

Orthodox Heights

HolyTrinityOrthodoxChurch.org

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MAY 28, 2017

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

Afterfeast of Ascension. St. Nicetas, Bishop of Chalcedon (9th c.). St. Ignatii (Ignatius), Bishop and Wonderworker of Rostov (1288). St. Eutychius, Bishop of Melitene (1st c.). Martyr Heliconis of Thessalonica (244). Hieromartyr Helladius, Bishop in the East (6th-7th c.). St. Germanus (Germaine, Herman), Bishop of Paris (576).

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.

LEGACY FUND: It was decided at the Parish Council Meeting to establish a Legacy Fund. This is a fund 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.

PARISH COUNCIL CONFERENCE: Each year, the Diocese offers conferences as training and educational opportunities for present and future Parish Council Members. This year, it will be held at Ss Peter & Paul Church in Endicott. Judge Ray Lanier will be discussing the proper governance of the Parish and the legal responsibilities that concerns each parish. Please see Fr James if you are interested in attending.

BABY BOTTLE FUND DRIVE: Choose to love the unborn and their moms and dads by picking up an empty baby bottle and take it home. Fill it with your spare change ... dollar bills or a check! Bring back your filled bottles to Church on or before Sunday, June 18th for the Southern Tier Pregnancy Resource Center to collect. Reach out to us if you'd like to become a volunteer, Board member, or prayer partner.

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.

PENTECOST: With the upcoming Parish Feastday, we will celebrate after the divine services with a festive Potluck meal. There is a sign-up sheet in the basement. If you have any questions, please see Katie.

SUMMER VACATIONS: If you are travelling this summer, you can find a church near your vacation spot by going to assemblyofbishops.org/directories/parishes. Also, be mindful that other jurisdictions have different requirements of preparation for receiving the Eucharist.

DONATION SOUGHT: Two items are needed for the altar. Blue priestly vestments are needed and are on order. There is a matching grant offered to pay for this item. A pledge of \$300 more is needed. A second hand blessing cross is also needed to properly outfit the altar table. If you are interested in sponsoring either of these items, please see Fr James.

FELLOWSHIP SCHEDULE:

May 28: Karney

June 4: Pentecost Potluck

June 11: Charlanow/Cemetery

June 18: T&M Cheplick

READERS SCHEDULE:

For Week of: 5/27 Rdr William

6/3 Rdr Thomas

6/10 Sdn Michael

6/17 Rdr William

PRAYER LIST

LIVING:	Kathleen	Kathleen	ANNIVS: Willie &	Anne O
Apr John	Helen	Michael	Carol.	Debra
Apr Herman	Peter	Yuri	NAMESDAYS: None.	Taissia
Apr Theodore	Rdr Thomas	Kira & Rebecca	REPOSED:	Theophan
Apr Jason	Rdr David	Bill	Apr John U	Lynda
Pr Gabriel & Family	Rdr Paul	Nadia	Priest Matthew	Alfred
Mat Joanna	Maria	John	Priest John	NEWLY REPOSED:
Mat Katherine	Leon	Sophie K	Apr Alexander	Clarence (5-13)
Mat Christine	Katherine	<u>Children:</u> All of the	Dn Mark	ANNIVERSARIES:
Mildred	Kate	Parish	Rdr Gregory	None.
Elizabeth	Kristin	BIRTHDAYS: Lou K.	Joseph C	
Antonina			Steven L	

BY THE NUMBERS: Last Collection: \$550. Weekly Budget: \$1100.
MTD: \$2548. Monthly Budget: \$4360. April: -228 (5 weeks).

WEEKLY HYMNS FOR SUNDAY, MAY 28TH

Tone 6 Troparion / Resurrection

The angelic powers were **at** Thy tomb / the guards became as **dead** men / Mary **stood** by Thy grave / seeking Thy most pure **Body** / Thou didst **capture** hell / not being **tempted** by it / Thou didst come to the Virgin **granting** life /// O Lord Who didst rise from the dead, **glory** to Thee.

Tone 4 Troparion / Ascension

Thou hast ascended in glory, O **Christ** our God / Granting joy to Thy disciples by the promise of the Holy **Spirit**. / Through the blessing **they** were assured / that Thou art the **Son of God**, /// the Redeemer of the **world**.

Tone 8 Troparion / Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council

Thou art most glorious, O **Christ** our God! / Thou hast established the Holy Fathers as **lights** on the earth! / Through them Thou hast guided us to the **True** Faith! /// O greatly Compassionate One, **Glory** to Thee!

Glory.

Tone 8 Kontakion / Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council

The Apostles' preaching and the Fathers' doctrines have established one **faith** for the Church. / Adorned with the robe of truth, woven from heavenly **theology**; /// great is the mystery of piety which it defines and **glorifies**.

Now & ever, Amen.

Tone 6 Kontakion / Ascension

When Thou hast fulfilled the dispensation for our sake, / and united earth to **heaven**: / Thou didst ascend in glory, O **Christ** our God, / not being parted from those who **love** Thee, / but remaining with them and **crying**: /// "I am with you and no one will be **against** you!"

Tone 4 / Prokeimenon – Fathers of the First Council

Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our Fathers / and praised and glorified is Thy name forever!

v: For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us!

Tone 1 / The Alleluia (from Psalm 49)

The Lord, the God of gods, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

v: Gather to Me, My venerable ones, who made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.

Hymn to the Theotokos Tone 6

Magnify, O my **soul** /// Christ the Giver of Life, who has ascended from earth to **heaven**! We magnify the **Mother** of God / who beyond reason and **understanding** / gave **birth** in **time** /// to the **Timeless** One!

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the **heavens**, praise Him in the **highest**! Rejoice in the Lord, O you **righteous**! Praise **befits** the just! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

During the Communion of the Clergy:

Tone 2 / Ascension

The Lord was taken up into the **Heavens** / so that He might send the Comforter **into** the **world** / The heavens made ready His throne and the **clouds** His **mount** / The angels marvel as they see a man more **exalted** than **they** / The Father receives Him Who had been with Him from **eternity** / The Holy Spirit commands all His **angels** / "Lift up your gates, O **princes** / All nations, **clap** your **hands** /// for Christ has ascended to where **He** was **before**.

Having beheld Thine Ascension on the holy **mountain**, O **Christ** / O Thou Who art the Radiance of the Father's **glory** / we **praise** the radiant likeness of Thy **countenance** / We worship Thy **Passion** / We honor Thy **Resurrection** / and we glorify Thy glorious **Ascension** /// O Lord, have **mercy** on us.

Tone 6 / Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council

Thou wast begotten from the Father before the **morning** star / But Arius taught wrongfully that Thou wast **created**: / In his ignorance he designated Thee as a **creature** / Yet the Fathers of the Council proclaimed Thee as **Son** of God / Co-enthroned with the **Father** /// and with the Holy **Spirit**.

The foolish Arius blasphemed the Holy **Trinity** / Dividing the Persons into three different and unequal **substances**: / But the God-mantled Fathers denounced his **confusion**: / They assembled with the zeal of **Elijah** / Destroying error with the sword of the **Spirit**, /// Directed by the **inspiration** of God!

Instead of "We have seen the True Light:" The Troparion of Ascension

Thou hast ascended in glory, O **Christ** our God / Granting joy to Thy disciples by the promise of the Holy **Spirit**. / Through the blessing **they** were assured / that Thou art the **Son of God**, /// the Redeemer of the **world**.

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).