

## Celestine to Cyril of Alexandria (CPG 8638)

<i>Reference:</i>	CPG 8638
<i>Incipit:</i>	<i>Tristitiae nostrae sanctitatis tuae litterae missae</i>
<i>Date:</i>	Aug 10, 430
<i>Greek Text:</i>	ACO 1.1.1:75-77
<i>Latin Text:</i>	ACO 1.2:5-6
<i>Other Ancient Versions:</i>	
<i>English Translation:</i>	FCC: J. Sauer; Price CE #14

Written just after Celestine held a council in Rome at which a letter from Cyril ([CPG 5310](#)) and one or more letters of Nestorius ([CPG 5665](#), [5667](#)) were read and discussed.<sup>1</sup> To learn more about the broader historical context, click [here](#).

The English translation below was produced by J. Sauer for FCC.

Caelestinus episcopus Cyrillo episcopo Alexandrino.	Bishop Celestine, to Cyril, bishop of Alexandria.	Τῷ ἀγαπητῷ ἀδελφῷ Κυρίλλῳ Κελεστίνος.
1. Tristitiae nostrae sanctitatis tuae litterae missae per filium nostrum Posidonium diaconum laetitia reddiderunt et gaudium alternauimus cum maerore. Cum enim respicimus et quae dixerat recensemus is qui Constantinopolitanam peruersis praedicationibus turbare conatur ecclesiam, non paruo animus noster dolore concussus diuersis cogitationum stimulis uexabatur qualiter populis possit, ut in fide persistenter, subueniri. Dum uero mentem nostram ad tuae fraternitatis scripta conuertimus, paratum iam remedium quo pestifer morbus salubri remedio uitaretur, inuenimus, puri fontis liquorem tuae caritatis sermone manantem, qui caenum omne male	1. The letter of your piety sent to our sadness through our son Posidonius the deacon has restored happiness, and we have alternated between joy and mourning. For when we consider and review the things he who began to trouble the Constantinople church with perverse preachings said, our spirit was greatly afflicted with sorrow troubled by the diverse incitements of thought as to how the church is able to be relieved for the people to persist in the faith. But then we turn our mind to your brotherly writings. We now find a prepared remedy by which a destructive	1. Τῆ ἡμετέρας στρυγνότητι τὰ διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἡμῶν Ποσειδωνίου τοῦ διακόνου ἀποσταλέντα παρὰ τῆς σῆς ἀγιότητος γράμματα ἀπέδωκεν εὐθυμίαν καὶ ἀντικατηλαξάμεθα τὸ ἥδον πρὸς τὸ λυποῦν. ἀποβλέποντες γὰρ καὶ ἐννοοῦντες ἅπερ εἶπεν ὁ τὴν ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει ἐκκλησίαν διεστραμμέναις προσομιλίαις ταραττεῖν ἐπιχειρῶν, οὐ σμικρῶ κατ' αὐτὴν τὴν ψυχὴν πεπληγμένοι πόνῳ διαφόροις σκέψεων κέντροις βασανιζόμεθα ἐννοοῦντες ὅπως βοηθηθεῖεν εἰς τὸ ἐμμένειν τῇ πίστει· ὡς δὲ τὴν ἡμετέραν διάνοιαν εἰς τὰ παρὰ τῆς σῆς ἀδελφότητος γραφέντα μετεστήσαμεν, ὥφθη ἡμῖν εὐθύς

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wessel, "Nestorius, Mary and Controversy", p. 17.

