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# Christ the Mediator: The Contribution of the Second Council of Constantinople\*

*Cristo mediador en el II concilio de Constantinopla*

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César IZQUIERDO

Universidad de Navarra. Facultad de Teología  
Pamplona. España  
ID ORCID 0000-0003-0679-0421  
cizquier@unav.es

**Abstract:** The Christological teaching of the Second Council of Constantinople (553) was a response to the theological discussion prompted by the Chalcedonian *hóros* (451). The article analyses the Christological teaching of the Council on the basis of three expressions used by the Fathers of Constantinople II (*kata synthesin*, *kath'hypostasin*, and *in theoria monê*). The author argues that the category of *mesites* (mediator) is the key to understanding the mystery of Christ. Here, "Christ the Mediator" should be understood both in an ontological and a soteriological sense.

**Keywords:** Christ Mediator, Christology, Council of Constantinople II, Hypostatic Union, Neo-Chalcedonianism.

**Resumen:** La enseñanza del II Concilio de Constantinopla (553) fue una respuesta a la discusión teológica provocada por el *hóros* de Calcedonia (451). El artículo analiza la enseñanza cristológica del concilio sobre la base de tres expresiones usadas por los Padres de Constantinopla II: *kata synthesin*, *kath'hypóstasin* y *en theôria monê*. La tesis que aquí se defiende es que la categoría de *mesites* (mediador) es la clave para entender el misterio de Cristo. La afirmación de que Cristo es mediador debe ser entendida, a la vez, en sentido ontológico y soteriológico.

**Palabras clave:** Cristo mediador, Cristología, Concilio de Constantinopla II, Unión hipostática, Neo-calcedonianismo.

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In his acclaimed text written on the occasion of the 1500th anniversary of the Council of Chalcedon, Karl Rahner presents the Mediator as an essential reference point for a correct interpretation of the teaching of that Council. To be able to speak about the Mediator rigorously, one ought to understand «that the real initiative, in some true sense, of the man Jesus with regard to God is given its *genuine* (anti-monothelite) meaning»<sup>1</sup>. He warns against a possible Monothelite interpretation of Chalcedon's *hóros*, which would lead to the view that Christ's humanity was merely God's location of appearance and would not have any particular value to the God who appears in it<sup>2</sup>. In this case, the mediator «would solely be a mediator for himself», that is, he would not really be a mediator at all. «And a Christology that does not realize this would end up becoming a true mythology», namely, a conception of incarnation in which the human is simply the apparel worn by God as he makes himself manifest among men. In that case, the human is not allowed «its supreme initiative and control over its own actions by the very fact of being assumed by God»<sup>3</sup>.

Rahner's interpretation of Chalcedon prompts the question of the relationship between the core of Christological dogmatic teaching and the reality of the Mediator. Our thesis is that the Mediator – as a reality and a theological category – is the key to interpreting the mystery of Christ and, in his person, all of theology<sup>4</sup>. This article seeks to confirm that thesis through a reading of the conciliar teaching of the first centuries and, in particular, that of the Second Council of Constantinople of 553.

## I. CHALCEDON'S CHRISTOLOGICAL TEACHING

The Council of Chalcedon marked the culmination of a long process of elaboration of Christological doctrine, following the three previous ecumenical Councils, especially the 431 Council of Ephesus, followed by the 433 Formula of Union. Once the second-century and third-century controversies of Docetism and Judeo-Christian positions and the fourth-century controversies

<sup>1</sup> RAHNER, K., «Current Problems in Christology», in *Theological Investigations*, I, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1965, 156.

<sup>2</sup> RAHNER, K., «Current Problems in Christology», 156.

<sup>3</sup> RAHNER, K., «Current Problems in Christology», 156 and 156 footnote 1.

<sup>4</sup> We have dealt with this topic in IZQUIERDO, C., «El Mediador, una clave para la teología», *Scripta Theologica* 49 (2017) 351-370; see also IZQUIERDO, C., *El Mediador, Cristo Jesús*, Madrid: BAC, 2017.

of Arianism and – in a lesser degree – Apollinarianism had been resolved, the heart of the Christological question shifted to the explanation of the unity and duality of Christ, a single subject who was truly God and, nonetheless, truly man. Some extreme views took the unity between the two natures to completely exclude any diversity within Christ, which made it necessary to fuse the humanity and the divinity in a strict Monophysitism; others argued for a duality of two subjects who were mutually related in an unspecified manner. While those clearly unilateral endpoints may not have been endorsed by anyone, as they could render the very reality of Jesus simply inexplicable, there are, nonetheless, different interpretations that we can situate along a spectrum in the space separating them.

The figure of Cyril of Alexandria is crucial at this point, in particular his principle of *μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη*, which he employed to defend the assertion of the unity of Jesus's person. The efficacy of the principle extended well beyond Cyril's life, and it came to be seen as typical of the stance of Alexandrian theology in general. However, when he wrote, the terminology was still being developed; hence, it should be understood that the Monophysite understanding of the principle does not match Cyril's own understanding, for whom *φύσις* was *ὑπόστασις*<sup>5</sup>.

Chalcedonian teaching fixed the precise terminology to designate the reality of Christ: one person (*πρόσωπον*) and a *ὑπόστασις*, in two natures. This formulation was a definite achievement in theology, independent of the ensuing discussion of its scope and meaning. Although neither the entire mystery of Christ nor his saving work is encompassed in it, the formula became an inevitable and, for its time, unparalleled reference. The interpretations made of it, which could be quite divergent, show that the conclusions of Chalcedon properly belong neither to the Alexandrian school, nor to the Antiochene nor to Latin theology, although it is influenced by all three.

Chalcedon was interpreted to suit both Monophysite and Nestorian schools because both of these persisted<sup>6</sup>. The Nestorian school could not ac-

<sup>5</sup> RICHES, A., *Ecce Homo. On the Divine Unity of Christ*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016, 39. Cfr. DALEY, B. E., *God visible. Patristic Christology Reconsidered*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018, 192.

<sup>6</sup> LOUTH, A., «Christology in the East from the Council of Chalcedon to John Damascene», in ARAN MURPHY, F. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Christology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 139-140. Cfr. GRILLMEIER, A., *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche. 2,1, Das Konzil von Chalcedon (451). Rezeption und Widerspruch (451-518)*, Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1986. BEELEY, Ch.,

cept the existence of a single person and hypostasis because it believed that this view would make Christ's humanity inauthentic, and the stronger Monophysite tendency refused to admit the existence of two natures because it perceived in this view standpoint the flavor of Nestorianism.

