



VIII. SANCTIFICATION AND DIVINE LIFE

The story of salvation is not complete without speaking about renewal, restoration, and sanctification. Although the early Church Fathers did not speak about deification specifically as a topic on its own, the topics they focused on such as the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the nature of Christ as fully divine and fully human all included arguments to show that God took our human nature to grant us again what we were from the beginning when He created us. Because Christ is the Son, the Second Hypostasis of the Trinity, He can deify; if He was a creature, He could not. *Theosis*, too, then speaks of the meaning of salvation, that humanity can now be united to its Creator. When the Fathers do use the term deification, they did not mean that humanity became like God in nature or that the human nature changes into the divine nature.

Within the economy of salvation, we can see the gift of sanctification or deification. God is the *Being* while we are the *becoming*. There is a difference in nature between Being and becoming that will never be the same. We are made from nothing and, as St. Athanasius says, were in danger of returning to a state of nothingness.¹ There are two poles, one pulls us towards the Uncreated and one pulls toward nothingness. When we were made in His image, we were pulled towards the Uncreated, and when we disobeyed and fell, we were pulled toward nothingness because we chose to return to nothing. God, in His love, wants to pull us back, and thus took human nature, and granted this human nature all of these gifts, so that through His incarnation, we can receive these gifts.

Saint Athanasius did not mean that Christ's human nature would become the divine nature, but that He granted it life, sanctification, and incorruptibility, so that we would be able to partake of it. He *reoriented* the fallen humanity towards the Divine. In Christ, the Uncreated (the Logos) united with the created (human nature), opening the doors for humanity to return to God through the Mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5). The gifts of grace, illumination, sanctification, etc., are given to all of humanity but are received individually when we are baptized, partake of the sacraments, and believe in Him. We are then adopted by God; we become royal as the children of the King. As His children, we are called to be perfect, which is a characteristic of God, to be merciful like our Heavenly Father, to have eternal life, and to partake of His glory. As St. Paul explains, we are glorified with Him if we suffer with Him (Romans 8:17).

After Chalcedon, there was a shift in focus from the fight over Christology, then Islam came. With this new atmosphere and language, the concept of deification could not be openly developed, especially in the Arabic language. The concept therefore is Orthodox although the specific terms are avoided.

A. Terminology. Sanctification is the objective of the economy of salvation.

1. Renewal. Indeed it is the desire of the Holy Trinity to make all things new (Isa. 43:18; 2 Cor. 5:17), and to pronounce the new name "blessed" to His creation (Rev. 2:17, 3:12).

2. Restoration. Salvation is often described as being restored to our original state.

As we say in the Liturgy according to St. Gregory, "You desired to renew him and to restore him to his first state." This takes place through the incarnation, through the wood of the Cross, the Ascension, and through the gift of the Holy Spirit. On one occasion St. Cyril of Alexandria describes this as redesigning Adam's beauty according to his original image.

After the death of Emmanuel according to the flesh, another seed sprang up immediately to Adam, enriched with the supreme beauty of the divine image... When, like some grain, after the manner of an ear of corn, He fell into the ground, He sprang up one of many; for human nature was refashioned in Him to the original image according to which the first man had been made.²

3. Recapitulation (*ανακεφαλαίσις*). As St. Paul the Apostle writes in Ephesians 1, the Holy Trinity desires to recapitulate or gather all of us once again into the one head, Christ.

¹ St. Athanasius, *Against the Heathen*, 41.3.

² St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Glaphyra in Genesis* 1 (PG 69:14); Burghardt, p. 160.



“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation (οἰκονομίαν) of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one (i.e., recapitulate) all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.” (Eph. 1:7-11)

Sin caused us to be separated from God, salvation restores us again to Him, and reorients fallen humanity toward the Divine. We were separated, now we the union is reunited.

