

YOUTH SPIRITUAL COMPETITION 2014

High School Level - Church Study/Sacrament

St. Cyril of Jerusalem – On Baptism

Introduction

St. Cyril's famous twenty-three lectures given to catechumens in Jerusalem being prepared for, and after, baptism are best considered in two parts: the first eighteen lectures are common known as the *Catechetical Lectures*, *Catechetical Orations* or *Catechetical Homilies*, while the final five are often called the *Mystagogic Catecheses*, because they deal with the *mysteria*, i.e. Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist.

(note: some lectures have been abridged by removing certain paragraphs)

The following excerpt from Maxwell E. Johnson's "The Rites of Christian Initiation" will be helpful in understanding St. Cyril's approach:

"...Cyril describes the process of Christian initiation itself as a close imitation, an image or icon, of the saving events in the life of Christ. That is, the stripping of the candidate signifies the nakedness of Christ on Calvary, the prebaptismal anointing joins the candidate to the cross, and the three immersions or submersions in the font imitate his three days in the tomb. After baptism, Cyril's paradigm changes from Christ's passion and burial to that of his baptism in the Jordan. In other words, for Cyril, the rite of initiation itself has become for the candidate a dramatic ritual enactment of the salvific events themselves."

It is important to note that St. Cyril understood that, for a Christian, initial conversion and baptism are only the beginning. Constant vigilance, constant repentance, is necessary for a Christian life to come safely into harbor: "Great is the Baptism that lies before you But there is a serpent by the wayside watching those who pass by: beware lest he bite you with unbelief" (Prologue, 16).

Prologue to the Catechetical Lectures

1. ALREADY there is an odor of blessedness upon you, who are soon to be enlightened; already you are gathering the spiritual flowers, to weave heavenly crowns; already the fragrance of the Holy Spirit has breathed upon you; already you have gathered round the vestibule of the King's palace; may you be led in also by the King! For blossoms now have appeared upon the trees; may the fruit also be found perfect! Thus far there has been an inscription of your names, and a call to service, the lamps have been kindled for the bridal procession, there is longing for

heavenly citizenship. There is good intention, with hope to back it up. For St. Paul does not lie who said, that *“to those who love God all things work together for the good”* (Rom 8:28). God is lavish in beneficence, yet He waits for each man's genuine will: therefore the Apostle added and said, *“to them that are called according to his purpose.”* The honesty of purpose makes you called: for if your body be here but not your mind, it profits you nothing.

2. Even Simon the Sorcerer once came to the Baptismal Font; he was baptized, but was not enlightened (cf. Acts 8 9-24). And though he dipped his body in water, he enlightened not his heart with the Spirit. His body went down and came up, but his soul was not buried with Christ, nor raised with Him. Now I mention the statements of men's falls so that you may not fall. For these things happened to them by way of example, and they are written for the admonition of those who to this day draw near. Let none of you be found tempting His grace, lest any root of bitterness spring up and trouble you. Let none of you enter saying, *“Let us see what the faithful are doing. Let me go in and see, that I may learn what is being done.”* Do you expect to see, but not expect to be seen? And do you think that while you are searching out what is going on, God is not searching your heart?

3. A certain man in the Gospels once pried into the marriage feasts, and took an unbecoming garment, and came in, sat down, and ate for the bridegroom permitted it (cf. Matt 22: 11-13). But when he saw them all clad in white, he ought to have assumed a garment of the same kind himself; whereas he partook of the like food, but was unlike them in fashion and in purpose. The bridegroom, however, though bountiful, was not undiscerning. And in going round to each of the guests and observing them (for his care was not for their eating, but for their seemly behavior), he saw a stranger not having on a wedding garment, and said to him, *“Friend, how did you come in here? In what a color! With what a conscience! You came in, and saw the glittering fashions of the guests, should you not have been taught even by what was before your eyes? Should you not have retired in good season, that you may come back suitably dressed? But now you have come in unseasonably, to be unseasonably cast out. So he commands the servants to bind his feet, which daringly intruded; to bind his hands, which knew not how to put a bright garment around him; and to cast him into the outer darkness, for he is unworthy of the wedding lights. You see what happened to that man! Now make your own condition safe.*

4. For we, the ministers of Christ, have admitted everyone, and occupying, as it were, the place of door-keepers, we left the door open, and possibly you entered with your soul covered with sins and with a defiled will. You were allowed to enter and your name was inscribed. Tell me, do you behold this venerable constitution of the Church? Do you view her order and discipline, the reading of Scriptures, the presence of the ordained, and the course of instruction? Be in

awe at the place, and be taught by what you see. Go out now, and come back prepared tomorrow. If the manner of your soul is avarice, put on another manner and come in. Put off your former manner, cover it not up. Put off fornication and uncleanness, and put on the brightest robe of chastity. This advice I give you, before Jesus the Bridegroom of souls comes in and see your filthy clothes. A long period of grace is given to you: you have forty days for repentance, you have full opportunity both to put off and wash, and to put on and enter. But if you persist in an evil intent, I will be blameless, but you will not receive the grace. The water will receive you, yet the Holy Spirit will not accept you. If anyone is conscious of his wound, let him take the salve; if any has fallen, let him arise. Let there be no Simon among you, no hypocrisy, no idle curiosity about the matter.

5. Possibly you have another reason for coming. It is possible that a man is wishing to court a Christian woman, and is coming here on that account. Or it could be the other way around. A slave also perhaps wishes to please his master, and a friend his friend. I accept this bait for the hook, and welcome you, though you came with an evil purpose, yet as one to be saved by a good hope. Perhaps you do not know where you are coming, or in what kind of net you are taken. You have come within the Church's nets: be taken alive, flee not. Jesus is seeking to hook you, not in order to kill you, but by killing to make you alive: for you must die and rise again. For you have heard the Apostle say, *"Dead indeed to sin, but alive to righteousness"* (Rom 6:11, 1 Peter 2:24). Die to your sins, and live to righteousness, live from this very day.

6. Look, I ask you, and see with how great a dignity Jesus favors you. You were called a Catechumen, while the word echoed around you from outside, hearing of hope, and knowing it not; hearing mysteries, and not understanding them; hearing Scriptures, and not knowing their depth. The echo is no longer around you, but within you for the indwelling Spirit from now on makes your mind a house of God. When you hear what is written concerning the Mysteries, then you will understand things which you knew not. And think not that you are receiving a small thing; being a miserable man, you will receive one of God's titles. Hear St. Paul saying, *"God is faithful."* Hear another Scripture saying, *"God is faithful and just."* Foreseeing this, the Psalmist, because men are to receive a title of God, spoke thus in the person of God: *"I said, 'You are Gods, and are all sons of the Most High'"* (Ps 82:6). But beware lest you have the title of "faithful," but the will of the faithless. You have entered into a contest, toil on through the race; you may not have another such opportunity. If it was your wedding-day before you, would you not have disregarded all else, and set about the preparation for the banquet? And so, on the eve of consecrating your soul to the heavenly Bridegroom, will you not cease from carnal things that you may win spiritual?

7. We may not receive Baptism twice or thrice; so you cannot say, "If I have failed once, I shall correct it a second time." But in this matter, if you do not succeed this once, there is no correcting it. For there is *one Lord, one faith, and one baptism* (Eph 4:5). For only the heretics are re-baptized, because the former was no baptism.

8. For God seeks nothing else from us except a good intention. Say not, "How are my sins blotted out?" I tell you: by willing and by believing. What can be simpler than this? But if, while your lips declare you willing, your heart is silent, He who judges you knows your heart. Cease from this day from every evil deed. Let not your tongue speak unseemly words, let your eye abstain from sin, and from roving after things unprofitable.

