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**SPIRIT-UAL WORD-FOR-WORDNESS:
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PNEUMATOLOGY
AND CHRISTOLOGY IN THE LIGHT
OF JOSEPH RATZINGER'S / BENEDICT XVI'S
THEOLOGY AND TEACHING**

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/SPLP.2022.025>

*DUCH ŚWIĘTY DAJE SŁOWO:
ZWIĄZEK MIĘDZY PNEUMATOLOGIĄ A CHRYSOLOGIĄ
W ŚWIETLE TEOLOGII I NAUCZANIA
JÓZEFA RATZINGERA / BENEDYKTA XVI*

Streszczenie

Joseph Ratzinger / Benedykt XVI przedstawia pneumatologię wywodzącą się z dogmatu trynitarnego, ściśle związaną z chrystologią i mającą konsekwencje antropologiczne, eklezjologiczne i duszpasterskie (w dziedzinie duchowości). Wszystkie poddziedziny teologiczne pozostają prawowierne i prowadzą do prawdy tylko wtedy, gdy są ze sobą powiązane, ale szczególnie pneumatologia ma własność integrującą, ponieważ dotyczy Tego, który jest w istocie wspólnotą i jednością. Wewnętrztrynitarna „pozycja” Ducha Świętego wyjaśnia strukturę całej rzeczywistości (w tym także rzeczywistości ludzkiej, osobowej, wraz z wiarą): to, co duchowe, czyni byt bardziej spójnym i raczej jednoczy niż wprowadza dychotomię czy dzieli. Jednoczy przez tworzenie relacji (komunii), a nie przez negację tożsamości (specyfiki ziemskiej, fizycznej i historycznej), jak chciałby niektóre herezje czy ideologie. Tak jak Duch Święty działa zawsze w komunii ze Słowem Wcielonym, tak duchowość chrześcijańska jest zawsze osadzona w historycznej formie Kościoła, a charyzmat jest zawsze udzielany w ramach struktur instytucjonalnych. Bliskość Chrystusa i pokora przed pokornym Bogiem jest źródłem prawdziwej duchowości.

Słowa kluczowe: *Duch Święty, Syn Boży, Jezus Chrystus, Trójca Święta, Wciele-
lenie, teologia, pneumatologia, trynitologia, eklezjologia, jedność, communio,
 duchowość, instytucja, Kościół, charyzmat, ortodoksja, utopia, ideologia*

Abstract

Joseph Ratzinger / Benedict XVI proposes a pneumatology derived from the Trinitarian dogma, strictly linked with Christology and having anthropological, ecclesiological, and pastoral consequences (in the domain of spirituality). All theological subdisciplines remain orthodox and lead to the truth only when inter-linked, but pneumatology has a particularly “linking” quality because it concerns the One who is, essentially, communion and unity. The intra-Trinitarian “position” of the Holy Spirit explains the structure of the entire reality (including the human, personal reality, together with faith): what is spiritual makes existence more consistent and unites rather than dualizes or divides it. It unifies by creating a relationship (communion) rather than by negating identity (the earthly, physical, and historical specificity), as some heresies or ideologies would have it. Just like the Spirit always acts in communion with the Incarnate Word, Christian spirituality is always set in the historical form of the Church, and charism is always given within institutional structures. Being close to Christ and humility before the humble God is the source of true spirituality.

Keywords: *Holy Spirit, Son of God, Jesus Christ, Holy Trinity, Incarnation, theology, pneumatology, trinitology, ecclesiology, unity, communio, spirituality, institution, Church, charism, orthodoxy, utopia, ideology*

1.

Christian spirituality is essentially linked with the Third Divine Person – in all of its dimensions: in terms of sources, contents, and history, and in many other ways. This link is much deeper than etymological connection, though it is precisely this connection that acts as a clear sign pointing at the heart of the matter. It is the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of the Father sent to us in the name of the Son (“and he will give you another Comforter to be with you always”, Jn 14:16), the Spirituality given to us and coming from God himself, its Lord and Giver of Life (cf. Jn 14–16). It is he who accompanies the Church and “makes us live in God’s presence, as hearers of his word, [...] appears to us as the guarantor of the active

presence of the mystery in history, the One who ensures its realization down the centuries”¹.

