the Last Supper and was actualized by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost⁹. This classic ecclesiological statement he repeats very often and one time he made an essential addition which seems to be in a harmony with the whole ecclesiology of Afanasiev. He insists that the church was actualized on the day of Pentecost when the disciples of Christ celebrated the first Eucharist¹⁰.

According to Afanasiev the church cannot be understood as a human society united in one faith, but it should be understood as the Body of Christ. This transformation of the people of God into the Body of Christ can only take place in the sacrament of the Eucharist¹¹. Afanasiev thus identifies the phenomenon of the church with the Eucharist. It makes it possible for him to change the famous expression of St. Irenaeus: "For where the church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the church and every kind of grace," – and instead to say instead the following: "For where the Eucharistic assembly is, there is the Church; and where the Church is, there is the Eucharistic assembly."¹² This statement entails specific consequences: first, the ecclesiology should be derived from the teaching about the Eucharist; and secondly, that the Eucharistic assembly or the local church by celebrating the Eucharist represents and really is the Church of God. It means that the expressions "local Church", "Church of God" and "Eucharistic assembly" are synonymous to one another.

The concept of the local church is central in the ecclesiology of Afanasiev. He defines the local church as a Eucharistic assembly of all Christians in one place presided over by a bishop. The Eucharist itself is a reflection of the Last Supper, in which Christ and the Apostles took part. That is why in the celebration of the Eucharist a bishop represents Christ and the people of

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 24.

¹⁰ *Idem*, Трапеза Господня, p. 5.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 16: "Through bread and wine of the Eucharist we become the Body of Christ".

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 9, 17. Afansiev claims that the ecclesiological ideas he expresses belong originally to Apostle Paul (and thus correspond to the biblical ecclesiological teaching), and write in the next sentence the following: "This is the main thesis of the Eucharistic ecclesiology revealed by Paul".

God represent the apostles. A bishop is a bishop only in and with his community and their assembly is the Catholic Church¹³. The Eucharistic assembly represents the church in its fullness and should serve as guidance for formation of order, ministry and structure of the church¹⁴.

As the Eucharist itself the church should also have two essential elements and the lack of either of them makes it impossible to speak about the church. They are: a bishop and the people of God.

Without a bishop, who represents Christ, there is no Eucharist and therefore – there is no church: "For the church, a bishop as presider is an ontological necessity"¹⁵. Presiding by the celebration of the Eucharist gives to a bishop a right of presiding also over other activities of his community. As a presider of one community of all Christians of one place he serves also as a sign of unity of his local church (or congregation).

The Holy Spirit makes out of every member of the Eucharistic community (in the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation) a member of the royal priesthood (1 Petr 2,9) and an *active* member of the church¹⁶. Belonging to the royal priesthood means, that *everyone* has their own service in the church and a charisma from the Holy Spirit to perform it, because „the Spirit is the principle (and source) of life and activity in the church"¹⁷. The highest expression the royal priesthood finds in the Eucharistic assembly is that: without the people of God no Eucharist is possible and consequently no church.

The service of a bishop and the service of a community are equally necessary: they coexist with one another without confusion, but also without separation. This cooperation between a bishop and the members of community Afanasiev calls "concelebration"¹⁸ which should find its place not only in the Eucharist, but also in the whole liturgical life of the church (while the Eucharist is an example of church order). Any sacramental act of the church can never be regarded as private or individual or belonging to ordained ministry alone since *everyone* is a performer in a liturgical action, but only together with the others because no one can be passive or alone in the church¹⁹.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 51.

¹⁴ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, Notre Dame, Indiana 2009, p. 136: "Thus the structure and order of the Church originate in the Eucharistic assembly, the foundation of the Church's entire organization."

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 138.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 3-4.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

¹⁸ Idem, *Трапеза Господня*, p. 47-49.

¹⁹ Idem, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, p. 33-38.

Through the prayers of a community and its presider, it is in the sacraments that the gifts of the Holy Spirit come from God. A sacrament is valid, when the gifts of the Spirit are given, and a sacrament is invalid when the gifts for which a community prays are not given²⁰. Only the people of God as the royal priesthood can witness that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given and received. The function of reception belongs to the people of God in the church. But authority in the church requires a special gift from the Holy Spirit: it belongs only to the church' hierarchy.

