

Orthodox Heights

HolyTrinityOrthodoxChurch.org

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MAY 20, 2018

7th SUNDAY OF PASCHA — Tone 6. Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council.

Afterfeast of Ascension. Martyr Thalelaeus at Aegae in Cilicia, and his companions, Martyrs Alexander and Asterius (ca. 284). Uncovering of the Relics of St. Aleksy, Metropolitan of Moscow and Wonderworker of All Russia (1431). Rt. Blv. Prince St. Dovmont (Timothy), Prince of Pskov (1299). Martyr Asclas of Egypt (ca. 287). Ven. Zabulon (Zebulon) and Sosanna (Susanna), parents of St. Nino, Enlightener of Georgia (1996).

EPISTLE: ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 20.16-18, 28-36: We must take heed to shepherd the Church in the true faith, and defend it against the wolves.

GOSPEL: JOHN 17.1-13: In our unity as a Church, Christ is glorified.

CEMETERY MAINTENANCE: The season has finally changed, and the grass will soon be growing in earnest. Many thanks are due to all of the families of the parish who have volunteered to maintain the cemetery through the coming months.

SANITATION ENGINEERING: In order to be good neighbors, we have installed locks on the dumpster. If you are taking refuse to the receptacle, please get the key from Fr James and deposit the bags inside. Please do not put it on top as this attracts vermin.

WELCOME VISITORS! We warmly welcome all of our visitors! It's good to have you with us! Please know that we are glad that you are here praying with us and invite you to join us after the service for a meal and to meet everyone in our community.

LEGACY FUND: We have established a Legacy Fund, in order to honor the work of the last 100 years, and provide a stable foundation for the next century in the life of our beloved parish. This designated fund will be for capital improvements and for furthering the ministries of the Parish. Please consider supporting this effort in your giving and estate planning.

SUNDAY SCHOOL: After a successful and edifying year, the Sunday School will have its last session today. We offer profound thanks to our teachers and aide, asking our Lord to bless each of them for their selfless services. For an end of the year field trip, we will be going to Tanglewood Nature Preserve after the Liturgy on June 3rd. All are invited, as we enjoy God's creation together in thanksgiving for His great goodness.

DDB APPRECIATION DINNER: As we are both benefactors and recipients of the Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors Program, we have been invited to the annual appreciation dinner. It will be held St Basil's Church in Watervliet, NY on Sunday, June 3rd at 5 PM. If you would like to attend, please see Fr James.

PENTECOST: With the upcoming Parish Feastday, we will come together after the divine services in fellowship for a festive Potluck meal. Please bring a favored dish that you would like to share with your brothers and sisters.



FELLOWSHIP SCHEDULE

May 20: Speen Family

May 27: Potluck for Pentecost

June 3: Dudek and Payzant Families

READERS SCHEDULE

May 19: Alexander C

May 26: Sdn Shawn Michael

June 2: Antonina M
June 9: Rdr William

CEMETERY

May 20: Haluszczak

May 27: Speen

June 3: Payzant

June 10: Haluszczak

LIVING:

Archpriest Jason
Archpriest Daniel K
Archpriest Herman
Archpriest John
Mat. Katherine
Rdr. Thomas
Rdr. David
Theresa Bridget
Kathleen
Infant Hannah
Abigail
Infant Justus

Anna & Family
Leon
Kate
Elizabeth
Kristen
Katherine
Nadezhda
Errin
Helen
Larissa & Family
Janet
Joshua

CATECHUMEN: None

BIRTHDAYS: Dmitri
ANNIVS: None
NAMESDAYS: Lydia
TRAVELLING: None

REPOSED:

Mitred Archpriest John
Archpriest John U
Archpriest Stephen
Priest John B
Deacon Mark H.
Rdr Gregory
Parker
Lindsay

Lucinda
Hannah
Katerina
Child Anthony C
Amanda
Peter

NEWLY REPOSED: Eleanor (5-15)

