

THE FAITH OF THE FIRST MILLENNIUM OF CHRISTIANITY

Selected texts from the holy fathers of the Eastern Orthodox Church, (Orthodox means = right worship).

******In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it...(John 1.1-5)*

ST.GREGORY OF NYSSA (335-394)

CREATION, MAN, AND FALL....

If the substance of the whole world depends on the power of the word, we are inescapably compelled to conceive that the only cause of the various parts of the world is the Word Himself, through Whom the whole scheme of things issued into being. If anyone desires to call Him Word, or Wisdom, or Power or God, or any other exalted and honored name, we shall not quarrel with him. For whatever term or name is discovered to describe the subject, one thing is indicated by the expressions, namely the eternal power of God, maker of all that exists, discoverer of what is not, which maintains all that has come into being and foresees all that is to be.

Then this Word of God (or Wisdom, or Power) has been shown by logical argument to be the Maker of human nature, not compelled by any necessity to man's creation, but effecting the origin of such a being of superabundance of love. For it could not be that His light should be unseen, His glory without witness, His goodness enjoyed, or that all the other things which are observed as belonging to the divine nature should be idle, with none to share and enjoy them. If therefore man came into being for this purpose, to share in the good things of God, he must inevitably be created with the capacity of enjoying these goods. (or. Cat.5", creation and fall)

It was necessary that man came into being in order to enjoy the good things of God, should have something in his nature akin to that in which he is to share. Therefore, he has been equipped with life and reason and wisdom and all the qualities appropriate to God, so that through each of those he might have a desire for those qualities. Now since one of the good things pertaining to the divine nature is eternity, it was absolutely necessary that the organization of our nature should not be deprived of this attribute, but should contain an immortal element, so that by reason of this innate capacity man might recognize the transcendent and be seized with the desire of the divine eternity. (IBID)

This is in complete harmony with our previous observations about man, namely that our human nature was in the beginning good and surrounded by good. But anyone who observes the present state of things and thinks that he can show the falsity of our argument may object that man is not now seen in that condition, but in a state almost completely opposite.

'Where is this godlike element in the soul, the body's freedom from passions, that eternity of life? Man's life is fleeting, he is subject to passions, doomed to death, liable to every kind of suffering in body and soul'... but the fact that man's life is now in an abnormal state is no valid proof that he did not at one time come into being surrounded

by good: for since man is a work of God, Who brought this creature into being because of His goodness, no one could plausibly suspect that he was brought into being by his creator surrounded by evil, since goodness was the cause of his constitution... He Who made man for participation in His own unique good and equipped his nature with the capacity for all kinds of excellence, in order that his impulse might be directed by corresponding movement of like to like through every endowment of his nature, would never have deprived him of that noblest and most precious of goods; I mean the gift of freedom and self determination. For if necessity in any way ruled the life of man, the 'image' would have been falsified in that particular, since it would have become remote from its original from its lack of resemblance. How could a nature, which is subjugated and enslaved to any kind of necessity, be called an 'image' of the nature of the King? Surely that which resembles the divine in every respect must inevitably possess in its nature the principle of self-determination and freedom, so that participation in good becomes the reward of virtue.

How is it then, you will ask, that he who had been honored with the whole range of excellent endowments has exchanged those good things for worse? The reason is plain. No evil which came into being had its origin in the divine will. To be sure, evil would not be blamed if it could claim God as its creator and Father, No; evil is engendered in some way from within, arising in the will when there is a retreat of the soul from the good. Sight is a natural activity, while blindness is a deprivation of the natural activity: there is a like opposition between virtue and evil. For it is impossible to conceive the origin of evil except as the absence of virtue. Darkness supervenes on the removal of light: while light is present, darkness does not exist. Similarly, as long as the good is present in the nature, evil has no existence in its own right.... It is not God who is responsible for the present evils, since He has constituted your nature so as to be uncontrolled and free. The responsibility is with the perverse will, which has chosen the worse instead of the better.

(The Latter Christian Fathers, Oxford press, Bettenson, 1970.)

"So long as we only see the Logos of God as embodied in many different ways in symbols in the letter of Holy Scriptures, we have not yet achieved spiritual insight into the unseen, simple, single and unique Father as He exists in the spiritual, simple, single and unique Son, according to the saying, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father...and I am in the Father and the Father is in Me" (John 14:9-10). We need much knowledge so that, having first penetrated the veils of the sayings which cover the Logos, with childlike intellect, we may see (insofar as men can) the pure Logos, as He exists in Himself, clearly showing us the Father in Himself. Hence, a person who seeks God with true devotion must not be dominated by the literal text, lest he unwittingly receives things pertaining to God, but not God; that is, lest he feel a dangerous affection for the words of scripture instead of for the Logos." (St. Maximos the Confessor 580-662 Orthodox Christian Reading, Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry, 1999, Pederson)

"You yourselves are our Letter of Recommendation, written on your hearts, to be known and read by all men; and you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our

sufficiency is from God, who has qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the spirit; for the written code kills, but the spirit gives life."