<p>fluentis riui detergeret et omnibus quid de fide nostra sentiri debeat, aperiret. Ut illum ergo reprehendimus et notamus, ita sanctitatem tuam uelut praesentem in litteris suis dominica sumus caritate complexi, cum unum idemque nos sentire de domino uideremus.</p>	<p>disease is withstood with a healthy remedy, liquid from an untainted source flowing from the speech of your charity, which wipes away every evil filth of the flowing river and uncovers for everyone what ought to be learned concerning our faith. When therefore we rebuke and mark him, thus we surround your piety as present in your letters with the Lord's charity, since we look to understand one and the same thing concerning the Lord.</p>	<p>έτοιμοτάτη θεραπεία, δι' ἧς ἡ λοιμώδης νόσος ὑγιεινῶ φαρμάκῳ ἀπελαθεῖται, φημί δὴ τὴν τῆς καθαρᾶς πηγῆς ἔκροισιν τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ λόγου τῆς σῆς ἀγάπης ἐκρέουσιν, δι' οὗ πᾶσα καθαριεῖται ἡ ἰλὺς τοῦ κακῶς διαχεομένου ρείθρου καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνοίγεται ὁ τρόπος τῆς δεούσης περὶ τὴν ἡμετέραν πίστιν ἐννοίας. ὥσπερ οὖν ἐκεῖνον καὶ στίζομεν καὶ μεμφόμεθα, οὕτως τὴν σὴν ἀγιότητα ὥσπερ παρούσαν ἐν τοῖς ἰδίῳις γράμμασιν τῆς τοῦ κυρίου ἀγάπης περιπλεκόμεθα, ὁρῶντες ὅτι ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ περὶ τοῦ δεσπότη φρονοῦμεν.</p>
<p>2. Nec mirum est prouidentissimum domini sacerdotem pro fidei amore ac uirtute pugnare, ut aduersorum improbae resistat audaciae et sibi creditos hac ammonitione confirmet. Quam ergo nobis illa fuerunt amara, tam ista sunt dulcia; quam illa caenulenta, tam ista sunt pura. Gratulamur tantam inesse sanctitati tuae uigilantiam, ut decessorum tuorum, qui et ipsi semper defensores orthodoxi dogmatis extiterunt, exempla iam uiceris. Vere tibi euangelicum potest testimonium conuenire quo dicitur: pastor bonus ponit animam suam pro ouibus suis. Sed ut tu bonus pastor, ita ille nec tamquam malus potest mercennarius accusari, qui non ideo quod oues relinquat, arguitur, sed quod eas ipse laniet, inuenitur.</p>	<p>2. It is wonderful for a very prudent priest of the Lord to fight on behalf of the faith with love and virtue so that he resists the wicked insolence of the enemies and confirms those trusting in him with this reminder. As therefore those clergy were bitter to us, so are these sweet; as those were filthy, so are these pure. We rejoice that your piety is so vigilant, that you have now overcome the examples of your predecessors who even themselves have stood out as defenders of orthodox doctrine. Truly the evangelical scriptures are able to bring together a testimony for you by which it is said: A good shepherd gives his life on behalf of his own sheep [John 10:11]. But because you are a good shepherd, thus you are not able to be accuse just as that bad hired hand is, who not for the reason that he abandons the sheep is proven so, but that it is found that he himself tears them to pieces [John 10:12].</p>	<p>2. καὶ θαυμαστὸν οὐδὲν τὸν προνοητικώτατον τοῦ κυρίου ἱερέα ὑπὲρ τοῦ τῆς πίστεως ἔρωτος τοιαύτη διαμάχεσθαι ἀρετῇ, ὥστε τῆ ἀτόπω τῶν ἐναντίων τόλμῃ ἀνθίστασθαι καὶ τοὺς ἑαυτῶ ἐμπεπιστευμένους τοιαύταις ὑπομνήσεσι βεβαιοῦν. ὥσπερ τοίνυν ἐκεῖνα ἡμῖν πικρά, οὕτω ταῦτά ἐστιν ἡδέα · ὥσπερ ἐκεῖνα ἰλυώδη, οὕτω ταῦτα καθαρὰ. καὶ χαίρομεν τοσαύτην ἐνεῖναι τῆ σῆ εὐλαβείᾳ γρηγόρησιν, ὡς ἤδη σε νενικηκένας τὰ ὑποδείγματα τῶν σου προηγησαμένων, γενομένων ἀεὶ καὶ αὐτῶν ἐκδίκων τοῦ ὀρθοδόξου δόγματος. ἀληθῶς ἐπὶ σοῦ ἀρμόσει ἡ εὐαγγελικὴ μαρτυρία ἢ λέγουσα · ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ ἀγαθὸς τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ τίθησιν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἰδίων προβάτων. ἀλλ' ὥσπερ σὺ ποιμὴν ἀγαθός, οὕτως ἐκεῖνος οὐδὲ ὡς κακὸς μισθωτὸς κατηγορεῖσθαι ἄξιος, ὅς οὐ διὰ τοῦτο διαβάλλεται ὡς τὰ ἑαυτοῦ καταλιπὼν πρόβατα, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἠυρέθη αὐτὸς διασπαράττων αὐτά.</p>
<p>3. Adderemus aliquid, frater carissime, si non te eadem sentire quae sentimus omnia uideremus et in</p>	<p>3. Let us add, dearest brother, if we do not see to it that we judge you in the same way that</p>	<p>3. προσθεῖναι δὲ καὶ ἡμεῖς τινὰ ἐμέλλομεν, ἀγαπητὲ ἀδελφέ, εἰ μὴ ἐρωῶμέν σε τὰ αὐτὰ φρονοῦντα</p>

