

Cyril Alexandria Letter ONE CLEANED

St. Cyril: Cyril Alexandria Letter One LETTER 1 Cyril, to the priests and deacons, fathers of monks, and to those practicing the solitary life among you are faith in God, beloved and most dear; greetings in the Lord. Some of your brethren, as is the custom, arrived Alexandria. I asked and eagerly inquired whether you excel in true and blameless faith, walking in the footsteps of your fathers' gentleness, and distinguishing yourself by that excellent way of life. I also asked whether you highly esteem the toils of your religious training by considering it a joy to choose suffering nobly for the sake of the good. They reported that you are so disposed, and added that you are zealously competing with the deeds of your predecessors. I rejoiced, claiming as my own the good reputation of my children. Just as trainers exult in the strength of young men and their pupils' successes to themselves, it is only fitting that I, your spiritual father, am filled with gladness and spur you on with words to your noble endeavor, so that you might carry off the prize after overcoming bodily temptations by prayer, avoid falling into sin. As the disciple of the Savior says, "Strive diligently to supply your faith with virtue, your virtue with knowledge, your knowledge with self-control, self-control with patience, patience with piety, piety with fraternal love, fraternal love with charity. For if these virtues are present and abound, they render you neither inactive nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (cf. 2 Pet 1:58). Those who have chosen to live according to Christ must be adorned with simple and unblemished faith, and then add virtue. When this has been done, must enrich you of the mystery of Christ and strive for complete understanding of Him. This is "to attain unto the perfection of man" and measure of the stature of his fullness" (Eph 4:13). With the sobriety of monks, fight manfully against spiritual and physical disturbances with readiness. In this way, you will be radiant with the hope prepared for the saints. Also let your faith be true, sincere, and without reproach. In following the pious example of your holy fathers you should dwell in the heavenly mansions, of which the prophet Isaiah speaks: "Your eyes shall see Jerusalem, a city that shall not be shaken" (Is 33:20). I know your way of life is illustrious and your sincere faith rests on a secure foundation. But I am disturbed because I have heard that certain troublesome rumors have reached you some go against your simple faith, raise fruitless arguments, and demanding whether the Holy Virgin Mary should be called the Mother of God. It is better to pay no attention to such disputes, which are puzzling to many and go beyond the understanding of those who instruct since you have heard these matters and some people are fond of disputing, I thought it necessary to write to help you avoid being misled and to assist others by persuading them to preserve the faith handed down from the fathers so that anyone would question whether the Holy Virgin should be called the Mother of God. If our Lord Christ is God the Holy Virgin who

bore Him not the Mother of God? The inspired disciples transmitted it to us, and the holy Fathers taught us to think likewise. Our father Athanasius, of hallowed memory, occupied the throne of Alexandria for forty years and valiantly the faith. In his work on the holy Trinity, he called the Holy Virgin the Mother of God: "He was always God, the being the Word and Wisdom of the Father. Afterwards, for our sake, by taking flesh from the Virgin the Mother of God, He became man." Elsewhere he says, "Jeremiah was sanctified from the womb, and John, as yet unborn voice of Mary, the Mother of God." Athanasius is trustworthy, and all testify to the accuracy and piety of his teaching. Some argue that we should also confirm this statement from the holy Scriptures, and that the holy council at Nicaea explicitly state it. Let us show from the Scriptures and from the Fathers, taught by the Holy Spirit, in what way the economy of salvation is presented. If the one born of the Virgin is God according to nature, no one should hesitate to call her the Mother of God. Thus runs the Creed of our faith: We believe in one God, the Father almighty, creator of all things, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, only-begotten of the Father, that is, from His substance; God of God, Light of Light, God of true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father, through whom all things were and our salvation descended, became incarnate, was made man, suffered, rose on the third day, ascended, alive and the dead; and in the Holy Spirit. The inventors of heresies have slipped into error, claiming the Son was made by the Father as a creature, denying eternity and equality. There is no one in between the creator and creation; teaching is untenable, for Scripture states, "The Lord your God shall you worship and Him only shall you serve" (cf. 4:10). We, following the faith of the Fathers, say that the Son was begotten of the Father's substance, one with essence, and is in Him and has the Father in Himself (cf. Jn 10:30; 14:10). The Son is Light from Light, God from God, in glory and operation, the image and brightness, equal in every respect, and not inferior in any way. With Holy Spirit the consubstantial Trinity is united in one divine nature. Scripture says the Word was made flesh (Jn 1:14), that is, united to flesh with a rational soul. The council taught was begotten of the Father, and for our salvation, He became incarnate, was made man, suffered, rose, will come to judge, and is one Lord Jesus Christ. It says the Son is one, being of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father. Someone may say "Christ" is applied not only to Emmanuel but also to others anointed by the Spirit, Scripture says, "Touch not the anointed ones" (Ps 104:15), and David calls Saul the "Lord's anointed" (1 Sam 24:6). Justified by faith in Christ and sanctified in the Spirit are honored by such a name. Scripture says, "You have an anointing from the Holy One" (2:20), and of Emmanuel, "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power" (Acts 10:38). But the Holy Spirit stands apart, for she bore, not a mere man, but the Word made flesh. Others mothers may rightly be called Christ- the Holy Virgin alone is Mother of Christ and Mother of God; she bore the Word made flesh. If you ask whether she is the Mother of His divinity, I reply: the living and subsistent Word was begotten from the substance of the Father, always existing, but upon becoming