9. Let your feet hasten to the catechizing. Receive with eagerness the exorcisms; whether you be breathed on or exorcised, the purpose is your salvation. Suppose you have crude gold, mixed with various substances, such as copper, tin, iron, and lead. We want the gold alone. Can gold be purified from the foreign substances without fire? Even so without exorcisms the soul cannot be purified, and these exorcisms are divine, having been collected out of the divine Scriptures. Your face has been veiled, so that your mind may be free, lest the eye by wandering make the heart distracted also. But when your eyes are veiled, your ears are not hindered from receiving the means of salvation. For in like manner as those who are skilled in the goldsmith's craft concentrate a blast upon the fire by the use of blowpipes, and by blowing up the gold which is hidden in the crucible they stir the flame which surrounds it so that they find what they are seeking; even so when the exorcists inspire terror by the Spirit of God, and set the soul, as it were, on fire in the crucible of the body, the hostile demons flee away, and there abide salvation and the hope of eternal life, and the soul henceforth is cleansed from its sins and has salvation. Let us then, brethren, abide in hope, and surrender ourselves. Let us hope in order that the God of all may see our intention and cleanse us from our sins and impart to us good hopes of what lies ahead of us, and grant us repentance that brings salvation. God has called, and His call is to you.

10. Pay close attention to the catechizing, and if we prolong our discourse, let not your mind be wearied out. For you are receiving armor against the adverse powers, armor against heresies, against Jews and Samaritans and Pagans. You have many enemies and take to yourself many darts for you have many to hurl them at. You also need to learn how to shoot down the pagan, how to fight against heretic, against Jew and Samaritan. And the armor is ready, and most ready is the sword of the Spirit; but you also must stretch forth your right hand with good resolution that you may fight the Lord's warfare, and overcome adverse powers and become invincible against every heretical attempt.

11. Let me give you this charge also: study our teachings and keep them forever. Think not that they are the ordinary sermons for though these are good and trustworthy, yet if we neglect them today we can study them tomorrow. But if the teaching concerning the Baptism of Regeneration delivered in a consecutive course be neglected today, when shall it be made right? Suppose it is the season for planting trees. If we do not dig, and dig deep, when else can that be planted rightly which has once been planted wrongly? Suppose that the Catechizing is a kind of building: if we do not mortar the stones together by cement, some gaps will be found and the building becomes unsound, and even our former labor is of no use. But stone must follow stone by course, and corner match with corner, and by our smoothing off rough places the building must thus rise evenly. Similarly, we are bringing to you stones, as it were, of knowledge. You must hear concerning the living God, you must hear of Judgment, must hear of Christ, and of the Resurrection. And many things there are to be discussed in succession, which though now dropped one by one are afterwards to be presented in harmonious connection. And unless you fit them together in one whole, and remember what is first, and what is second, the builder may build, but you will find the building unsound.

12. When, therefore, the Lecture is delivered, if a Catechumen ask you what the teachers have said, tell nothing to him who is outside the faith. For we deliver to you a mystery, and a hope of the life to come. Guard the mystery for Him who gives the reward. Let no one ever say to you, "What harm is it to you if I also know it?" So too the sick ask for wine, but if it is given at a wrong time it causes delirium, and two evils arise: the sick man dies and the physician is blamed. Thus it is also with the Catechumen, if he hears anything from the believer both the Catechumen becomes delirious (for he understands not what he has heard, and finds fault with the thing and scoffs at what is said), and the believer is condemned as a traitor. But you are now standing on the border; make sure that you tell nothing to outsiders. Not that the things spoken are not worthy to be told, but because his ear is unworthy to receive. You were once yourself a Catechumen, and I described not what lay before you. When by experience you have learned how high are the matters of our teachings, then you will know that the Catechumens are not worthy to hear them.

13. You who have been enrolled are become sons and daughters of one Mother. When you have come in before the hour of the exorcisms, let each one of you speak things tending to godliness, and if anyone of you is not present, seek for him. If you were called to a banquet, would you not wait for your fellow guest? If you had a brother would you not seek your brother's good? Afterwards busy not yourself about unprofitable matters, neither about what the city has done, nor the village, nor the King, nor the Bishop, nor the Priest. Look upward; that is what your present hour needs. *"Be still and know that I am God"* (Ps 46:10). If you see the believers assisting in the service at ease, they know what they have received, they are in

possession of grace. But you stand just now in the turn of the scale, to be received or not. Copy not those who have freedom from anxiety, but cherish fear.

14. And when the Exorcism has been done, until the others who are being exorcised have come, let men be with men, and women with women. For now I need the example of Noah's ark in which were Noah and his sons, and his wife and his sons' wives. For though the ark was one, and the door was shut, yet things were suitably arranged. If the Church is shut, and you are all inside, yet let there be a separation, men with men, and women with women lest the pretext of salvation become an occasion of destruction. Even if there is a fair pretext for sitting near each other, let passions be put away. Further, let the men when sitting have a useful book and let one read and another listen. And if there is no book, let one pray and another speak something useful. And again let the group of young women sit together in like manner, either singing or reading quietly, so that their lips speak, but others' ears catch not the sound for *"I do not permit a woman to speak in the Church"* (I Cor 14:34). And let the married woman also follow the same example, and pray; and let her lips move, but her voice be unheard that a Samuel may come (cf. I Sam 1:12-17) and your barren soul give birth to the salvation of "God who has heard your prayer" (I Sam 1:20) for this is the interpretation of the name "Samuel."

15. I shall observe each man's eagerness, each woman's reverence. Let your mind be refined as by fire unto reverence; let your soul be forged as metal. Let the stubbornness of unbelief be hammered out, let the superfluous scales of the iron drop off, and what is pure remain. Let the rust of the iron be rubbed off, and the true metal remain. May God sometime show you that night, the darkness which shines like the day, concerning which it is said, *"The darkness shall not be hidden from you, and the night shall shine as the day"* (Ps 139:12). Then may the gate of Paradise be opened to every man and every woman among you. Then may you enjoy the Christ-bearing waters in their fragrance. Then may you receive the name of Christ, and the power of things divine. Even now, I beseech you, lift up the eye of the mind. Even now, imagine the choirs of Angels, and God the Lord of all there sitting, and His Only-begotten Son sitting with Him on His right hand, and the Spirit present with them; and Thrones and Dominions doing service, and every man of you and every woman receiving salvation. Even now let your ears ring, as it were, with that glorious sound, when over your salvation the angels shall chant, *"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered"* (Ps 32:1), when like stars of the Church you shall enter in, bright in the body and radiant in the soul.

16. Great is the Baptism that lies before you: a ransom to captives, a remission of offences, a death of sin, a new-birth of the soul, a garment of light, a holy indissoluble seal, a chariot to heaven, the delight of Paradise, a welcome into the kingdom, the gift of adoption! But there is a serpent by the wayside watching those who pass by so beware lest he bite you with unbelief.

He sees so many receiving salvation, and is seeking whom he may devour. You are coming in unto the Father of Spirits, but you are going past that serpent. How then can you pass him? *Have your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace* (Eph 6:15) so that even if he bite, he may not hurt you. Have faith in-dwelling, steadfast hope, and a strong sandal that you may pass the enemy and enter the presence of your Lord. Prepare your own heart for reception of doctrine and for fellowship in holy mysteries. Pray more frequently that God may make you worthy of the heavenly and immortal mysteries. Cease not day or night, and when sleep is banished from your eyes, then let your mind be free for prayer. And if you find any shameful thought rise up in your mind, meditate on the Judgment to remind you of Salvation. Give your mind wholly to study, that it may forget base things. If you find any one saying to you, "Are you then going in, to descend into the water? Has the city just now no baths?" Take notice that it is the dragon of the sea who is laying these plots against you. Attend not to the lips of the talker, but to God who works in you. Guard your own soul that you be not ensnared, so that abiding in hope you may become an heir of everlasting salvation.