One of the main fruits of the presence and activity of the Divine Spirit is the charism/gift of joy. This joy, which arises in the disciples at the meeting with the Risen Christ (“The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord”; Jn 20:20), is strongly and deeply linked in the Joyful News with the coming of the Comforter. His outpouring complements the Passover of Christ, and joy proves to be the real gift of the Holy Spirit as “the true gift of the Redeemer”² (Die Freude erscheint [...] als die eigentliche Gabe des Geistes³). The Lord says to his people: “your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you” (Jn 16:22). Thus, the chord⁴ that is sounded with all its clear power already in the angelic salutation (“Hail, favored one!”; Lk 1:28) runs through the entire hidden and public life of Jesus, reaching its paschal “symphonic” culmination of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit. The last of these is special as far as joy is concerned. A careful analysis of the gospel concept of “complete joy” (“so that your joy may be complete”; Jn 16:20.22.24; 1 Jn 1:4; cf. Lk 11:13) suggests that it is the same as the Holy Spirit: “‘joy’ and ‘Holy Spirit’ mean the same thing”⁵. This is the same gift from the killed and resurrected Christ: the Spirit who is joy, or the Comforter.

However, this truth, brimming with theological and existential enthusiasm, and the assertion of this truth should not obscure two difficult groups of questions that the current reflection stems from and that I would like to find and give one joint answer to. Here they are:

1. Why does pneumatology seem to be a minefield? Catholicism has reportedly always suffered from the lack of a strong, vibrant, and clearly articulated pneumatology (?). By contrast, many (if not actually a vast majority of) heretics and originators of “new churches” claimed and are still claiming to have allegedly (?) received “inspiration from the Holy Spirit,” and the largest exoduses from the Church in Poland in recent years were associated with the so-called “spiritual awakening,” charismatic renewal communities, Pentecostalism, etc. But what is the most interesting and the most nourishing is the positive aspects of the pneumatological question: the study of the Holy Spirit is having a powerful renaissance in the late twentieth and

¹ Benedict XVI, *Dlaczego wierzę? Przesłanie pontyfikatu 2005–2013* [Why Do I Believe? The Message of the 2005–2013 Pontificate], trans. A. M. Stefańska, Kraków 2013, pp. 74–76.

² Idem, Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*, trans. P. J. Whitmore. New York 2012 [further referred to as JNIN], p. 27.

³ Benedict XVI, *Jesus von Nazareth. Prolog. Die Kindheitsgeschichten*, Freiburg im Br. 2014, p. 38.

⁴ JNIN, p. 27.

⁵ J. Ratzinger / Benedict XVI, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion*. San Francisco 2005 [further referred to as PFF], Kindle edition.

early twenty-first centuries and has been reviving both the Church and its theology. Where does this originate? Why? Where is it heading?

2. How is the Holy Spirit related to Christ and how is pneumatology related to Christology? What does the essence of this relationship consist in?

This is a provisional set of questions. I do not promise to answer them all – their complexity, depth, and sweep exceed the modest design and size of the present paper. But in looking for answers and clues I will use, above all, that which, in recent decades, has been contributed to Christian theology in the fields of contemporary ecclesiology and pneumatology by Joseph Ratzinger / Benedict XVI.

2.

Let me begin superdogmatically and trinitologically: communion flows into our world – into the person, into people, into the entire reality – from its source, namely from God.

Communion in God is the Holy Spirit. He is the *communio* of the Father and Son; this constitutes his essence: to be the communion between the Father and Son. “The particular characteristic of the Holy Spirit is [...] being what is shared by the Father and the Son. His particular quality is to be unity”⁶, writes Ratzinger in “The Holy Spirit as Communion”⁷ relying on Saint Augustine’s pneumatology, presented especially in *De Trinitate*.

