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## THE FATHER IN THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY TRINITY

Holy Trinity is the Communion of Persons. Relational understanding of Persons in the Holy Trinity is closely related to the concept of perichoresis. Most importantly, God is the Father. He is the Trinitarian source of Deity and exists in the Communion with the Son and the Holy Spirit. The mystery of love in God H.U. von Balthasar expresses with the help of the concept of kenosis, which did not take place only at the moment of incarnation or death of Jesus on the cross, but in God himself. In explaining of this image Balthasar does not use the full harmony of the meaning of communion, but dramatic metaphors of “killing”, “expropriation”, “separation” and even “absolute distinction” between the Father and Son. However, there is a question about the legitimacy of abandoning the metaphor of mutual community commonly used in Trinitology.

Early Christian research for the proper understanding of the Holy Trinity not only did it lead to the new discovery of the person, but also to the discovery of its relational, interpersonal and communal structure<sup>1</sup>. There is no real existence in the Holy Trinity without Communion, but it can not be a communion that eliminates or oppresses the Person<sup>2</sup>. Tertullian had seen it communally: God is not

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. Kasper, *Jezus Chrystus*, transl. B. Białecki, Warszawa 1983, p. 247–249; J. Ratzinger, *Wprowadzenie w chrześcijaństwo*, Kraków 1994, p. 170–174.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. G. Greshake, *Trójjedyny Bóg. Teologia trynitarna*, transl. J. Tyrawa, Wrocław 2009, p. 183; J.D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church*, Crestwood–New York 1985, p. 18.

a monad, but the originally distinguished greatness of three Persons: *Tres unum sunt, non unus*<sup>3</sup>. In God, not only are there three individual and specific realities, but in His reality there is also the interpersonal concept of the person<sup>4</sup> – three Persons have their independence, but only within the framework of the relationship<sup>5</sup>. The person is an “not substitutable carrier of an irreplaceable role in interpersonal and interactive role play, [...] independence in the relationship”<sup>6</sup>, because according to the Council of Nicaea, the Son is *homoousios tō patri* – consubstantial with the Father<sup>7</sup> – somehow a movement joins the concept of God, which is why an attempt was made to replace the Greek concept of God with biblical thinking and the understanding of being not as an independently thinking being itself but rather as a personal relation. The Fathers of Cappadocia (above all Saint Gregory of Nazianzus) emphasized *schésis* – the mutual relationality of the Hypostases in God. On the basis of this relativity, at the Divine Persons compatibility of will, community in action, homogeneous orientation of Hypostases exists. God’s Communion (*koinonia tes ousias*) is not a collective unity of the Persons, but also cannot be dismembered into individual Persons – it is the unity of the being (*ousia*). This essence is originally realized in the Father and passed on to the Son (and the Holy Spirit), through each of Hypostases it becomes perfect, so that the life of God is a kind of “pulsation”, where “from unity becomes triple and from triple goes back the unity”<sup>8</sup>.

## THE FATHER IN TRINITARIAN PERICHORESIS

Relational and communal understanding of Persons in the Holy Trinity is closely related to the concept of perichoresis (*perichoresis*)<sup>9</sup> (Latin *circumincessio* emphasizes mutual and dynamic interpenetration of Persons, *circuminsessio* emphasizes the permanent presence of one Person in another (inherence, static dura-

<sup>3</sup> Tertulian, *Adversum Praxean* 3 (CCL 1, 282).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. W. Kasper, op. cit., p. 347–349.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. C.S. Bartnik, *Dogmatyka katolicka*, vol. I, Lublin 2000, p. 212–214.

<sup>6</sup> B.J. Hilberath, *Der Personbegriff der Trinitätstheologie in Rückfrage von Karl Rahner zu Tertulians “Adversus Praxean”*, Innsbruck–Wien 1986, p. 230 (quotation from: G. Greshake, *Wierzę w Boga trójjedynego. Klucz do zrozumienia Trójcy Świętej*, Kraków 2001, p. 80).

<sup>7</sup> Por. J. Ratzinger, *Bóg Jezusa Chrystusa. Medytacje o Bogu Trójjedynym*, Kraków 2006, p. 85–92.