Afanasiev tries really hard to show in his works that the ecclesiological reality depends upon the activity of the Holy Spirit. In the Foreword to his book "The Church of the Holy Spirit" he gives to the church the following pneumatological characteristic: "...the only foundation of the life of the church is the Spirit. The church is an organism filled with grace not because long ago it received the gifts of the Spirit which it keeps as if a hidden treasure, not because only some receive a charism within it, but because it lives and acts by the Spirit. The church is the place of the Spirit's activity. Without the Spirit there is no life in the church, no activity, no ministry; in short, there is no church. Founded by Christ on the Last Supper, the church was actualized at Pentecost... Beginning with that day the Spirit lives in the church and the church lives by the Spirit"²¹.

The constant emphasis on the pneumatological dimension of the church²² leads Afanasiev to the following interesting conclusions. First of all, the constant presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in the church means for him that in the church there is no place for a human will: everything that happens there does not depend upon the desires of the church' hierarchy or of the church' members. The only will that operates in the church is the Will of God: "... the Church is not a human organization but a divine establishment that it is not human will but God's will through the revelation of the Spirit that acts in it, that the Church lives and acts by the gifts of the Spirit..."²³

Secondly, the Holy Spirit appears to be the main principle of church organization or structure and of church' order. "The anarchy of divine grace" (as Afanasiev calls it) is just something that cannot exist²⁴.

²⁰ Idem, *Вступление в Церковь*, p.178.

²¹ Idem, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, p. 1-2.

²² For example his words: „We believe that in the Church the Old Testament prophecy has been fulfilled: „And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh" (Acts 2.17)". *Ibidem*, p. 3.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

²⁴ Idem, *Трапеза Господня*, p. 20: „The opposition between the Spirit and order... is not only deceptive but also incomprehensible. It comes out from the presupposition – that is

So these are the main ideas of the ecclesiology of Afanasiev, which he identifies with the ecclesiology of the ancient church. Its liturgical life was quite different from what we do have today: in the long historical process the idea of the royal priesthood has been forgotten; the understanding of the church as of a local church has been lost and replaced by the idea of "a parish", which cannot be identified with a local church, but is only a part of it; the Eucharist as the main sacrament of the church has lost its meaning and become one of the sacraments.

The Eucharistic ecclesiology of Afanasiev is interesting and attractive, but in some aspects is also quite questionable. By introducing the conception of a local church which plays a significant role in the modern ecclesiological discussion, Afanasiev has not solved a problem of the connection between different ecclesiological assemblies, and the question about the unity of the church remains unanswered. The concept of the royal priesthood changes a lot in our understanding of the role of the laymen in the church and their activity, but at the same time it does not preserve the idea of a human person²⁵ and of a human will. And it seems to be really strange that speaking so much about the Eucharist and its meaning for the teaching about the church has not led Afanasiev to a theological interpretation of the sacrament of the Eucharist itself.

The constant repetition, that the church is the church of the Holy Spirit is itself a proof that Afanasiev tries really hard to give to his ecclesiology a pneumatological foundation. Nevertheless it is hard to say that he actually finds a place for the personal *oikonomia* of the Holy Spirit. In spite of the constant repetition of the name of the Spirit the person of the Spirit in reality remains unimportant to Afanasiev, and the Spirit is reduced to the Spirit's functions

not always clear pronounced, but that is always present, – that only a man's will can be an organizing principle, and that the Spirit can create only the divine grace' anarchy. That is why the order and the structure could appear in the Church only when the charismatic character of the Church's life was weakened and the eschatological tension was eased. The anarchy of divine grace of primitive Christianity is one of the scientific myths. From the very beginning the Church has understood itself as the Church of the Spirit. Founded on the Last Supper it was actualized after the descent of the Spirit. [...] In the Church the Spirit is an organizing principle, because in the Spirit and through Him the community of the first Christians has become the Church. That is why the Spirit is not the principle of anarchy in the Church, but the principle of the Church itself and the principle of its order".

²⁵ Afanasiev understands very well that the concept of a human person should be saved in the ecclesiology. For example, he says the following: "A human person does not disappear in the Church, but it is preserved by the Church or more precisely a man becomes a person by his entrance into the Church". See: Idem, *Вступление в Церковь*, p. 34. But he nevertheless fails to give to it a proper place in his ecclesiological constructions.

and largely dissolved in them. The Spirit emerges first of all not as a Divine Person, but as a Giver of the gifts and a source of divine grace and force.