Dispensing with historical precision, the Chalcedonian formula vigorously accounts for the relationship between Christ's unity and twofold nature; in other words, it elucidates the mystery of Christ as such. Christ is one single person who is, at the same time, God (therefore, non-man) and man (therefore, non-God). The extreme tension introduced indicated by the humble conjunction *and* was, and continues to be, an authentic challenge for all rationalizing tendencies. Reason seeks clarity, and here that could easily be found, if the disjunction *man or God* were given, where the choice of one would entail the exclusion of the other. Thus, faced with the mystery of Christ, reason seeks to do the next best thing and tone one of the poles down: Christ would then be a true man, in a close relationship with God, but not the true God; or, he would be the true God, who appears in human form but is not truly human. The second possibility, under the name Docetism, is less commonly met with today, although the novel and menacing contemporary spiritualism, with its aversion to taking the body or, consequently, the incarnation, seriously, may gaze at it sympathetically. The former possibility, which presents Jesus as only as a man in a special relationship with God, is more commonplace: Arianism is a well-known example<sup>7</sup>.

Chalcedon firmly established the principles on which the reality of Christ is understood, but it does not state how those principles act, for instance, in the historical dimension of Christ's life. For this reason, the criticism that calls the *ὁποῦς* formula static is accurate in its way<sup>8</sup>, although the Council's aim was to set-

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*The unity of Christ. Continuity and conflict in Patristic Tradition*, New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2012; PRICE, R. and WHITEY, M. (eds.), *Chalcedon in context. Church councils 400-700*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> RATZINGER, J., *Ein Neues Lied für den Herrn*, Freiburg: Herder, 1995, 40: «Offenkundig ist, das heute die Gefährdung genau umgekehrter Natur ist: Nicht Monophysitismus bedroht die Christenheit, sondern ein neuer Arianismus oder, milder, wenigstens ein recht ausgeprägter neuer Nestorianismus, dem im übrigen mit innerer Logik ein neuer Bildersturm entspricht».

<sup>8</sup> Concerning significant criticisms of the Chalcedonian formula, see URIBARRI, G., *La singular humanidad de Cristo*, Madrid: San Pablo-Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2008, 109-119; Uríbarri follows SESBOÜÉ, B., «Le procès contemporain de Chalcédoine. Bilan et perspectives», *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 65 (1977) 45-79. See also RUESTRA, J. A., «Il dibattito sul valore e i limiti della dottrina calcedonense nella cristologia recente», in DUCAY, A. (ed.), *Il concilio de Calcedonia 1550 anni dopo*, Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2003, 93-113; LADARIA, L. F., «La recente interpretazione della definizione di Calcedonia», *PATH 2* (2003) 321-340; LA PARRA, J. R.,

the doctrinal controversies that emerged long earlier and that had come to light partly through formulations distinguished by their highly logical content. The Council did not, however, set out to construct a complete Christology.

Even after the publication of the conclusions of the Council of Chalcedon, Monophysitism and Nestorianism did not disappear. The former, which refused to admit the doctrine of two natures because they perceived Nestorianism in it, was especially strong, continuing a doctrinal and political-ecclesiastical struggle. Cyril's principle of *μία φύσις*, which thenceforth had to be interpreted in light of Chalcedon's teaching, retained its importance. Its critics denominated the Alexandrian-Cyrillian rereading of the Chalcedonian formula as Neo-Chalcedonianism, and this finds its dogmatic expression in Constantinople II<sup>9</sup>. To interpret Cyril's *μία φύσις* in harmony with the 451 Council's assertion of two natures, it is necessary to elaborate the distinction between *ὑπόστασις* and nature with utmost precision.

## II. THE SECOND COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

The vicissitudes of the 553 Second Council of Constantinople take a prominent place in Church history, due both to everything that led up to it and its own turbulence<sup>10</sup>. It became acknowledged as an ecumenical council by the 649 Synod of Lateran and the Third Council of Constantinople because of the conviction that its conclusions ratified those of Chalcedon, even though, to a Cyrillian perspective, Constantinople II was oriented above all to the defense and comprehension of Christ's unity<sup>11</sup>. Its teachings are not of

*El acceso contemporáneo a la cristología de Calcedonia. La lectura de A. de Halleux en diálogo con A. Grillmeier y R. Price*, Barcelona: Ateneu Universitari Sant Pacià/Facultat de Teologia de Catalunya, 2018, 102-105.

<sup>9</sup> COZZI, A., *Conoscere Gesù Cristo nella fede: Una cristologia*, Assisi: Citadella, 2007, 276.

<sup>10</sup> Regarding the Second Council of Constantinople, see HEFELE, C. J., *Histoire des Conciles*, III/1, Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1909, 1-145; MURPHY, F. X., *Histoire des Conciles Oecuméniques*, III, *Constantinople II et Constantinople III*, Paris: L'Orante, 1974; GRILLMEIER, A., *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, 2,2, *Die Kirche von Konstantinopel im 6. Jahrhundert*, Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1989, 484. PRICE, R., «The Second Council of Constantinople (553) and the Malleable Past», en PRICE, R. and WHITBY, M. (eds.), *Chalcedon in context. Church councils 400-700*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011, 117-132.

<sup>11</sup> On the Council's ecumenical character as well as authority and reception, see VRIES, W. DE, *Orient et occident: les structures ecclésiales vues dans l'histoire des sept premiers conciles oecuméniques*, Paris: Cerf, 1974, 161-194; SESBOÜÉ, B., «Reception of Councils from Nicaea to Constantinople II: Conceptual Divergences and Unity in the Faith, Yesterday and Today», *The Jurist* 86 (1997) 86-117 at 109-115.

only minor importance in that they enrich and clarify the interpretation of the Chalcedonian doctrine. Cyril of Alexandria's Christology, as reflected in the Council of Ephesus, which exerted an influence on the Council of Chalcedon<sup>12</sup> and on other dogmatic writings, certainly played a fundamental role in the deliberations of the 553 Council.

In relation to the theology of the Mediator, the main focus of this article, Constantinople II produced three expressions of great import from the hermeneutic and dogmatic standpoints: «according to composition» (κατὰ σύνθεσιν), «according to hypostasis» (καθ' ὑπόστασιν), and «only in theory» (ἐν θεωρίᾳ μόνῃ), employed by Constantinople II to explain the unity of Christ and the duality of his natures. The first two expressions deny that the union between the natures took place «according to grace, or according to operation, or according to dignity, or according to equality of honor, or according to authority or relation, or temperament, or power, or according to good will» (D. 424). The Council thus teaches that the Word is a single concrete being with respect to his humanity while reasserting the alterity between God and man. The hypostasis of the Word makes humanity subsist in itself by appropriating it; the former «hypostatize» (*enhypóstasis*) the latter, making it subsist hypostatically in the person of the Word<sup>13</sup>. «This means that *the hypostasis of the Word has truly been humanized in its act of being a person*, thanks to which the ultimate subject of all actions and passions of Christ is the humanized Word»<sup>14</sup>. It is a compound hypostasis, for which a single act of subsisting depends on two reasons. In turn, the ἐν θεωρίᾳ μόνῃ through which the distinction of natures must be understood poses the challenge of articulating the unity and duality of Christ.