ANNIVERSARIES: None

BY THE NUMBERS: Last Collection: \$877. Weekly Budget: \$1100.
MTD: \$1667. Monthly Budget: \$4360. April +\$434

SCHEDULE FOR THIS WEEK

CONFESSIONS ARE HEARD BEFORE AND AFTER VESPERS AND AT ANY OTHER CONVENIENT TIME

SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE 1ST COUNCIL, MAY 20: 8:40 Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy, Fellowship Hour and Sunday School

MONDAY, MAY 21: Rector's Sabbath

TUESDAY, MAY 22: 8 AM Morning Prayers

WEDNESDAY, MAY 23: 8 AM Morning Prayers

THURSDAY, MAY 24: 8 AM Morning Prayers

FRIDAY, MAY 25: 8 AM Morning Prayers

SATURDAY, MAY 26: 5 PM Great Vespers

PENTECOST SUNDAY, MAY 27: 8:40 Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy, Kneeling Vespers and Fellowship Hour

ST. LYDIA OF PHILIPPI

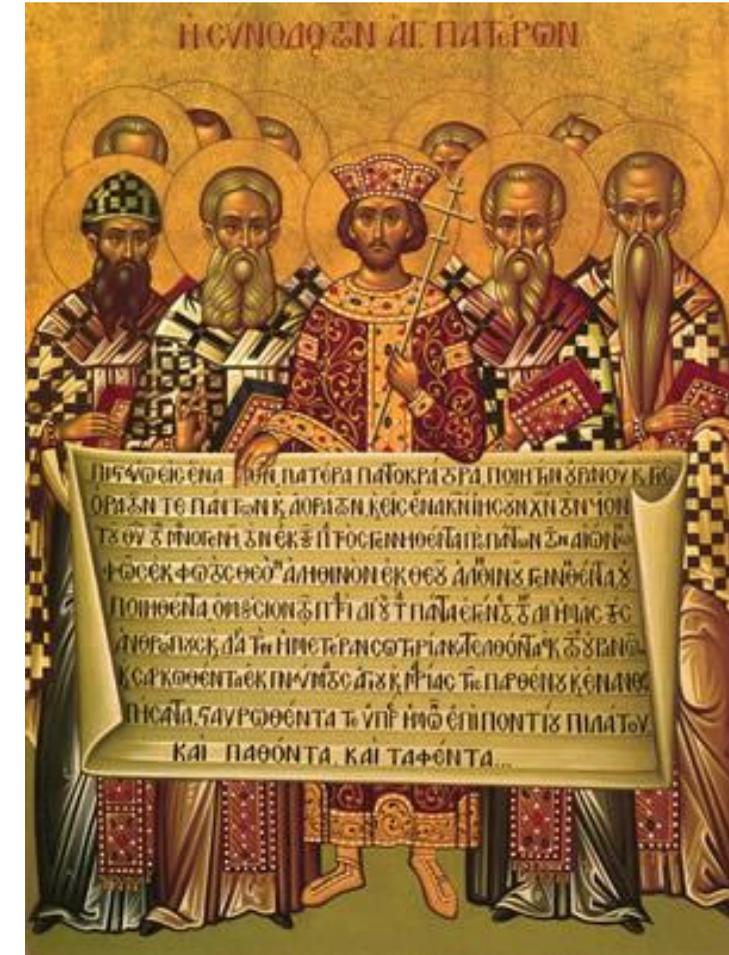
While Saint Paul was at Troas, he beheld a certain Macedonian in a dream (Acts 16:9), who entreated him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." He heeded this voice as if it were the voice of God, and he decided to journey to Macedonia without delay, accompanied by Saints Timothy, Silas, and Luke. They disembarked at Neapolis and made their way to Philippi. On the outskirts of Philippi, on the banks of a river, there was a Jewish place of prayer. It was the Sabbath and, to the women who had gathered there, the Apostle of the Gentiles preached the Word of God in Europe for the first time. The God-fearing women listened to the words of this unknown Jew carefully and with reverence. The one who was most enthusiastic was St.