<sup>8</sup> Ἐκ μονάδος Τριάδος ἐστὶ καὶ ἐκ Τριάδος μονάς αὐθις... (St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmina dogmatica* I, 1, 3: PG 37, col. 413); cf. Ch. Schönborn, *Bóg zesłał Syna swego. Chrystologia*, Poznań 2002, p. 148–152; G. Strzelczyk, *Traktat o Jezusie Chrystusie*, w: *Dogmatyka*, ed. E. Adamiak, A. Czaja, J. Majewski, vol. I, Warszawa 2005, p. 331–333; M. Jagodziński, *Węzłowe zagadnienia chrystologii komunijnej*, Radom 2013, p. 29–30.

<sup>9</sup> See J. Moltmann, *Der dreieinige Gott*, in: *Der lebendige Gott. Auf den Spuren neueren trinitarischen Denkens*, ed. R. Weth, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2005, p. 181–186.

tion); *circumincessio* indicates the ecstatic movement of the Persons towards each other<sup>10</sup>. Originally, perichoresis meant the mutual dance of dancers around them, in Stoic and Neoplatonic thinking, meant the unification and mutual penetration of soul and body in a human being. In Christology, this first served to express the mutual penetration of Deity and humanity in Jesus Christ while preserving their properties – in order to understand the communion of natures in Him as communication<sup>11</sup>. In Trinitarian theology, perichoresis means that the three Divine Persons are so closely united that they understand and penetrate each other perfectly, do not keep anything for themselves, but mutually order everything they are and mutually impart to each other (metaphorical collective dance of the Persons). The Council of Florence drew a consistent conclusion from *circumincessio*: “the Father is whole in the Son, whole in the Holy Spirit; the Son is whole in the Father, whole in the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is whole in the Father, whole in the Son”<sup>12</sup>.

In the perichoretical whirling, the Son is all in the Father, the Father is all in the Son and with the Son, and the basis of their unity is the bond in the Holy Spirit. Prologue of the Gospel of Saint John speaks of the Son, that He is “the only God who is in the bosom of the Father” (1:18). And because love permeates everything, Jesus could say that “by himself the Son can do nothing; he can do only what he sees the Father doing: and whatever the Father does the Son does too” (5:19); disciples should know “that the Father is in me and I am in the Father” (10:38). That is why Jesus could speak to the Father: “All I have is yours and all you have is mine...” (17:10) – they both constitute perichoretical unity in the Holy Spirit<sup>13</sup>.

## CHRISTIAN REVELATION ABOUT THE FATHER

The basic Christians’ belief of that God is firstly and directly the Father, finds reflection in the ancient confessions of faith, always directed to “God the Almighty Father”. Analogically, this also applies to the Father as the causeless cause (ἀρχή)

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. W. Granat, *Bóg jeden w Trójcy Osób*, Lublin 1962, p. 406–409; J. Auer, *Gott – Der Eine und Dreieine*, Regensburg 1978, p. 318–322; C.S. Bartnik, p. 215n; J. Warzeszak, *Bóg jedyny w Trójcy Osób*, Warszawa 2006, p. 219.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. G. Bausenhardt, “*In allem und gleich außer der Sünde*”. *Studien zur Beitrag Maximus’ des Bekenners zur altkirchlichen Christologie*, Mainz 1992, p. 173.

<sup>12</sup> Ecumenical Council of Florence (1438–1445), Session 11–4 February 1442 [Bull of union with the Copts *Cantate Domino* (or *Decretum pro Jacobitis*), 6, 4], <https://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/FLORENCE.HTM#5> [access: 15.05.2019]; cf. G. Greshake, *Trójjedyny Bóg. Teologia trynitarna...*, p. 82–83; W. Kasper, *Bóg Jezusa Chrystusa*, transl. J. Tyrawa, Wrocław 1996, p. 351–352; M. Jagodziński, op. cit., p. 35n.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. G. Greshake, *Wierzę w Boga trójjedynego...*, p. 29–30; M. Jagodziński, op. cit., p. 36–37.

of all reality – He is *principium sine principio*). The language of the prayers of the oldest liturgy speaks about this in a characteristic way<sup>14</sup>.