(2 Cor 3:2-6)

"And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness to me. His voice you have never heard, His form you have never seen; and you do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe him whom He has sent. You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. (Jn 5:37)

ST. ATHANASIUS (296-373)

REDEMPTION AND DEIFICATION

He assumed a created human body, that, having renewed it as its creator, He might deify it in himself, and thus bring us all into the kingdom of heaven through our likeness to Him.... We should not have been freed from sin and the curse, had not the flesh which the Word assumed been by nature human (for we should have nothing in common with what was alien to us); so too humanity would not have been deified, if the Word who became flesh had not been by nature derived from the Father and his true and proper Word. For it was for this reason that the conjunction was of this kind, that He might join Him who by nature was man to Him who naturally belonged to the godhead, that His salvation and deification might be sure.... There would be no profit to us men if either the Word had not been truly by nature the Son of God, of the flesh, which He assumed had not been real flesh. *(Contra Arianos, ii.70 Early Christian Fathers. Oxford press, Bettenson 1956.)*

The Word was made man in order that we might be made divine. He displayed Himself through a body, that we might receive knowledge of the invisible Father. He endured insult at the hands of men, that we might inherit immortality. In Himself He suffered no injury, being impassible and immortal and very Word of God: but in His impassability He was guarding and saving suffering men, for whose sake He endured this treatment.

(De Incarnation, 54 Early Christian Fathers. Oxford press. Bettenson 1956.)

"Purify your mind of anger, resentment, and shameful thoughts, and then you will be able to know the indwelling of Christ...If we are lazy and careless and do not purify ourselves from the passions that defile us and blind our mind...let us blame ourselves and not deny the indwelling of grace". (St. Maximos the Confessor, 580-662, Joy of the Holy pg.42 by Harry M. Boosalis)

"When we are angry with others, it is not wise to seek to be alone on the grounds that there, at least, no one will provoke us to anger, and that in being alone, the virtue of long-suffering can easily be acquired. Our desire to leave our brothers is because of our pride, and because we do not wish to blame ourselves and point to our own unwillingness as the cause for our unruliness. As long as we assign the cause of our weakness to others, we cannot attain perfection in long-suffering. (St. John Cassian 360-435 Orthodox Christian Readings, Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry, Pederson, Ed. 1999)

"You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Mt 5.48)

ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH (+107)

I give glory to Jesus Christ the God who bestowed such wisdom upon you; for I have perceived that you are established on faith immovable, being as it were nailed on the cross of the lord Jesus Christ, in flesh and in spirit, and firmly grounded in love in the blood of Christ, fully persuaded as touching our lord that he is truly of the race of David according to the flesh, but Son of God by the Divine will and power, truly born of a virgin and baptized by John that all righteousness might be fulfilled by him, truly nailed up in the flesh for our sakes under Pontius Pilate and Herod the Tetrarch (of which fruit we are---that is, of His most blessed passion); that He might set up an ensign unto all the ages through his resurrection, for His saints and faithful people, whether among Jews or among Gentiles, in one body of his Church.

For He suffered all these things for our sakes (that we might be saved); and He suffered truly, as also He raised Himself truly; not as certain unbelievers say, that He suffered in semblance, being themselves mere semblance. And according as their opinions are, so shall it happen to them, for they are without body and demon-like. For I know and believe that He was in the flesh even the resurrection; and when He came to Peter and his company, He said to them, lay hold and handle me, and see that I am not a demon without body. And straightway they touched Him, and they believed, being joined unto His flesh and his blood. Wherefore they also despised death, nay they were found superior to death. And after His resurrection He both ate with them and drank with them as one in the flesh, though spiritually He was united with the Father.

Let no man be deceived. Even the heavenly beings and the glory of the angels and rulers visible and invisible, if they believe not in the blood of Christ (who is God), judgment awaits them also. He that receiveth let him receive. Let not office puff up any man; for faith and love are all in all, and nothing is preferred before them. But mark ye those who hold strange doctrine touching the grace of Jesus Christ which have come to us, how they are contrary to the mind of God. They have no care for love, none for the widow, none for the orphan, none for the afflicted, none for the prisoner, none for the hungry or thirsty. They abstain from Eucharist (thanksgiving) and prayer, because they allow not that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which flesh suffered for our sins, and which the Father of His goodness raised up.

But shun divisions, as the beginning of evils. Do ye all follow your bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and the presbytery as the Apostles; and to the deacons pay respect, as to God's commandment. Let no man do ought of things pertaining to the Church apart from the bishop. Let that be held a valid Eucharist, which is under the bishop or one to whom he shall have committed it. Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be, even as where Jesus may be, there is the catholic church. It is not lawful apart from the bishop either to baptize or hold a love feast; but whatsoever he shall approve, this is well pleasing to God; that everything, which ye do, may be sure and valid. *(Smyrnaeans 1,2,3,6,8)*

"I praise you, brethren, that you always remember me and keep the traditions as I delivered them to you." (1 COR 15.3)

Brothers, stand firm and hold on to the Traditions (paradosis), we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter! (2 Th 2.15)

"By knowledge of the truth' we mean: the teaching of the apostles; the order of the Church as established from the earliest times through out the world: the distinctive stamp

of the body of Christ, preserved through the Episcopal succession: for to the bishops the apostles committed the care of the church which is in each place, which has come down to our own time, safeguarded without any written documents, by the most complete exposition (i.e. the Creed), which admits neither increase or decrease (of the tradition): the reading of scripture without falsification, and consistent and careful exposition of them, avoiding audacity and blasphemy: and the special gift of love, which is more precious than knowledge, more glorious than prophecy, surpassing all other spiritual gifts. (Adversus Haereses, Iv. Xxxiii.8, St. Irenaeus, The Early Christian Fathers, Bettenson, Oxford press 1956.)