4. Sanctification is most often described using terms such as Theosis, Divinization or Deification.

Unfortunately, these terms are often misunderstood in the Coptic Church. It is therefore important to clarify what is (and what is not) meant by these terms. When we speak of the deification of humanity, we are saying that humanity is granted divine characteristics and is thereby called divine. This is of course by *grace* and not by *nature*. Our Lord Jesus Christ, through His incarnation, came and granted humanity a share and inheritance with Him. The nature of humanity is not changed, but by grace is given divine characteristics allowing humanity to approach and become more like God.

For example, if we have a kettle to make tea, cold water is put into the kettle and electricity is turned on. After a while, the water will be hot. The heat is not in the nature of water, but the water takes this characteristic on from the heat of the electricity. If you were to put the electricity directly into the water, it would not work; you need the mediator of the kettle. Furthermore, if the water gets very hot, you may call it “fire,” not because it has become fire, but because it has taken on the characteristics of the heat. In this analogy, the water is humanity; the heat is incorruption, immortality, sanctification, holiness; and the kettle is the incarnation.

Another example from St. Cyril is that of a rod of iron placed in a flame. The iron becomes red and glows from the heat, but it does not stop being iron. The nature of the metal is not altered or changed, but it takes on properties and characteristics from the flames and heat. So also the Divinity (the fire) took on flesh (the iron) and neither nature was altered or changed. The humanity however is sanctified by its union to the Divine and is therefore endowed with divine characteristics.

When defining terms, it is important to understand that a word in different languages can mean different things. One prominent example for the word “deification” is the Arabic language. In Arabic, there is only one meaning for the word deification, and it is to become God by nature. This term is also understood in the context of being abundantly prideful as Satan was when he wanted to be equal to God, or a god away from God. In the English and Greek languages, theosis or deification are not understood in this way. Deification is rather recognized as a gift from God to bring us closer to Him, with no change to our human nature.

B. The Concept of Sanctification in the Bible, Fathers, and Liturgy

There are many Biblical references to the concept of deification, which are even quoted by our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Then God said, “Let Us make man according to Our image, according to Our likeness” (Genesis 1:26)
- I said, “You are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High.” (Psalm 81(82):6)
- Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, “You are gods?”’” (John 10:34)
- “... as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (2 Peter 1:3-4)
- “For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.” (Hebrews 3:14)
- “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 [a]if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.” (Hebrews 6:4-6)



As we will see with the Fathers shortly, they understood the phrase in the Psalms “to be gods” with the understanding of 2 Peter 1:4, to be “partakers of the divine nature,” which also meant to be “partakers of Christ” and “partakers of the Holy Spirit,” or to receive the gifts and graces which we receive in the Church. Or, what as St Peter says, receiving “the great and precious promises.”

Although none of the Fathers until and including the Cappadocians dealt with deification as a stand-alone topic, their writings include the understanding of the sanctification of humanity through the incarnation. St. Ignatius of Antioch, was among the first of the the fathers spoke about deification.³ This tradition continues with St. Justin Martyr,⁴ St. Irenaeus,⁵ Clement,⁶

Origen,⁷ St. Athanasius,⁸ among others.⁹

St. John Chrysostom interprets the passage above on John 10:35 by rephrasing the words of Christ clearly:

He says something like this: If those who have received this honor [to be called children of God] by grace, are not found fault with for calling themselves gods, how can He Who has this by nature deserve to be rebuked? Yet He spoke not so, but proved it at a later time, having first relaxed and yielded somewhat in His discourse, and said, “Whom the Father has sanctified and sent.” And when He had softened their anger, He brings forward the plain assertion. For a while, that His speech might be received, He spoke in a humbler strain, but afterwards He raised it higher, saying, “If I do not the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works.”¹⁰

St. Athanasius has much to say about deification in his writings:

- **“He became human that we might become divine.”¹¹**
- “For He has become human, that He might deify us in Himself, and He has been born of a woman, and begotten of a Virgin, in order to transfer to Himself our erring generation, and that we may become henceforth a holy race, and ‘partakers of the Divine Nature,’ as blessed Peter wrote.”¹²
- “We must not conceive that the whole Word is in nature a creature, but that He put on the created body and that God created Him for our sakes, preparing for Him the created body, as it is written, for us, that in Him we might be capable of being renewed and deified.”¹³
- “Therefore He was not man, and then became God, but He was God, and then became man, and that to deify us...For the Word was not impaired in receiving a body...but rather He deified that which He put on, and more than that, *gave* it graciously to the race of man.”¹⁴
- “But as we, by receiving the Spirit, do not lose our own proper substance, so the Lord, when made man for us, and bearing a body, was no less God; for He was not lessened by the envelopment of the body, but rather deified it and rendered it immortal.”¹⁵

³ St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ep. to Ephesians*, 4.2, 11.2; Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 164-169; Daniel Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 150.

⁴ St. Justin Martyr, 1 *Apol.* 65, 66; Russell, p. 175; Keating, pp. 150-151.

⁵ St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, 4.18.5, 4.20.5, 5.11.1; Keating, p. 151. St. Irenaeus spoke of Christ saying, “He became what we are in order to make us what He is Himself.” St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book 5, Preface.

⁶ St. Clement of Alexandria, “The Logos of God had become man so that you might learn from a man how a man may become God.” *Pedagogue*, 1.2.6.1 (GCS 12:93); *Prot.* 1.2.8.4.

⁷ Participation and sanctification is a major theme in the writings of Origen. Norman Russell claims this is the most important concept for Origen, p. 270. See also, David L. Balás, “The Idea of Participation in the Structure of Origen’s Thought: Christian Transposition of a Theme of the Platonic Tradition,” *Vetera Christianorum*, 12 (1975), p. 259, 262, 270; Keating, pp. 151-152.

⁸ St. Athanasius, *Against the Heathen*, 46.8; *De Decretis*, 9-10; *Against the Arians*, 1.9, 15-16, 37; 2.59; 3.1, 17, 19-20, 24-25; *Letters to Serapion*, 1.23-24, 27, 39, 2.4, 3.6; *De Synodis*, 51.

⁹ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Volume 1: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 155.

¹⁰ St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 61 on John* (10:33-38).

¹¹ St. Athanasius, *De inc.*, 54, 3 (PG 25:192B).

¹² St. Athanasius, *Letter LX: To Adelphius, Bishop and Confessor: Against the Arians*. NPNF, s. 2, v. 4, p. 576.

¹³ St. Athanasius, *Four Discourses Against the Arians*, Discourse 2.47, NPNF, s. 2, v. 4, p. 374.

¹⁴ St. Athanasius, *Four Discourses Against The Arians*, Discourse 1.39, 42, s. 2, v. 4, p. 329-330.

¹⁵ St. Athanasius, *De Decretis*, 3.14, NPNF, s. 2, v. 4, p. 159.



- “For He did not, when He became man, cease to be God; nor, whereas He is God does He shrink from what is man's; perish the thought; but rather, being God, He has taken to Him the flesh, and being in the flesh deifies the flesh.”¹⁶

This the Church also declares in her liturgical tradition, especially in the Theotokia of the Holy Midnight Psalmody. Summarizing the teachings of the above fathers, we praise saying:

- “He did not cease to be divine, He came and became the Son of Man, for He is the true God, Who came and saved us.”¹⁷
- “He took what is ours and gave us what is His...”¹⁸

C. What Sanctification (Theosis) is NOT.

Unfortunately, none of the fathers wrote of theosis as a subject, it came in their writings. St. Athanasius didn't write a book or an article about theosis. He used this language in defending the divinity of the Logos. This was the main language which other suse to quote him. He was writing about the divinity of the Logos in responding to Origen, who believes that the Son is deified from the Father. He proved then, that the son can divinize and has the power to divinize. He started by describing how Christ sanctified human nature. Even the Cappadocians, like St. Gregory the Theologian didn't write a book or article about theosis, but used it in his orations (like Oration 21). Later on, he used to speak about it as a subject.