For me it is also not clear, why Afanasiev insists so definitely that the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church is an indication that only the Will of God can operate in it. The definition of the Church itself always includes a human element. There can be no Church without the Holy Spirit. And there can be no Church without a human person. Humankind is also active in the church and can manifest the Spirit's will. The fact that Afanasiev enumerates the innovations which have been brought into the life of the church in its history, and also criticizes them, is sufficient by itself to affirm the reality of human freedom and of human will in the church. Because: "...the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." (2 Cor 3,17)

A Brief Remark: Ecclesiological contribution of George Florovsky

I think that it is really interesting to mention here the name of another famous Orthodox theologian George Florovsky (1893-1979), who in his ecclesiological views stands very close to Afanasiev. In spite of the fact that he is known first of all for his patristic and historical works, he was also an active member of the ecumenical movement. Facing the necessity to answer the question of his ecumenical partners about the Orthodox Church he has written several articles dedicated to Orthodox ecclesiology, which deserve our special attention.

Florovsky sees only two possible foundations of any ecclesiological system, which differ greatly from one another. Speaking about the church we can proceed either from the assumption, that the church is *the Body of Christ*, or from the assertion, that the church is *a community of the faithful*²⁶.

Florovsky himself insists that the only appropriate foundation for ecclesiology is the first one, and it is the only firm and positive foundation for any proper theological research. The second possibility – the understanding of the Church as a community of the faithful – deserves only sharp criticism and should never been taken as a guiding ecclesiological principle²⁷. Here Florovsky, without an explanation or a proof, makes a surprising conclusion: and when this last proposition is thoroughly applied and completely developed, then sooner or later it leads to the pneumatological understanding

²⁶ In Russian: Георгий Флоровский, *Христос и Его Церковь* [Christos i Ego Cerkov'], http://azbyka.ru/dictionary/22/florovskij_hristos_i_ego_tserkov-all.shtml, viewed on 10th September 2014:

²⁷ George Florovsky, "The Church: Her Nature and Task" in: G. Florovsky, *Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View*, Belmont 1987, p. 67-68.

of the church. Here he also sees the danger of what he calls "charismatic sociology"²⁸.

The ecclesiology of Florovsky is one of the most Christocentric in Orthodox theology. The church for him is a continuation and fulfilment of the Incarnation,²⁹ and its sacraments are a manifestation of Christ's presence in this world. Such Christocentric and sacramental understanding of the church leads him to emphasizing a special role of the Eucharist for the church's life and ecclesiology. On this point Florovsky comes very close to the ecclesiology of Afanasiev saying the following: "As the mystery of the church, the Eucharist is, in a sense, the realization of the church"³⁰.

This utterly Christocentric position has not allowed him to find a place for the personal oikonomia of the Holy Spirit in his ecclesiological works. But it would be unfair to say that he has completely forgotten the Spirit: he mentions His name from time to time but consciously without saying anything essential about Him. The Holy Spirit is first of all the Spirit of the Son and the church is the church of the Son: the Spirit makes Christ visible in the church in its sacraments and Christ is present in the church through the Holy Spirit. For Florovsky it means that there can be no place for any special personal characteristics of the Spirit Himself or of His activity, while He does not speak about Himself, but only witnesses about or to the Son³¹.

This brief presentation of ecclesiological ideas of two orthodox theologians makes clear, that although having different approaches to the Holy Spirit, they share as a result some common problems. In both ecclesiological systems the Holy Spirit as the Divine Person is never denied, but is not important. Both – Florovsky and Afanasiev – could not find a proper place for the personal oikonomia of the Spirit: in all His activities He depends on the Son³². It is quite remarkable that like Afanasiev, Florovsky realizes the impor-

²⁸ Idem, *Христос и Его Церковь*. As an example he points here at a book of Adam Möhler, *Die Einheit in der Kirche*.

²⁹ G. Florovsky, *The Church: Her Nature and Task*, p. 64. It is possible for Florovsky even to say that the Church is Christ himself.

³⁰ Idem, "The Elements of Liturgy: An Orthodox View" in: G. Florovsky, *Ecumenism: A Doctrinal Approach*, Belmont 1989, p. 90.

³¹ Idem, *Христос и Его Церковь*.