** In fact it was not until 397 A.D. (400 years after the birth of Christ) that the canon of the Bible including Old and New Testaments was finally fixed as we have it today by the Church in council.*

ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM (315-386) *The Eucharist,*

The teaching of blessed Paul is in itself sufficient to give you complete assurance about the divine mysteries, the admission to which makes us 'of the same body' and blood with Christ. For he proclaimed, with emphasis and precision, 'That our Lord Jesus Christ...took bread...and said "this is my body:" and, taking the cup, He gave thanks, and said,..."This is my blood". 'Since Christ Himself in His own words asserted of the bread, 'This is my body', who will dare any longer to have doubts? And since in His own words He insisted, 'This is my blood', who will have any doubts or say it is not His blood?

Once in Cana of Galilee, He changed water into wine (and wine is akin to blood); is it incredible that He should change wine into blood?... Therefore with complete assurance let us partake of those elements as being the body and blood of Christ. For in the symbol of bread His body is given to you, and in the symbol of wine His blood; so that by partaking of the body and blood of Christ you may be made of the same body and blood with Him. For in this way we become Christbearers, since His body and blood is distributed in the parts of our body. Thus, as blessed Peter says, we 'become partakers of the divine nature'...

Christ once said in a conversation with the Jews: 'if you do not eat of my flesh and drink my blood you have no life in you.' They did not take the meaning spiritually and were shocked: they withdrew themselves, supposing that He was urging a literal eating of flesh.

Even under the old covenant there was showbread; but this came to an end, as belonging to the old covenant. But in the new covenant there is the bread of heaven and the cup of salvation, sanctifying both soul and body; for as the bread is adapted to our body, so the word is appropriate to our soul. therefore think of the bread and wine not as merely that, for they are in fact, according to the Lord's express statement, the body and blood of Christ. For though sense suggests the mere elements, let faith assure you otherwise. Do not judge the matter by taste, but from faith be assured, without hesitation, that you have been granted the body and blood of Christ (*cat.22. (cat myst.4) 1-6 The Latter Christian Fathers, Oxford press, 1970, Bettenson*)

"He who loves God, lives the angelic life on earth, fasting and keeping vigils, praying and singing psalms and always thinking good of every man." "He who anoints his intellect for spiritual contest and drives all impassioned thoughts out of it, has the quality of a deacon. He, who illuminates his intellect with the knowledge of created being and

utterly destroys false knowledge, has the quality of a priest. And he who perfects his intellect with the holy myrrh of the knowledge and worship of the Holy Trinity, has the quality of a bishop." (St. Maximos the Confessor 580-662, pg. 85-87 Orthodox Christian Readings, Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry, Pederson, 1999)

"Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles. Rather, speaking truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ," (Eph 4:13-16)

ST. ATHANASIUS (296-373)

THE HEAVENLY FEAST

My beloved brethren, it is no temporal feast that we come to, but an eternal, heavenly feast. We do not display it in shadows; we approach it in reality. The Jews had their fill of a dumb lamb, and when their feast was finished they anointed their doorposts with the blood, to beg for aid against the destroyer. But the food we partake of is the Fathers Word; we have the lintels of our hearts sealed with the blood of the new covenant; and we acknowledge the grace bestowed on us by the Savior.

(Epistole Festales, iv.3 Early Christian Fathers, Oxford press, Bettenson, 1956)

"He who relies on theoretical knowledge alone is not a faithful servant, a faithful servant is one who expresses his faith in Christ through obedience to his commandments. Often, our knowledge becomes darkened because we fail to put things into practice, for when we have totally neglected to practice something, our memory of it will gradually disappear.

(St. Mark the Ascetic 5th century, pg. 77, Orthodox Christian Readings, Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry, Pederson, 1999)

"He who prays truly is a theologian, and a theologian is he who prays." (Evagrius the Solitary)

ST. IRENAEUS OF LYONS (+211)

EUCCHARIST

Again, how can they say that flesh passes to corruption and does not share in life, seeing that flesh is nourished by the body and blood of the Lord? Let them either change their opinion, or refrain from making those oblations of which we have speaking. But our opinion is congruous with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist supports our opinion. We offer to Him what is His own, suitably proclaiming the communion and unity of flesh and spirit. For as the bread, which comes from the earth, receives the invocation (epiklesis) of God, and then is no longer common bread but Eucharist, consists of two things, an earthly and heavenly; so our bodies, after partaking of the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the eternal resurrection. *(Adv. Haer. 4.18.5)*

True knowledge is (that which consists in) the doctrine of the apostles, and the ancient constitution of the Church throughout the world, and the distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ according to the successions of the bishops, by which they have handed down that Church which exists in every place, and has come even unto us, being guarded and preserved, without any forging of scriptures, by a very complete system of doctrine, and neither receiving addition nor (suffering) curtailment (in the truths which

she believes); and (it consists in) reading the (word of God) without falsification, and a lawful and diligent exposition in harmony with the scriptures, both without danger and without blasphemy; and (above all it consists in) the preeminent gift of love, which is more precious than knowledge, more glorious than prophecy, and which excels all the other gifts (of God). (4.33:8)

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, of His boundless love, became what we are that He might make us what He Himself is. (*Adv.Haer.5. Preface, The Early Christian Fathers, Oxford press, 1956, Bettenson*)

"Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father."