<p>ipsa adsertione fidei defensorem fortissimum probassemus. Ingesta uero nobis sunt cuncta per ordinem a filio nostro Posidonio diacono quaecumque de hac re tua sanctitas scripsit. Omnes tendiculas praedicationis callidae detexisti et fidem taliter, ne Christo deo nostro credentium cor in alteram partem trahi ualeat, communiti.</p>	<p>we judge everything and that we had tested the strongest defense in the assertion of faith itself. Truly everything your piety wrote concerning this matter has been brought to us in order by our son Posidonius the deacon. You have uncovered all the snares of shrewd preaching and have strengthened the faith such that the heart of one who believes in Christ our God is not able to be drawn to the other side.</p>	<p>πάντα ἅπερ φρονοῦμεν ἡμεῖς, καὶ ἐν τῇ βεβαιώσει τῆς πίστεως ἐδοκιμάζομεν σε ἕκδικον ἰσχυρότατον. ἀπεδόθη γὰρ ἡμῖν πάντα κατὰ τάξιν παρὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἡμῶν Ποσειδωνίου τοῦ διακόνου ὅσα περὶ τοῦτου τοῦ πράγματος ἡ σὴ ἀγιότης γεγράφηκεν. πάντα τὰ δίκτυα τῆς δολερᾶς προσομιλίας ἐγύμνωσας καὶ οὕτως τὴν πίστιν ὠχύρωσας, ὡς μὴ δύνασθαι τὴν καρδίαν τῶν τῷ Χριστῷ καὶ θεῷ ἡμῶν πιστευόντων εἰς ἕτερον ἐλκυσθῆναι μέρος.</p>
<p>4. Magnus fidei nostrae triumphus est et adseruisse nostra tam fortiter et aduersa sanctarum scripturarum testimoniis deuicisse. Quid agat iam, quo se ille circumferat? Qui amator impiae nouitatis, dum mauult suo potius ingenio seruire quam Christo, sibi creditam plebem ueneno uoluit suae praedicationis inficere, cum et legere debuerit et tenere, prauas quaestiones et quae non proficiant ad salutem, sed ad perditionem animarum nitantur, uitandas potius quam sequendas.</p>	<p>4. It is a great triumph of our faith to have overcome even the enemies of the Holy Scriptures with proofs. What does he do now? To where does he carry himself? And this lover of wicked newness, as long as he prefers more to serve his own nature rather than Christ, wished to corrupt for himself the multitude having believed in the poison of his preaching, when he had ought to both read and comprehend that crooked investigations, which do not advance toward salvation but struggle toward the ruin of souls [Tit. 3:9], are to be shunned more than followed.</p>	<p>4. μέγας οὗτός ἐστι τῆς ἡμετέρας πίστεως θρίαμβος τὸ καὶ ἀποδείξαι τὰ ἡμέτερα οὕτως ἰσχυρῶς καὶ νενικηκέναι τὰ ἐναντία διὰ τῆς τῶν θείων γραφῶν μαρτυρίας. τί λοιπὸν διαπράξεται ἢ ποῦ ἑαυτὸν ἐκεῖνος περιστρέψει; ὃς γενόμενος ἐραστής ἀσεβοῦς νεωτερισμοῦ, ὡς ἐβούλετο ταῖς ἑαυτοῦ μάλλον ἐννοίαις δουλεύειν ἢ τῷ Χριστῷ, τὸν ἐμπιστευθέντα ἑαυτῷ δῆμον βλάψαι ἠθέλησε τῷ τῆς ἰδίας προσομιλίας δηλητηρίῳ, δέον καὶ ἀναγνῶναι τοῦτο καὶ κατέχειν ὅτι τὰ μάταια ζητήματα καὶ μὴ προκόπτοντα εἰς υἰείαν, ἀλλὰ χωροῦντα εἰς ψυχῶν ἀπώλειαν φεύγειν μάλλον ἢ ἐπιζητεῖν δεῖ.</p>
<p>5. Sed ad praecipitia festinantem, immo iam in praecipiti unde corruat, constitutum, si possumus, reuocare debemus, ne ruinam eius, si non succurrimus, urgeamus. Christus deus noster, cui suae quaestio natiuitatis infertur, pro una oue laborare nos docuit, uolens eam suis quoque umeris reuocari, ne rapaci lupo pateret in praedam. Et qui pro unius ouis currere salute nos docuit, qualiter nos uult pro ipsarum ouium laborare pastore, qui officii et nominis eius oblitus in rapacitatem lupi se ipse conuertit, gregem cupiens perdere, quem debuerat custodire?</p>	<p>5. But if we are able, on the contrary, lest we urge his fall if we do not help, now we ought to call back on the precipice the one bent on hastening to the precipice from which he falls. Christ our God, to whom an investigation of his birth is brought, has taught us to labor on behalf of one sheep, wishing that it is called back also by our own shoulders, lest it become exposed to a ravenous wolf as prey [Luke 15:4f]. And who teaches us to run on behalf of one sheep's salvation, just as he wishes us to labor on behalf of the shepherd of the sheep</p>	<p>5. ἀλλ' ὅμως εἰς κρημνοὺς αὐτὸν ἐπειγόμενον, μάλλον δὲ ἤδη ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ κρημνῷ ὅθεν πεσεῖται, διάγοντα, εἴ γε δυνάμεθα, ἀνακαλεῖσθαι ὀφείλομεν, μὴ τὴν πτώσιν αὐτοῦ τῷ μὴ βοηθεῖν προσωθήσωμεν. ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, ὃ ἐπάγεται ζήτησις περὶ τῆς ἰδίας γεννήσεως, ἐδίδαξεν ἡμᾶς κάμνειν ὑπὲρ προβάτου ἑνός, θέλων καὶ διὰ τῶν ἰδίων ὤμων ἀνακαλεῖσθαι, μὴ ἐκκέχθαι τῷ λύκῳ εἰς ἀρπαγὴν· εἶτα ὁ διδάξας ἡμᾶς οὕτως δραμεῖν ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας προβάτου ἑνός, πῶς ἄρα ἡμᾶς κάμνειν βούλεται ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ τοῦ τῶν προβάτων ποιμένος;</p>