17. We for our part as men, charge and teach you thus, but as for you, make not our building hay and stubble and chaff, lest we suffer loss from our work being burnt up; but make our work gold and silver and precious stones! For it lies in me to speak, but in you to set your mind upon it, and in God to make perfect. Let us concentrate our minds and brace up our souls and prepare our hearts. The race is for our soul, our hope is of things eternal. And God, who knows your hearts and observes who is sincere and who is a hypocrite, is able both to guard the sincere and to give faith to the hypocrite. For even to the unbeliever, if only he gives his heart, God is able to give faith. So may He blot out the handwriting that is against you (cf. Col 2:14), and grant you forgiveness of your former trespasses. May He plant you into His Church and enlist you in His own service, and put on you the armor of righteousness. May He fill you with the heavenly things of the New Covenant and give you the seal of the Holy Spirit indelible throughout all ages, in Christ Jesus Our Lord to whom be the glory forever and ever! Amen.

Lecture III: On Baptism

Romans 6:3, 4. Do you not know that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

1. Rejoice, you heavens, and let the earth be glad because of those who are to be sprinkled with hyssop and cleansed with the spiritual hyssop (Ps 50:7), and the power of Him to Whom at His Passion drank from hyssop and a reed. And while the Heavenly Powers rejoice, let the souls that are about to be wed to the spiritual Bridegroom make themselves ready. For the voice is heard of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord." For this wedding is no light matter, no ordinary and indiscriminate union according to the flesh, but the All-searching Spirit's election according to faith. For the marriages and contracts of the world are not made

altogether with judgment, but wherever there is wealth or beauty there the bridegroom speedily approves. But here it is not beauty of person, but the soul's clear conscience; not the condemned Mammon, but the wealth of the soul in godliness, that the Bridegroom desires.

3. This is in truth a serious matter, brethren, and you must approach it with great attention. Each one of you is about to be presented to God before tens of thousands of the Angelic Hosts. The Holy Spirit is about to seal your souls, you are to be enrolled in the army of the Great King. Therefore get ready, be prepared, by putting on I mean, not bright apparel, but piety of soul with a good conscience. Do not think of the baptismal font as filled with simple water, but rather think of the spiritual grace that is given with the water. For just as the offerings brought to the heathen altars, though simple in their nature, become defiled by the invocation of the idols, so in the opposite sense the simple water in the baptismal font having received the invocation of the Holy Spirit, and of Christ, and of the Father, acquires a new sanctifying power.

4. For since man is of twofold nature, soul and body, the purification also is twofold: the one incorporeal for the incorporeal part, and the other bodily for the body. The water cleanses the body, and the Spirit seals the soul that we may draw near to God, having our heart sprinkled by the Spirit, and our body washed with pure water. When going down, therefore, into the water, think not of the bare element, but look for salvation by the power of the Holy Spirit, for without both you cannot possibly be made perfect. It is not I that say this, but the Lord Jesus Christ who has the power in this matter, for He says, *"Except a man be born anew (and He adds the words) of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"* (Jn 3:3). Neither does he who is baptized with water but not found worthy of the Spirit receive the grace in perfection; nor if a man is virtuous in his deeds, but receive not the seal by water shall he enter into the kingdom of heaven. A bold saying, but not mine, for it is Jesus who has declared it: and here is the proof of the statement from Holy Scripture. Cornelius was a just man, who was honored with a vision of Angels, and had set up his prayers and alms-deeds as a good memorial before God in heaven. St. Peter came and the Spirit was poured out on them who believed, and they spoke with other tongues and prophesied. And after the grace of the Spirit the Scripture says that St. Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ in order that the soul having been born again by faith, the body also might by the water partake of the grace.

5. But if any one wishes to know why the grace is given by water and not by a different element, let him take up the Divine Scriptures and he shall learn. For water is a grand thing, and the noblest of the four visible elements of the world. Heaven is the dwelling-place of Angels, but the heavens are from the waters. The earth is the place of men, but the earth is from the waters, and before the whole six days' formation of the things that were made, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the water. The water was the beginning of the world, and Jordan the beginning of the Gospel tidings. Also, Israel's deliverance from Pharaoh was through the sea, and the world was delivered from sins by "the washing of water with the word of God" (Eph 5:26). Where a covenant is made between parties, there is water also. After the flood, a covenant was made with Noah; a covenant was made with Israel from Mount Sinai with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop (cf. Heb 9:19). Elijah is taken up, but not apart from water, for he first crosses the Jordan and then in a chariot mounts the heaven. The high-priest is first washed,

then offers incense; for Aaron first washed, then was made high-priest, for how could one who had not yet been purified by water pray for the rest? Also as a symbol of Baptism there was a basin set apart within the Tabernacle.

6. Baptism is the end of the Old Testament and beginning of the New. For its author was St. John, whom there is no one greater among those that are born of women (Mat 11:11). The end He was the end of the Prophets, for all the Prophets and the law were until John, but of the Gospel history he was the first-fruit. For it is said, *"The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ..."* (Mark 1:1-4). St. John came baptizing in the wilderness. You may mention Elijah the Tishbite who was taken up into heaven, yet he is not greater than St. John. Enoch was translated, but he is not greater than St. John. Moses was a very great lawgiver, and all the Prophets were admirable, but not greater than St. John. It is not I that dare to compare Prophets with Prophets, but their Master and ours, the Lord Jesus, declared it: "Among them that are born of women there has not risen a greater prophet than John." He says not "among them that are born of virgins," but "of women." The comparison is between the great servant and his fellow-servants, but the pre-eminence and the grace of the Son is beyond comparison with servants. Do you see how great a man God chose as the first minister of this grace? A man possessing nothing and a lover of the desert, yet no hater of mankind. A man who ate locusts, and winged his soul for heaven, feeding upon honey, and speaking things both sweeter and more salutary than honey. A man clothed with a garment of camel's hair, and showing in himself the pattern of the ascetic life; who also was sanctified by the Holy Spirit while yet he was carried in his mother's womb. Jeremiah was sanctified, but did not prophesy in the womb. St. John alone while carried in the womb leaped for joy, and though he saw not with the eyes of flesh, knew his Master by the Spirit. For since the grace of Baptism was great, it required greatness in its founder also.

7. This man was baptizing in Jordan, and there went out to him all Jerusalem to enjoy the first-fruits of baptisms, for to Jerusalem is the pre-eminence of all good things. But learn, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, how they who came out were baptized by him, confessing their sins, it is said. First they showed their wounds, then he applied the remedies, and to them who believed he gave redemption from eternal fire. And if you want to be convinced of this very point, that the baptism of John is a redemption from the threat of the fire, hear how he says, "O generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" But since you have fled, cease from being a viper. As you have been formerly a viper's brood, put off the slough of your former sinful life. For every serpent creeps into a hole and casts its old slough, and having rubbed off the old skin, grows young again in body. In like manner enter also through the strait and narrow gate: rub off your former self by fasting, and drive out that which is destroying you. Put off the old man with his doings, and quote that saying in the Canticles, *"I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on?"* (Song 5:3). But there is perhaps among you some hypocrite, a man-pleaser, and one who makes a pretence of piety, but believes not from the heart, having the hypocrisy of Simon the Sorcerer; one who has come here not in order to receive of the grace, but to spy out what is given: let him also learn from John: *"And even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees, therefore every tree which does not forth good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire"* (Mat 3:10). The Judge is so serious so put away your hypocrisy.