The composition or synthesis, the hypostasis or person, and the theoretical distinction within one and the same being converge in the Mediator. In him, divinity and the humanity coexist, dwelling in unity and tension: Christ is the synthesis of these. The person of Christ is simultaneously reality itself and in a relationship with elements in opposition to it. This compound unity

<sup>12</sup> FRANCK, G. L. C., «The Council of Constantinople II as a Model Reconciliation Council», *Theological Studies* 52 (1991) 636-650 at 639.

<sup>13</sup> DALEY, B. E., «Leontius of Byzantium and the Rezeption of the Chalcedonian Definition», in HAINTHALER, Th., ANSORGE, D. and WUCHERPFENNIG, A. (Hrsg.), *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der einen Kirche. Christologie – Kirchen des Ostens – Ökumenische Dialogue*, Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2019, 229-230.

<sup>14</sup> COZZI, A., *Conoscere Gesù Cristo nella fede*, 282 (emphasis in the original; translation mine).

is not to be considered something that is obtained from an accidental unification or mixture of two elements but as a full unity in itself, only distinguished *quoad nos* and primarily in a theoretical sense, as the combined being is not a monster with two heads but a person and a subject in whom human plenitude, enabled by virtue of being God, and God's proximity, enabled by virtue of being man, are present in a single unity.

### 1. *Καθ' ὑπόστασιν*

The fifth, sixth, and seventh canons of the Second Council of Constantinople reject the Nestorian interpretation of Chalcedon, and the eighth excludes a Monophysite reading.

In specific terms, the fifth canon asserts that the description of Christ as one hypostasis expresses a rigorous subsistent unity. God's λόγος is united to the flesh in hypostasis (*καθ' ὑπόστασιν*), and for this reason, only one hypostasis and only one πρόσωπον exists (D. 426). The sixth canon asserts the title of Θεοτόκος for Mary for her role in being the mother of the Word who took flesh in her (D. 427).

The seventh canon is a dense explanation of the union in Christ's natures. It affirms the continued distinction between the natures, «in which without confusion the marvelous union was born, and that the nature of the Word was not changed into that of the flesh, nor was the nature of the flesh changed into that of the Word (for each remains exactly as it is by nature, and the union has been made according to subsistence [*καθ' ὑπόστασιν*])» (D. 428).

The expression *καθ' ὑπόστασιν* is used in Cyril of Alexandria's *Second Letter to Nestorius* to expound John 1:14, stating that the Word was not made flesh by being changed in any way but through the unification of a complete humanity with the Word «according to the hypostasis», that is, in a concrete act of subsisting or existing. In this way, Christ's unity is safeguarded within the hypostasis of the Word, and in this unity there is no more than and only one subsisting subject. Christ relates to his humanity not according to the order of having but to that of being. At the same time, Cyril asserts that Christ's humanity does not pertain to as a different subsisting subject. Here, Cyril plants the seed of what would grow into the Christological formula that was embraced as the Church position. In that formula, the union is a hypostatic one, taking place on the level of the hypostasis.

It remains to interpret the formula μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη, first stated by Apollinaris of Laodicea but understood by Cyril to be of Athana-



sus. This phrase was defended by Cyril and became understood to be a distinctive attribute of the anti-Nestorians<sup>15</sup>. Cyril's *Third Letter to Nestorius* – which contains Cyril's famous anathematisms – includes the expression κατὰ φυσικὴν ἕνωσιν, which advances what used to be a postulate of a single school rather than an orthodox expression of faith. How did Cyril understand φύσις in his use of employed this expression? Cyril is asserting here that Jesus is a real, existing being (μία φύσις), the sole λόγος that exists and was incarnate (τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη). Simply put, here φύσις does not point name the essence of a being but its existence, which would later be normatively designated as ὑπόστασις. For Cyril, the terms φύσις and ὑπόστασις were interchangeable. The consequence of this, according to Riches, is that Cyril's μία φύσις means the same thing as the doctrine of the hypostatic union (ἕνωσις καθ' ὑπόστασιν), in fundamental terms<sup>16</sup>.

In the eighth canon, Constantinople II asserts the Cyrillian doctrine of μία φύσις, here dissociated from verbal Apollinarianism and asserted to be in conformity with the teaching of Chalcedon: «If anyone who agrees that a union has been born of the two natures of divinity and humanity, or who says that one nature of the Word of God has been made flesh, does not accept these [expressions] as the holy Fathers have taught, namely, that of the nature of God and of that of man, the union having taken place according to subsistence [καθ' ὑπόστασιν], one Christ was produced; but from such words attempts to introduce one nature or substance of Godhead and humanity of Christ, let such be anathema» (D. 429).

Here, the phrase «according to hypostasis» introduces a novel hermeneutical facet to the theology of the Mediator. That is, it displays the capacity of the person to contain a distinction on the order of being without losing unity. Thus, the person of Christ is not a static metaphysical principle; rather, it contains within itself the capacity to mediate between what is distinct and to relate one aspect to another. Christ's humanity is real because it appears in and through the person in its mediation, which allows it to appropriate what is in itself distinct, namely, the anhypostatic human nature. The person provides

<sup>15</sup> According to Weinandy, Cyril employed this formula to assert the singularity of Jesus's existence, not to adopt any stance on the question of the any divine or human essence: cfr. WEINANDY, T., «Cyril and the Mystery of Incarnation» in WEINANDY, T. and KEATING, D. (eds.), *The Theology of Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation*, London: T&T Clark, 2003, 33; this refers to WEINANDY, T., «The Soul/Body Analogy and the Incarnation: Cyril of Alexandria», *Coptic Church Review* 17 (1996) 59-66.

<sup>16</sup> RICHES, A., *Ecce Homo. On the Divine Unity of Christ*, 39.



the substratum, enabling that which lacks a proper hypostasis to really and personally exist; reciprocally, the person is humanized according to the nature of which it is the hypostasis. This is the profound way in which the person, «who is essentially mediation»<sup>17</sup>, completes the meeting between God and man in Christ the Mediator. «In it, there are both the *from*-God of Jesus-the-man and the *from*-man of the God-revealed-in-Christ, as well as the *for* of Christ's existence. Thus, the *relationality* of the person, which essentially consists in being-with and being-for, becomes reality in Christ also in a singular manner»<sup>18</sup>.