flesh, was born of a woman according to the as mothers on earth bring forth a
whole being, body and soul, not part; so too did the Virgin bear a living being,
uniting body and divinity, the Word made flesh. The unity in Christ is very necessary.
Paul says, "Who being in the form of God, did not consider equality robbery,
but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and being made like unto
men; and appearing as man himself" (Phil 2:68). Some divide Christ into man and the
Word of God, saying only the one born of the emptied If they do, they must show
this man was equal in form and equality with the Father and able to the state of a
son. But no mere man, by nature, is equal to the Father or can lower himself
from such a high indwelling alone does not for the emptying of the Word; were it so,
then the Father also would be emptied indwelling in the faithful (cf. Jn 14 a conclusion
that is absurd. Therefore, it is the Word Himself, being equal to God,
who humbled Himself by becoming flesh. If you say the Word called Christ from the
anointing, does this mean He needs sanctification? What is bereft sanctification is
chance and would not be free from sin, yet the consubstantial Trinity is holy by nature.
It is not as God that the Word was sanctified, but as man. If, as some suggest, only the
one born of the Virgin is anointed, and the one called Christ, does anointing suffice for
equality with God? We too have been anointed, yet we are not equal to God. Christ
alone is, by nature, the Son of all. We do not say that God became the Father of
flesh or that the divinity was born of a woman without the human but that the
Word begotten of God and the man born of the Virgin were united in one Christ,
Jesus and man, the Word who voluntarily emptied Himself and took the form of a
servant. He "descended from 2:16), "partook of blood and flesh" (Heb 2:14), becoming
like us. The Word of God took on human making His own the body born from a
woman. Thus, Emmanuel is divinity and humanity, yet is one Lord Jesus name
Christ was appropriate to Him when He became according to nature, united with
human flesh. The prophet foretold the coming of God as man: "Behold, our God will
come and save us. Then the eyes shall be opened... 35:45). The
holy evangelists proclaimed: "Behold, your God comes..." (Is 40:9). Christ's show
His divine power the Baptist announced, "Make ready the way of the
Lord, make straight the paths (Mt 3:3). Paul bears witness: did not spare His own
Son, but delivered Him up for us all..." (Rom 8:32) If Christ were only an
instrument, He not be truly the Son. The distinction between Moses and Christ lies
Moses is the servant, faithful in God's house Christ is the Son over His own house
(Heb 3:16), builder and creator not merely a servant. We do not claim God was Father of
flesh, nor that divinity was born of a woman without assuming humanity the Word,
begotten of God, and perfectly born of the Virgin are united; thus, there is one Christ
and Lord Jesus, both divine and human. The Word made flesh. He laid down His life
for us: life itself endured death in the flesh, that through resurrection He might triumph. How
can life die? By suffering death in the flesh; thus, He is life by reviving His own
flesh. Our souls do not perish when our bodies die, the Word in flesh yielded His
humanity to death, Himself remaining impassible as life. Thus, having been first to rise

from death, He secured salvation for all. If Christ is only a man, then we are not by God. But Christ declared, "I lay down my life of my own accord the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it again" (Jn 10:18). He rose as God, having "despoiled the whole world," and made heaven accessible to human. He is truly God and King by nature, and the crucified one is called the Lord of glory (1 Cor 2:8), how can anyone call the Holy Virgin the Mother of God? Adore Him as one, not divided after the union. We adore Him who is God by nature, who became like us yet remained God. Through Him, with the Holy Spirit, glory be to the Father, forever and ever. Amen.