Augustine (as well as other Fathers before and after him, though the author of *De Trinitate* is the most precise and argumentatively the strongest on this issue)⁸ derive this “communion” understanding of the Holy Spirit from the name of the Third Divine Person. After all, the term “Holy Spirit” conveys what is common to God rather than personally specific. “Being the Father” and “being the Son” are exclusive attributes of these Persons, but “being the Spirit” and “being Holy” are expressions for what is shared by God; these are, simply, terms that define God “as such,” designating what God is characterized by as God⁹. This is precisely where the original characteristic of the Third Divine Person manifests itself – this characteristic is, so to speak, “the lack of intra-Trinitarian originality”; in other words, “he is that which is common, the unity of the Father and the Son, the unity in Person. The Father and the Son are one with each other by going out beyond themselves; it is in the third Person, in the fruitfulness of their act of giving, that they are One”¹⁰.

⁶ PFF, Kindle edition

⁷ PFF, Kindle edition (pp. 38–59 in the printed edition)

⁸ J. Ratzinger, *The God of Jesus Christ: Meditations on the Triune God*, trans. B. McNeil. San Francisco 2008 [further referred to as GJC], Kindle edition; PFF, Kindle edition.

⁹ GJC, Kindle edition; PFF, Kindle edition.

¹⁰ GJC, Kindle edition (p. 109 in the printed edition).

This understanding of the *proprium* of the Third Divine Person opens Trinitology and pneumatology to anthropology and further, to the entire reality (for if God is the Creator, this is where it shows what unity, concord, and harmony are – between humans and things, among all creatures, and where the community of what exists has its source), but particularly to ecclesiology and Christian spirituality. Because it is here, in the understanding of the proper character of the Holy Spirit, that the key to understanding the essence of being a Christian lies: to become a Christian means to enter the *communio* of the Father and the Son and thereby to embark on the mode of life that is proper to the Holy Spirit. And even this is feasible only thanks to him, “who is the power of communication, its element of mediation, of enabling, and who is as such [! – *J. Sz.*] himself a Person”¹¹. Ratzinger thus sums up this pneumatological analysis of the basic name of the Third Divine Person, rooted in Augustine’s writings – an analysis in which Trinitological, ecclesiological, and personalistic topics come together:

“Spirit is the unity God gives to himself, in which he gives himself to himself, in which Father and Son give themselves back to each other. His paradoxical peculiarity, his *proprium*, is to be communion, to find the highest degree of personal identity in being fully the movement toward unity. ‘Spiritual’ would on that basis always have an essential connotation of reuniting, com

municating. [...] Communion thereby becomes the constitutive element of the concept of the Spirit and is thus, after all, given content and thoroughly personalized”¹².

It is here that Christian spirituality receives its original identity and at the same time its depth: it is anchored in the Spirit and, as such, is communion-oriented.

3.

What is of decisive significance for Joseph Ratzinger’s / Benedict XVI’s trinitology and pneumatology, particularly for the “communion” view of the person and the role of the Third Divine Person presented in it, is the interrelation between the activity of the Holy Spirit and the work of Jesus Christ. On the strictly theological plane, this concerns the pneumatology–Christology relationship – in both directions and, importantly, from both trinitological and ecclesiological perspectives:

¹¹ PFF, Kindle edition.

¹² PFF, Kindle edition.

“One often hears the complaint that in the Church too little is spoken of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes it goes so far as to say that there must be a certain symmetry between the speaking of Christ and speaking of the Holy Spirit. Everything said about Christ must correspond to what is said of the Holy Spirit. Whoever demands this forgets, however, that Christ and the Spirit belong to the triune God. He forgets that the Trinity is not to be understood as a symmetrical coexistence. If this were so, then we would simply be believing in three divinities, and we would thereby be fundamentally distorting what the Christian confession of the one God in three Persons holds. [...]. The Holy Spirit is not an isolated value or a value that can be isolated. It is according to his essence to direct us into the unity of the triune God. When we pass through the history of salvation from Christmas to Easter, Father and Son appear to us in contrast, in mission and obedience. Now the Holy Spirit does not represent a third reality somewhere next to or between the other two. He leads us to the unity of God. Looking to him means overcoming distinction and recognizing the ring of eternal love that is the highest unity. Who wants to speak of the Spirit must speak of the Trinity of God. If the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is supposed to be in a certain respect a corrective to a one-sided Christocentrism, then this corrective consists in the Spirit teaching us to see Christ entirely in the mystery of the trinitarian God as our way to the Father in perpetual conversation of love with him”¹³.

