

The Humanity of Christ

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The Oriental Orthodox Churches have often been criticised for professing a faulty doctrine of the humanity of Christ. This criticism is heard as much in the 21st century as it was the 5th. We may respond with frustration that our actual doctrinal position is misunderstood, and misrepresented, but it is perhaps wiser to seek to explain and inform. Our Churches no longer face the pressure of Imperial opposition, and many of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and indeed the Roman Catholic Church, have shown a willingness to listen and learn, rather than simply depend on age-old polemics in dealing with us.

The criticisms that are most often used against us are:

- i. that we confess the humanity of Christ is dissolved or swallowed up by the humanity such that it has no real existence.
- ii. that we confess that the humanity of Christ is not consubstantial with us but has come down from heaven and is merely a fantasy.
- iii. that we confess that the humanity of Christ has been mixed or confused with his divinity such that a third nature, neither human nor divine, is created.
- iv. that we confess that the humanity of Christ is defective in lacking a human will.

All of these criticisms may still be heard and read, in encyclopaedias and on websites, from clergy as well as lay people. The Columbia Encyclopaedia, Sixth edition 2001, states,

“Monophysitism was anticipated by Apollinarianism and was continuous with the principles of Eutyches, whose doctrine had been rejected in 451 at Chalcedon. Monophysitism challenged the orthodox definition of faith of Chalcedon and taught that in Jesus there were not two natures (divine and human) but one (divine).”¹

If Eastern Orthodox Christians really believe this of us then it is not surprising that many remain hostile to the prospect of our reconciliation.

Of course the doctrine of the humanity of Christ is not the only issue which is a matter of dispute. But it is perhaps one of the most often used against us. We are accused of confessing a Christ whose humanity is not real, or is defective, or has been absorbed by his divinity. An investigation of the actual content of our faith will show plainly that we have never accepted any of these positions.

We should begin of course with St Cyril of Alexandria, who is the great champion of Orthodox Christology. There were many occasions when St Cyril himself faced much the same accusations that we bear. His position was misunderstood and misrepresented, so much so that Theodoret, whose writings were much later recognised as heretical by the Eastern Orthodox, wrote of St Cyril saying,

“In my opinion he appears to give heed to the truth, in order that, by concealing his unsound views by it, he may not be detected in asserting the same dogmas as the heretics.

¹ Columbia Encyclopaedia. Sixth Ed. 2001

But nothing is stronger than truth, which by its own rays uncovers the darkness of falsehood. By the aid of its illumination we shall make his heterodox belief plain.”²

Now if St Cyril was misunderstood and accused of heresy, then perhaps we may take comfort in the situation we also face. Nevertheless we have a responsibility to do all we possibly can to clear up the confusion still experienced by those who condemn our Orthodox Churches as heretical.

It is clear from St Cyril that despite the conclusions of Theodoret, who also accused him of mixing the natures of humanity and divinity, he confessed a thoroughly Orthodox Christology. Indeed his Christology is the model for that of all the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

He writes in some of his letters,

“Our Lord Jesus Christ is, to be sure, the only begotten Son of God, his Word made man and made flesh, not to be divided into two sons, but that he was ineffably begotten from God before all time and in recent periods of time he was born according to the flesh from a woman, so that his person is one also. In this way we know that the Holy Virgin is the Mother of God, because he is God and man at the same time, that he who without change and without confusion is the only begotten, is incarnate and made man, and moreover that he was able to suffer according to the nature of his humanity. We know that it is impossible for him to suffer according to the nature of his divinity, and that he did suffer in his own flesh according to the scriptures.”³

and,

“Accordingly we confess that the only begotten Son of God is perfect God, consubstantial to the Father according to divinity, and that the same Son is consubstantial to us according to humanity. For there was a union of two natures. Wherefore, we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord.

And, if it seems proper, let us point out as an example the composition in us ourselves according to which we are men. For we are composed of soul and body, and we see two natures, the one of the body and the other of the soul, but one man from both according to a union, and the composition of two natures does not make two men be considered as one, but one man.

For, if we shall give the answer that there is only one Christ from two different natures, those on the opposite side will say, if he is entirely one physis, how was he made man or of what kind of flesh was he made?

Those who say that there was a blending, or a mixture, or a confusion of God the Word according to the flesh, these the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes.”⁴

and yet again,

“I have never been of Apollinarius’ persuasion (God forbid!) nor ever shall be. It is not my assertion that the holy body, which God the Word put on, lacked a soul. No, it

² Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series II. Vol 3.