(Eph 5:18)

"Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come Thy will be done, give us this day our 'daily' (epiousios = supersubstantial) bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

(Mt 6:9 epiousios, beyond necessity; for life, i.e. body and blood of Christ)

******"Truly, Truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh.." (John 6.47 Quote from Jesus Himself)*

THE CREED OF NICAEA 325/ CONSTANTINOPLE 381

I believe in one God, (Deut 6.4) the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Jn 20.31), the only-begotten (John 1.14), begotten of the Father before all ages; light of light, true God of true God (John 14.9), begotten not made (Jn.1.18), of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made (John 1.3); who for us men and for our salvation (Acts 28.28) came down from heaven (Jn 3.13) and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary (Lk 1.35) and became man (Lk 2.7). And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried (Lk 24.20), and the third day He rose again (Lk 24.8) according to the scriptures (Cor 15:4), and ascended into heaven (Lk 24.52) and sits at the right hand of the Father (Heb 10.12). And He shall come again in glory to judge (Acts 17.31) the living and the dead (1 Pet 4.5), Whose kingdom shall have no end (Lk 1.33).

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord (2 Cor 3.17), the giver of Life (Gal 6.8), who proceeds from the Father (Jn 15.26); Who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets (Mt 1.22), (Jn 17.3), (Heb 9.14), (Gal 6.8), (1 Jn 5.7), (Jn 13.31).

And in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church (Jn 17. 11), (Eph 4.4), (Eph, 5.23-27); I acknowledge one baptism (Eph 4.4), for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor 15.16-24); and the life of the age to come (1 Thess 4:17). Amen (Rev 22.21).

ST. ATHANASIUS (296-373)

THE HOLY TRINITY

We believe in one unbegotten God, the Father almighty, maker of all things, visible and invisible, whose being is derived from Himself; and in one only-begotten Word, Wisdom, Son begotten of the Father without beginning, and eternally; a Word not as expressed or as conceived, not an effulgence from the perfect, not a section of the impassible nature, not an emanation from it; but a Son perfect in Himself, living and acting, the real image of the Father, Equal in honor and glory...(John v.23) true God of true God...(1 John v.20) omnipotent from the omnipotent; for all things which the Father rules and commands, the Son rules and commands likewise, for He is entire from the entire, like to the Father...(John xiv. 5-7). He was begotten in a way inexplicable and incomprehensible...(Isa. l iiii.8). He also in the end of the ages came down from the Father's bosom, and from the undefiled Virgin Mary took upon Him our humanity, Christ Jesus, who on our behalf He allowed to suffer, of His own choice...(John x.18). In which humanity He was crucified and died for us, rose from the dead, and was taken up to heaven. He also was 'made the beginning of ways' for us, when He was on earth; He showed us light out of darkness, salvation out of error, life from the dead, entrance into paradise...He has also prepared the ascent to heaven, whither as precursor the Lord's humanity has entered for us, the humanity in which He is to judge the living and the dead.

We believe likewise in the Holy Spirit...(1 Cor. ii. 10). We do not think of a 'Son-Father' (as the Sabellians who call Him 'unisubstantial', not 'consubstantial', thus destroying his Sonship). Nor do we ascribe to the Father the passable body which the Son bore for the salvation of the whole world: nor may we suppose three 'hypostases' (being) divided from each other, as three men are corporally separate: this would introduce the many gods of the heathen. Rather, as a river is generated from it's source, and is not separated from it, although there are two forms and two names...As the source is not the river, nor the river the source, but each is one and the same water; so the Godhead flows from the Father to the Son without change or separation.... Nor do we think of the Son of God, who is God, the creator of all things, as 'created' or 'made' or 'coming from non-existences'; He is existent from the existent. (*Expositio Fidei, 1*)

('Athanasian' though unknown)

There is one form of Godhead, which is also in the Word; one God the Father, existing by Himself in respect that He is above all, and appearing in the Son in respect that he acts in Him in all things through the Word. Thus we acknowledge God to be one in the Trinity. (*Contra Arianos, iii. 15*)

It is written in the 103rd psalm: 'Thou shalt take away their spirit (breath) and they shall fail, and return to their dust. Thou shalt send forth thy Spirit and they shall be created'.

Hence it is clear that the Spirit is not a creature but shares in the work of creation. The Father creates all things through the word, in the Spirit; for where the Word is, there is the Spirit also; and things created through the Word have their being from the Spirit by means of the Word: 'By the word of the Lord the heavens were set fast: and by the spirit of his mouth all the power of them'. (*Ep. Ad Serapionem, iii.4*)

(*The Early Christian Fathers, Oxford press, 1956, Bettenson.*)

ST. CYRILL OF ALEXANDRIA (403-450)

I am amazed that there are some who are extremely doubtful whether the Holy Virgin should be called the Mother of God or not. For if our Lord Jesus Christ is God, then surely the Holy Virgin who gave him birth must be God's Mother...But you may say; 'Now tell me, was the Virgin the Mother of the Godhead?' My reply is that the living and subsistent Word of God is begotten of the substance of God the Father, as all acknowledge, and has His existence without beginning in time, always co-existing with his Father, having His being in and with the Father, and is thus presented to our minds. In the last times of this age, when He became flesh, that is, was united with flesh endowed with a rational soul, he is said to have also been begotten through a woman according to the flesh.