	themselves? Who turns himself back into the greediness of the wolf forgetting his office and title, desiring to lose the flock which he ought to protect?	ὁς τῆς προσηγορίας ταύτης καὶ τοῦ επαγγέλματος ἐπιλεησμένος αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν εἰς ἀρπαγὴν λύκου μετέλλαξεν, ἐπιθυμῶν ἀπολέσαι τὴν ἀγέλην ἣν αὐτὸς ὤφειλε συντηρῆσαι.
6. Quem nos a saeptis agnorum remouere debemus, si non ita ut uolumus, corrigamus. sit spes ueniae corrigenti; malumus enim ut reuertatur et uiuat, si uitam sibi commissorum ipse non perdat. Sit certa sententia perduranti; abscondendum enim est tale uulnus, quo non unum membrum laeditur, sed totum corpus ecclesiae sauciatur. Quid enim cum consentientibus faciat qui solus sibi sapiens a nostra credulitate dissentit? Sint in communione quos ipse resistentes sibi a communione submouit, nostramque communionem habere se non posse nouerit, si in hoc peruersitatis suae tramite apostolicae doctrinae contrarius perduravit.	6. Whom we ought to remove from enclosures of lambs if we do not improve him as we wish. Let there be hope of grace for the one who corrects; for we prefer that he return and live [Ezek. 32:11], if he himself does not destroy the life of those committed to him. Let there be an established judgment for the one who continues; for such a wound ought to be cut off, by which not one limb is wounded, but the entire body of the church is hurt [Matt. 5:29]. What will he, who being wise for only himself dissents from our belief, do with those who agree? Let them be in communion whom he himself removes from communion staying behind with himself, and he has known that he is unable to have our communion, if he continues on this side path of his perversity contrary to the teachings of the apostles.	6. τοῦτον οὖν ἡμεῖς ἀπὸ τῆς περικλείσεως τῶν ἀμνῶν ἀποκινήσαι ὀφείλομεν, ἐὰν μὴ αὐτόν, ὡς θέλομεν, διορθώσωμεθα. εἴη ἔτι συγγνώμης ἐλπίς διορθουμένῳ· θέλομεν γὰρ ἵνα ὑποστρέψῃ καὶ ζήσῃ, εἰ μὴ αὐτὸς τὴν ζωὴν τῶν ἐμπεπιστευμένων ἑαυτῷ ἀπολέσειεν· εἴη δέ τις φανερὰ ἀπόφασις κατ' αὐτοῦ ἐμμένοντος. ἐκκοπτέον γὰρ τὸ τοιοῦτον τραῦμα, δι' οὗ οὐχ ἓν μέλος βλάπτεται, ἀλλὰ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἐκκλησίας τιτρώσκεται. τί γὰρ ποιεῖ μετὰ τῶν ἀλλήλοις ὁμοιοῦντων, ὁς μόνος ἑαυτῷ φρονεῖν δοκῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμετέρας διχονοεῖ πίστεως; ὅθεν μενέτωσαν ἐν τῇ κοινωνίᾳ οὓς αὐτὸς ἀντιλέγοντας αὐτῷ ἀπεκίνησε τῆς κοινωνίας, καὶ γινωσκέτω ὅτι αὐτὸς τὴν ἡμετέραν κοινωνίαν ἔχειν οὐ δύναται, ἐὰν ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ τῆς διαστροφῆς ὁδῷ παραμείνῃ ἐναντιούμενος τῇ ἀποστολικῇ διδαχῇ.
7. Auctoritate igitur tecum nostrae sedis adscita, uice nostra usus, hanc exequeris districto uigore sententiam, ut aut intra decem dies ab huius conuentionis die numerandos prauas praedicationes suas scripta professione condemnet et hanc se de natiuitate Christi dei nostri fidem tenere confirmet quam et Romana et tuae sanctitatis ecclesia et uniuersalis deuotio tenet. Aut nisi hoc fecerit, mox sanctitas tua illi ecclesiae prouisura a nostro eum corpore modis omnibus sciat esse remouendum, qui nec in se medentium curam uoluit admittere et in perditionem tam suam quam omnium sibi creditorum male pestifer festinauit. Eadem autem	7. Therefore, the authority of our see has been received with you. In our place of use, you are pursuing this judgment with strict vigor, so that either within 10 days to be numbered from the day of this meeting he condemns his perverse preachings in a written declaration, and he confirms that he holds this faith concerning the birth of Christ our God which both the Roman and your holy church and the universal allegiance hold. Or if he does not, soon your piety about to act with foresight upon that church knows that he is to be removed from our body with all means, who	7. συναφθείσης σοι τοίνυν τῆς αὐθεντίας τοῦ ἡμετέρου θρόνου, τῇ ἡμετέραι διαδοχῇ χρησάμενος ταύτην ἐκβιβάσεις ἀκριβεῖ στερρότητι τὴν ἀπόφασιν ἵνα ἢ ἐντὸς δέκα ἡμερῶν ἀριθμουμένων ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμέρας τῆς ὑπομνήσεως ταύτης τὰ κακὰ κηρύγματα ἑαυτοῦ ἐγγράφῳ ὁμολογίαι ἀθετήσῃ καὶ ἑαυτὸν διαβεβαιώσῃται ταύτην κατέχειν τὴν πίστιν περὶ τῆς γεννήσεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἢ καὶ ἡ Ῥωμαίων καὶ ἡ τῆς σῆς ἀγιότητος ἐκκλησία καὶ ἡ καθόλου καθοσίωσις κατέχει, ἢ ἐὰν μὴ τοῦτο ποιήσῃ, εὐθύς ἢ σὴ ἀγιότητος ἐκείνης τῆς ἐκκλησίας προνοησομένη μάθῃ αὐτὸν παντὶ τρόπῳ ἀπὸ τοῦ