³ McEnerney, John. Trans. **St Cyril of Alexandria, Letters 51-110**. Letter 59. C.U.A. 1987

⁴ McEnerney, John. Trans. **St Cyril of Alexandria, Letters 51-110**. Letter 97. C.U.A. 1987

contained a rational soul. Nor have I ever asserted or declared, as many report against us, mixture, confusion, or intermingling of natures.”⁵

These passages teach us that the foundation of Oriental Orthodox Christology is rooted in a confession of the reality of the humanity of Christ. The first passage shows us that St Cyril teaches that the humanity of Christ derived from the humanity of Mary, his mother. It was not a fantasy, nor was it from heaven, but it was real humanity. A humanity that suffered in the flesh according to the scriptures. But it was a humanity that was united with his divinity so that our Lord Jesus Christ remains one, not two. And it was a humanity that remained distinct but not separate from his divinity so that the nature of his divinity was not confused. Christ suffers in his humanity and is impassible in his divinity, but in all things he is one Lord, for it is his flesh which suffers and not another’s.

The second passage makes quite clear that St Cyril, and those of us who follow his teachings, confess that the humanity of Christ is consubstantial with us. This was the point on which Eutychius faltered. He had read in the Creed that Christ was consubstantial with the Father but considered that speaking of Christ as being consubstantial with us, according to his humanity, was an innovation he could not accept. Of course St Cyril had already spoken in this way and therefore Eutychius was setting himself apart from the Orthodoxy of St Cyril.

If the humanity of Christ is consubstantial with us then it is like us in every way except sin. It is a humanity that hungers and thirsts, that aches and bleeds. More than that we find St Cyril teaching us that because the humanity is that of Christ, it belongs to him and is his, so we must say that it is the Word, the second person of the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity which is consubstantial with us according to his humanity, as he is consubstantial with the Father according to his divinity.

Because of this we confess that there is a union of two natures in our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ. There is only ‘One Lord’, there is only one whose is both the humanity and the divinity. St Cyril points us to the example of our own human composition, both material and fleshly, and immaterial and spiritual. Yet these two completely different natures, or ways of being, are united without division or confusion to make us one man or woman.

Now St Cyril faced the same question that we do. If Christ is one physis or nature then of what sort is his humanity? But he explains that this union of natures is a composition, not a mixture. Christ is ‘of’ humanity and divinity, and just as the material and immaterial remain in us as human persons, so the reality of these natures remains in Christ, who continues to be ‘of’ two natures through the millennia after his incarnation.

Yet this is not a confusion, nor a mixture, nor a blending, and St Cyril anathematizes those who teach thus. Humanity is humanity and in Christ is consubstantial with us. Divinity is divinity and in Christ is consubstantial with the Father.

Could St Cyril be much clearer? Yet in the third extract he goes as far as to condemn Apollinarius who taught that the humanity of Christ was without a soul. This humanity that St Cyril speaks of is entirely ours, yet without sin. It possesses all that is proper to humanity, including a human soul. It is a rational, that is a thinking and willing soul.

What can we learn from St Cyril? He teaches that the humanity of Christ is the same as ours. It is of the same substance, consubstantial with us. This is contrary to the teaching of Eutychius who confessed that Christ’s humanity was from the Virgin Mary but was not consubstantial with us. He teaches that the humanity had a rational soul and was not merely

⁵ McEnerney, John. Trans. **St Cyril of Alexandria, Letters 51-110**. Letter 100. C.U.A. 1987

a body being animated by the divine Word. But he is equally insistent that the humanity was united to the divinity, such that both the humanity and the divinity really belonged to the Word. It was his own humanity and not someone else's. And this humanity was united to the divinity according to his analogy as the immaterial component of our humanity is united to the material, without confusion, mixture or blending. Each remaining what it always is. Yet we are one man or woman, as Christ is one, both God and man. We do not exist in the nature of spirit and the nature of flesh, we are not two, but we exist as one in a union of spirit and flesh in our complete humanity. Neither, as St Cyril teaches, does Christ exist in the nature of divinity and in the nature of humanity, as though he were two, but he exists, after the incarnation, in the union of humanity and divinity, a union that preserves each but does not introduce division.

Perhaps it will be accepted that this is the teaching of St Cyril, and there are some in other churches who will even go so far as to disparage the teaching of St Cyril. But it may be suggested that this is no longer the teaching of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. A survey of the teaching of some of the Oriental Orthodox fathers should make it quite clear that in fact the Orthodox Christology of St Cyril remains the foundation of our own faith.