Lydia, a proselyte and a seller of purple from Thyatira. As she listened, the Lord opened her heart to heed the words that were being spoken by Saint Paul. When she heard him talk about the Messiah, she accepted the truth of what he said and she believed in Christ. Saint Lydia and her entire household were baptized in the waters of the river. Thus, she became the first woman of Macedonia to be enrolled as a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven. Her heart was filled with gratitude toward those who had opened the eyes of her soul, and so she asked them to accept the hospitality of her house. "If you have judged me to be a believer in the Lord, come to my house and remain there." And she insisted that they should come (Acts 16:15). The Orthodox Church honors Saint Lydia as an Equal of the Apostles, and at the holy place of her baptism on the banks of the Zygaktos River, a baptistery has been built, which is similar to the early Christian basilicas of Philippi. Saint Lydia is commemorated on March 23 (Slavic usage) and on May 20 (Greek usage). She was glorified by the Church of Constantinople on May 23, 1972.

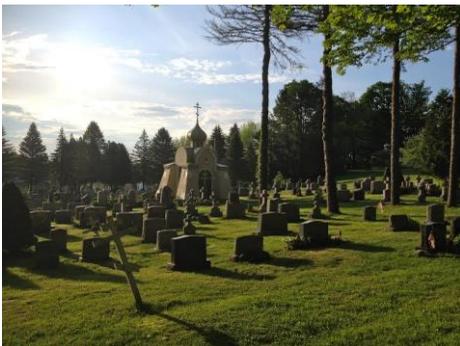
Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

Elmira Heights, New York



SUNDAY, MAY 20TH, 2018
SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE 1ST COUNCIL

ORTHODOXY AND THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD: BENEFITS OF EARTH BURIAL



Cemeteries provide consecrated ground for survivors to visit the graves and honored loved ones. These visits reminded survivors of the brevity and uncertainty of their own lives and our inevitable destination to leave this world and meet our Lord. Studies show that survivors of the departed who are cremated express less grieving and weeping at time of funeral, rarely visit the site where their relatives or loved ones are kept, especially with those whose ashes are scattered.

It is well known among church historians that the early Christians fervently opposed infanticide, child abandonment, abortion and suicide because they believed in the sanctity of the human being. In their minds, the sanctity of the human body did not come to an end when a person died. They saw the human being as the crown of God's creation, for man was made in the image and likeness of God (Gen.1:27) (p.49). "The saints, during their earthly lives, were filled with the Holy Spirit. And when they fulfill their course, the grace of the Holy Spirit does not depart from their souls or their bodies in the tombs" (St. John of Damascus). Cremation denies and deprives us of the sacred tradition and benefits of the presence of saintly holy relics.

St. Paul emphasizes this: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy and you are that temple" (1Cor.3:16-17). He repeats this again later, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which have from God? You are not your own" (1Cor.6:19). So, even though we may not have attained a level of saintliness like some of our spiritual predecessors, nevertheless, God's Holy Spirit lives and dwells within us.

Cremation is the denial and purposeful destruction of God's human temple. As followers of Christ, we are not dualists or spiritualists who believe that the material world is inherently evil and to be despised. Rather, as Christians, we believe in the inherent goodness of the material world, especially our human bodies. Together, our body and soul, are created in God's image and likeness. We are called to redeem and transfigure the creation to its original glory and beauty by continually resisting sin and temptation, repenting of our transgressions, and opening our hearts, minds and bodies to the indwelling presence of God's divine grace through His only-begotten Son and live-giving Holy Spirit.

The only fire we should submit ourselves to is the fire of God's love and holy presence. St. Paul also says "Each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done...If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved but only through fire" (1Cor.3:14,15). Amen!