Through his Son – Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit, God the Father came to humanity and “gave himself away” to it – revealed and presented himself, informed and gave the opportunity to participate in God’s life<sup>15</sup>. In addition to the Western primacy of thinking about unity in Eastern theology, there is an alternative form of theological-Trinitarian reflection which in a specific way emphasizes the unity of God towards its Trinitarian multiplicity, similar to the biblical forms of speaking and presenting, in order to not to understand the unity of God as the pre-personal unity of the being, but to see Him as the unity personally realized in the Father: the Father passes on – in the birth of the Son and in the breath of the Holy Spirit<sup>16</sup> – the personal Divine being possessed by Him, so that one God lives and acts in the Trinitarian-relational structure<sup>17</sup>. This concept first indicates that in the New Testament, the ruthlessly used and still unexplained name of God almost always signifies the

<sup>14</sup> Cf. W. Kasper, *Bóg Jezusa Chrystusa...*, p. 185. “The oldest preserved to our time Eucharistic prayer is directed to the Father: ‘We give thanks to thee, our Father, for the Holy Vine of David thy child, which, thou didst make known to us through Jesus thy Child; to thee be glory for ever’. The synod of Hippo clearly states: ‘When the service is performed at the altar, prayer should always be directed to the Father’. That is why liturgical doxology is: ‘Glory be to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit’. Not only the Eastern Church, but also the Roman liturgy has preserved this form of prayer until today in the end of the prayers or in the great doxology at the end of the Eucharistic Canon: ‘Through Him, with Him and in Him, God, Almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory, through all ages of the ages’” (ibidem).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. G. Greshake, *Trójjedyny Bóg. Teologia trynitarna...*, p. 45, 50. J.D. Szczurek (*Bóg Ojciec w tajemnicy Trójcy Świętej. Elementy patrylogii*, Kraków 2003, p. 288–289) noticed that Jean Galot emphasizes that knowing God is not synonymous with knowing the Father, because God is also the Son and the Holy Spirit. In the Father is the original fullness of the Deity, whereas in the Son and the Holy Spirit it is the fullness received (cf. J. Galot, *Découvrir le Père. Esquisse d’une théologie du Père*, Louvain 1985, p. 72–73).

<sup>16</sup> “Trinitology is speaking about active and passive breath. These are relationships resulting from the origin of the Holy Spirit from the Father (and the Son). *Breath* is a word clearly indicating the act of the subject, which is the Father, or the Son. *Origin* is a more complex and ambiguous word. Many theologians also associate them with the work of the Holy Spirit. It means *coming out, pouring out, getting out*. You can find interpretations that emphasize more the role of the Father who extracts from Himself the Holy Spirit, *comes* the Holy Spirit. It is not easy to determine the role of the Father and the role of the Spirit in God’s internal process, called origin. This is because the word comes in Polish, like the word *procedere* in Latin, it does not allow to show all the wealth that contains the corresponding Greek word *ekporeuestai*. [...] Those who talk about the existence of two origins, call it: *birth* and *origin*. It turns out that in Latin and many other languages, including Polish, there is not enough appropriate terms” (P. Liszka, *Duch Święty, który od Ojca (i Syna) pochodzi*, Wrocław 2000, p. 139). On the theme of the Father’s breathing Holy Spirit see ibidem, p. 138–160, 171–176.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. J.D. Szczurek, op. cit., p. 287–291.

Father who is the beginning of the creation and the history of salvation. The fundamental principle (*archè*) and the ultimate reason for being of God is in this perspective the person of the Father. It is not nature (*ousia*) but the person (*hypóstasis* – *prósopon*) that becomes the expression of the ultimate reason for God's existence. It is assumed that God manifests himself in the way in which He is in himself, that is, the Father's story of sending the Son and the Spirit indicates that the Father's person is intrinsically also the origin and source of the Son and the Spirit<sup>18</sup>. However, there is also a narrowing resulting from the omission of the texts saying that the divinity of the Father also owes to the Son: for example, the Holy Bible not only says that the Son was sent by the Father and the Father gave him everything, but also that only when the Son gives himself to the Father, God (the Father) “will be everything in everything” (1 Cor 15:28), or J 1:71nn – where not only the Father loves the Son,