³² Here I do not try to reject the connection between the Son and the Holy Spirit on the personal level or on the level of salvation: the Son is always with the Spirit and the Spirit is always with the Son. I just want to underline, that in spite of the fact that the Holy Spirit remains for us somehow more mysterious than the Son, we should never forget that the Spirit is first of all a Person and we are not allowed to reduce Him completely to His actions and functions. Because He is more than that.

tance of a concept of the human person and human freedom; he also fails to support them in the context of his teaching about the church. (Speaking about authority in the church and in its hierarchy leads Florovsky even to a denial of the validity of private theological opinions).

From what has previously been said it is clear that the question about the ecclesiological place of the Holy Spirit is a problem also for Orthodox theology. Everyone who is writing something about the church should always mention the name of the Holy Spirit, because it is clear for everyone that the church is impossible without the Spirit. But this constant repetition of the Spirit's name does not mean that the Spirit is a correct part of one's ecclesiological ideas. Very often He emerges only as a giver of gifts or a source of divine grace. He is of course all of that, but He is also and first of all a Divine Person. And a person – divine or human – can never be reduced to its activity.

The Possibility of Applying of Neo-Patristic Synthesis

One of the most popular methodological requests in Orthodox theology nowadays is to connect any theological reflection with the patristic heritage of the church in order to support the expressed views with the authority of the Fathers. Even if it is not possible in all cases, in this particular question of the Holy Spirit and the Church, some patristic texts devoted to the Spirit can be a real source of inspiration. I mean here, first of all, the works of St. Basil the Great and of Didymus the Blind (both works are called "On the Holy Spirit") and of Athanasius of Alexandria ("Letters on Serapion"); all of these works are based on their interpretation of the Bible, which is for them the only source of the true teaching about the Holy Spirit. That is why we are working here not only on patristic texts, but also on the biblical texts.

While dealing with the pneumatological texts of early Christian writers, it is very important to remember that they have never occupied themselves with ecclesiological problems. In the focus of the theological thought of the time of the ancient church, Christ was Himself the Son of God and the Son of man. The theological occupation with the person of the Holy Spirit was a logical continuation of Christological discussion, and defending the deity of the Son has led the Fathers of the church to the defence of the deity of the Spirit. The question about the nature of the church and its connection to the Holy Spirit did not bother anyone, but it is possible to find in these texts important references to the *oikonomia* of the Spirit. It would take a lot of time to make a thorough analysis of these texts, and that is why I will only point out some ideas about the Person of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's activities, which can, in my opinion, be helpful and fruitful for ecclesiological discussion.

1. The Holy Spirit is a Person of the Holy Trinity. He is never named alone, but always together with the Son and the Father. His activity is always a part of the common *oikonomia* of salvation of one God. It means that through pneumatological accent ecclesiology receives Trinitarian foundation³³.
2. The Holy Spirit is always the Spirit of the Son (and of God?). It means that the Christological foundation of the Church can never be replaced by the pneumatological, but only supported by it³⁴.
3. The Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Son is the Spirit of adoption: He makes out of *every* person (who is longing for it) a child of God conformed to the image of Christ. He makes a person similar to Christ³⁵. It means that the attention to the pneumatological foundation makes it possible to find a proper place in the church also for a human person.
4. The Holy Spirit is a Creator of the world together with the Father and the Son, but in his own personal way: the Father commands, the Son creates, the Spirit strengthens and perfects everything in holiness³⁶. It means that the Holy Spirit is active *before* the foundation of the church and therefore *outside* its visible boundaries. It also means that the teaching about the church should include a theological reflection on the world as creation of God.
5. The Holy Spirit is called the Giver of life: He gives the force of life to everything and *everyone*: every human soul knows His touch, because

³³ For example the words of St. Basil the Great: "...in all things the Holy Spirit is inseparable and wholly incapable of being parted from the Father and the Son" (XVI.37). In: *The Book of Saint Basil on the Spirit*. De Spiritu Sancto, in: A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Vol. VIII: St. Basil: Letters and Select Works, Michigan 1975, p. 23

³⁴ St. Athanasius repeats it many times: "For the Spirit is indivisible from the Word", I.31, in: *The Letters of Saint Athanasius Concerning the Holy Spirit*, London, 1951, p. 143.