Because the Orthodox Faith affirms the fundamental goodness of creation, it understands the body to be an integral part of the human person and the temple of the Holy Spirit, and expects the resurrection of the dead. The Church considers cremation to be the deliberate desecration and destruction of what God has made and ordained for us. The Church instead insists that the body be buried so that the natural physical process of decomposition may take place. The Church does not grant funerals, either in the sanctuary, or at the funeral home, or at any other place, to persons who have chosen to be cremated. Additionally, memorial services with kolyva (boiled wheat) are not allowed in such instances, inasmuch as the similarity between the "kernel of wheat" and the "body" has been intentionally destroyed.

COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY FATHERS OF THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

On the seventh Sunday of Pascha, we commemorate the holy God-bearing Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council. The Commemoration of the First Ecumenical Council has been celebrated by the Church of Christ from ancient times. The Lord Jesus Christ left the Church a great promise, "I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18). Although the Church of Christ on earth will pass through difficult struggles with the Enemy of salvation, it will emerge victorious. The holy martyrs bore witness to the truth of the Savior's words, enduring suffering and death for confessing Christ, but the persecutor's sword is shattered by the Cross of Christ.

A local Council, convened with Patriarch Alexander of Alexandria presiding, condemned the false teachings of Arius. However, Arius would not submit to the authority of the Church. He wrote to many bishops, denouncing the decrees of the local Council. He spread his false teaching throughout the East, receiving support from certain Eastern bishops.

Investigating these dissensions, the holy emperor Constantine (May 21) consulted Bishop Hosius of Cordova (Aug. 27), who assured him that the heresy of Arius was directed against the most fundamental dogma of Christ's Church, and so he decided to convene an Ecumenical Council. In 325, 318 bishops representing Christian Churches from various lands gathered together at Nicea.

Among the assembled bishops were many confessors who had suffered during the persecutions, and who bore the marks of torture upon their bodies. Also participating in the Council were several great luminaries of the Church: St Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia (December 6 and May 9), St Spyridon, Bishop of Tremithos (December 12), and others venerated by the Church as holy Fathers.

With Patriarch Alexander of Alexandria came his deacon, Athanasius (who later became Patriarch of Alexandria (May 2 and January 18). He is called "the Great," for he was a zealous champion for the purity of Orthodoxy. In the Sixth Ode of the Canon for today's Feast, he is referred to as "the thirteenth Apostle."

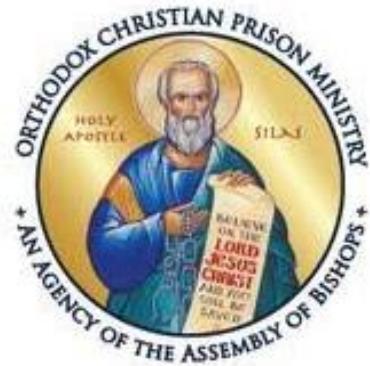
The emperor Constantine presided over the sessions of the Council. In his speech, responding to the welcome by Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, he said, "God has helped me cast down the impious might of the persecutors, but more distressful for me than any blood spilled in battle is for a soldier, is the internal strife in the Church of God, for it is more ruinous."

Arius, with seventeen bishops among his supporters, remained arrogant, but his teaching was repudiated and he was excommunicated from the Church. In his speech, the holy deacon Athanasius conclusively refuted the blasphemous opinions of Arius. The heresiarch Arius is depicted in iconography sitting on Satan's knees, or in the mouth of the Beast of the Deep (Rev. 13).

The Fathers of the Council declined to accept a Symbol of Faith (Creed) proposed by the Arians. Instead, they affirmed the Orthodox Symbol of Faith. St Constantine asked the Council to insert into the text of the Symbol of Faith the word "consubstantial," which he had heard in the speeches of the bishops. The Fathers of the Council unanimously accepted this suggestion.