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. G. Greshake, *Trójjedyny Bóg. Teologia trynitarna...*, p. 61. “This concept [...] carries [...] danger (or only a tendency) that the Father's person and personified the unity of the Divine being be considered independently of the other two, and the Son and the Spirit are seen as ordered, but thus subordinated ‘resulting complements’ in itself constitutes already the God-Father. In this way, however, not only the unitarian thought gains new importance before the trinitarian, but also the specific danger of Eastern theology, subordinationism (in the same way as the danger of Western modalism) becomes clear” (ibidem). “The Divine being, nor does he possess his independence ‘in himself’, or above or beside three persons, but he is what happens ‘in’ and ‘between’ three persons, easier: what ever in a variety of ways in and through the Three together is done is the content of their being a person and their interpersonal perichoresis. With this assumption, of course, the action of the three Divine persons, as far as perichoretically permeates itself, it can be attributed to one Divine being, or one Divine nature, and properties can also be claimed through them as long as it is guaranteed, that this is not about something fourth, which – even if only ‘logically’ – anticipates or follows persons, but it is precisely the fulfilment of their perichoretic community: *Communio*. Thus *essentia divina*, one Divine being is *Communio*, which exists only *in the exchange* of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Each of the Divine persons is facing the other, that is, he is correlative, when simultaneously gives himself and accepts: *The Father* fulfills his own Son when he completely gives himself over to the other as the Son and thus he has his Divinity ‘only as a gift’, but at the same time he receives from him being the Father; *the Son*, when he takes himself completely from the Father and gives him ‘glory’; *The Spirit*, when he receives himself from the relation of the Father and the Son as the ‘Third’ and at the same time he worships both. In this way, three persons in God do not have their self-existence against each other, but only for each other's sake, with each other and for each other. Each of the three persons thus reflects the whole of the Trinitarian event in its own way. Or differently: on the basis of the radical mediation of each person by the other and thus the same radical mutual “entanglement”, there are given also together two other persons, where *one* Divine person is involved. Because the fullness of love flourishes in the Spirit, while the unity of the unity and multiplicity of the Father and the Son remains open to a certain extent, also from his side, and therefore from the perspective of the Spirit, allows the whole of the Trinitarian life to be understood as perfect love” (ibidem, p. 162–164). Cf. ibidem, p. 184 passim; J.D. Szczurek, op. cit., p. 291.

but also the Son gives the Father glory (*doxa*), and therefore also the Divinity of the Father “depends” on the Son, not only the divinity of the Son from the Father<sup>19</sup>.

## THE FATHER AS A TRINITARIAN SOURCE OF DEITY

The Father is the absolute source of the Deity<sup>20</sup>. The act of birthing neither precedes the existence of the Father nor comes after Him – he co-exists with the existence of the Father; it is constitutive of the Father’s person, but excludes any priority and causality. Everything is directed in the Father towards the other one, His person exists in the act of giving birth – in relation to the Son. Therefore, love appears as the most appropriate to the person of the Father. J. Galot argue with the belief that in the mystery of the Holy Trinity, love is identical with the person of the Holy Spirit: “‘love first belongs to the Father and is realized as fatherly love in the birth of the Son’. By the power of the common breath with the Son, God’s love is entirely given to the Holy Spirit. Love uniting the Father and the Son takes its ecstatic fullness in the Holy Spirit. In the depths of the mystery of the Father, there is love, which is why the Father is the first person in whom love has developed”<sup>21</sup>. Love wants a birth of someone who would be pleased. Therefore, the Father states: “You are my beloved Son, in you I am well pleased” (Mk 1:11). Birth implies resemblance, and hence the beloved Son is the perfect image of the Father<sup>22</sup>.

The eternal birth of the Son is already the work of love, because out of love, the Father gives birth to the Son as a similar one. Thanks to this, the Father takes delight in the Son and gets in return the love of the Son. Mutual love therefore comes from the Father as the initial source, while the love of the Son is aroused by the love of the Father. It is also an authentic mutual love. Through this mutual love, the Father and the Son breathe the Holy Spirit, that is, they shape a separate person of the Holy Spirit. The love that causes birth develops further as an act of breath, through which the perfection of God’s life is also fulfilled. The breath is also an act of love and as such has its ultimate source in the Father. The texts of God as life, truth, power and love are speaking about the origin of the Holy Spirit. They allow us to understand the “act of the breath as the outflow of life that springs from the inner life of the Father and the Son. [...] This breath of life is the breath of truth. The Father and the Son will breathe the Spirit, transferring His whole truth

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. G. Greshake, *Trójjedyny Bóg. Teologia trynitarna...*, p. 61–62.