When we read about being like God or being divine, this does NOT mean that we participate in the characteristics of the divine essence such as being unchangeable, all-knowing, omnipresent, filling all things, or infallible. Neither does it mean that our human nature will become divine natures. We are human, always have been human, and always will be human. We cannot take on the nature of God.

St. Cyril helps to clarify what divinization is NOT in his commentary on John:

For the Son gives what is His alone and specially and of nature to be in their *power*; setting it forth as common, making this a sort of image of the love for man that is inherent to Him, and of His love for the world. For in none other way could we who bore *the image of the earthy* escape corruption, unless the beauty of *the image of the heavenly* were impressed upon us, through our being called to sonship. For being partakers of Him through the Spirit, we were sealed unto likeness with Him and mount up to the primal character of the Image after which the Divine Scripture says we were made. For thus hardly recovering the pristine beauty of our nature, and reformed unto that Divine Nature, shall we be superior to the ills that have befallen us through the transgression. Therefore we mount up unto dignity above our nature for Christ's sake, and we too shall be *sons of God*, not like Him in exactitude, but by grace in imitation of Him. For He is Very Son, existing from the Father; we adopted by His Kindness, through grace receiving *I have said, Ye are gods and all of you are children of the Most High*.¹⁹

D. The Process of Sanctification

Christ *is* Holy by nature, but we *become* holy externally by means of sanctification, by grace. “The Holy Spirit reforms us...to Him through sanctification.”²⁰ God bestows His Spirit on those whom He deems are worthy though His grace, and for those who live a holy life. It is impossible for man to be fully united with God except through participation (μετουσίᾳς) in the Holy Spirit Who instills “in us His proper sanctification (ἀγιασμόν) and refashioning to His own life the nature that fell subject to corruption, and thus restoring to God and to God's semblance what had been deprived of this glory.”²¹ The Holy Spirit is the “fount of sanctification” *Who restores* us to the image of God.²²

There are many aspects of sanctification.

¹⁶ St. Athanasius, *Four Discourses Against the Arians*, Discourse 3.38, NPNF, s. 2, v. 4, p. 414.

¹⁷ The Holy Psalmody, Thursday Theotokion.

¹⁸ The Holy Psalmody, Friday Theotokion.

¹⁹ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John (1:11)*.

²⁰ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on Isaiah 4:2* (PG 70:936); Burghardt, p. 71.

²¹ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, 11.11.

²² St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on Isaiah*, 1, 5; cf. *Scholia*, 1.



(1) Sanctification is **dedication** and **consecration** to God like the firstborn of Israel (Ex. 13:2). St. Cyril describes the cattle and sheep that were offered as whole-burnt offerings to God (Lev. 1:2-9), as types of the saints who were gentle animals who offered a spiritual sacrifice by dying to the world and living a righteous life to God. Thus, the whole burnt offering is a perfect consecration to God in the life that is completely acceptable and holy.²³

(2) Sanctification is being **chosen** (*προχειρισθέν*) by God to carry out His will, like the Son of God chosen by the Father, or King Cyrus against the Babylonians (Isa. 13:3).

(3) Sanctification is being **partakers** of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). It is the will of the Holy Trinity that we become partakers of the Holy Spirit, to become citizens of heaven, and be born anew.²⁴

This is a transformative process in which the Holy Spirit makes us holy.

[The Spirit] transforms him to the Creator's Image through sanctification; for the Maker of all things is holy; that is why He says, *'Be holy, for I am holy'* (Lev. 19:2)...For we too, we ourselves, have been created to God's image and likeness. Now, that which produces the divine resemblance (*εξεικονισμόν*) in us is surely sanctification (*αγιασμός*), that is participation (*μέθεξις*) of the Son in the Spirit.²⁵

According to St. Cyril, our Lord implants His own life in us, and dwells in us in fellowship (*κοινωνία*). This participation is always relative, and very distinct from the union in Christ that is complete, perfect, and hypostatic. St. Cyril cites 2 Pet. 1:4 over 40 times in his writing, more than any other father before him. He describes it as transformation a transformation "to newness of life, casting off the corruption that stemmed from sin and laying hold hereafter of eternal life through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and His love for men..."²⁶

4) Sanctification is being **set apart** (*αφοριζόμενα*) as a sacrifice to God.