10. If any man does not receive Baptism, he has not salvation; except only Martyrs, who even without the water receive the kingdom. For when the Savior, in redeeming the world by His Cross, was pierced in the side, He shed forth blood and water that men, living in times of peace, might be baptized in water, and, in times of persecution, in their own blood. For the Savior spoke of martyrdom also as baptism, saying, *“Can you drink from the cup which I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”* (Mark 10:38). And the Martyrs profess their faith by being made *a spectacle to the world, and to Angels, and to men* (I Cor 4:9); and you will soon profess your faith; but it is not yet the time for you to hear of this.

11. Jesus sanctified Baptism by being Himself baptized. If the Son of God was baptized, what godly man is there who despises Baptism? But He was baptized not that He might receive remission of sins, for He was sinless, but being sinless He was baptized that He might give to them who are baptized a divine and excellent grace. *“For since the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise partook of the same”* (Heb 2:14), so that we having been made partakers of His presence in the flesh, we might be made partakers also of His Divine grace. Thus, Jesus was baptized that by this we again by our participation might receive both salvation and honor. According to Job, there was in the waters the dragon that draws up Jordan into his mouth (cf. Job 40:23). Since, therefore, it was necessary to break the heads of the dragon in pieces (cf. Ps 74:14), He went down and bound the strong one in the waters that we might receive power to tread upon serpents and scorpions. The beast was great and terrible. No fishing-vessel was able to carry one scale of his tail (cf. Job 40:26); destruction ran before him, ravaging all that met him. The Life encountered him that the mouth of Death might henceforth be stopped, and all we who are saved might say, *“O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?”* (I Cor 15:55). The sting of death is destroyed by Baptism.

13. Moreover, when you have been deemed worthy of the grace, He then gives you strength to wrestle against the adverse powers. For as after His Baptism He was tempted forty days (not that He was unable to gain the victory before, but because He wished to do all things in due order and succession), so you likewise, though not daring before your baptism to wrestle with the adversaries, yet after you have received the grace and have received the courage, must then fight with the armor of righteousness, and, if you will, preach the Gospel.

14. Jesus Christ was the Son of God, yet He preached not the Gospel before His Baptism. If the Master Himself followed the right time in due order, ought we, His servants, to venture out of order? From that time Jesus began to preach, when the Holy Spirit had descended upon Him in a bodily shape, like a dove; not that Jesus might see Him first, for He knew Him even before He came in a bodily shape, but that St. John, who was baptizing Him, might behold Him. *“For I, knew Him not, but He who sent me to baptize with water, He said to me, ‘Upon whomever you shall see the Spirit descending and abiding on Him, this is He’”* (Jn 1:33). If you too have sincere piety, the Holy Spirit will come down on you also, and the Father's voice will sound over you from on high, not to say, *“This is My Son,”* but, *“This has now been made My son;”* for the “is” belongs to Him alone, because *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* To Him belongs the “is,” since He is always the Son of God, but to you

“has now been made” since you have not the sonship by nature, but receive it by adoption. He eternally “is,” but you receive the grace by adoption. Make ready then the vessel of your soul, that you may become a son of God, and an heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ (cf. Rom 8:17).

16. Be of good courage, O Jerusalem, the Lord will take away all your iniquities. The Lord will wash away the filth of His sons and of His daughters by the Spirit of judgment, and by the Spirit of burning. He will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be cleansed from all your sin (cf. Zeph 3: 14-15, Isa 4:4, Ezek 36;25). Angels shall dance around you, and say, “Who is this who comes up in white array, leaning on her beloved?” (cf. Song 8:5). For the soul that was formerly a slave has now adopted her Master Himself as her kinsman. And He accepting the sincere intention will answer: “Behold, you are fair, my love; behold, you are fair. Your teeth are like flocks of sheep new shorn, (because of the confession of a good conscience) which have all of them twins (cf. Song 4:1-2), because of the twofold grace, I mean that which is perfected of water and of the Spirit, or that which is announced by the Old and by the New Testament. And God grant that all of you when you have finished the course of the fast, may remember what I say, and bringing forth fruit in good works, may stand blameless beside the Spiritual Bridegroom, and obtain the remission of your sins from God to whom with the Son and Holy Spirit be the glory forever. Amen.

Mystagogic Catecheses (addressed to the newly baptized, in preparation for the reception of Holy Communion) – part of 5 total lectures given on the Holy Mysteries

Lecture XIX: First Lecture on the Mysteries

“Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experience of suffering is required of your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, establish, and strengthen you. To Him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God; stand fast in it. She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark. Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you that are in Christ.” (I Peter 5:8-14)

This lecture was given on Bright Monday, the Monday after Pascha (Easter), after they had been baptized.

1. I have long been wishing, O true-born and dearly beloved children of the Church, to speak to you concerning these spiritual and heavenly Mysteries. However, since I well knew that seeing is far more persuasive than hearing, I waited for the present season so that finding you more open to the influence of my words from your present experience, I might lead you by the hand

into the brighter and more fragrant meadow of the Paradise before us; especially as you have been made fit to receive the more sacred Mysteries, after having been found worthy of divine and life-giving Baptism. Since therefore it remains to set before you a table of the more perfect instructions, let us now teach you these things exactly, that you may know the effect wrought upon you on that evening of your baptism.

2. First you entered into the vestibule of the Baptistery, and there facing towards the West you listened to the command to stretch forth your hand, and as in the presence of Satan you renounced him. Now you must know that this figure, the devil, is found in ancient history. For when Pharaoh, that most bitter and cruel tyrant, was oppressing the free and high-born people of the Hebrews, God sent Moses to bring them out of the evil bondage of the Egyptians. Then the door posts were anointed with the blood of a lamb that the destroyer might flee from the houses which had the sign of the blood; and the Hebrew people were marvelously delivered. The enemy, however, after their rescue, pursued after them (cf. Exodus 14:9-23), and saw the sea wondrously parted for them. Nevertheless he went on, following close in their footsteps, and was all at once overwhelmed and engulfed in the Red Sea.

3. Now turn from the old to the new, from the figure to the reality. There we have Moses sent from God to Egypt; here, Christ, sent forth from His Father into the world. There, that Moses might lead forth an afflicted people out of Egypt; here, that Christ might rescue those who are oppressed in the world under sin. There, the blood of a lamb was the spell against the destroyer; here, the blood of the Lamb without blemish Jesus Christ is made the charm to scare evil spirits. There, the tyrant was pursuing that ancient people even to the sea; and here the daring and shameless spirit, the author of evil, was following you even to the very streams of salvation. The tyrant of old was drowned in the sea; and this present one disappears in the water of salvation.

4. But nevertheless you are bidden to say, with arm outstretched towards him as though he were present, "I renounce you, Satan." I wish also to answer why you stand facing to the West; for it is necessary. Since the West is the region of sensible darkness, and he being darkness has his dominion also in darkness, therefore, looking with a symbolical meaning towards the West, you renounce that dark and gloomy potentate. What then did each of you stand up and say? "I renounce you, Satan,"—you wicked and most cruel tyrant, meaning, "I fear your might no longer; for that Christ has overthrown, *having partaken with me of flesh and blood, that through these He might by death destroy death* (Heb 2:14, 15), that I might not be made *subject to bondage* forever." "I renounce you,"—you crafty and most subtle serpent. "I renounce you,"—plotter as you are, who under the guise of friendship did contrive all disobedience, and work apostasy in our first parents. "I renounce you, Satan,"—the artificer and abettor of all wickedness.