³⁵ "The seal [the Holy Spirit] gives the impress of the Son, so that he who is sealed has the Form of Christ" (III.3). In: *Ibidem*, p. 172. And: "Therefore, inasmuch as the Holy Spirit perfects rational beings, completing their excellence, He is analogous to Form. For he, who no longer «lives after the flesh,» [Rom 8,12] but, being «led by the Spirit of God,» [Rom 8,14] is called a Son of God, being «conformed to the image of the Son of God,» [Rom 8,29] is described as spiritual", XXVI.61, in: *The Book of Saint Basil on the Spirit*, p. 38.

³⁶ "...da er [der Heilige Geist] ... dasselbe schafft, was der Vater und der Sohn schaffen", XXXVII.145, in: Didymus der Blinde, Über den Heiligen Geist, Turnhout 2004, p. 179. „And in the creation bethink thee first, I pray thee, of the original cause of all things that are made, the Father; of the creative cause, the Son; of the perfecting cause, the Spirit...", XVI.37, in: *The Book of Saint Basil on the Spirit*, p. 23.

it is He who brings us to life³⁷. It means that the whole creation is capable of receiving the Spirit and – one more time – that His activity cannot be limited to the visible church.

6. The impact of the Holy Spirit is always referred (or related?) to a human person and its extent is limited by the human ability (by the purity of his soul) and human desire to receive it and is never violent: a person is always free to decline Him³⁸. It means that human person and human will can and should find its ecclesiological place.
7. The Holy Spirit as a Perfector leads the whole creation and all human-kind to its proper fulfilment. It means that the church can be theologically regarded as a place, where a human person in the fellowship with the Person of the Holy Spirit reaches his proper goal (or destiny?) – Theosis³⁹.
8. The Spirit as a Giver of Life is also a pledge of eternal life, because it is the Spirit who raises us from the dead. This gift of eternal life comes to everyone in their Baptism⁴⁰. It means that in any ecclesiological research a special emphasis should be put not only the sacrament of the Eucharist, but also on the sacrament of Baptism.

Conclusion

The problem of the ecclesiological place of the Holy Spirit is very complicated and cannot be solved in this brief article. But speaking about the

³⁷ “So, then, what should we call him? Holy Spirit [Jn 14,26], Spirit of God [Rom 8,9], Spirit of truth sent from God and bestowed through the Son [Jn 15,26], not a servant [Rom 8,15], but holy [Ps 50,13], good [Ps 142,10], and guiding [Ps 50,14; Jn 16,13] Spirit that gives life [Jn 6,63], Spirit of adopted sonship [Rom 8,15], the one who knows all that is God’s [1 Cor 2,10-11]” (3.6), in: St. Basil of Caesarea, *Against Eunomius*, Washington 2011, p. 194.

³⁸ “Now the Spirit is not brought into intimate association with the soul by local approximation. How indeed could there be a corporeal approach to the incorporeal? This association results from the withdrawal of the passions...”, IX.23, in: *The Book of Saint Basil on the Spirit*, p. 15.

³⁹ About the perfection of the angels: „...so that the ministering spirits subsist by the will of the Father, are brought into being by the operation of the Son, and perfected by the presence of the Spirit. Moreover, the perfection of angels is sanctification and continuance in it”, XVI.38, in: *Ibidem*, p. 23.

⁴⁰ “For there the death on behalf of the world is one, and one the resurrection of the dead, whereof baptism is a type. For this cause the Lord, who is the Dispenser of our life, gave us the covenant of baptism, containing a type of life and death, for the water fulfills the image of death, and the Spirit gives us the earnest of life... the water receiving the body as in a tomb figures death, while the Spirit pours in the quickening power, renewing our souls from the deadness of sin unto their original life. This is what to be born again of water and of the Spirit, the being made dead being effected in the water, while our life is wrought in us through the Spirit”, XV.35, in: *Ibidem*, p. 22.

church one should always remember that pneumatology should always be an essential part of any ecclesiology, and should never forget the truth that the Holy Spirit is a Person. Our knowledge about Him is not complete, but there are facts that we know for sure: He is always here. He is always close. We should only learn, how to feel it: (and believe it?) "...after the likeness of the sunbeam, whose kindly light falls on him who enjoys it as though it shone for him alone, yet illumines land and sea and mingles with the air. So, too, the Spirit is to everyone who receives It, as though given to him alone, and yet It sends forth grace sufficient and full for all mankind, and is enjoyed by all who share It, according to the capacity, not of Its power, but of their nature."⁴¹

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 15.