This mystery of the incarnate Word has some similarity with human birth. For mothers of ordinary men, in obedience to the natural laws of generation, carry in the womb the flesh which gradually takes shape, and develops through the secret operations of God until it reaches perfection and attains the form of a human being; and God endows this living creature with spirit, in a manner known only to Himself: as the prophet says, 'He forms a man's spirit in him'. The condition of flesh is very different from that of spirit. But although those mothers are only the mothers of bodies belonging to this world, they still are said to give birth, not to a part of a man but to the whole man, consisting of soul and body...If anyone maintained that anyone's mother was 'mother of flesh' and not 'mother of soul' he would be talking nonsense. For what she has produced is one living being, a composite of two dissimilar elements, but a single human being, with each element retaining its own nature.

(ep.1, ad monachos Aegypti, The Later Christian Fathers, Oxford press, 1970, Bettenson.)

THE FIRST HOUR

HOROLOGION, Daily Church service.

What shall we call thee, O thou that art full of grace? Heaven: for thou hast dawned forth the Sun of Righteousness. Paradise: For thou hast blossomed forth the Flower of Immortality. Virgin: for thou hast held in thy embrace the Son the God of all. Do thou entreat Him to save our souls.....(*Theotokos = Mother of God*).

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, For He has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed! (Luke 1.46-48)

EMPEROR JUSTINIAN (CA.550)

Only-begotten Son and immortal Word of God,
Who for our salvation willed to be incarnate,
Of the Holy Theotokos and ever-Virgin Mary,
Who without change became man and was crucified,
Who is one of the Holy Trinity
Glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
O Christ our God, trampling down death by death: Save us!

*"CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD, TRAMPLING DOWN DEATH BY DEATH,
AND UPON THOSE IN THE TOMBS BESTOWING LIFE.
(Resurrection Troparion, Pascha)*

ROMANOS THE MELODIST (+556) Akathistos hymn to the mother of God.

To thee the champion leader we thy servants dedicate a feast of victory and of thanksgiving as one's rescued out of sufferings, O Theotokos. For as thou art one with might which is invincible, from all dangers that can be do thou deliver us, that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded!

Oikos 1:

A Prince of the angels was sent from heaven to say to the Mother of God: Rejoice! And seeing Thee, O Lord, Take fleshly form, he was amazed, and with his bodiless voice he stood crying to her such things as these: Rejoice thou through whom joy shall shine forth, Rejoice, thou through whom the curse will cease. Rejoice, raising of fallen Adam. Rejoice, redemption of the tears of Eve. Rejoice, height hard to climb for the thoughts of men. Rejoice, depth hard to scan even for the eyes of angels. Rejoice, for thou art the throne of the King. Rejoice, for thou holdest Him who upholdeth all. Rejoice, star that bringest the Sun. Rejoice, womb of the divine incarnation. Rejoice, thou through whom creation is made new. Rejoice, thou through whom we worship the Creator. Rejoice, thou bride unwedded!

EPHESUS 431: THE TWELVE ANATHEMAS OF ST. CYRILL OF ALEXANDRIA, AGAINST NESTORIUS

If anyone preaches another Gospel, other than what you've accepted let him be anathema. (Gal 1,9)

I. If anyone will not confess that the Emmanuel is very God, and that therefore the Holy Virgin is the Mother of God (Theotokos), inasmuch as in the flesh she bore the Word of God made flesh (as it is written, "The Word was made flesh"): Let him be Anathema.

II. If anyone shall not confess that the Word of God the Father is united hypostatically to flesh, and with that flesh of His own, He is one only Christ both God and man at the same time: Let him be Anathema.

III. If anyone shall after the hypostatic union divide the hypostases in the one Christ, joining them by that connection alone, which happens according to worthiness, or even authority and power, and not rather by a coming together (synodo), which is made by natural union (henosin physiken): Let him be Anathema.

IV. If anyone shall divide between two persons or subsistences those expressions which are contained in the Evangelical and Apostolic writings, or which have been said concerning Christ by the saints or by Himself, and shall apply others to the only Word of God the Father, on the ground that they are fit to be applied to God: Let him be Anathema.

V. If anyone shall dare to say that the Christ is a theophorous (that is, God-bearing) man and not rather that He is very God, as an only Son through nature, because "the Word was made flesh" and "hath a share in flesh and blood as we do": Let him be Anathema.

VI. If anyone shall dare to say that the Word of God the Father is the God of Christ or the Lord of Christ, and shall not confess him as at the same time both God and Man, since according to the scriptures, "The Word was made flesh": Let him be Anathema.

VII. If anyone shall say that Jesus as a man is only energized by the Word of God, and that glory of the only-begotten is attributed to Him as some thing not properly his: Let him be Anathema.

VIII. If anyone shall dare to say that the assumed man ought to be worshipped together with God the Word, and glorified together with Him, and recognized together with him as God, and yet as two different things, the one with the other (for this "Together with" is added (i.e. by the Nestorians) to convey this meaning); and shall not rather with one glorification, as (it is written) "The Word was made flesh:" Let him be Anathema.

IX. If any man shall say that the one Lord Jesus Christ was glorified by the Holy Spirit, so that He used through Him a power not His own and from Him received power against unclean spirits and power to work miracles before men and shall not rather confess that it was His own spirit through which He worked these divine signs: Let him be Anathema.