5. Then in a second sentence you are taught to say, "and all your works." Now the works of Satan are all sin, which also you must renounce—just as one who has escaped a tyrant has surely escaped his weapons also. All sin therefore, of every kind, is included in the works of the devil. Only know this: that all that you say, especially at that most thrilling hour, is written in

God's books. When therefore you do anything contrary to these promises, you shall be judged as *a transgressor* (Gal 2:18). You therefore renounce the works of Satan, which are all deeds and thoughts which are contrary to reason.

6. Then you say, "And all his pomp." Now the pomp of the devil is the madness of theaters, and horse races, and hunting, and all such vanity. This is what that holy man David prayed to be delivered from, saying to God, "*Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity*" (Psa 119:37). Be not interested in the madness of the theater, where you will behold the shameless gestures of the players, carried on with mockeries and all unseemliness, and the frantic dancing of effeminate men—nor in the madness of them who in hunts expose themselves to wild beasts that they may pamper their miserable appetite. These who serve their belly with meats become themselves in reality meat for the belly of untamed beasts; and to speak justly, for the sake of their own god, their belly, they cast away their life headlong in single combats. Shun also horse races, that frantic and soul-subverting spectacle. For all these are the pomp of the devil.

7. Moreover, the things which are hung up at idol festivals, either meat or bread, or other such things polluted by the invocation of the unclean spirits, are considered the pomp of the devil. For as the Bread and Wine of the Eucharist before the invocation of the Holy and Adorable Trinity were simple bread and wine, while after the invocation the Bread becomes the Body of Christ, and the Wine the Blood of Christ, so in like manner such meats belonging to the pomp of Satan, though in their own nature simple become profane by the invocation of the evil spirit.

8. After this you say, "and all your service." Now the service of the devil is prayer in idol temples, things done in honor of lifeless idols, and the lighting of lamps or burning of incense by fountains or rivers, as some persons cheated by dreams or by evil spirits do, thinking to find a cure even for their bodily ailments. Go not after such things. The watching of birds, divination, omens, or amulets, or charms written on leaves, sorceries, or other evil arts, and all such things are services of the devil; therefore shun them. For if after renouncing Satan and associating yourself with Christ, you fall under their influence you shall find the tyrant even more bitter. This is perhaps because he treated you of old as his own and relieved you from his hard bondage, but has now been greatly exasperated by you; so you will be bereaved of Christ and have experience of the other. Have you not heard the old history which tells us of Lot and his daughters? Was not he himself saved with his daughters when he went to the mountain, while his wife became a pillar of salt, which was set up as a monument forever in remembrance of her depraved will and her turning back. Take heed therefore to yourself and turn not again to *what is behind* (Phil 3:13), having put your hand to the plough, and then turning back to the salt savor of this life's doings. But rather escape to *the mountain*, to Jesus Christ, *that stone hewn without hands* (Daniel 2:35, 45), which has filled the world.

9. When therefore you renounce Satan, utterly breaking all your *covenant* with him, that ancient league *with hell* (Isa 28:15), there is opened to you the paradise of God, which He planted towards the East, where for Adam's transgression our first father was banished. A symbol of this was your turning from West to East, the place of light. Then you were told to say, "I believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Spirit, and in one Baptism of

repentance.” Of which things we spoke to you at length in the former lectures, as God’s grace allowed us.

10. Guarded therefore by these discourses, be sober. *For our adversary the devil, as was just now read, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour* (1 Pt 5:8). But though in former times death was mighty and devoured, at the holy Laver of Regeneration God has *wiped away every tear from off all faces* (Isa 25:8, Rev 7:17). For you shall no more mourn now that you have put off the old man, but you shall keep holy-day, *clothed in the garment of salvation* (Isa 61:10), even Jesus Christ.

11. And these things were done in the outer chamber. But if God will, when in the succeeding lectures on the Mysteries we have entered into the Holy of Holies, we shall there know the symbolical meaning of the things which are there performed. Now to God the Father, with the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be glory, and power, and majesty, forever and ever. Amen

Lecture XX: Second Lecture on the Mysteries – On Baptism

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For he who has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. The death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. Do not yield your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. (Romans 6:3-14)

1. These daily introductions into the Mysteries and new instructions, which are the announcements of new truths, are profitable to us; most of all to you, who have been renewed from an old state to a new. Therefore, I shall necessarily lay before you the sequel of yesterday’s lecture that you may learn of what those things, which were done by you in the inner chamber, were symbolical.

2. As soon as you entered, you put off your tunic; this was an image of *putting off the old man with his deeds* (Col 3:9). Having stripped yourselves, you were naked; in this also imitating Christ, who was stripped naked on the Cross, and by His nakedness *put off from Himself the principalities and powers, and openly triumphed over them on the tree* (Col 2:15). For since the

adverse powers made their den in your members, you may no longer wear that old garment; I do not at all mean this visible one, but the *old man, which grows corrupt in the lusts of deceit* (Eph 4:22). May the soul which has once put him off, never again put him on, but say with the Spouse of Christ in the Song of Songs, *I have put off my garment, how shall I put it on?* (Song 5:3). O wondrous thing! You were naked in the sight of all and were not ashamed; for truly you bore the likeness of the first-formed Adam who was naked in the garden and was not ashamed.

3. Then, when you were stripped, you were anointed with exorcised oil, from the very hairs of your head to your feet, and were made partakers of the good olive-tree, Jesus Christ. For you were cut off from the wild olive-tree, and grafted into the good one, and were made to share the fatness of the true olive-tree. The exorcised oil therefore was a symbol of the participation of the fatness of Christ, being a charm to drive away every trace of hostile influence. For as the breathing of the saints, and the invocation of the Name of God, like fiercest flame, scorch and drive out evil spirits, so also this exorcised oil receives such virtue by the invocation of God and by prayer, as not only to burn and cleanse away the traces of sins, but also to chase away all the invisible powers of the evil one.

4. After these things, you were led to the holy pool of Divine Baptism, as Christ was carried from the Cross to the Sepulcher which is before our eyes. And each of you was asked, whether he believed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and you made that saving confession, and descended three times into the water, and ascended again; here also hinting by a symbol at the three days burial of Christ. For as our Savior passed three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, so you also in your first ascent out of the water, represented the first day of Christ in the earth, and by your descent the night; for as he who is in the night, no longer sees, but he who is in the day remains in the light, so in the descent, as in the night, you saw nothing, but in ascending again you were as in the day. And at the self-same moment you were both dying and being born; and that Water of salvation was at once your grave and your mother. And what Solomon spoke of others will suit you also, for he said in that case, *There is a time to live and a time to die* (Eccl 3:2); but to you, in the reverse order, there was a time to die and a time to be born; and one and the same time effected both of these, and your birth went hand-in-hand with your death.

5. O strange and inconceivable thing! We did not really die, we were not really buried, we were not really crucified and raised again; but our imitation was in a figure, and our salvation in reality. Christ was actually crucified, and actually buried, and truly rose again; and all these things He has freely bestowed upon us, that we, sharing His sufferings by imitation, might gain salvation in reality. O surpassing loving-kindness! Christ received nails in His undefiled hands and feet and suffered anguish, while on me without pain or toil by the fellowship of His suffering He freely bestows salvation.