## 2. Κατὰ σύνθεσιν

According to the doctrine of Constantinople II, union «according to composition» (κατὰ σύνθεσιν) and union «according to hypostasis» (καθ' ὑπόστασιν) appear on the same level. In concrete terms, the Council anathematizes whoever «does not confess that the union of the Word of God to a body animated with a rational and intellectual soul, took place according to composition [κατὰ σύνθεσιν] or according to subsistence [καθ' ὑπόστασιν], as the Holy Fathers have taught, and on this account one subsistence of Him, who is the Lord Jesus Christ, one of the Holy Trinity» (D. 424)<sup>19</sup>. Nevertheless, two expressions of this union, although they are mutually implicated, are not synonymous: κατὰ σύνθεσιν requires an analysis that takes its specific and proper meaning into account.

Cyril employs the term composition (σύνθεσις) to describe Christ's nature, while understanding it by analogy with that which takes place between body and soul: «we are composed of body and soul and we perceive two natures; there is one nature of the body, and a different nature of the soul, and yet one man from both of them according to composition [κατὰ σύνθεσιν]»<sup>20</sup>. Wolfson brings together other passages where Cyril uses the analogies of fire and wood and of fire and iron to explain the union of the incarnation. Wolfson concludes that all these examples show that Cyril does not consider com-

<sup>17</sup> KASPER, W., *Jesus der Christus*, Freiburg: Herder, 2007, 365.

<sup>18</sup> IZQUIERDO, C., *El Mediador; Cristo Jesús*, 12. Cf. RUIZ-ARAGONESES, R., «Cuando creer salva. Sentido salvífico de la humanidad de Jesús: una perspectiva ireneana», *Scripta Theologica* 52 (2020) 457-458.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. MÜHLEN, H., *Una Mystica Persona. Die Kirche als das Mysterium der Heilsgeschichtlichen Identität des Heiligen Geistes in Christus und den Christen*, München: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 1968, 569.

<sup>20</sup> CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, *Epistola ad Succensum* I, 6, in SCHWARTZ, E. (ed.), *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum* (ACO), I, 1, 6, Berolini: Walter de Gruyter, 1971, *Epistola* 45, PG 77, 233A.

position to be a union in which the two components are simply juxtaposed but one in which there is a predominance, such that, when two individual realities are united, only one remains individual, and the composition must entail the predominance of one over the other<sup>21</sup>.

The fourth canon of Constantinople II takes up this understanding of composition as predominance. It enumerates three interpretations of the union (ένωσις) that occurred in the incarnation: the Monophysite understanding, or confusion; the Nestorian meaning, or relative union; and the Orthodox meaning, where the union of God's Word with the flesh, as animated by a rational and intelligent soul, occurred through composition (κατὰ σύνθεσιν) or by means of hypostasis (καθ' ὑπόστασιν). Where the union is understood as composition, the person of the union is the Word, one of the three persons of the Trinity. Hence, this composition can be understood as the predominance of the Word<sup>22</sup>.

The openness of the hypostasis to an articulation of a unity understood through the expression according to hypostasis (καθ' ὑπόστασιν) is enabled through with a refinement as captured by the phrase «according to composition» (κατὰ σύνθεσιν), which adds to the unity understood as καθ' ὑπόστασιν a type of distinction that neither separates nor divides the unity of the person but articulates it in an interior sense with a manifestation that, by virtue of the several natures, can be called a composite person<sup>23</sup>.

The distinction between the two natures should not be understood to jeopardize the unity of the subsistent subject. Jesus is known as the one existent of the only Son and the Word of God incarnate, although it must be maintained that he has two natures. Thus, we reach the third element of the analysis presented here, namely, is the έν θεωρία μονή discussed by Constantinople II. Before this examination begins, however, it must be noted that

<sup>21</sup> Cfr. WOLFSON, H. A., *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964, 409, 417.

<sup>22</sup> WOLFSON, H. A., *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 409, 417. Cfr. TROSTYANSKIY, S., *St. Cyril of Alexandria's Metaphysics of the Incarnation*, New York: Peter Lang, 2016, 43-46.

<sup>23</sup> A theological interpretation of the union κατὰ σύνθεσιν would be given centuries later by Thomas Aquinas in a passage that explicitly alludes to the Second Council of Constantinople (ST, III, q. 2, a. 1 ad 1; a. 3) and establishes that the person of Christ is composite (*persona composita*). «It was above all Constantinople II that played a decisive role in shaping Thomas's mature Christology» (RICHES, A., *Ecce Homo. On the Divine Unity of Christ*, 156). On this account, in the person of Christ there is only one subsistence but a double *ratio subsistendi*, due to the dual natures. In this sense Christ is a composite person, insofar as *unum duobus subsistit* (ST, III, q. 2, a. 4). Following Thomas, Riches gives the interpretation that the composite person is the same thing as the union of the *esse principale* and the *esse secundarium* in Christ.

everything given up to this point leads to a theology of mediation and a Mediator that exemplify the Neo-Chalcedonianism that underlies the teachings of the Second Council of Constantinople, as many have suggested<sup>24</sup>.

The reality of Christ, the Incarnate Word, is a «complex of reality», integrating a divine element and a human one<sup>25</sup>. This coordination enables the construction of a theological perspective on the Mediator, in whom all the essential dimensions of Christology and Soteriology converge in a unity, exhibiting a full integration of the distinction between humanity and divinity.

### 3. Ἐν θεωρία μὴ

The seventh canon of the Second Council of Constantinople condemns whoever, «acknowledging a number of natures in the same one Lord our Jesus, Christ the Word of God made flesh, ... does not accept only in theory (ἐν θεωρία μὴ) the difference of these [natures] of which He is also composed, which is not destroyed by the union (for one is from both, and through one both), but in this uses number in such a way, as if each nature had its own subsistence separately» (D. 428)<sup>26</sup>.

The Council Fathers assert that the idea of being in two natures (*in duabus naturis*), inspired by *Tomus Leonis* and found in Chalcedon's *hóros*, can only be understood as giving the natures together as permanently related, although under tension, to a single reality, that of Jesus Christ. This excludes an ultimate separation between the natures. Nevertheless, in the incarnation, the difference between the natures persists and is not annihilated, but it exists

<sup>24</sup> Cfr. GRILLMEIER, A., *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*. 2,1, *Das Konzil von Chalcedon (451). Rezeption und Widerspruch (451-518)*, Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1986, 15; OROZCO-RUANO, R., *Jesucristo, Dios con nosotros. ¿Cómo puede ser un hombre el Hijo de Dios?*, Salamanca: Secretariado Trinitario, 2016, 98 (this passage alludes to Harnack's *Vermittlungstheologie*), 101.