X. Whosoever shall say that it is not the divine Word Himself, when He was made flesh and had become man as we are, but another than He, a man born of a woman, yet different from Him, who is become our Great High Priest and apostle; or if any man shall say that He offered Himself as a sacrifice for Himself and not rather for us, whereas, being without sin, He had not need of offering or sacrifice: Let him be Anathema.

XI. Whosoever shall not confess that the flesh of the Lord gives life and that it pertains to the Word of God the Father as his very own, but shall pretend that it belongs to another person who is united to Him (i.e. the Word) only according to honor, and who has served as a dwelling for the divinity; and shall not rather confess, as we say, that the flesh gives life because it is that of the Word who gives life to all: Let him be Anathema.

XII. Whosoever shall not recognize that the Word of God suffered in the flesh, that He was crucified in the flesh, and that likewise in that same flesh He tasted death and that He is become the first-begotten of the dead, for as He is God, He is the life and it is He that gives life: Let him be Anathema.

"Much water makes up the sea, but extreme watchfulness and the prayer of Jesus Christ (i.e. Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner) (Luke 18:13), undistracted by thoughts, are the necessary bases for inner vigilance and great stillness of soul, for the depth of secret and focused contemplation, for the humility that knows and judges, for uprightness and love. This watchfulness and this prayer must be intense, concentrated and unceasing.

(St. Hesychios the Presbyter 7th-9th century, Orthodox Christian Readings, Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry, 1999, Pederson)

"Rejoice always, pray unceasingly, Give thanks in all circumstances."

(1 THESS.5.16)

CHALCEDON, 451 THE CHALCEDONIAN DEFINITION

JESUS CHRIST

Following the Holy Fathers we teach with one voice that the Son (of God) and our Lord Jesus Christ is to be confessed as one and the same (Person), and that He is perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, very God and very man, of a reasonable soul and body

consisting, consubstantial with the Father as touching his Godhead, and consubstantial with us as touching His manhood; made in all things like unto us, except for sin; begotten of His Father before the ages according to His Godhead; but in these last days for us men and for our salvation born of the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos according to His manhood; This one and same Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son must be confessed to be in two natures, without confusion, without division, and without separation, and that without the distinction of natures being taken away by such union, but rather the peculiar property of each nature being preserved and being united in one person and subsistence, not separated or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten, God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets of old time have spoken concerning Him, and as Lord Jesus Christ hath taught us, and as the Creed of the Fathers hath delivered to us.

"That you may be able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you may be filled unto the fullness of God." (Eph.iii.18, 19.)

CONSTANTINOPLE III, 680-681

JESUS CHRIST

...As the prophets of old have taught us and our Lord Jesus Christ Himself have instructed us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers hath delivered unto us; defining this we likewise declare that in Him are two natural wills and two natural operations indivisibly, immutably, inseparably and inconfusedly, according to the teaching of the Holy Fathers. And these two natural wills are not contrary the one to the other (God forbid!) as the impious heretics assert, but His human will follows and that not as resisting or reluctant, but rather as subject to His divine and omnipotent will. For it was right that the flesh should be moved but subject to the divine will, according to the most wise Athanasius. For as His flesh is called and is the flesh of God the word, so also the natural will of His flesh is called and is the proper will of God the Word, as He Himself says: "I came down from heaven, not that I might do mine own will, but the will of the Father which sent me!" where He calls his own will the will of his flesh, inasmuch as his flesh was also His own. For as His Most Holy and immaculate animated flesh was not destroyed because it was deified but continued in it's own state and nature, so also His human will, although deified, was not suppressed, but was rather preserved according to the saying of Gregory Theologus: "His will is not contrary to God but altogether deified."

"And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat." (Exodus 25.18)

"And you shall command the people of Israel that they bring to you pure olive oil for the light, that a lamp may be set up to burn continually. In the tent of meeting, outside the veil which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening to morning before the Lord." (Exodus 27.20)

NICAEA II, 787
CHURCH

We, therefore following the royal pathway and the divinely inspired authority of our Holy Fathers and the traditions of the Catholic Church (for, as we all know, the Holy Spirit dwells in her), define with all certitude and accuracy that just as the figure of the precious and life-giving Cross, so also the venerable and Holy images, as well in painting and mosaic as of other fit materials, should be set forth in the Holy churches of God, and on the sacred vessels and on the vestments and on hangings and in pictures both in houses and by the wayside, to wit, the figure of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, of our spotless lady, the Mother of God (Theotokos), of the honorable Angels, of all saints and of all pious people.

For by so much more frequently as they are seen in artistic representation, by so much more readily are men lifted up to the memory of their prototypes, and to a longing after them; and to these should be given due salutation and honorable reverence (proskynesis), not indeed that true worship of faith (latreia, adoration) which pertains alone to the divine nature; but to these, as to the figure of the precious and life-giving Cross and to the Book of the Gospels and to other holy objects, incense and lights may be offered according to ancient pious custom. For the honor which is paid to the image passes on to that which the image represents (prototype), and he who reveres the image reveres in it the subject represented. For this is the teaching of our Holy Fathers, that is the tradition of the Catholic Church, which from one end of the earth to the other has received the Gospel, is Strengthened.