The “polemical target” of this passage is what can be called the Catholic pneumatological deficit – namely, the complaint that, reputedly, “the Holy Spirit is too rarely spoken of in the Church”. According to this view, it is only the ecumenical opening of Catholicism and its contacts with the Orthodox Church and with the pneumatologically oriented evangelical Protestantism (Pentecostals *et consortes*) that have been restoring the Holy Spirit to Catholicism in recent decades. There is some truth in this statement, certainly – though its extreme versions, where theology is mixed with politics, counterculture, and *Zeitgeist* (which theology absolutely must not confuse with the Holy Spirit), border on grotesque: Catholicism, they suggest, has “forgotten” about the Holy Spirit or has “got scared”, preferring the power of institutions to the freedom of charism, etc. Nevertheless, the ecumenical efforts of the last hundred years have undoubtedly brought much good also in the field of Catholic pneumatology, which has been revived, expanded, and deepened. The theory and practice of the need for two lungs for full breathing

¹³ J. Ratzinger, *Images of Hope: Meditations on Major Feasts*, trans. J. Rock & G. Harrison, San Francisco 2006 [further referred to as IHMMF], pp. 63–65.

and health (of the Church and Christianity) is valid in this case as well; one might say: particularly in this case, where the truth concerning the PNEUMA is at stake.

However, the pneumatological restraint of Catholicism has good reasons behind it too. It is a sign of something much deeper that the “typically Catholic pneumatological deficit.” There is significant and convincing justification for the lack of qualitative symmetry between Christological and pneumatological statements¹⁴. On the one hand, the justification is dogmatic – or, more precisely, trinitological: speaking about the Trinity is speaking about the Holy Spirit *per se*, even if his name remains unspoken; demanding total symmetry in “speaking about the Persons” may lead to tritheism and involves the recognition of the specific, communion, intra-Trinitarian “function” of the third Divine Person. On the other hand, the justification is pastoral and concerns “pneumatological spirituality” (which will be discussed further below).

It should be stressed that speaking about God and his love (nature) in Christian (!) theology (in the elements of its thinking, within texts, in analysis and conclusions, in encyclical letters and treatises) is not in itself a concession to what has been referred to as “hard”, anti-Trinitarian monotheism. Nor does it amount to abandoning the understanding of the Mystery of God as triune.

4.

On the contrary – if we speak of genuinely Christian theology, the word “God” is understood as Trinitarian by definition.

Precisely in the context of this problem, Joseph Ratzinger / Benedict XVI devotes much attention to the Christ–Spirit relationship and, consequently, to the relationship between Christology and pneumatology. The iron rule of Christian hermeneutics is as follows: “Christ and the Spirit are properly distinguished only if, by considering their difference, we can learn better to understand their unity”¹⁵. “Now the Lord is the Spirit”, as we read in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (3:17), which means, among other things, that Christ cannot be understood without the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit cannot be properly understood without Christ. And even though they are not, *sic et simpliciter*, the same reality or the same Person, they shed light on each other’s mysteries (the mysteries of different Divine Persons) and thereby shed light on the mystery of God. The above hermeneutic principle translates into important ecclesiological issues: the Christological and pneumatological visions of the Church are not the same, but they must not be

¹⁴ IHMMF, pp. 63–65.