<sup>25</sup> *Complexa realitas* is an expression applied by Vatican II to the Church. The foundation of that «complex of reality» is the analogy with the mystery of the Word incarnate. Cfr. *Lumen Gentium* (November 21, 1964), 8, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19641121\\_lumen-gentium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html).

<sup>26</sup> Regarding ἐν θεωρία μὴ, Hefele writes, «Nul doute qu'il ne faille pas prendre trop à la lettre cette dernière expression. On en arriverait vite à nier toute distinction réelle. Ce qu'il en faut retenir, c'est l'affirmation d'une distinction des deux natures telle qu'elle ne se nuise pas à l'unité d'être et de personne» (HEFELE, C. J., *Histoire des Conciles*, III/1, 117-118, footnote 2). For Grillmeier, on the other hand, the purpose of ἐν θεωρία μὴ is to exclude any real separation of Christ's humanity. According to Cyril, ἐν θεωρία and ἐννοια were key elements in the interpretation of Chalcedonian teaching on the two natures (GRILLMEIER, A., *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*. 2,2, *Die Kirche von Konstantinopel im 6. Jahrhundert*, 480).

simply ἐν θεωρία μονή, that is as an intellectual distinction. In this way, the Fathers of the Fifth Ecumenical Council justify the Chalcedonian terminology as legitimate while denying the Nestorian interpretation<sup>27</sup>.

#### 4. *Ἐν θεωρία μονή in Cyril*

The expression ἐν θεωρία μονή extends back to Cyril of Alexandria's *Second Letter to Succensus*. The Cyrillian origin of the expression came back to prominence in the 1990s, thanks to the *Agreed Statements* that proceeded from the ecumenical dialogues between Anba Bichôï (1989) and Chambésy (1990), representing the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches<sup>28</sup>.

Cyril's two letters to Succensus are among those writings in which Cyril sought to justify, for his adherents, the conciliatory position that he maintained in the 433 *Formula of Union*, intended to prevent them from believing that he had renounced his defense of the unity of Christ. Many of these writings are characterized by recurrence to an idea that has been previously alluded to here and that is now to be clearly expounded: in the union of the Christ's natures, only the intellect is able to make a distinction between them. In his letters to Succensus, the assertion that the language of two natures is compatible with that of the one nature (μία φύσις) of the Word incarnate appears more commonly and with greater emphasis. In his *First Letter to Succensus*, Cyril declares that the two natures in Christ are related without confusion or alteration; these words were later employed in Chalcedon's own dogmatic formula<sup>29</sup>. This idea is, as Boulnois asserts, the conceptualization (ἐννοια) and vision through the eyes of the soul of how the Only Begotten (μονογενῆ) became man; for this reason, the united natures are nevertheless

<sup>27</sup> FRANCK, G. L. C., *The Council of Constantinople II as a Model Reconciliation Council*, 646.

<sup>28</sup> Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, «Communiqué of the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches (Anba Bishoy Monastery, Egypt: 20-24 June, 1989)», *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 34 (1989) 393-397; «Second Agreed Statement and Recommendations to the Churches», *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 36 (1991) 185-188. Cfr. HALLEUX's, A. DE, critical judgment in «Actualité du néochalcedonisme. À propos d'un accord récent», in HALLEUX, A. DE, *Patrologie et oecumenisme. Recueil d'études*, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990, 481-503. Cfr. LA PARRA, J. R., *El acceso contemporáneo a la cristología de Calcedonia*, 192-199, 264-266.

<sup>29</sup> BOULNOIS, M.-O., «Patristique grecque et histoire des dogmes», *Annuaire of l'École pratique des hautes études, section des sciences religieuses* 118 (2011) 171.

two, while the Word of God made man and flesh is one Christ, the Son and the Lord<sup>30</sup>.

In his *Second Letter to Succensus*, Cyril explains the reasons why the division between the two is to be understood as appearing only in the intellect but not as a real separation in nature. This text also questions whether Christ in fact has one nature or two. It is recognized that in his use of the crypto-Apollinarian affirmation of μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη, which Cyril wrongly attributes to Athanasius, there was no intention to deny the duality of Christ. Cyril asserts a unity not only in beings that have a simple nature but also in compound beings that continue to exist in unity. One example of this would be the case of the relation between body and soul, which forms of heterogeneous elements one human nature. (This perspective allows Cyril to speak of the single nature of the Word incarnate without this entailing any sort of mixture or diminution of human nature)<sup>31</sup>. Here, Cyril criticizes those who claim two separate subsistent natures in Christ and argues that separation within a complete alterity can only be understood in reference to elements that do not admit an intellectual division alone, but also a concrete one. Thus, there is no complete separation, in compound beings, between natures that can be distinguished only in intellect, as occurs in man, who is composed of the natures of body and soul but nevertheless exists only in unity: «both belong to one being in such a way that, henceforward, the two are no longer two, but, out of the two, one living being has been formed»<sup>32</sup>.

While we distinguish in a purely conceptual manner through a subtle contemplation or, put differently, as we perceive their difference by imagination and intellect, we neither mutually separate the natures nor let the virtue of division entirely act on them. Rather, we conceive that both belong to one being in such a way that, henceforward, the two are no longer two, but, out of the two, one living being has been formed<sup>33</sup>.

How did Cyril understand ἐν θεωρία μονή? This is not a minor question, as his characterization, if not his opinion as such, was strongly represented in the debates of the Council of Chalcedon, where Cyril's letters to Nestorius,

<sup>30</sup> BOULNOIS, M.-O., *Patristique grecque et histoire des dogmes*, 172. Cfr. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, *Epistola ad Succensum* I, 6, ACO I, 1, 6, 153, 23-154, 3.

<sup>31</sup> Cfr. BOULNOIS, M.-O., *Patristique grecque et histoire des dogmes*, 172.

<sup>32</sup> Cfr. BOULNOIS, M.-O., *Patristique grecque et histoire des dogmes*, 173.

<sup>33</sup> CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, *Epistula ad Succensum* II, ACO I, 1, 6, 162, 2-9.

approved by the Council of Ephesus, were read, following which they also appeared in the deliberations of the Second Council of Constantinople.