<sup>20</sup> Por. Y. Congar, *Wierzę w Ducha Świętego. Rzeka życia płynie na Wschodzie i na Zachodzie (Ap 22,1)*, trans. L. Rutowska, vol. III, Warszawa 1996, p. 161–168.

<sup>21</sup> J.D. Szczurek, op. cit., p. 294.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. ibidem, p. 294–295.

to Him. [...] God's breath is the breath of power, because the result is a Person who has the power of the Father and the Son. He is also a breath of love and is usually described so, because comes to a man as the love. He gives the light of truth and the power needed to overcome the dangers that threaten God's life in man"<sup>23</sup>.

According to H.U. von Balthasar, the essence of God is His Trinitarian event. The centre of this event is the pure self-giving of the Father himself for the Son: in His inmost being, God divine identity of the Father is the "possession" of the Deity, and He has them as much as He is giving it out. There is no need in God forcing him to be a Father, to open himself. In the permission to be the beginning of everything that exists, He is the complete Fullness – Eschaton in the manner of an eternal beginning. The unforeseeable dispossession from the Deity constitutes the Father in a personal way through a lack of the beginning of the beginning of the Son, and therefore the Father can be identified with His birth. In the birth, the eternal Father bestows His Son, gives Him all His being of God. This boundless love testifies to the inexhaustible richness of the Father, who gives everything to the Son – except the very act of the Father's giving, which is Himself. In the immense dedication of himself to His Son, the Father experiences the miracle of love in which He discovers his identity as a pure giving of himself<sup>24</sup>.

Analysing the development of the community theology of the Holy Trinity, Greshake sees at St. Thomas Aquinas some trend to overcome an "essentialism", but also to be influenced by a certain unitarian perspective, which makes him accept the "personal" term "essentia divina est tres personae", because other Persons have one being and unity of the substance with the Father only from the Father, in which she subsists without beginning and who grants her undividedness (*principium non de principio*), whose being is constituted by the relationships of the beginning – however He has no being independently of others Persons and before them<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 296–297.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. I. Bokwa, *Trynitarno-chrystologiczna interpretacja eschatologii w ujęciu Hansa Ursa von Balthasara*, Radom 1998, p. 92. "The giving away of God the Father to the Son is complete, and the Father cannot be conceived as existing 'before' the release of himself to the Son, because he is this movement of total self-giving, without leaving anything to himself. This giving of the Father to the Son reminds constantly thriving source. God is a continuing event of giving. The birth is a dynamic event, Balthasar wants to emphasize how far he is from understanding the essence of God as a static *aseitas*" (ibidem, p. 93). Cf. J.D. Szczurek, op. cit., p. 299–301.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. G. Greshake, *Trójjedyny Bóg. Teologia trynitarna...*, p. 105. Greshake emphasizes that the unity of the Deity is here appropriated to the Father who has no temporal priority over the other Persons (see ibidem, p. 169–172), although His "logical" primacy exists – "first" there is a subsistent Divine being in the Father, which is passed down through Him to the other Persons. Greshake thinks that the Thomistic personalism only initially – by focusing on the person of the Father – reaches the interpersonal and communion dimension (cf. ibidem, p. 105–110).



## KENOSIS OF THE FATHER IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF COMMUNION

The secret of love happening in God H.U. von Balthasar expresses with the help of the concept of “kenosis”, which, did not take place however, only at the moment of incarnation or death of Jesus on the cross, but in God himself, above all in the Father’s self-expressing in the birth of the Son<sup>26</sup>. In this pre-kenosis, the Father showed his infinite power and impotence, because God cannot exist except in the manner of this “kenosis”<sup>27</sup>. The kenosis of the creation and the covenant comes to the kenosis of the incarnation, but all of them remain in the relationship with the Father’s kenosis – they coincide with it, are made possible through it and even have to be treated as resulting from it. It is caused by boundless love<sup>28</sup> and means absolute loss and emptiness of God’s “selflessness” – but not to be limited in being – that is, love<sup>29</sup>.