6. Let no one then suppose that Baptism is merely the grace of remission of sins, or further, that of adoption similar to how John's was a baptism conferring only remission of sins. Whereas here we know full well that as it purges our sins and ministers to us the gift of the Holy Spirit, so also it is the counterpart of the sufferings of Christ. For this cause St. Paul just cried aloud and

said, *“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death”* (Rom 6:3). These words he spoke to some who were disposed to think that Baptism ministers to us the remission of sins and adoption, but has not further the fellowship also by representation of Christ’s true sufferings.

7. In order therefore that we might learn that whatever things Christ endured for us and for our salvation, He suffered them in reality and not in appearance and that we also are made partakers of His sufferings, St. Paul cried with all exactness of truth, *“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection”* (Rom 6:5). Well has he said, *planted together*. For since the true Vine was planted in this place, we also by partaking in the Baptism of death have been *planted together* with Him. And fix your mind with much attention on the words of the Apostle. He said not, *“For if we have been planted together with His death,”* but, *“in the likeness of His death.”* For in Christ’s case there was death in reality, for His soul was really separated from His body and really burial. For His holy Body was wrapped in pure linen and everything happened really to Him, but in your case there was only a likeness of death and sufferings, whereas of salvation there was not a likeness but a reality.

8. Having been sufficiently instructed in these things, keep them, I beseech you, in your remembrance that I also, unworthy though I am, may say of you, *“Now I praise you, because you always remember me, and hold fast the traditions which I delivered to you”* (1 Cor 11:2). And God, who has presented you as it were *alive from the dead* (Rom 6:13), is able to grant unto you to *walk in newness of life* (Rom 6:4) because His is the glory and the power, now and forever. Amen.

Lecture XXI: Third Lecture on the Mysteries - On Chrism

But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all know. I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and know that no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father. He who confesses the Son has the Father also. Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is what He has promised us, eternal life. I write this to you about those who would deceive you; but the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that any one should teach you; as His anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie, just as it has taught you, abide in Him. And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears we may have confidence and not shrink from Him in shame at His coming. (1 John 2:20-28)

1. Having been *baptized into Christ*, and *put on Christ* (Gal 3:27), you have been made conformable to the Son of God. For God having *foreordained us unto adoption as sons* (Eph

1:5), He made us *to be conformed to the body of Christ's glory* (Phil 3:21). Having therefore become *partakers of Christ* (Heb 3:14), you are properly called Christs, and of you God said, *Touch not My Christs* (Psa 104:15), or anointed. Now you have been made Christs, by receiving the antitype of the Holy Spirit; and all things have been wrought in you by imitation, because you are images of Christ. He washed in the river Jordan, and having imparted of the fragrance of His Godhead to the waters He came up from them; and the Holy Spirit in the fullness of His being lighted on Him— like resting upon like. And to you in like manner, after you had come up from the Pool of the sacred streams, there was given an Unction, the anti-type of that with which Christ was anointed; and this is the Holy Spirit of whom also the blessed Isaiah in his prophecy about Him, said in the person of the Lord, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me; He has sent Me to preach glad tidings to the poor* (Isa 61:1).

2. For Christ was not anointed by men with oil or material ointment, but the Father having before appointed Him to be the Savior of the whole world, anointed Him with the Holy Spirit, as St. Peter says, *"Jesus of Nazareth, whom God anointed with the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 10:38). David the Prophet also cried, saying, *"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom; You have loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God even Your God has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows* (Psa 44:7-8). And as Christ was in reality crucified, buried, and raised, and you are in Baptism accounted worthy of being crucified, buried, and raised together with Him in a likeness, so is it with the Unction also. As He was anointed with the spiritual oil of gladness, the Holy Spirit, who is so called, because He is the author of spiritual gladness, so you were anointed with ointment, having been made partakers and *fellows of Christ*.

3. But beware of supposing this to be plain ointment. For as the Bread of the Eucharist, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, is no longer mere bread but the Body of Christ, so also this Holy Ointment is no more simple ointment, nor (so to say) common, after the invocation, but the gift of Christ; and by the presence of His Godhead, it causes in us the Holy Spirit. It is symbolically applied to your forehead and your other senses; and while your body is anointed with the visible ointment, your soul is sanctified by the Holy and life-giving Spirit.

4. And you were first anointed on the forehead, that you might be delivered from the shame, which the first man who transgressed bore about with him everywhere; and that *with unveiled face you might reflect as a mirror the glory of the Lord* (2 Cor 3:18). Then you are anointed on your ears that you might receive the ears which are quick to hear the Divine Mysteries of which Isaiah said, *"The Lord gave me also an ear to hear"* (Isa 50:4); and the Lord Jesus in the Gospel, *"He who ears to hear, let him hear"* (Matt 11:15). Then on the nostrils that receiving the sacred ointment you may say, *"We are to God a sweet savor of Christ to those who are saved"* (2 Cor 2:15). Afterwards on your breast that having put on the *breast-plate of righteousness*, you may *stand against the wiles of the devil* (Eph 6:14, 11). For as Christ after His Baptism, and the visitation of the Holy Spirit went forth and vanquished the adversary, so likewise you after Holy Baptism and the Mystical Chrism, having put on the whole armor of the Holy Spirit, are to stand against the power of the adversary, and vanquish it, saying, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"* (Phil 4:13).

5. Having been counted worthy of this Holy Chrism, you are called Christians, verifying the name also by your new birth. For before you were deemed worthy of this Grace, you had properly no right to this title, but were advancing on your way towards being Christians.

6. Moreover, you should know that in the old Scripture there lies the symbol of this Chrism. For immediately after Moses imparted to his brother the command of God and made him High-priest after bathing in water, he anointed him; and Aaron was called Christ or Anointed, evidently from the typical Chrism. So also the High-priest, in advancing Solomon to the kingdom, anointed him after he had bathed in Gihon (1 Kings 1:39). To them however these things happened in a figure, but to you not in a figure, but in truth; because you were truly anointed by the Holy Spirit. Christ is the beginning of your salvation for He is truly the First-fruit, and you the lump; but *if the First-fruit is holy*, it is manifest that *Its holiness will pass to the mass also* (Rom 11:16).

7. Keep this Chrism unspotted, for It shall teach you all things, if It abide in you, as you have just heard declared by the blessed John, discoursing much concerning this Chrism. For this holy thing is a spiritual safeguard of the body and salvation of the soul. Of this the blessed Isaiah prophesying of old time said, *“And on this mountain,—(now he calls the Church a mountain elsewhere also, as when he says, In the last days the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be manifest [Isa 2:2])— shall the Lord make to all nations a feast; they shall drink wine, they shall drink gladness, they shall anoint themselves with ointment”* (Isa 25:6). And that he may make you sure, hear what he says of this ointment as being mystical: *“Deliver all these things to the nations, for the counsel of the Lord is unto all nations”* (Isa 25:7). Having been anointed, therefore, with this holy ointment, keep it unspotted and unblemished in you, pressing forward by good works, and being made well-pleasing to the Captain of your salvation, Christ Jesus, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

CYRIL'S USE OF SCRIPTURE, AND HIS THEOLOGY

Since Jerusalem was a point of contact between Greek- and Syriac-speaking Christians, it is no surprise that Cyril's theology shows numerous points of affinity with both Antiochene and Syriac writings. Thus his Christology is in some respects in the tradition of Antioch, while his use of typology and imagery has many parallels in Syriac literature.¹

THE USE OF SCRIPTURE

Cyril subscribed to a form of *scriptura sola* doctrine, stating categorically that every doctrinal statement must be based on the Scriptures: 'let us not presume to speak of what is not in Scripture' (*Cat.* 16.24).