In the Nicene Creed, the holy Fathers set forth and confirmed the Apostolic teachings about Christ's divine nature. The heresy of Arius was exposed and repudiated as an error of haughty reason. After resolving this chief dogmatic question, the Council also issued Twelve Canons on questions of churchly administration and discipline. Also decided was the date for the celebration of Holy Pascha. They decree that it should be celebrated by Christians on the first Sunday after the first full moon of the vernal equinox (which occurred on March 22 in 325).

MAY 20 DESIGNATED PRISON MINISTRY AWARENESS SUNDAY



Sunday, May 20, 2018 has been designated "Prison Ministry Awareness Sunday" by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America.

The day will highlight the work of the Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry [OCPM], an Assembly agency.

"Our Divine Liturgy begins with petitions that include 'for captives and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord,'" said Father Stephen Powley, OCPM Executive Director, in a letter announcing Awareness Sunday. "Later, following the Holy Anaphora, the priest again prays, 'Remember Lord...

captives and their salvation.'

"Orthodox Christians are meant to put feet to their prayers," Father Stephen continued. "As Saint Paul exhorts us, 'Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things' [Romans 10:13-15].

"Please put 'feet' to your prayers for captives and for their salvation by assisting OCPM in bringing the Good News to the precious souls living in the prisons and jails of our country," Father Stephen concluded. "OCPM needs your help to bring the Love and Light of Christ to these men and women who should also be afforded the joy of the Resurrection of our Lord. Please be so kind as to pass a second tray for the ongoing ministry of OCPM on Prison Ministry Awareness Sunday."

OCPM provides Orthodox Christian publications, Bibles, prayer books, icon and catechism courses to those in prison and to prison chapel libraries. It also links prisoners to Orthodox Christian priests who provide a sacramental life while offering their families spiritual

guidance and aid. Donations may be made online or may be sent to OCPM, PO Box 1597, New York, NY 10025.



SAINT CONSTANTINE AND EMPRESS HELENA

Constantine's parents were Emperor Constantius Chlorus and the Empress Helena. Chlorus had other children by another wife, but from Helena he had only Constantine. After his coronation Constantine fought three great battles: one, against Maxentius, a Roman tyrant; the second, against the Scythians on the Danube and the third, against the Byzantines.

Before the battle with Maxentius, while Constantine was greatly concerned and in doubt about his success, a brilliant Cross appeared to him in the sky during the day, completely adorned with stars and written on the Cross were these words: "By this Sign Conquer." Astonished, the emperor ordered a large cross to be forged similar to the one that appeared to him and that it be carried before the army. By the power of the Cross he achieved a glorious victory over the enemy who was superior in members. Maxentius was drowned in the Tiber river.

Immediately after that, Constantine issued the famous Edict of Milan in the year 313 A.D. to halt the persecution of Christians. Defeating the Byzantines, Constantine built a beautiful capital on the Bosphorus called Constantinople.

Before that, he succumbed to the dreaded disease of leprosy. As a cure, he rejected that. Then the pagan priests and bathed in the blood of he appeared to him and told Sylvester who will cure him bishop instructed him in him and the disease of emperor's body.



persecution of Christians.

Constantine built a beautiful which from that time on was

however, Constantine disease of leprosy. As a cure, physicians counseled him to slaughtered children. However, Apostles Peter and Paul him to seek out Bishop of this dreaded disease. The the Christian Faith, baptized leprosy vanished from the

When a discord began in the Church because of the mutinous heretic Arius, the emperor convened the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, 325. A.D., where the heresy was condemned and Orthodoxy confirmed.

St. Helena, the pious mother of the emperor, was very zealous for the Faith of Christ. She visited Jerusalem, discovered the Honorable Cross of the Lord, built the Church of the Resurrection on Golgotha and many other churches throughout the Holy Land. This holy woman presented herself to the Lord in her eightieth year in 327 A.D. Emperor Constantine outlived his mother by ten years. He died in Nicomedia in his sixty-fifth year in 337 A.D. His body was interred in the Church of the Twelve Apostles in Constantinople.