"For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered in my name, and a pure offering; For my name shall be great among all nations," (Malachi 1.11)

"All spiritual thinking about God must be governed by faith, hope and love, but most of all, by love. The first two keep us apart from delights and pleasures of the material world, but love unites the soul with the excellence of God. It searches out the invisible God by means of spiritual sensitivity and awareness. (St. Diadochos of Photiki 400 AD, Orthodox Christian Readings, Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry, 1999, Pederson.)

THE ANAPHORA OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT (EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER) (+380)

O existing one, Master, Lord God, Father almighty and adorable! It is truly meet and right and befitting the magnificence of thy holiness to praise thee, to sing to thee, to bless thee, to worship thee, to give thanks to thee, to glorify thee, the only truly existing God, and to offer to Thee this, our reasonable worship with a contrite heart and a spirit of humility, for Thou hast granted us the knowledge of the truth. Who can utter Thy mighty acts? Or make all Thy praises known? Or tell of all Thy miracles at all times? O Master of all, Lord of heaven and earth and of all creation both visible and invisible; Who sittest upon the throne of glory and beholdest the depths; without beginning, invisible, incomprehensible, indescribable, changeless.

O Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Great God and Saviour, our hope, Who is the image of Thy goodness, the seal of Thy very likeness, showing forth in Himself Thee, O Father; the living Word, the true God, the Eternal Wisdom, the life, the sanctification, the power, the true light, through Whom the Holy Spirit was revealed: the Spirit of Truth, the gift of Sonship, the pledge of future inheritance, the first-fruits of eternal blessings, the

life-creating power, the fountain of sanctification, through whom every creature of reason and understanding worships Thee and always sings to Thee a hymn of glory, for all things are Thy servants. Thou art praised by angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, principalities, authorities, powers and many-eyed cherubim. Round about Thee stand the Seraphim, one with six wings and the other with six wings; with two they cover their faces, and with two they cover their feet, and with two they fly, crying to one another with unceasing voices and ever-sounding praises, singing the triumphant hymn, shouting, proclaiming and saying:

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory! Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!

With these blessed powers, O Master Who lovest mankind, we sinners also cry aloud and say: Holy art Thou, truly Most Holy, and there are no bounds to the magnificence of Thy holiness. Thou art gracious in all Thy deeds, for with righteousness and true judgement, Thou hast ordered all things for us. When Thou didst create man by taking dust from the earth and didst honor him with Thine own image, O God, Thou didst set him in a paradise of delight, promising him eternal life and the enjoyment of everlasting blessings in the observance of Thy commandments. But, when man disobeyed Thee, the true God Who had created him, and was deceived by the guile of the serpent, becoming subject to death through his own transgressions, Thou O God, in Thy righteous judgement, didst send him forth from paradise into this world, returning him to the earth from which he was taken, yet providing for him the salvation of regeneration in Thy Christ Himself. For Thou didst turn thyself away forever from Thy creature whom Thou hast made, O Good One, nor didst Thou forget the work of Thy hands.

Through the tender compassion of Thy mercy, Thou didst visit him in various ways: Thou didst send prophets; Thou didst perform mighty works by Thy saints, who in every generation were well-pleasing to Thee; Thou didst speak to us by the mouths of Thy servants, the prophets, foretelling to us the salvation which was to come; Thou didst give us the law as a help; Thou didst appoint angels as guardians. And when the fullness of time had come, Thou didst speak to us through Thy Son Himself, by Whom Thou didst make the ages; Who, being the radiance of Thy Glory, and image of Thy Person, upholding all things by the word of His power, thought it not robbery to be equal to Thee, the God and Father. He was God before the ages, yet he appeared on earth and lived among men. Becoming incarnate of a holy virgin, He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being likened unto the body of our lowliness that He might liken us to the image of His glory. For as by man sin entered the world, and by sin death, so it pleased Thine only begotten Son, Who was in the bosom of Thee, the God and Father, Who was born of a woman, the Holy Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, Who was born under the law, to condemn sin in His flesh, so that those who were dead in Adam might be made alive in Thy Christ Himself. He lived in this world, and gave us commandments of salvation; the releasing us from the delusions of idolatry, He brought us to knowledge of Thee the true God and Father. He obtained us for His own chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. Having cleansed us in water, and sanctified us with the Holy Spirit, He gave Himself as a ransom to death, in which we were held captive, sold under sin. Descending through the cross into hell, that He might fill all things with Himself, He loosed the pangs of death. He rose on the third day, having made for all flesh a path to the resurrection from the dead, since it was not possible for the Author of life to be a victim of corruption. So

He became the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep, the first-born of the dead that He might be Himself truly the first in all things. Ascending into heaven, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and He will come to render to every man according to his works. And as memorials of His saving passion, He has left us these things which we have set forth according to His command.

For when He was about to go forth to His voluntary and ever-memorable and life-creating death, in the night in which He gave Himself up for the life of the world, He took bread into His holy and pure hands; And having showed it to Thee, the God and Father, having given thanks, blessed and hallowed it, and broken it, He gave it to His holy disciples and apostles saying,

"Take, eat, this is My Body Which is broken for you for the remission of sins." Likewise He took the cup of the fruit of the vine, and having mingled it and given thanks, blessed and hallowed it, He gave it to His holy disciples and apostles saying:

"Drink of it all of you, this is My Blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins. Do this in remembrance of me, for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim My death, you confess my resurrection!"