For where the divine and holy mysteries of the Creed are concerned, one must not teach casually without reference to the sacred Scriptures, or be led astray by persuasive and elaborate arguments. Do not simply take my word when I tell you these things, unless you are given proof for my teaching from holy Scripture. (*Cat.* 4.17)

The Creed summarizes the Scriptures which contain the whole of doctrine (*Cat.* 5.12).

Cyril's method of interpreting Scripture had more in common with Antioch than with Alexandria. The Alexandrian Fathers, following Philo, Clement and Origen, influenced no doubt by the methods which the literary critics of their city employed to expound the Homeric poems, were quick to seek a philosophical or spiritual message beyond the literal interpretation of a passage, and in doing so were prone to

attach a deep, allegorical significance to each detail of a narrative. Thus for Origen the 'two measures' which the pots at Cana contained refers to the two senses of God's word, 'the soul meaning and the spiritual meaning'.² The Antiochenes, on the other hand, while suspicious of the arbitrary nature of allegory, were not opposed to every kind of 'spiritual' interpretation, provided that the historical narrative was respected.³ Thus John Chrysostom appealed not only to verbal prophecy but also to 'prophecy expressed in terms of things'.⁴

It is this Antiochene method which Cyril adopts and develops. In the *Catecheses* he repeatedly regards events in the Old Testament as prophecies of the circumstances of Jesus' Passion and resurrection, providing 'testimonies (*marturias*) concerning the cross', and 'proofs (*apodeixeis*) concerning the resurrection' (*Cat.* 14.2). His aim is not 'to perform an allegorical (*theoretiken*) exposition of the Scriptures, but to deepen our faith in things we already believe' (*Cat.* 13.9). For example, the Old Testament provides the key to understanding the details of the resurrection (*Cat.* 14.5):

Do you want an indication of the place? It says again in the Song of Songs: 'I went down to the nut-garden' (Cant 6.10 (11)). For it was in a garden that he was crucified. For although it has been largely decorated with royal gifts, it was once a garden, and the signs and remains of it are still present. 'A garden enclosed...a spring sealed' by the Jews who said: 'We have remembered that that deceiver said while he was still alive: "after three days I shall rise." So give orders for the tomb to be made safe.' And later: 'They went and made the tomb safe with the guard, sealing the stone' (Mt 27.63–4, 66). There is a saying which applies to them neatly: 'You will judge them to your rest' (Job 7.18 (LXX)). What is the sealed spring? What is the meaning of the 'spring of the well of living water' (Cant 4.15 (adjusted))? It is the Saviour himself, about whom Scripture says: 'With you is the spring of life' (Ps 35 (36).9).

Underlying this exegetical method is a theory of salvation-history resting on two presuppositions. The first is that God's saving action is a continuous whole, so that what he has accomplished in the Old Testament gains its true significance as a preparation for his work in the New. A hermeneutic of this sort was already familiar to St Paul, according to whom the misfortunes which befell the

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Israelites in the desert were types or symbols (*tupoi*) of our situation: 'these things befell them symbolically (*tupikos*) but were written as a warning for us' (1 Cor 10.6, 10). Adam was 'a symbol (*tupos*) of the one to come' (Rom 5.14). So too in 1 Peter the salvation which comes to us through baptism is symbolized by (*antitupon*) the safety which the ark provided for Noah and his family amid the water of the Flood (1 Pet 3.21).

The second presupposition of this method is that the symbol provided by the Old Testament event is less 'real' or 'true' than its application in the life of the Church. To transfer one's gaze from the crossing of the Red Sea to baptism is to pass from symbol (*tupos*) to reality (*MC* 1.3). Our baptism is an 'image' (*eikon*) and 'imitation' (*mimesis*) of what happened 'really' (*ontos, alethos*), of Christ's Passion and resurrection (*MC* 2.5). Solomon was anointed as a prefiguration (*tupikos*) of the anointing which Christians receive in reality (*alethos*).

Cyril does not develop this typological interpretation of Old Testament events and persons until the *Mystagogics*, where he uses it in various ways and extends it beyond the Old Testament to other areas:

- The Old Testament type (e.g. the blood of the lamb at the Exodus) points to an event in Christ's life (the shedding of Christ's blood) (*MC* 1.3).
- The Old Testament type (e.g. the Red Sea; the anointing of Aaron and Solomon) points to an event in the sacramental life of the Church (baptism, post-baptismal anointing) (*MC* 1.3; 3.6).
- The sacramental event (e.g. baptism, anointing) is an imitation or image of or participation in an event in the life of Christ (the Passion, anointing with spiritual—*noetoi*—oil) (*MC* 2.5–6; 3.2).
- The sacramental event (e.g. receiving bread and wine, washing hands) is a sign or symbol (*tupos, symbolon*) of an effect in the order of grace (sharing Christ's body and blood and becoming of one body and blood with him, purification from sin) (Mt 4.3; 5.2; 5.20).

THEOLOGY

Space is not available here for a complete summary of Cyril's teaching; nor is one necessary, as he provides his own in the fourth *Catechesis*. We shall be content with selecting four major themes: theological language, the Trinity, Christology and sacramental theology.

Theological language

The inadequacy of human language to describe God is a recurrent theme in Cyril's writings. He develops his idea most fully in the opening paragraphs of *Cat.* 6. 'For in what concerns God the height of knowledge is to confess one's ignorance' (*Cat.* 6.2). There is much in creation we cannot explain; how can we presume to give an account of the Creator? Cyril gives more than one reason why God is hidden from us: we often find it impossible to express analytically in words complicated facts which we recognize by insight; God's 'substance' (*hupostasis*) or 'nature' (*phusis*) is hidden from us, even though we know enough from his works for our needs (*Cat.* 6.5; 9.2). Thus in his analysis of the statement that the Father 'begot' the Son, Cyril warns the listener against an anthropomorphic understanding of the word and against curious speculation (*polupragmonein*):

So will you speculate about matters which even the Holy Spirit has not written of in the Scriptures? If you are ignorant of what is written there, will you speculate about what is not written? (*Cat.* 11.12; cf. 11.8–13)

The purpose of theology is 'to glorify the Lord, not to explain him' (*Cat.* 6.5).

Trinity

The pastoral and liturgical orientation of Cyril's theology helps to explain why he never became deeply engaged in theological controversy over the Trinity. In the *Catecheses* he expresses regret at the schisms which were dividing the Church, but shows little interest in the doctrinal issues involved. Thus, speaking on the signs of the Second Coming, he advises the candidates not to bother with the theological issues which lead to schisms:

If you hear that bishops are proceeding against bishops, and clerics against clerics, and congregations against congregations, even to the point of bloodshed, do not be disturbed. It was foretold in Scripture. So pay no attention to what people are *doing*; attend to what is *written* in Scripture. (*Cat.* 15.7)

The early Arians could regard him as a man who posed no threat; his clashes with Acacius were perhaps concerned more with ecclesiastical

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politics than with dogma. He never includes Arius or his followers in lists of heretics. Although Rufinus thought it characteristic of Cyril's episcopate that he 'varied sometimes in faith, more often in communion',⁵ J. Lebon seems to be right when he suggests that this judgment is only half true: though Cyril's 'communion' varied, in so far as he changed his allegiance from the Arian to the anti-Arian party, his faith remained unchanged.⁶

Nevertheless there are points at which, even as early as the *Catecheses*, Cyril's intention seems to be to refute an Arian tenet. He rejects the Arian watchword: 'There was once when the Son was not.'⁷ According to St Athanasius, the Arians had argued from Phil 2.9 ('therefore God has highly exalted him...') that Christ became God and Son as a 'reward of virtue', through advancement (*prokope*) and improvement in humility (c. *Arianos* 1.37, 40); Cyril by contrast, apparently anticipating Athanasius by several years, states that Jesus 'did not gain the rank of Lord by advancement (*prokope*) but possesses it by nature' (*Cat.* 10.6).