The Father, caused by absolute love, does not want to be alone – it is His deepest being – “He is himself in resignation from the (Arian) being-for-himself”, He is the “inexplicable abyss of love”. He is only God as a Father and is a person only through the birth of the Son. An expression of love is giving and therefore the Father has himself only in the ongoing process of giving. In the eternal birth of the Son, the Father “expropriates” himself by the virtue of the “unexamined and unrecognizable motive of the gratuitousness of love”, He gives himself without any reservations, radically and wholly – He immerses himself in the “(divine) love-godlessness” – His womb remains empty because it radically transmits His

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<sup>26</sup> See I. Bokwa, op. cit., p. 142–144.

<sup>27</sup> “The radical kenosis of the Father is clearly directed towards the Son. The Father is the pure giving of himself in favour of the Son. Because in the birth of the Son, the Father does not keep anything for himself, it is possible [...] to speak about His absolute poverty towards himself and even about the moment of ‘nothing inside-divine’ [...] In his pre-kenosis, the Father forgets completely about himself, even negates himself. Thus, He creates a personal ‘space’ of freedom in which two other God’s hypostases can appear” (I. Bokwa, op. cit., p. 98). Cf. J.D. Szczurek, op. cit., p. 303–304.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. F. Courth, *Bóg trójjedynnej miłości*, Poznań 1997, p. 285–290.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. I. Bokwa, op. cit., p. 96n. The author of this study quotes one of the most synthetic descriptions of this kenosis of the Father: “To understand with believer’s heart not the temporal-propositional pradrama of God, one should consider more closely: while the Father, without any reservations, pronounces and gives himself, does not get lost, he does not lose himself in a gift, as much as on the other hand He does not keep anything of himself and for himself, because He is the whole being of God in this self-giving, so that all the infinite power and at the same time the impotence of God appear in it, who cannot be God other than in this ‘kenosis’ that happens inside God” (from the third volume of *Theodrama*). The omnipotence of love means the omnipotence of giving out everything that the Father possesses from Deity, and her impotence is simply a lack of “prudence” and “caution” – here the theological analogy reaches the end of its abilities – comments the author (*ibidem*, p. 97–98). Cf. J.D. Szczurek, op. cit., p. 300.



fruitfulness to the Son, which will result in the possibility of common birth of the Holy Spirit<sup>30</sup>.

The Father giving birth to the Son in no way “does not lose Himself” in this act, He does not become something else, so that He can only find himself in this ‘find’; He already as self-giving is from ages Himself<sup>31</sup>. Balthasar adds that the act by which the Father gives Himself demands His own freedom (just like the act by which the Son receives himself from the Father and gives Him back and the act by which the Holy Spirit shows and evokes the deepest mutual love of the Father and the Son). Despite the depth of the exchange, it is necessary to keep separateness<sup>32</sup>. The acts through which the exchange takes place must have some kind of infinite “duration” and “space”, because it is a condition for the development of life in communion and reciprocity. “For centuries the Father has spoken His Eternal Word, and He never interrupts this activity; similarly, the Spirit comes in God in order that he may manifest himself with the common Spirit of the Father and the Son. Even if in this exchange one should exclude all temporal ‘before’ and ‘later’, then absolute freedom must have an area here on which it develops, as it is in every event of love and happiness”<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. I. Bokwa, op. cit., p. 94.

<sup>31</sup> H.U. von Balthasar, *Teodramatyka*, vol. II: *Osoby dramatu*, part 1: *Człowiek w Bogu*, transl. W. Szymona, Kraków 2006, p. 244. “Also the Son is always himself as born by him, and the proceeded Spirit is himself for ages, because he understands his ‘I’ as ‘We’ of the Father and the Son and considers this his ‘expropriation’ as his *propriissimum*” (ibidem). Cf. I. Bokwa, op. cit., p. 92–93.