### 5. *Interpretation of André de Halleux*

André de Halleux, who has conducted close study of Cyrillian Christology, holds that Cyril's theory of *division in se*uls concepts may have been rooted in an apologetical perspective for moderate dyophysitism, which could not be precisely situated<sup>34</sup>, which would be nothing but «a secondary and apologetic reflection in the horizon of a spontaneous and basic monophysitism»<sup>35</sup>.

According to de Halleux, Cyril did not find it difficult to admit a difference between natures, as his term difference (διαφορά) did not denote the same ontological duality as that suggested by the term division, whose arithmetical understanding did not properly respond to the profession of unity, as asserted in 1 Cor 8:6. In consequence, Cyril did not think that it was necessary to assess difference of natures, although he rejected any discourse on division that would assign to the term senses other than purely conceptual ones<sup>36</sup>.

For Cyril, in an ontological sense, Christ's sole nature is that of God the Word, born of the Father<sup>37</sup>. He does not consider Christ's humanity to be a nature, although he admits that it could be a specific principle of natural activity, because he thought a consequence of this would mean treating it as an autonomous ὑπόστασις. Nevertheless, he continues to perceive in the Word incarnate «a real alterity that is not substantial but qualitative [*qualifiante*]»<sup>38</sup>. In this context, it can be understood that the distinction of natures remains within a merely intellectual sphere, in which a reality that is ontologically one is only conceptually dual.

De Halleux characterizes Cyril's conception of the Christological unity as a fundamentally vital, dynamic, and soteriological one, where soteriology is understood to refer to a descending mediation through which the flesh serves the Word as an instrument of divinization<sup>39</sup>. Cyril did not develop technical

<sup>34</sup> HALLEUX, A. DE, «Le dyophysisme christologique of Cyrille», in BRENNECKE, H. C., GRASMÜCK, E. L. and MARKSCHIES, C. (eds.), *Logos. Festschrift für Luise Abramowski zum 8. Juli 1993*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993, 417, 419.

<sup>35</sup> LA PARRA, J. R., *El acceso contemporáneo a la cristología de Calcedonia*, 213.

<sup>36</sup> HALLEUX, A. DE, «Le dyophysisme christologique of Cyrille», 417.

<sup>37</sup> HALLEUX, A. DE, «Le dyophysisme christologique of Cyrille», 423.

<sup>38</sup> HALLEUX, A. DE, «Le dyophysisme christologique of Cyrille», 423.

<sup>39</sup> HALLEUX, A. DE, «Le dyophysisme christologique of Cyrille», 423-424.

terminology to allude to Christological duality and no pre-existing language for it; hence, the statement that the distinction between natures was only through the intellect represented the only way «of acknowledging, as he did in 433, a *diphysism* compatible with the real unity of the Word incarnate»<sup>40</sup>. However, the distinction of reason was considered superfluous in Chalcedonian Christology, which considered the duality of natures to be just as real as a unity «situated in the supreme ontological level of ὑπόστασις and person»<sup>41</sup>. De Halleux concludes that the Second Council of Constantinople took ἐν θεωρίᾳ μονῇ to be rooted in the sense given by Justinian, who availed himself of the ancient Cyrillian formula to convince the Severians, in language they were familiar with, that Chalcedon's assertion of δυοφυσιτισμός did not require any division of natures into two hypostases<sup>42</sup>.

### III. MEDIATION ACCORDING TO THE CAPPADOCIANS

It is interesting to observe the route through which Cyril's expression ἐν θεωρίᾳ μονῇ reached the Second Council of Constantinople. Without becoming lost in the historical vicissitudes that led to the Council, it can be noted that this expression had already appeared in the eighth anathema of Justinian's edict (551)<sup>43</sup>, and from there, it came to be part of the seventh conciliar canon. However, during time from Cyril's writings to the convocation of the Council, the expression underwent a process of reinterpretation that ultimately reinforced its real aspect.

Leveraging Cyril's terminological ambiguity, Justinian reinterpreted his affirmations of ἐν θεωρίᾳ μονῇ in a Neo-Chalcedonian sense<sup>44</sup> by claiming that

<sup>40</sup> HALLEUX, A. DE, «La distinction des natures de Christ "par la seule pensée" au cinquième concile oecuménique», in PLĂMĂDEALĂ, A., PĂCURARIU, M. and ICĂ, I. (eds.), *Persoana și comuniune. Festschrift D. Staniloae*, Sibiu: Editura i tiparul Archiepiscopiei ortodoxe Sibiu, 1993, 318.

<sup>41</sup> HALLEUX, A. DE, «La distinction des natures de Christ "par la seule pensée" au cinquième concile oecuménique», 318.

<sup>42</sup> HALLEUX, A. DE, «La distinction des natures de Christ "par la seule pensée" au cinquième concile oecuménique», 318.

<sup>43</sup> JUSTINIAN, *Edictum rectae fidei*, in SCHWARTZ, E. (ed.), *Drei dogmatische Schriften Iustinians*, 2nd ed. by AMELOTI, M., ALBERTELLA, R. and MIGLIARDI, L., Milano: Giuffrè, 1973, 151: «Si quis in uno Domino Iesu Christo, hoc est Deo Verbo incarnato, numerum confitens naturarum non intellectu differentiam earum ex quibus et compositus est, excipit utpote non interemptam propter unitatem, sed pro divisione per partem numero utitur, anathema sit».

<sup>44</sup> Cfr. SIMONETTI, M., *Il Cristo*, II, Milano: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1986, n. 21, 628. Justinian quotes Cyril's *First Letter to Succensus* (ACO I, 1, 6, 153, 23-154, 3) in *Contra Monophysitas*, 17, 1-18, 1 (SCHWARTZ, E. [ed.], *Drei dogmatische Schriften Iustinians*, 12,



the distinction of natures was true in a real and not purely abstract manner. According to Giulio Maspero<sup>45</sup>, it is probable that, through this process, the influence of the Cappadocians on the emperor, and especially that of Gregory of Nyssa, played a significant role. This hypothesis is supported by strong evidence that ought to be seriously considered, such as the fact that, in Justinian's work, only Cyril and the Cappadocians are cited as authorities for the possibility that the two natures in the hypostatic union are to be distinguished only intellectually (κατ' ἐπίνοιαν). A theological analysis shows, moreover, that Justinian was able to rely on the Cappadocians to reinterpret Cyril's doctrine in a realist sense. Ἐν θεωρία μόνῃ can be understood both as purely abstract and non-real distinction on the one hand and, on the other, as a real one, although one that is imposed upon a concrete unity that was so profound that only thought can distinguish its properties<sup>46</sup>.