It seems unlikely that Cyril was ever expressly opposed to the *homoousion*, as A. Harnack and A. Stephenson suggest.⁸ It is, however, true that the word occurs only once in his works, namely in the formal conclusion to the Letter to Constantius (8), where he refers to 'the holy and consubstantial Trinity'. This passage is surprising for several reasons. First, one would not expect to find Cyril speaking in these terms to the Arian sympathizer Constantius, especially as he seems concerned to win the Emperor's favour. Moreover, whereas the Nicene Creed speaks of the Son as consubstantial with the Father, this passage describes the whole Trinity as consubstantial, a use of the term which was not officially adopted until the Council of Constantinople (381).⁹ Even in the late *Mystagogic Catecheses* Cyril speaks of the Spirit as 'like (*homoioi*)' the Son, rather than 'consubstantial' with him (*MC* 3.1). Presumably it is reasons such as these which led Stephenson to conclude that the term 'consubstantial' in the Letter to Constantius is 'certainly an interpolation'.¹⁰

Still, granted that it was not to be expected that Cyril would describe the Spirit as 'consubstantial' as early as the *Catecheses* or the Letter to Constantius, it is clear that he already believed in the Spirit's full divinity: 'the Only-begotten Son shares in his Father's divinity together with the Holy Spirit' (*Cat.* 6.6). However, he explicitly renounced any attempt to express this truth in scientifically exact terms:

There is one God the Father, one Lord, his Only-begotten Son, and one Holy Spirit, the Paraclete. This is all we

need to know, without inquiring curiously about nature or hypostasis. For if it had been in Scripture, we would have spoken of it; let us not presume to speak of what is not in Scripture. (*Cat.* 16.24)

However, Cyril has many ways of formulating his understanding of the Trinity without recourse to the controversial *homoousios*. The language of the Gospels and the Creed ('I believe in one God, the Father...') encourages him to apply the name of God pre-eminently to the Father: 'One should not think of God without thinking of him as Father' (*Cat.* 6.1). Like Justin and the other Logos-theologians, Cyril explores the process of speech as an analogy for the begetting of the Father's Son or Word (*Cat.* 11.10).

Cyril has various ways of expressing the Son's equality with the Father. 'For the Son is in everything like (*homoios*) the Father' (*Cat.* 11.18; cf. 4.7). The Son is eternally begotten: he has an *arche* in the sense of an origin, but not a beginning in time (*Cat.* 11.20). His glory and his worship are identical with the Father's; their wills are inseparable.¹¹ Jesus' words: 'I and the Father are one' (Jn 10.30) mean that they are one in the dignity of their Godhead, in their reign, in unity of wills and operations; the Father creates through the Son (*Cat.* 11.16).

Thus Cyril envisages the Son as in a sense subordinate to the Father, though equal to him. The Father is the principle or beginning (*arche*) of the Son (*Cat.* 11.30). The Son 'honours' the Father, and obeys him.¹² It is by the Father's decree that he rules over the world he has created (*Cat.* 10.5).

Christology

Cyril kept apart from speculative controversy about the nature of Jesus Christ, just as he did about the Trinity. Nevertheless his treatment of the Saviour in his addresses implies a firm Christology, for he wanted to show his hearers how to assess various heresies, and to make them see the significance of what had taken place 'here in Jerusalem'. Thus we find him affirming against the Docetists the reality of Jesus' earthly existence:

The humanity he assumed was not an appearance only or an illusion, but true. He did not pass through the Virgin as if through a pipe, but truly took flesh from her and

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was truly nourished by her milk...For if the Incarnation was an illusion, so too was our salvation. (*Cat.* 4.9)

There is no hint of the hesitations which even orthodox theologians sometimes showed about asserting that Jesus experienced real suffering:

You must believe too that this Only-begotten Son of God came down from heaven to earth because of our sins, assumed a humanity subject to the same feelings as ours, and was born of the holy Virgin and the Holy Spirit. (*Cat.* 4.9)

Christ was really crucified and really buried and literally rose again, and all of this he did for our sake so that we might gain salvation literally. What unmeasured love this showed for mankind! Christ received the nails in his pure hands and experienced pain, and grants me salvation through sharing his experience without the pain and the toil. (*MC* 2.5)

In his comments on the Creed he is equally explicit about the distinction between Christ's humanity and divinity, and about the unity between them. Cyril does not draw the conclusion that every event in Jesus' life had both a divine and a human dimension, but like Tertullian he attributes some of Jesus' experiences to the divinity and others to the humanity:

Christ was twofold: man in appearance, and God, but not in appearance. As man he ate truly as we do, for he had the same fleshly feelings as ourselves; but it was as God that he fed the five thousand from five loaves. As man he truly died; but it was as God that he raised the four days dead body to life. As man he truly slept on the boat; but it was as God that he walked on the waters.¹⁵

SACRAMENTAL THEOLOGY

In addition to what has been said above concerning Cyril's celebration of the liturgy and his use of typology, two more points need to be made. The first concerns the importance he attached to the epiclesis (the invocation of the Holy Spirit). In the most fully worked out

formulation of this, the celebrant calls upon the Father to send down the Holy Spirit, so as to make Christ present or active in a sacrament. This trinitarian form is evident in Cyril's account of the epiclesis at the Eucharist:

we call upon the God who loves mankind to send down the Holy Spirit on the offerings so as to make the bread Christ's body and the wine Christ's blood, for whatever the Holy Spirit touches is made holy and transformed. (*MC* 5.7)

The same process is at work with the water of the baptismal font:

after the ordinary water has received the invocation of the Holy Spirit and Christ and the Father, it acquires the power of holiness (*Cat.* 3.3)

and the *muron*:

just as after the invocation of the Holy Spirit the bread of the Eucharist is no longer ordinary bread but the body of Christ, so too this holy *muron* is no longer ordinary or, so to say, common ointment, but Christ's grace which imparts to us his own divinity through the presence of the Holy Spirit. (*MC* 3.3)¹⁴

The second point concerns Cyril's explanation of Christ's eucharistic presence in realistic, almost materialistic terms. The bread and wine are 'transformed' by the Holy Spirit; if one loses a particle of the Eucharistic bread, 'it is as if it were part of your own body that is being lost' (*MC* 5.7; 5.21). When we receive holy communion, 'we become Christ-bearers, as his body and blood are spread around our limbs' (*MC* 4.3). The sacrament benefits the body and the soul in different ways:

In the New Testament there is the bread of heaven and the cup of salvation, which sanctify both body and soul. Just as the bread is suitable for the body, so the Word is adapted to the soul. (*MC* 4.5)

In receiving the sacrament the communicants apply the bread and wine to their senses:

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Before you receive, carefully bless your eyes with the touch of the holy body...While your lips are still moist, touch them with your hands and bless your eyes, your forehead and your other senses. (*MC* 5.21–2)

Christ is present as a 'sacrifice of propitiation', because of which the intercessions included in the Eucharistic Prayer have a special efficacy,

for we believe that great benefit will result for the souls for whom prayer is offered when the holy and most awe-inspiring sacrifice lies on the altar. (*MC* 5.8–9)