¹⁵ J. Ratzinger / Benedict XVI, *New Outpourings of the Spirit: Movements in the Church*, trans. M. J. Miller & H. Taylor, San Francisco 2007 [further referred to as NOS], p. 28.

seen as opposed to each other, since both the institution and charism and governed by this principle¹⁶. In a 1998 lecture devoted to the theological position of Church movements, Ratzinger addressed precisely this topic:

“We can never escape into a free-floating pneumatology, never leave behind the solid earth of the Incarnation, of God’s action in history. But conversely, this once-for-all element is only mediated in the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of the risen Christ”¹⁷.

The relationship between the Spirit and the Son, the link of the Annunciation and the Nativity with Pentecost, is fundamental, essential, and strict. “The Holy Spirit’s greatest work in history is the Incarnation of the Son of God. Even the day of Pentecost could not bring anything greater than that [! – J. Sz.]”¹⁸ – Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI illustrates and emphasizes this relationship on numerous occasions, many times as strongly as he does in this passage. He explains: Pentecost is the most deeply linked with the hour of Nazareth, because what began at that time (in the events of the Annunciation and the Nativity) should, from now on (in the event of Pentecost), spread to the whole world: “Christ wants to be born anew in people all the time. God wants to become a man in us. The history of mankind should be part of his Incarnation; Christ wants to take shape in us [...]”¹⁹. And it is precisely this giving of Christ’s shape to man and his history, making people Christ-shaped, that is the Holy Spirit’s greatest work extended to everyone and everything: from Nazareth and Bethlehem, through the Upper Room in Jerusalem, to the eschatological theandric communion. Its essence and foundation is precisely the incarnational work of the Divine Spirit, the Incarnation – theandric communion *par excellence*. “[F]or no one can lay a foundation other than the one that is there, namely, Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 3:11) – “[f]or it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her” (Mt 1:20c).

¹⁶ NOS, pp. 28–29.

¹⁷ NOS, pp. 30. The difference and unity translate into sacramentology in the following way: “[...] the two inseparable components of the sacrament [...] must be kept in view: first there is the incarnational and christological element, that is to say, the Church’s being linked to the ‘once only’ element of the Incarnation and the Paschal events, the link with God’s action in history. Yet at the same time there is the way that this event is made present now in the power of the Holy Spirit – that is, the christological and pneumatological component that guarantees both the newness and the continuity of the living Church” [emphasis by J. Sz.]; NOS, p. 51.

¹⁸ Translated from: J. Ratzinger / Benedict XVI, *W dzień Pięćdziesiątnicy* [On the Day of Pentecost], trans. K. Wójtowicz, Kraków 2006 [further referred to as ODP], p. 32.

¹⁹ Translated from ODP, pp. 32–33.

5.

The proper relationship between pneumatology and Christology, understood and interpreted in an orthodox way, is so important also because, guarding the truth (the trinitological and soteriological truth, about God and about salvation), it thereby guards pneumatology against the results of its dissociation from Christology (and it is this dissociation that leads to anarchy: theological, and then ecclesial as well). Both in the history of Christianity and in the history of ideas, this has been (and continues to be) one of the most serious temptations (both in thinking and in life), resulting in heterodox currents with disastrous theological and anthropological consequences, and particularly ecclesiological ones. And here is a milder version of this temptation:

“[...] the religion of the Holy Spirit must be a religion that flows entirely and exclusively from the heart; there are no dogmas and no commandments in it, no offices and no hierarchy, no bureaucracy and no administration; there is only Spirit and Truth. This is a dream we keep associating with Pentecost; we would like the Spirit to tear it all apart and lead us into a pure and free religion of the Spirit. Who thinks in this way (and to some extent everyone does) does not know the essence of man. Man, after all, is not pure spirit. His distinctive characteristic, in accordance with God’s wonderful idea, consists precisely in the fact that the spirit lives in the body and the body lives thanks to the spirit; in the fact that the unity of creation lives in him; in the fact that the spirit penetrates through matter and takes something from its power, vitality, and fullness; and in the fact that – conversely – the spirit fills matter, enlightens it, and illuminates it with the grace of knowing”²⁰.