The theological basis that Gregory of Nyssa provided is the schema of relation and distinction together with articulation at the same time, between θεολογία and οἰκονομία. This relation forms the basis for a theology of the Mediator. The distinction is, in the first place and in a radical way, which links the uncreated and the created, the divine and the human. Between the uncreated and the created, there is not nor could there be any intermediary<sup>47</sup>. The divine and the human are united in Christ the Mediator, in whom the two natures are united in a dynamic single reality, where the properties of each nature remain safeguarded, without any mingling or confusion. «The thought [ἐπίνοια] divides in two that which has become one reality out of love of humankind [φιλανθρωπία] and is distinguishable by reason [λόγος]»<sup>48</sup>. In the interior of the absolute unity of the two natures, their properties can be conceptually distinguished<sup>49</sup>.

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30-32) and immediately bestows on the Cyrillian affirmations a realistic sense (SCHWARTZ, E. [ed.], *Drei dogmatische Schriften Iustinians*, 12, 33-39). Cfr. MASPERO, G., «La cristología de Gregorio de Nisa desde la perspectiva del II Concilio de Constantinopla», *Scripta Theologica* 36 (2004) 389.

<sup>45</sup> MASPERO, G., «La cristología de Gregorio de Nisa desde la perspectiva del II Concilio de Constantinopla», 385-410.

<sup>46</sup> Cfr. MASPERO, G., «La cristología de Gregorio de Nisa desde la perspectiva del II Concilio de Constantinopla», 388-389.

<sup>47</sup> Cfr. BRUGAROLAS, M., «La mediación de Cristo en Gregorio de Nisa», *Scripta Theologica* 49 (2017) 301-326, at 310.

<sup>48</sup> GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Contra Eunomium* III/4, 15, in JAEGER, W. (ed.), *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* (GNO), II, 139, 6-8, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960; *Contra Eunomium* III (1, 92, 5-93, 1; GNO, II, 35, 12-19). Justinian quotes this text again in *Contra monophysitas* 54, 10-13. Cfr. MASPERO, G., *La cristología de Gregorio de Nisa desde la perspectiva del II Concilio de Constantinopla*, 390.

<sup>49</sup> MASPERO, G., «La cristología de Gregorio de Nisa desde la perspectiva del II Concilio de Constantinopla», 390.

Gregory of Nyssa asserts that there is no name that relates to the Mediator between God and humankind as fittingly as that of the Son, «since it is applied equally to the two natures: the divine and the human. Indeed, the very being is the Son of God who has become the Son of man in the economy (κατ' οἰκονομίαν) in order to reunify in himself, through communion (κοινωνία) with both [natures], what had been separated by nature»<sup>50</sup>.

The lengthiest text cited by Justinian in *Edictum* comes from Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium*<sup>51</sup>. In addition to providing an accounting for Christ's one reality and the distinction between the natures, the text finds in the Mediator a key reality that excludes a confusion of natures and prevents, for example, passion from being attributed to the divine nature<sup>52</sup>.

Maspero concludes that the concept of ἐν θεωρία μονή as it appears in the Second Council of Constantinople has the realist sense that was attributed to it by Justinian, for whom the influence of the Cappadocians and Gregory of Nyssa was decisive<sup>53</sup>.

#### IV. DISTINCTION ἐν θεωρία μονή IN THE MEDIATOR

The principle of Christ's single πρόσωπον and single ὑπόστασις in two natures, the doctrine of Chalcedon, remains indispensable for expressing faith in the incarnation and in Christ's reality as both human and divine. Accordingly, neither unity nor duality in Christ should be de-emphasized, as was done in Nestorianism and Monophysitism in their different ways and in their various manifestations. Both of these tendencies seek to rationalize the mystery of the Word incarnate. In our times, the most widespread rationalization of Christ's nature is a type of Arianism that considers Jesus the man in his human and religious plenitude as a divinized man, but not as God from God, *homoousios* *tó Patri*.

<sup>50</sup> MASPERO, G., *La cristología de Gregorio de Nisa desde la perspectiva del II Concilio de Constantinopla*, 294. Cfr. GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Contra Eunomium* III, 1, 92, 5-93, 1 (GNO II, 35, 12-19).

<sup>51</sup> JUSTINIAN, *Edictum rectae fidei*, 142-145.

<sup>52</sup> JUSTINIAN, *Edictum rectae fidei*, 142-145: «Et ne quis incorruptibili (*akêratos*) naturae crucis passionem applicaret, per alia manifestius (*Paulus*) talem emendat errorem, mediatorem ipsum Dei et hominum et hominem et Deum ipsum nominans, ut cum duo de uno dicantur (*ta duo peri to ben*), congruum intelligatur circa utrumque, circa deitatem quidam impassibilitas, circa humanitatem autem dispensatio passionis (*hê kata to pathos oikonomia*)», in GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Contra Eunomium*, III, 14, 6-15, 12 (GNO II, 138, 28-139, 6).

<sup>53</sup> MASPERO, G., «La cristología de Gregorio de Nisa desde la perspectiva del II Concilio de Constantinopla», 396.

The Arian crisis marked the occasion for the development of a theology of the Mediator, largely seen in the writings of St. Athanasius. As Robertson points out<sup>54</sup>, Athanasius uses the terms μεσίτης, μεσιτεύω, and μέσος, but always with fear that they could be misinterpreted, as in fact happened, to indicate a third party. In reference to mediation, the Word brings God to men and brings men to God. In this Word, there is an ontological unity between divinity and humanity<sup>55</sup>. Christ reveals his divinity in a truly human condition. The basis of his epistemological mediation that reveals God is his divine-human ontology as the Incarnate Word. In addition, to this, Christ's mediation is also a redemption<sup>56</sup>. These considerations laid a firm foundation for later Christological teaching.

Beyond the metaphysical explanation of Christ as one person in two natures, he is one subject and one simple being in his human-divine complexity. To understand this, we could consider that one and the same person could be many different types of people at the same time: a person can be a worker, a father, a gardening enthusiast, a member of a professional association, a Catholic, a volunteer in a hospital, and so on. However, nothing within all this diversity, none of them excludes the other understandings, as all are mutually compatible; all of them could be linked through the conjunction *and* alone: this person is a worker *and* a father *and* a Catholic. None of this, and no union of any of these types of person, would generate a logical or metaphysical problem when we take account of the union of those properties. On the contrary, each of these additions enriches the basic person. In the case of divine and human nature, of course, is more complex. Stating that Jesus is man appears to entail affirming that he is not divine, because the human is not God. In the same way but in the other direction, saying that Christ is God entails an implicit denial that he is man; as above, God is not man. This is because the natures that are joined in the Word incarnate are not simply ways of being. Instead, they bear a metaphysical dimension and cannot be mingled, divided, or separated. Therefore, it is possible to affirm, as is done here, that Christological faith holds that Jesus is man – that is, non-God – *and* simultaneously God – that is, non-man. The enormous tension concentrated in the simple conjunction *and* between God and man – places the believer before the mystery as such because the identity of the single subject Jesus Christ simply exists indissolubly in his concurrent being as man and God.