Lev. 4:1-12 describes, the bull that is slain before the door of the altar of the tabernacle so that its blood is used for the consecration of the altar, and the veil of the altar. St. Cyril explains this passage by looking at Christ's declaration of sanctification:

The bull is led close to the tabernacle doors before the Lord, without objecting to the suffering for the sake of the holy tabernacle; that is the church that Christ consecrated Himself for her sake, as a fragrant incense before God the Father. Thus He said, "And for their sake I sanctify Myself" (John 17:19). He uses "sanctify" instead of "I offer and sanctify a blameless offering to God the Father," because what is consecrated to God is mentioned as "to sanctify."²⁷

5) Sanctification as being **united** (*ενωθέντα*) to the Word of God.

[The Logos] lowered Himself in order to lift to His own height that which was lowly by nature, and He bore the form of the slave, though by nature He was Lord and Son, in order to transport what was slave by nature to the glory of adoptive sonship, after His own likeness...Therefore, just as He became like us, that is, man, in order that we might become like Him, I mean gods and sons, He takes to Himself what is properly ours and gives us in return what is His...We mount to a dignity which is supernatural (*υπερ φύσιν*) through our likeness to Him; for we have been called sons of God, even though we are not sons by nature...But the Son, as it were mingling Himself with us, bestows on our nature the dignity that is properly and peculiarly His own.²⁸

6) Sanctification as **adoption**. Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the union through the Eucharist, men become adopted sons of God. By sitting at the right hand of the Father, our Lord bestows a great grace on humanity:

For us and our sakes He did this, in order that man, that He was...[He would] transmit the glory of the sonship to the whole race through Himself...He manifested Himself as man, in order to set us once more in the sight of the Father...He sat down as Son, that we too might be called sons (*υιοί*) through Him and children (*τέκνα*) of God.²⁹

²³ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *De Adoratione*, 16 (PG 68:1013C).

²⁴ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, 1.

²⁵ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *De sancta et consubstantiali trinitate*, Dial. 6 (PG 75:1013); Burghardt, p. 70.

²⁶ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, 9.1 (Pusey 2, 483).

²⁷ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *De Adoratione*, 10 (PG 68:688A).

²⁸ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, 12.1.

²⁹ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, 9.



In responding to Nestorius, St. Cyril emphasizes this does NOT mean becoming divine by nature. Rather, it is the state in which men bear the “image of the heavenly.”

[This sonship means the] utter absence of slavery to passion, ignorance to sin, superiority to death and corruption, holiness, justice... These, I think are possessions that befit the divine, undefiled nature; for it is superior to sin and corruption; it is holiness and justice.³⁰

7) Love. Above all, sanctification is a transformation towards the goal of love--this the greatest fruit of this union, manifest to all humanity. Love is not simply a thing to possess, or an action to conduct, God, Himself.

If...you have been purified and have forgotten your past misdeeds and have recovered the natural (φυσικόν) beauty of the soul, your creation to God’s image, you will have the Beloved of God for your Lover.³¹

D. The Holy Mysteries of the Church

Yet one cannot understand sanctification (and likewise, deification, communion, etc.) outside of the Holy Mysteries of the Church. This was the mistake of many later theologians in East and West. As St. Cyril of Alexandria explains, our Lord primarily sanctifies us through Baptism and the Eucharist.

Holy Baptism is a new beginning in the life of sanctification, making us temples of the Holy Spirit. Baptism restores us to the image of God, conforms us with Christ, makes us the children of God by adoption. Thus, we are sanctified by the Grace of God and by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Also, through the Eucharist the faithful become concorporeal (σύσσωμοι) with Christ and partakers of the divine nature of God through the Holy Spirit, as in baptism.