In a more severe phase, naivety is linked with anarchy here, and the religious variety of counterculture leads to Gnostic panspiritualism, dissociated from truth and realism (from the “burden” of humanity and life), where the body is only used

²⁰ Translated from ODP, p. 40. The results of “dissociating” the spirit from the body include the following outcomes: “Where these two realities are separated, the body becomes ordinary matter and the spirit is associated only with cool calculation and raw functionality. Such a division of the world is a great temptation today and a problem in this day and age. After all, we do experience the body being treated one-sidedly – as part of matter that one can manufacture on one’s own in laboratories and put an end to later, at the right moment (when it is no longer of benefit). The destruction of deep respect for human life (before its beginning and before its end) shows this reduction of the body to mere matter, which is the case when unity is lacking. It also reveals the degradation of the spirit, which appears as mere calculation and functioning because it is not set in the God-designed unity”. (Translated from ODP, pp. 40–41).

(the instrumentalization of matter is and continues to be evil, even if it is engaged in for noble purposes) and thereby disdained.

This has little to do with the religion of the INCARNATION and is not in line with the Christian teaching about the Holy Spirit, whose greatest gift in history is the Incarnation of the Son²¹. In this context, Ratzinger takes pleasure in citing a relevant fragment from a document issued by the International Theological Commission (ITC) in the times when he was its ordinary member²²:

“The unceasing action of the Holy Spirit and the unique event of the Incarnation are intrinsically linked: The Spirit is the highest Gift that the exalted Christ bestows on those who have been with him ‘from the beginning’ (Jn 15:26–27) and to those who do some kind of ministry in his Church (Eph 4:8–12). The sending of the Holy Spirit brings Christ’s work of salvation to the people of all times, but it never replaces that work”²³.

As always, the theological truth guards the anthropological truth: it does not let the human spirit “fly away” from the human body and prevents man from being “torn in two”, which would lead to the disastrous, terrible outcomes discussed above. By guarding anthropology, it also guards the ecclesiological truth. “Inasmuch as anyone loves Christ’s Church, to that degree he possesses the Holy Spirit”²⁴ – Joseph Ratzinger / Benedict XVI follows Augustine in saying. This is, after all, about loving Christ’s Church, the Church with all its “in-carnated” burden, which is often a great (heavy) cross... We are not going to become more spiritual by escaping from the clay in us or from the heavy clay of the Church, warns Ratzinger. In this way (by means of escape or mental negation) – through anarchy – we are not going to add spirituality, freshness, or freedom to the Church. The clay in us and in others should first be borne and immersed in the breath of Christ – in the Holy Spirit²⁵. Instead of renouncing it, we should unite and thus transform it. This is the model of *communio* based on a genuinely Christian pneumatology – anti-anarchic *par excellence*.

²¹ ODP, p. 32.

²² He was its member for two terms: from the beginning of the existence of the ITC (1969) until 1980. From 1981 until 2005 he served as its president.

²³ International Theological Commission, *Priesterdienst*, Einsiedeln 1972, p. 93 (cited in and translated into English from: J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, *Formalne zasady chrześcijaństwa. Szkice do teologii fundamentalnej*, [Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology], trans. W. Szymona, Poznań 2009, p. 331). “For Ratzinger, the condition of a sound pneumatology is the affirmation that the locus of the Spirit is the Son.” A. Nichols, *The Thought of Pope Benedict XVI: An Introduction to the Theology of Joseph Ratzinger*. London & New York 2007, p. 139.

²⁴ ODP, p. 41. This statement comes from Augustine of Hippo’s *Tractatus in Joannem* XXXII, 8 (as cited in: Nichols, *The Thought of Pope Benedict XVI*, p. 95).

²⁵ ODP, p. 42.