<sup>54</sup> ROBERTSON, J. M., *Christ as Mediator*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007, 175.

<sup>55</sup> ROBERTSON, J. M., *Christ as Mediator*, 215-216.

<sup>56</sup> ROBERTSON, J. M., *Christ as Mediator*, 212.

Whoever believes in Jesus of Nazareth sees in him a single subject who has the position of the Mediator by virtue of his humanity and divinity. The unity can be perceived and believed in through knowledge of its elements without breaking it (καθ' ὑπόστασιν). In Christ, the human action, that is, what is performed *qua* man, and divine action, that is, what is performed *qua* God, is to be distinguished. However, this distinction is in the realm of contemplation or theory, because in each case, it is only the Mediator who acts and, in each action, an implicit understanding of the Mediator as the totality, that is, in all cases, the other nature is present in the acts of the one. Thus, Jesus becomes man from a divine starting-point, and this «from God» is an essential part of his humanity. The inverse may not be affirmed, that Jesus becomes God from a human starting-point, although it may be asserted that he is God revealed from a human nature. The fact that the human and divine natures, as is taught by Chalcedon, exist without mingling, confusion, separation, or division does not mean that they are a pair of static realities that behave alternately as human or divine actions or, rarely, together in a limited set of theandric actions. Instead, it is always the sole Mediator who performs both strictly human and strictly divine actions, in such a way that the distinction between them, as affirmed in the Third Council of Constantinople, exist only ἐν θεωρίᾳ μόνῃ, that is, through a rational analysis of Jesus's life based on the teaching put forward at Chalcedon teaching.

Cyril compares Christ as one person in two natures to a human being composed of soul and body. Using that comparison, as noted, he extracted an understanding of the distinction of natures in Christ as occurring only in theory, or conceptually. Is this comparison valid? Although it does seem to open a path to understanding the dual nature of Christ, the comparison is not valid, properly speaking, because man's hylomorphic composition must come into being out of incomplete substances, which act as matter and form for each other. Hence, the living human body is inconceivable without an essential relation to its soul, and similarly, the human soul must be conceived as embodied. In Christ, neither the human nor the divine nature is incomplete, and neither is matter or form for the other<sup>57</sup>. The comparison of Christ with the human compound of soul and body is only valuable where it begins from an understanding of the Mediator as already existing, namely, the fact that

<sup>57</sup> AQUINAS, *ST*, III, q. 2, a. 4, ad 2: «Illa compositio personae ex naturis non dicitur esse ratione partium, sed potius ratione numeri, sicut omne illud in quo duo conveniunt, potest dici ex eis compositum».

Christ is man *from* God and God revealed *from* man. It is not possible, therefore, to think of Christ's nature as either purely or solely human or purely or solely divine: both natures are mutually implicated in the Mediator, although not in the same sense, insofar as the divine nature and the human nature do not operate on the same level<sup>58</sup>. In that sense, the distinction between them, although it is certainly real, is only made conceptually, ἐν θεωρίᾳ μόνῃ.

This approach should not be taken as an ingenuous covering up of the matter using words to disguise the problem of unity and duality in Christ. Instead, it is an excavation of an expression to convey the complex unity of Christ's being. The heart of the matter is the relationship between eternity and time as established in the Incarnation and seen by man, while truly, still inadequately as the union of human nature and divine nature in the person of the Word. The Mediator is the common term between them – the name – that best articulates the complex reality of the single Christ, who is perfect God and perfect man, the Son and the Savior.

If the Chalcedonian formula was developed from an analysis of Christ's reality, the canons of the Second Council of Constantinople embody the moment of synthesis. This synthesis is not only present in its explicit expression in the text produced by the Council (κατὰ σύνθεσιν), although that use does denote acceptance. The 553 Constantinople synthesis is the logical correlation of the analysis of Chalcedon. Both the analysis and the synthesis are necessary; the analysis allows a delimitation of terms and concepts that the believing reason reaches out for, hoping that nothing will be left unexplained. Here, a key element is the absence of logical contradiction or and a quest for coherence. In its very nature, such an analysis attains its objective where different levels of reality are each clearly situated within their distinction. Person, nature, and mode of union are all included in the ὅρος, such that what is valid in earlier propositions could be recognized as such. At the same time, all interpretations that would be detrimental to the integrity of the mystery or to its coherence are avoided.

This necessary analytic moment goes in hand with the interior demand of synthesis. On the one hand, the Christian faith confesses that Christ is one person with two natures, without mingling, division, confusion, or separation. Once this is expressed, faith simply turns toward the single, unitary reality of Christ and confesses, «I believe in Jesus Christ!» This is the endpoint, the true

<sup>58</sup> AQUINAS, *ST*, III, q. 2, a. 1, ad 1: «Non ergo sensus est quod in incarnatione ex duabus naturis sit una natura constituta, sed quia una natura Dei verbi carnem univit in persona».

synthesis, based on a clarity of analysis; such a synthesis does not admit of a separation between the real, confessed Christ as understood in the faith and the dogmatically analyzed Christ. That synthesis expresses what is real and knowable but is not reducible to knowledge.

The need to account for analysis and synthesis in belief closely relates the very nature of Christian faith, which consists in an intellectual assent to and confession of a known, revealed truth and, at the same time, in the believer's own self-offering and adhesion to Christ the Lord. As, in Christ's person, a union is acknowledged that arises out of the meeting of contraries, it is necessary to admit the paradox between realities that despite their apparent opposition possess a profound identity in reality that is not thoroughly reducible to concepts.

This mediation is essentially a synthesis. In Christ the Mediator, the extremes of God and man coexist in perfect unity, but they remain distinct: each one includes the relation to the other, and both are partners in the unity. In the Mediator, we see one single subject, in whom the richness and complexity of his being, with its clearly distinct divinity and humanity, do not entail the existence of separate realities. Rather, his divinity and humanity exist together in a single that interiorly contains a distinction conceivable only conceptually (*ἐν θεωρία μονῇ*), to wit, a reality that, instead of separating, bears witness to unity.

In sum, analysis and synthesis of Christ form a circle and converge in a single person who is capable of articulating unity and diversity. Personhood is the foundation of individuality and also of encounter and relation.

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