St Dioscorus is almost universally considered, outside of Oriental Orthodoxy, as an heretical and violent man who led many of the Eastern Christians into the heresy of Eutychus. Yet within our own Oriental Orthodox tradition we remember a very different man. Those writings which have come down to us show us a bishop who never failed to confess the complete humanity of Christ.

The proceedings of the Council of Chalcedon show us that St Dioscorus was not opposed to the phrase 'from two natures after the union'. He did not accept Eutychus' defective teaching of 'two natures before the union, one nature after the union'. His 'from two natures' is the same as St Cyril's 'of two natures'. Christ is always, after the incarnation, existing in the dynamic union of humanity and divinity. He does not exist in a static, parallel existence of humanity and divinity. Now if the Eastern Orthodox, as we believe, express this Orthodox conception of the continuing, dynamic union of humanity and divinity by using the term 'in two natures' this is acceptable, but if what is confessed is a static division of natures united only externally or notionally then this is not acceptable, and it is against this position that we have always stood firm.

If Christ is 'from two natures after the union' then these natures have to be real. How can Christ be 'from two natures', or 'of two natures' and yet one of these does not exist or is overwhelmed by the other?

St Dioscorus also wrote,

"God the Logos, consubstantial with the Father, at the end of the ages for our redemption became consubstantial with man in the flesh, remaining what he was before."⁶

This is entirely what has been found in the teaching of St Cyril. Christ is God the Word, or Logos. He is consubstantial with the Father according to his divinity, and consubstantial with us according to his flesh. This can in no sense at all be considered Eutychianism. As has been described before, Eutychius rejected the idea that Christ was consubstantial with us according to his humanity. Now if Christ is consubstantial with us then his humanity is real humanity, like us in every way except sin.

⁶ Sellers, R.V. **The Council of Chalcedon** p31. n1. S.P.C.K. 1953

But St Dioscorus goes further and expresses that other Cyrilline teaching, that even when becoming man for us the Word never ceased to be what he was. If the Word 'remained what he was before' then his divinity suffered neither confusion, nor mixture nor any diminution at all. And if the Word is consubstantial with us according to the flesh then the flesh must be preserved as a reality. How can the Word be consubstantial with us if his humanity has no reality?

Another letter of St Dioscorus says,

"I know full well, having been brought up in the faith, that he has been begotten of the Father as God, and that the Same has been begotten of Mary as man. See Him walking on the sea as man, and Creator of the heavenly hosts as God; see him sleeping in the boat as man, and walking on the seas as God; see Him hungry as man, and bestowing nourishment as God; see him thirsty as man, and giving drink as God; see him stoned by the Jews as man, and worshipped by angels as God; see him tempted as man, and driving away the demons as God; and similarly of many instances."⁷

Where does this passage show a failure to comprehend the continuing reality of humanity and divinity in Christ? It seems once more to be very similar to passages found in other writings of St Cyril, as indeed we would expect of St Cyril's disciple and successor. St Dioscorus teaches that in the earthly life of Christ we can see both the humanity and the divinity acting as is proper to each. Yet he does not act divinely and humanly on different occasions but in the union of humanity and divinity we see the unconfused natures acting as is appropriate.

How can it be thought that St Dioscorus denies the reality of the humanity, or confesses some sort of confusion? If Christ is described as 'sleeping in the boat as man' then how is he not perfectly and unconfusedly human? If Christ is described as walking, hungry and thirsty 'as a man' then how is the humanity of Christ not confessed? It seems rather that St Dioscorus is simply following the teaching of St Cyril.

Let us turn to St Timothy Aelurus, Pope of Alexandria after St Dioscorus. He wrote,

"For the Divine Logos, not yet incarnate, was conceived in the womb of the holy Virgin, and was then incarnate of the flesh of the holy Virgin, in a manner in which he alone knew, while remaining without change and without conversion as God."