The internal ecclesial and ecclesiological balance between that which is spiritual and that which is material is based precisely on this: it must be based on the true teaching about the Holy Spirit and his gifts²⁶. Sound pneumatology ensures that the Church has both: on the one hand, the “Christological concretum” – faithfulness to history, the earth, and the body, and on the other hand – Christian spirituality and spiritual agility. Without precluding the institutional form, it transcends it, limits its claims, and prevents it from becoming similar to purely secular institutions. Thus, Christ remains present in the Church through the Holy Spirit in his openness, greatness, and freedom²⁷. Crucified and Resurrected. The Incarnation is the highest work of the Holy Spirit, but also the Spirit himself is the highest gift from Christ – “[t]he Paraclete, Christ’s first gift to those who believe”²⁸. As is always the case with God, he gives himself and nothing less. “The gift of God is God himself, the Holy Spirit...”²⁹

6.

What is one to do?

One should look for a spiritual Christianity in the depth of the word, in the Logos, in its very center rather than outside it. The proper answer to this great desire was given by St Francis of Assisi: he lived by the Gospel *sine glossa*³⁰, “word-for-Word.” This is exactly the direction indicated by the orthodox balance between pneumatology and Christology: spiritual Christianity is a Christianity of the word that one can live by and that one lives by truly. Ratzinger writes:

“The Spirit dwells in the Word, not in a departure from the Word. The Word is the location of the Spirit; Jesus is the source of the Spirit. The more we enter into him, the more really do we enter into the Spirit, and the Spirit enters into us. This also exposes the false element in Joachim, namely, the utopia of a Church that would depart from the Son and rise higher than him in the irrational expectation that portrays itself as a real and rational program”³¹.

²⁶ J. Ratzinger / Benedict XVI, *Wprowadzenie w chrześcijaństwo* [Introduction to Christianity], trans. Z. Włodkowska, Kraków 2006³, p. 351.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 352.

²⁸ Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum caritatis* (22.02.2007), no. 12. The exhortation makes a reference here to *Eucharistic Prayer IV* from the Roman Missal.

²⁹ J. Ratzinger / Benedykt XVI, *Seek That Which Is Above: Meditations Through the Year*, trans. G. Harrison (2nd ed.). San Francisco 2007, p. 102.

³⁰ GJC, Kindle edition (p. 108 in the printed edition).

³¹ GJC, Kindle edition (pp. 108–109 in the printed edition).

We receive the Spirit not by departing from the Son but by entering into him, by coming “within breathing range” of the Son – the Word – and in letting Jesus breathe on us (Jn 20:19–23)³². The Spirit does not dwell alongside the Word but in the Word; his (the Spirit’s) function consists in recalling³³. Let us then restate the key point of the pneumatological layer of Joseph Ratzinger’s/Benedict XVI’s theology: The Holy Spirit is not separation; he is *communio*.

Therefore, the true logic is not Joachim’s – from the Father to the Son and then, finally, to “liberation” in Spirit – but that proposed by Irenaeus of Lyons: “[...] the Spirit is present at the beginning as an instruction and guidance of man that is as yet scarcely perceptible. He leads to the Son and, through the Son, to the Father...”³⁴

“The Holy Spirit points to the Trinity, and thereby he points to us”³⁵. This is because the truth about God is the truth about us and our life. To put it briefly: we are God’s people insofar as God’s truth is reflected in the truth of our lives. Likewise, we are truly spiritual insofar as the truth of the Spirit is reflected in our spirituality.

What does it mean to reflect the truth about the Divine Spirit – the *Communio* of the Father and the Son – in Christian spirituality?

It means, above all, to obey the Word and to derive all the virtues-fruits of the Spirit from this. It means to be an obedient model of the Spirit, who is faithful to the Word that was said once and who “speaks not out of what is his” (a different translation reads: “He will not speak on his own”; Jn 16:13) but reminds the disciples of everything the Word has said (cf. Jn 14:26)³⁶. This is the model that John’s epistles follow: the author refers to himself as, simply, ‘older’, while his adversary is the *preagon* – ‘one who runs ahead’³⁷ (which he does at the cost of remaining in Christ’s teaching; 2 Jn 1:9). The fourth Gospel – and all John’s writings – “would not be anything other than an act of reminding, and in this sense it is a pneumatic gospel”³⁸.