Therefore we also, O master, remembering His saving passion and life-creating cross, His three-day burial and resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven, and sitting at the right hand of Thee, the God and father, and His glorious and awesome second coming.

Thine own of Thine own, we offer unto Thee, on behalf of all on behalf of all and for all. Therefore, Most Holy Master, we also, Thy sinful and unworthy servants, whom Thou has permitted to serve at Thy holy altar, not because of our own righteousness (for we have done nothing good upon the earth), but because of Thy mercy and compassions (which Thou hast so richly poured out on us) we now dare to approach Thy holy altar and, offering to Thee the anti-types of the holy body and blood of Thy Christ, we pray Thee and call upon Thee, O Holy of Holies, that by the favor of Thy goodness Thy Holy Spirit may come upon us and upon the gifts now offered, to bless, to hallow, and to show this bread to be the precious body of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ; and this cup to be the precious blood of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ shed for the life of the world. Amen.

And unite all of us to one another who become partakers of the one bread and cup in the communion of the Holy Spirit. Grant that none of us may partake of the Holy Body and Blood of Thy Christ for judgement or condemnation. Instead, may we find mercy and grace with all the saints who throughout the ages have been well pleasing to Thee; ancestors, fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, teachers, and every righteous spirit made perfect in faith.

*"For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgement upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died."
(1 COR. 11.29)*

*"Would you be truly intelligent? Then book learning isn't enough; you must have spiritual knowledge. This includes being able to tell the difference between what is good and what is evil. Then you must avoid what is sinful and harmful to your soul and, with thanks to God, carefully keep what is good and what benefits your soul. If you do that, you are truly intelligent.
(St. Anthony the Great 251-356, Orthodox Christian Readings, Orthodox Christian Prison ministry, 1999, Pederson.)*

ST.JUSTIN THE MARTYR LATE 2nd CENTURY

Christians

Christians cannot be distinguished from the rest of mankind by country, speech, or customs. They do not live in cities of their own; they do not speak a special language; they do not follow a peculiar manner of life. The ingenuity or speculation of men did not invent their teaching. Nor do they advocate mere book learning, as other groups do. They live in Greek cities and they live in non-Greek cities according to the lot of each one. They conform to the customs of their country in dress, food, and the general mode of life, and yet they show a remarkable, and admittedly extraordinary, structure of their own life together. They live in their own countries but only as guests and aliens. They take part in everything as citizens and endure everything as aliens. Every foreign country is their homeland, and every homeland is a foreign country to them. They marry like everyone else. They beget children, but they do not murder them after they are born. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live according to the flesh. They live on earth, but their citizenship is in Heaven. They obey the established laws, but through their way of life they surpass these laws. They love all men and are persecuted by all.

Nobody knows them, and yet they are condemned. They are put to death, and just through this they are brought to life. They are as poor as beggars, and yet they make many rich. They lack everything, and yet they have everything in abundance. They are dishonored, and yet have their glory in this very dishonor. They are insulted, and just in this they are vindicated. They are abused, and yet they bless. They are assaulted, and yet this is how they show respect. Doing good, they are sentenced like evildoers. When punished with death, they rejoice in the certainty of being awakened to life. Jews attack them as men of another race, and Greeks persecute them, yet those who hate them cannot give any reason to justify their hostility. (*Letter to diognetus, The Early Christian Fathers, Oxford press, 1956, Bettenson.*)

"Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, which the lord has made you guardians, to feed the Church of the Lord, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remember that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. (Acts 20:28-31)

THE PRAYER OF THE HOURS, Prayed throughout the day at the Hours.

Thou Who at all times and at every hour, in heaven and on earth, art worshipped and glorified, O Christ God, who art long suffering, plenteous in mercy, most compassionate, Who loves the righteous and has mercy on sinners, Who calls all to salvation through the promise of good things to come: Receive, O Lord, our prayers at this hour, and guide our life toward thy commandments. Sanctify our souls, make chaste our bodies. Correct our thoughts, purify our intentions, and deliver us from every sorrow, evil, and pain. Compass us about with thy holy angels that, guarded and guided

by their array, we may attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory; for blessed art thou unto the ages. Amen

"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace"

(EPH. 4.1)

"Beloved, being very eager to write to you of our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

(JUDE 1.3)

"What shall we call you, O saints? Cherubim, for Christ rested on you. Seraphim, for ye glorified him without ceasing. Angels, for ye rejected your bodies. Powers, for ye work miracles. Many are your names, and great your gifts. Pray ye that our souls be saved"

(Octoechos- Tone VIII pg. 140 book of hymns)

"Therefore, as I address one who thirsts for the salvation of his soul, I thought it proper to chose no other starting point than the very eternal Source Himself, Christ our savior and our God...He is the Goal of every endeavor with good hope, and of every desire. For those who begin He is the unbreakable foundation, for those in the middle he is the hope that cannot be confounded, for those at the end He is insatiable love and life without end."

(St. Symeon the New Theologian 949-1022, Orthodox Christian Readings, Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry, 1999, Pederson.)

"THIS IS THE FAITH OF THE APOSTLES, THIS IS THE FAITH OF THE FATHERS, THIS IS THE FAITH OF THE ORTHODOX, THIS IS THE FAITH WHICH HAS ESTABLISHED THE UNIVERSE." *(Orthodox Sunday Chant)*

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