This shows us that St Timothy taught that the flesh, that is the humanity, of Christ was taken from the Virgin Mary, but that in the union of humanity and divinity the nature of divinity did not suffer any change, nor was there a mixture or confusion. He states this more explicitly in a letter written from exile,

"Since children partake of flesh and blood, he also participated in them, in order that he might, by his death, abrogate the power of death....He did not receive the nature from the angels, but from the seed of Abraham. It was necessary that he should identify himself with his brethren in everything in order that he might be merciful...Since he endured suffering and temptation he is able to succour those who are being tempted."⁸

St Timothy reminds us that the humanity of Christ did not come from heaven, nor from angels, but is of the seed of Abraham. Taken from the flesh of his mother, Mary, it is of the same nature as our humanity. He writes elsewhere,

⁷ Sellers, R.V. **The Council of Chalcedon** p32. S.P.C.K. 1953

⁸ Samuel, Fr V.C. **The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined**, p259. Xlibris2001

“Let no-one, thinking to honour God, insult his mercy by refusing to abide by the teaching of our holy fathers, who have confessed that our Lord Jesus Christ became consubstantial with us in the flesh.”⁹

We are not taught in these passages that Christ merely took flesh or humanity that was consubstantial with us, and then dissolved or overwhelmed it in his divinity such that it has no reality. On the contrary, he became, that is he remains, consubstantial with us. He bears still as his own flesh the humanity we bear. He says,

“He who is of the same nature with the Father as to Godhead, the same became of the same nature with [Mary] and with us in the body.”¹⁰

Now if the humanity of Christ has no reality, or is defective, then he has not become of the same nature with us. But St Timothy teaches us that we dishonour God if we fail to confess the reality and consubstantiality of the humanity of Christ. Seeing that St Timothy condemns those who do not make this confession it is a matter of some frustration that in fact he is accused, with us, of maintaining the position he rejects.

When he found that even among those who anathematised Chalcedon there were some who did indeed confuse the natures of divinity and humanity he took firm action. A certain Isaiah and Theophilus travelled to Constantinople and starting teaching a confusion of natures. St Timothy wrote letters against them and eventually excommunicated them. Why would he do this if in fact they were merely teaching a heresy that he himself believed?

In fact anyone reading the writings of St Timothy could not fail to be impressed by his Cyrilline Orthodoxy, if they approached such writings without prejudice. One last passage, found in his letters against the very people who taught a defective humanity of Christ, says conclusively,

“The Scriptures teach us of Christ that he identified himself with us in everything, and that he became perfectly of the same nature with us, but for the impulse of sin. He was born supernaturally apart from conjugal union. But he became perfect man, having been conceived in Mary the Virgin, and from her born by the Holy Spirit, and he himself continued to remain God incarnate without any change.”¹¹

What could be clearer? St Timothy Aelurus most definitely does not teach any diminution of the humanity of Christ. It is complete in everything that pertains to our humanity. He became man with no change at all to his divinity.

We can find no denial of the humanity of Christ in the earliest non-Chalcedonian patriarchs. Without any difficulty we can also find the same constant witness to the reality of that humanity in the later, and even greater fathers. St Severus of Antioch, writing in the first part of the 6th century has much to say about the humanity of Christ.

He writes,

“When the Doctor [St Cyril] has confessed one nature of God the Word, who is incarnate, he says that each of them continues together and is understood in the particularity that belongs to the nature.”¹²

Each nature continues together. Now if each nature continues then neither is dissolved or changed, nor is there any mixture or confusion. This is the teaching of St Cyril,

⁹ Samuel, Fr V.C. **The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined**, p258. Xlibris2001

¹⁰ Samuel, Fr V.C. **The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined**, p259. Xlibris2001

¹¹ Samuel, Fr V.C. **The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined**, p260. Xlibris2001

¹² Torrance, Iain. **Christology After Chalcedon** p148. Canterbury Press. 1988

and we find it repeated from the hand of St Severus. More than that, this passage, quoting from St Cyril, shows how the 'one incarnate nature of the Word incarnate', that famous saying, should be understood. It does not stand for the confusion or mixture of natures, neither does it stand for the dissolution of the humanity. For each 'continues together'.

In another passage St Severus quotes again from St Cyril saying,

"Therefore let us recognise that even if the body which was born at Bethlehem is not the same, that is, as far as natural quality is concerned, as the Word which is from God and the Father, yet nevertheless it became his, and did not belong to another man beside the Son. But the Word incarnate is to be considered one Son and Christ and Lord."¹³

Here it is clear that he understands and teaches that the humanity is completely other and different from the divinity. And nine months after the miraculous conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary, when the Word was born as a human baby, that humanity remained, as it always was, other than the divinity. But it had become his, that is the Word's, own humanity. Every action of the humanity of Christ was in fact the activity of the Word of God, there was no-one else whose activity it could be. Yet it was human activity, because the divine nature and the human nature are not the same.