It is precisely this feature of the Spirit – and, consequently, this feature of the truly Christian spirituality – that Joseph Ratzinger / Benedict XVI emphasized particularly forcefully. In practical terms, the point is to consciously abandon the attitude of “one who runs ahead,” so that “‘one’s own spirit’ is not parading as the ‘Holy Spirit’”³⁹. This attitude – *preagon* (2 Jn 1:9) – seems to be present mainly in the confusion of the Holy Spirit with the spirit of the times, *Pneuma hagion* or *Zeitgeist* (it is our spirit of

³² GJC, Kindle edition (p. 109 in the printed edition).

³³ GJC, Kindle edition (p. 111 in the printed edition).

³⁴ GJC, Kindle edition (p. 109 in the printed edition).

³⁵ IHMMF, p. 65.

³⁶ GJC, Kindle edition (p. 111 in the printed edition); PFF, Kindle edition.

³⁷ GJC, Kindle edition (p. 112 in the printed edition).

³⁸ Translated into English from the Polish edition: J. Ratzinger, *Bóg Jezusa Chrystusa. Medytacje o Bogu Trójjedynym* [*The God of Jesus Christ: Meditations on the Triune God*], trans. J. Zychowicz, Kraków 1995, p. 109.

³⁹ PFF, Kindle edition.

our times, the call of the age, mistaken uncritically and often without ill will with the Divine in-Spiration), which has disastrous theological and ecclesial outcomes.

To follow the inspiration of the spirit is to be willing and try to hear the Word rather than oneself. The lack of this honest desire and the failure to understand the essence of genuine Spirit-uality gives rise to the phenomenon (well known in exegesis, theology, and the Church) of “critically” listening to the Word (reading the Bible); those who engage in it are often totally uncritical of themselves (e.g., of the arbitrariness of their philosophical and existential assumptions) and critical only of the authority and dogma being recalled⁴⁰. Whom, in the end, do we hear: Jesus or Heidegger? – asks Ratzinger in his famous dispute with the biblical hermeneutics as practiced by Rudolf Bultmann⁴¹. The Holy Spirit or the spirit of the times? What should one do to distinguish these voices?

One should change the superficial understanding of what pneumaticity is, reaching the trinitological heart of the truth about God and reaching the truth about the Spirit-*Communio* – this is how Joseph Ratzinger’s / Benedict XVI’s answer can be summarized. One should, moreover, be careful and critical of one’s own “spirits,” of one’s own “internal anarchy,” which does not always have to be God’s wind... For pneumaticity is not wild freedom and constant quivering (a kind of spiritual ADHD), but the force of abiding in faithful obedience to the Word – always living, valid, and resounding in the Church. If the Spirit is unpredictable or incomprehensible (which he is, to us), it is not in the sense of lacking logic or constancy but in the sense in which God speaks about himself in the verses of Deutero-Isaiah: “my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways” (Is 55:8).

7.

This is a very important decision – a fundamental decision: “Is the *Pneuma* to be sought only in what is discontinuous, or is it in ‘abiding’ itself that he dwells, in enduring and creative faithfulness?”⁴² In unpredictability or in recalling? In the latter, and without fears about the novelty and freshness of the resulting program of life and action. The “selflessness of remembering”⁴³ reaches into the depths and is perpetually renovating, new, and fresh. The patience of obedience to the Word placed over one’s own originality is the true fruit of the Spirit. It is also a truly pneumatic and charismatic (because it is a great gift, of special significance for building *communio Ecclesiae*) program for Christian spirituality, one that most

⁴⁰ J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, *Slowo Boga. Pismo – Tradycja – Urząd* [God’s Word: Scripture, Tradition, Office], trans. W. Szymona, Kraków 2008, p. 95.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 92.

⁴² PFF, Kindle edition.

⁴³ GJC, Kindle edition (p. 114 in the printed edition).

deeply reflects the relationship between the truth of God and the truth of human life: The Holy Spirit makes himself known insofar as he shapes human life, and conversely: a life shaped by faith points to the Holy Spirit.

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