We have become concorporeal with Him through the Mystical Blessing (the Eucharist). But we have also been united in another way, namely in that we have become partakers of his divine nature through the Spirit. For He Himself dwells in the souls of the saints, and as the blessed John says, “*In this we know that he is in us, by the Spirit Whom He gave to us*” (1 John 3:24).³²

Regular participation in the Eucharist leads to the taste of the joyful and sanctified life. The Eucharist leads us to perfection (τελείωσις) and wisdom. Partaking in the Eucharist allows us to be “remodeled” and sanctified in body and soul.

We ask earnestly that they may be remodeled into a spiritual blessing, that partaking of these things, we may be sanctified in body and soul...Partaking of them, we take into us the life-giving and sanctifying power of Christ...For God puts the power of life into the offerings bringing Himself down to our weakness, and He changes them into the energy of His own life.³³

To participate in the Eucharist is to participate in the life of Christ. The Eucharist not only unites us with God but with one another. Indeed, our Lord Jesus Christ is the bond of union not only between God and man but also between man and man.

As St. Cyril explains, the Eucharist expels death, disposes of corruption, totally vanquishes corruption, and completely transforms those who partake of the mysteries. As a result of this transformation, Christ is formed in us, and indirectly our image is restored:

Made partakers of the Holy Spirit, we are being transformed to the primitive beauty of our nature; the image which we bore at the first is engraved afresh upon our spiritual life, for Christ is formed in us through the Spirit.³⁴

In the third letter to Nestorius, St. Cyril places

And of necessity will we add this too: Declaring the Death in the Flesh of the Only-Begotten Son of God, that is Jesus Christ, and confessing His living again from the dead and His Ascension into Heaven, we celebrate the Unbloody Service in the churches, and thus approach to the Mystic Blessings, and are sanctified, rendered partakers of the Holy Flesh and Precious Blood of Christ the Saviour of us all. And not as though we were receiving common flesh (God forbid) nor yet that of a man sanctified and connected with the Logos by unity of dignity, or as having a Divine Indwelling, **but as truly life-giving and the own Flesh of the Logos Himself.** For being by Nature Life as God, since He became One with His own Flesh, He rendered it **Life-giving.** So that even though He say to us, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood” [John 6:53], we shall not account it also as that of one of us (for how will a man's flesh be

³⁰ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Against the Blasphemies of Nestorius*, 3.2 (ACO 1.1.6.59-60; PG 76:128-129).

³¹ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on Psalm 44*:12-13 (PG 69:1044).

³² St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Glaphyra in Genesis*, 1.

³³ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Fr. Matt.*, 26:27 (PG 72:452).

³⁴ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on Nahum*, 2:1 (PG 71:812D).



life-giving in its own nature?) but as having truly become the own Flesh of Him Who for our sakes both became and was called Son of Man.³⁵

And in the Eleventh Anathema

If anyone confess not that the Flesh of the Lord is Life-giving and that it is the own Flesh of the Logos Himself that is from God the Father, but say that it belongs to another than He, connected with Him by dignity or as possessed of Divine Indwelling only and not rather that it is Life-Giving (as we said) because it has been made the own Flesh of the Logos Who is mighty to quicken all things, be he anathema.

So Nestorius and others were separating between two hypostases conjoined to each other. So St Cyril spoke about the Eucharist to emphasize we don't partake of the flesh of a man, or the divinity. Thus, we can't say that we eat divinity, but flesh that is life-giving flesh that is the very flesh of the Logos. The body that we take is the same body that He took from St. Mary and united it to Himself. This is our belief we confess in the final confession before partaking of the Eucharist.

But like St. Cyril we don't believe that divinity was born from St. Mary and that divinity suffers. No one means by Theotokos that divinity was born from St. Mary but because our Lord took human nature and made it own with himself, we can say that God was born in the flesh, and can rightly say that GOD died for us in the flesh, while we believe divinity does not die. But who died on the Cross? The incarnate Logos, not just a man. God died *in the flesh*. In communion we partake the body of the Incarnate logos without separating divinity from humanity. We don't eat divinity.

³⁵ Letter 3.7.