It is clear that St Severus often quotes from St Cyril. Indeed in three letters written to a certain Sergius who had fallen into error he quotes over 60 times from St Cyril. One of these quotations, describing his own confession says,

"For even if the Only-Begotten Son of God, incarnate and inhominate, is said by us to be one, he is not confused because of this, as he seems to those people, nor has the nature of the Word passed over into the nature of the flesh, nor indeed has the nature of the flesh passed into that which is his, but while each one of them continues together in the particularity that belongs to the nature, and is thought of in accordance with the account which has just been given by us, the inexpressible and ineffable union shows us one nature of the son, but as I have said, incarnate."¹⁴

What could be clearer? We say of the Son of God that he is incarnate and has been made man, but we do not confuse the natures, or say that the humanity has become divinity or the divinity become humanity. Again we find the express teaching that each 'continues together'. And if we speak of 'one nature', it is in the sense that each of us as humans is 'one' and not two. So Christ is one individual not two, even though he is a union of humanity and divinity.

A final passage from St Severus, since this is only a brief overview and his teachings could fill many volumes,

"There is no share in any blame that one should recognise, for example, that the flesh is one thing in its own nature, apart from the Word which sprang from God and the Father, and that the Only-Begotten is another again, with respect to his own nature. Nevertheless to recognise these things is not to divide the natures after the union."

Following St Severus the Oriental Orthodox Churches confess that the humanity is one thing and the divinity another. That is, they are not the same and do not become the same. Yet we do not divide the humanity from the divinity, nor make it act apart from the divinity as though it belonged to another.

¹³ Torrance, Iain. **Christology After Chalcedon** p148. Canterbury Press. 1988

¹⁴ Torrance, Iain. **Christology After Chalcedon** p148. Canterbury Press. 1988

St Severus is most strict in requiring that the confession of the integrity of the humanity and divinity in Christ be preserved. We know that he accepted the doctrinal content of the Henoticon of Zeno, a document designed by the Emperor Zeno to bring peace to the Church, but which was generally attacked by all sides for either failing to condemn Chalcedon, or failing to approve it.

This document says,

“And we confess as one and not two the only-begotten Son of God, even God, our Lord Jesus Christ who in truth was made man, consubstantial with the Father in divinity and the same consubstantial with us in humanity, who came down and was made flesh from the Holy Spirit and Mary the Virgin and Mother of God. For we declare to be of one being both the miracles and the sufferings which he endured voluntarily in the flesh. For those who divide or confound or introduce an illusion we utterly refuse to receive, since indeed the sinless incarnation, that was in truth from the Mother of God, did not create an additional entity of the Son. For the Trinity has remained a Trinity even after one of the Trinity, God the Word, was made flesh.”¹⁵

This is not merely the confession of one man, but as a theological statement it was accepted by many of the non-Chalcedonian bishops. It shows that the fathers taught that Christ was ‘in truth made man’. All possibility of a Eutychian fantasy incarnation is excluded. The consubstantiality of the humanity of Christ with us is re-iterated. It is not the case that he was consubstantial with us and then this humanity was somehow diminished, but as has already been shown from individual fathers, he remains consubstantial with us, a consubstantiality that demands the perfect and complete reality of his humanity.

What is positively taught is the union of humanity and divinity in Christ. What is condemned is the introduction of a division which separates the humanity and divinity such that they become two centres of activity; or a confounding of the natures such that they cease to preserve their integrity and reality; or even that the incarnation is an illusion in the manner of Eutychius who failed to confess the consubstantiality of the humanity of Christ with us.

All of these false understandings of the humanity of Christ are rejected by the Oriental Orthodox, and can be shown to have been rejected from the beginning. It can only be assumed in charity that the Eastern Orthodox lacked access to the writings of many of our fathers. Not one suggests in any place that the humanity of Christ is not consubstantial with us, or fails to preserve its integrity and reality in the incarnation.

If we advance to modern times we can find this same faith professed by all the Oriental Orthodox Churches. Archbishop Aram Keshishian, surely someone who would know what the Armenians believe, states:

"The Christology of the Armenian Church is fundamentally in line with the Alexandrian Theological School. In fact, the Cyrillian formula of 'One Nature of the Incarnate Word' constitutes the foundation stone of her Christology. [It should be noted that] first, 'One Nature' is never interpreted in the Armenian Christology as a numerical one, but always a united one. This point is of crucial importance [for the Armenian Church] particularly in its anti-Eutychian and anti-Chalcedonian aspects. Second the term 'nature' (ousia, in Armenian *bnut'iun*) is used in Armenian theological literature in three different senses: (a) as essence, an abstract notion, (b) as substance, a concrete reality, (c) as person. In