<sup>32</sup> “In the context of the necessary distinction between the Father and the Son, the theologian from Basel speaks of the ‘separation’ of [...] ‘absolute difference’ [...]: *The infinite distance between the world and God has its basis in another distance between God and God that has the characteristics of the pattern*. The concept of “separation” is primarily used by Balthasar in the context of the event of the cross as the Son’s abandonment of the Father, as indicated by synonymous expressions such as ‘the greatest distance’ [...], ‘infinite distance’ [...] or ‘the greatest separation’ [...] The abandonment of the Son by the Father on the cross is a revelation of the absolute difference between the Divine Persons. [...] It seems that in the case of Balthasar’s theology, one can legitimately speak of the transposition of the drama of redemption into the interior of a Trinitarian God, combined with the simultaneous questioning of the reality of the human history of salvation. [...] giving birth, both from the Father’s and the Son’s side, is establishing of an absolute, infinite distance, a distance between God and God, an absolutely hypostatical difference. This separation in God is to testify to the ‘growing’ in Him vitality: dynamism in God is an absolutely positive feature in absolute being. [...] Balthasar is aware of the paradoxical nature of the concepts of the inner life of the Holy Trinity, introduced on the basis of the mystical visions of Adrienne von Speyr, and for this reason he sometimes tries to relativize their unequivocal meaning: it turns out that the Father’s abandonment of the Son on the cross is seeming [...] and the staurological distance cannot be separated” (I. Bokwa, op. cit., p. 103).

<sup>33</sup> H.U. von Balthasar, op. cit., p. 245. Cf. J.D. Szczyrek, op. cit., p. 301–302: “It follows from the logic of God’s love that paternal birth is not exhausted in being an expression, but it must

Summing up, the trinitological achievements of H.U. von Balthasar, I. Bokwa stated that to express the dynamism of the essence of God as love, he does not use the image of the full harmony of community – communion, but dramatic metaphors of “killing”, “expropriation”, “separation” and even “absolute distinction” between Father and Son. However, there is a question about the legitimacy of abandoning the metaphor of mutual community commonly used in Trinitology (*communio*<sup>34</sup>).

According to the ideas of the Cappadocian fathers, “one God’s being who is originally realized in the Father and is passed on to the Son and the Spirit, through each individual hypostasis becomes perfect and in the same way preserved, but so that the life of the Trinitarian God is in a sense ‘pulsing’, according to which ‘from unity becomes a triple and from a triple becomes back unity’”<sup>35</sup>. This understanding of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is connected with the concept of perichoresis – they are so united with each other, that they perfectly interconnect and understand each other, do not retain anything in themselves, but order each other and give each other what they are. Figuratively, this community can be represented metaphorically as dancers swirling in a common dance<sup>36</sup>.

The Father is a pre-gift in the dynamics of love. Therefore, He is never without the Son (and the Spirit) to whom (whom) He gives himself, and he cannot be

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reflect the movement of bottomless loving self-expression, that is, to co-execute together with the beginning source. This means, further explains Balthasar, that this origin source with its ‘from’ [...] also has its ‘to’ [...] that is, the bottomless, loving edition of the one who is called the Holy Spirit of God. In this context, the author refers to the Filioque issue and emphasizes the principle of one breath. Understood in this way the spiration of the Holy Spirit (or as a turning *to*), can be described from the intra-trinitarian and historical-salvational perspective. The intra-trinitarian description is completely a priori. [...] Within its framework it is possible to say that this “to” [...] of Logos goes in two directions: first in a direction determined by birth, as an act of the Father leading to a kind of poured whole [...] *beyond* any form, image, or graspable expression, which can be defined as absolute love in general, and then in the direction specified precisely by turning to the Father, which as the beginning source for the Logos is just absolute love at all. To the essence of the Logos belongs that in its subsistence it should be what it objectively owes to the Father and subjectively does. These two directions of giving out of the Holy Spirit, Balthasar notes, correspond to two visions of the Holy Spirit origin: eastern and western. The Eastern vision sees here the final spilling of himself from the Father through the Son into the unlimited freedom of the Spirit. On the other hand, according to the Western perspective, the ‘turning’ of [...] the Son to the Father is a fruitful meeting of the giver and recipient of love which expresses itself in the common breath as the Spirit of love”.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. I. Bokwa, op. cit., p. 125–133.