<p>scripsimus et ad sanctos fratres et coepiscopos nostros Iohannem, Rufum, Iuuenalem, et Flavianum, ut nota sit de eo nostra, immo Christi nostri diuina sententia.</p>	<p>does not turn round to admit care of the healers to himself and he badly diseased has hurried so into his ruin as of all who believed in him. Moreover, we have written these things both to our holy brothers and bishops John, Rufus, Juvenal, and Flavian, so that our judgments, or rather the divine judgments of our Christ, may be known concerning this.</p>	<p>ἡμετέρου σωματίου ἀποκινητέον, ὅς οὔτε τῶν θεραπευόντων ἴασιν ἠθέλησε καταδέξασθαι καὶ εἰς ἀπώλειαν αὐτοῦ τε καὶ πάντων τῶν αὐτῶ ἐμπεπιστευμένων καθὼς λοιμώδης ἠπείχθη. Τὰ δὲ αὐτὰ ἐγράψαμεν πρὸς τοὺς ἁγίους ἀδελφοὺς καὶ συνεπισκόπους ἡμῶν Ἰωάννην Ῥοῦφον Ἰουβενάλιον καὶ Φλαβιανόν, ἵνα φανερὰ ᾗ ἢ περὶ αὐτοῦ ἡμῶν, μᾶλλον δὲ ἢ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἡμῶν θεία ἀπόφασις.</p>
<p>DAT IIII ID AVG THEODOSIO XIII ET VALENTINIANO III AAGG CONSS</p>	<p>Given the 4<sup>th</sup> day before the Ides of August in the 13<sup>th</sup> consulship of Theodosius and the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Valentinian, Emperors.</p>	

*Last updated 9/22/24 JTS*