¹⁵ Whitby, Michael trans. **Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus** p149, Liverpool University Press. 2000

the context of anti-Chalcedonian Christology 'one nature' is used in a sense of 'one person' composed of two natures."¹⁶

Or Archbishop Aram Keshishian of the Armenians also says:

"We say, always in a formal way, that Nestorianism and Eutychianism have been rejected and anathematized by our churches and we adhere to that. In other words, we both anathematized, once again, Eutychian and Nestorian heresies."¹⁷

The Coptic Orthodox have also officially accepted a Christological statement which says:

"We confess that our Lord and God and Saviour and King of us all, Jesus Christ, is perfect God with respect to His divinity, perfect man with respect to His humanity. In Him His divinity is united with His humanity in a real, perfect union without mingling, without commixtion, without confusion, without alteration, without division, without separation. His divinity did not separate from His humanity for an instant, not for the twinkling of an eye. He who is God eternal and invisible became visible in the flesh, and took upon Himself the form of a servant. In Him are preserved all the properties of the divinity and all the properties of the humanity, together in a real, perfect, indivisible and inseparable union."

This is part of the official teaching of the Church, and it makes clear that there was no mixture or confusion of the humanity and Divinity in Christ which are preserved and remain unchanged and unconfused.

Or in a shorter form the statement was recast and equally authoritatively accepted as:

"We believe that our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Incarnate-Logos, is perfect in His Divinity and perfect in His Humanity. He made His Humanity One with His Divinity without Mixture, nor Mingling, nor Confusion. His Divinity was not separated from His Humanity even for a moment or twinkling of an eye. At the same time, we Anathematize the Doctrines of both Nestorius and Eutyches."

Again the unconfused distinction of humanity and Divinity is confessed, and also the doctrines of Eutyches are anathematised. This is the official teaching of the Coptic Orthodox Church, and since both these statements were written by Pope Shenouda and agreed by the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate they are explicit statements of Christological teaching.

The Syrian Orthodox Church have made an official statement on Christology in the following words:

"In our turn we confess that He became incarnate for us, taking to himself a real body with a rational soul. He shared our humanity in all things but sin. We confess that our Lord and our God, our Saviour and the King of all, Jesus Christ, is perfect God as to His divinity and perfect man as to His humanity. This Union is real, perfect, without blending or mingling, without confusion, without alteration, without division, without the least separation. He who is God eternal and invisible, became visible in the flesh and took the form of servant. In Him are united, in a real, perfect indivisible and inseparable way, divinity and humanity, and in Him all their properties are present and active."¹⁸

¹⁶ Aram Keshishian, **The Witness of the Armenian Church in a Diaspora Situation** (New York: Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, 1978), p. 58-59

¹⁷ Window Quarterly 4, 4 (1994); ACRAAG c. 1994

¹⁸ Joint Statement Pope John Paul II and His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas. 1984

Christ is perfect God and perfect man. There doesn't seem to be a lack of distinction in this statement. Confusion or mingling is also explicitly rejected, and the humanity and Divinity are confessed to be present and active in Christ with all their properties undiminished in any way.

Or the Indian Orthodox have made a statement in the following words

“Our Lord Jesus Christ is one, perfect in his humanity and perfect in his divinity, at once consubstantial with the Father in his divinity, and consubstantial with us in his humanity. His humanity is one with his divinity – without change, without commingling, without division and without separation. In the Person of the Eternal Logos Incarnate are united and active in a real and perfect way the divine and human natures, with all their properties, faculties and operations.”¹⁹

This statement confesses the dual consubstantiality of Christ, the perfection of each nature, and the union without confusion or change. And again the statement is careful to make clear that the divine and human natures are active in a real way. Active in a real way. Can this be much clearer?

The Oriental Orthodox Churches have never ceased to confess the real humanity of Christ. Consubstantial with us, like us in every way except for sin. Preserving the integrity of both his humanity and divinity in the union of both. A union which is without confusion or mixture. More than ever, while the possibility of the reconciliation of the Orthodox Churches exists, we must ensure that we ourselves are confident in the content of our own faith and are able to explain this faith to others.

If we fail to communicate our faith then there are countless others, misunderstanding and misrepresenting our position, who are already filling the void. From St Cyril, through St Dioscorus to St Severus and up to the present day, our Christology is wholly Orthodox and without any stain of heresy.

¹⁹ Joint Statement between the Roman Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. 1990