<sup>35</sup> G. Greshake, *Trójjedyny Bóg. Teologia trynitarna...*, p. 82.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 82–83.

“isolated” – even in thought – from two other Persons, for example, as the beginning of the divine ancient cause without beginning of the two remaining Persons. He has his “identity” in the fact that He gives himself, is far from himself because of the other, but at the same time He “gets” his identity because of the other. In this possession of the identity in “being for the sake of the other” and together with the identity is the same-originally difference, “distance between God and God” (H.U. von Balthasar), pre-primary “No” (not “being in yourself”, but “being in another”), “No”, which aims not only at the infinite “confirmation” of himself, but the confirmation of the other – “No” in the “confirmation”. This “No”, that is difference and otherness, does not appear only with temporal being as threatened with the defect of being or imperfection, but it is given originally in the life of God under the sign of the purest positivity<sup>37</sup>.

The Father, fulfilling in the dynamics of love the boundless, the not to be covered secret of His particulars of being a gift, gives the whole base and maintenance to the Communion, carries it and gathers it together, so that both other Persons see their centre in Him, which does not mean that He could be conceived as an ontological principle of the genetic process or even as such a process – the Fatherly “centre” without any relations with others and on the part of others is unacceptable<sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. *ibidem*. “In all of this the ‘absolutely positive moment of these differences’ appears in the absolute Being: the nature of God is not in the common possession of Hypostasis as an untouchable treasure, but the whole is determined by the ways of God’s existence (*tropos tēs hyparxeos*). This nature exists as possessed and at the same time given, and you cannot say that a person is rich as possessive and poor as a contributor, because the fullness of happiness consists only in giving and receiving the gift and the donor himself. [...] Because the divine hypostases come from each other and are mutually open to each other (also the Father as the First Beginning), although they are unchangeable among themselves, in this Divine exchange, in this dialogue, both elements will always be present: total mutual transparency, and yet something like an inviolable personal ‘secret’. [...] If personal modes of existence introduce the greatest conceivable counteractions (therefore one Person cannot be reduced to another), this is to allow the deepest co-penetration. Every single Person is in Divine manner as absolutely free as the others, although they are defined in this by *ordo processionis* and by their trinitarian unity. No one can predict how the Son will ‘use’ the only and divine freedom to arouse the thoughts and actions of love; because the Son and the Spirit are consubstantial to the Father, just as He can give this one Divine freedom the most surprising forms and surpassing all imaginations. Only in finite beings the fulfillment of expectation can mean the ending causing stagnation of life, boredom, supersaturation and disgust (*koros*); in eternal life this is not possible [...] Not only because God’s wealth will always exceed the expectations of created freedom [...], but also because God is always greater than himself because of his triune freedom” (H.U. von Balthasar, *op. cit.*, p. 245–246).

<sup>38</sup> Cf. G. Greshake, *Trójjedyny Bóg. Teologia trynitarna...*, p. 183.

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**Keywords:** relation, person, perichoresis, communion, kenosis

## OJCIEC W KOMUNII TRÓJCY ŚWIĘTEJ

### Streszczenie

Trójca Święta to Komunia Osób. Relacyjne rozumienie Osób w Trójcy Świętej jest ściśle związane z pojęciem perychorezy. Bóg jest przede wszystkim Ojcem. On jest trynitarnym źródłem Bóstwa i istnieje w Komunii z Synem i Duchem Świętym. Tajemnicę miłości w Bogu H.U. von Balthasar wyraża za pomocą pojęcia kenozy, która nie miała miejsca tylko w momencie wcielenia lub śmierci Jezusa na krzyżu, ale w samym Bogu. Wyjaśniając ten obraz, Balthasar nie wykorzystuje pełnego harmonii znaczenia komunii, lecz dramatyczne metafory „zabijania”, „wywłaszczenia”, „oddzielenia”, a nawet „absolutnego rozróżnienia” między Ojcem a Synem. Istnieje jednak pytanie o zasadność porzucenia metafory wspólnoty powszechnie stosowanej w trynitologii.

**Słowa kluczowe:** relacja, osoba, perychoreza, komunია, kenoza