

HOLY FATHERS OF THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

The commemoration of the First Ecumenical Council has been celebrated by the Church 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” (Matthew 16:18). The holy martyrs bore witness to the truth of these words, enduring suffering and death for confessing Christ, but the persecutor’s sword is shattered by the Cross of Christ.

Persecutions of Christians ceased during the fourth century, but heresies arose within the Church itself, one of which was Arianism. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, denied the divine nature of Christ and taught that the Savior is not consubstantial with the Father but is only a created being. Arius would not submit to the authority of the Church. He wrote to many bishops and spread his false teaching throughout the East, receiving support from some.

Emperor Constantine decided to convene an Ecumenical Council. In the year 325, 318 bishops from various lands gathered at Nicea. Among them were many confessors who had suffered during the persecutions and who bore marks of torture upon their bodies. Also participating were great luminaries of the Church—St. Nicholas, St. Spyridon, St. Athanasius. Emperor Constantine presided over the Council, saying, “God has helped me cast down the impious might of the persecutors, but more distressful to me than any blood spilled in battle is the internal strife in the Church of God, for it is more ruinous.”

Arius, with 17 bishops supporting him, remained arrogant, but his teaching was repudiated, and he was excommunicated from the Church. The Fathers of the Council declined to accept a Symbol of Faith proposed by the Arians. Instead, they affirmed the Orthodox Symbol of Faith. St. Constantine asked the Council to insert into the text of the Creed the word “consubstantial,” which he had heard in the speeches of the bishops; the Fathers 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. The Council also issued Twelve Canons on questions of churchly administration and discipline, as well as deciding the date for Holy Pascha should not be celebrated by Christians on the same day with Passover, but on the first Sunday after the first full moon of the vernal equinox.

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HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

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THE TRINITARIAN

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V. REV. ALEXANDER GARKLAVS, PASTOR

Divine Liturgy at 9:00 A.M.
Church School Every Sunday at 10:45 A.M.
(During the Months of September thru May)

Vespers - Every Saturday - 5:00 P.M.
Choir Rehearsals Every Thursday at 7:30 P.M.
Michael N. Pilat, Choir Director

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BULLETIN 31 - VOLUME LVII

TONE 5

MAY 31, 2020

SIXTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA
Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council
Afterfeast of the Ascension
Apostle Hermes of the Seventy;
Martyr Hermias at Comana; Martyr Philosophus at Alexandria

“Today, as we honor the memory of those divinely inspired fathers, with their encouragement, we entreat You, O all merciful Lord: Keep us from being led astray by those who delight in error and falsehood, and deem us worthy of praising Father, Word and Spirit.”

Exapostilarion, Tone I

“When You had joined earth to heaven and fulfilled Your plan of redemption, O Christ, our God, You ascended into heaven while remaining in our midst. For You assured us who love You that no one has any power over us, for You Yourself are with us.”

Kontakion, Tone VI

TODAY’S EPISTLE: ACTS 20:16-18,28-36

TODAY’S GOSPEL: JOHN 17:1-13

HOLY WORSHIP THIS WEEK:

Please attend worship services online on our HTOC Facebook page, accessible on www.holy-trin.org

Today, May 31 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy
Saturday, June 6 5:00 p.m. Great Vespers

Daily Scripture Readings

Monday, June 1	Acts 21:8-14	John 14:27-15:7
Tuesday, June 2	Acts 21:26-32	John 16:2-13
Wednesday, June 3	Acts 23:1-11	John 16:15-23
Thursday, June 4	Acts 25:13-19	John 16:23-33
Friday, June 5	Acts 27:1-44	John 17:18-26
Saturday, June 6	Acts 28:1-31	John 21:15-25
(Departed)	I Thessalonians 4:13-17	John 5:24-30

CURBSIDE CARRYOUT:

Woodside at St. Michael's Church is offering Take-Out Dinners on Fridays and Saturdays, 4:00-8:00 p.m. The menu changes each week; three entrees as well as a child's meal are offered. Information and ordering is available online at www.cateringbyverbas.com

VIGIL CANDLES:

During the pandemic, the 7-day Vigil Candles can be lit for your health or in memory of departed loved ones. Send your names and donations to the church, and Fr. Protodeacon Anthony will light your candles in the vestibule. Vigil candles are \$5 a piece.

IOCC:

Every Spring, the Cleveland Chapter of the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) holds a fund-raising dinner. This event brings together the local Orthodox parishes to recognize and support the great and important work of the IOCC. Prior to the event, we at Holy Trinity Church collect funds to donate to the IOCC, as our parish's contribution together with the other Cleveland Churches. Because of the COVID pandemic, there was no such event this year; but the local IOCC chapter did have a ZOOM gathering, which can be viewed on the Facebook page, on our parish's website.

As we will not be making a general collection in church, we encourage parishioners to donate directly to the IOCC. As many of you are on the IOCC's mailing list, use the donation envelope you received in the mail. Contributions can be made and sent directly to the IOCC; P.O. Box 17398; Baltimore, MD 21298. Indicate on your check that you are part of the Cleveland IOCC!

MORNING PRAYER

Eternal Lord and Creator of everything, You brought me to life by Your infinite goodness;

You granted me the gift of Baptism and the Seal of the Holy Spirit.

You filled me with the desire to search for You, the one true God.

Please listen to my prayer:

I have no life, no light, no joy, no wisdom or strength, except in You, O God.

I dare not lift my eyes to You because of my sinfulness; still, You told Your disciples:

"Whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive;" and

"What you ask in My Name, I will grant."

Thus I dare beseech You to purify me from all taint of flesh and spirit.

Teach me the way to pray.

Bless this day You give to me, Your unworthy servant, by the power of Your blessing, let me speak and act always for Your glory, with a pure heart, humbly, patiently, lovingly, gently, serenely, courageously and wisely, aware of Your constant presence.

By Your great goodness, O Lord, point me on the path of Your will, and let me walk by grace, watched by You.

All hearts are open to You, and You know everything I need.

You know what I cannot see or fail to understand, all my weaknesses and what is corrupting my soul.

Both pains and anxieties aren't hidden from You.

I plead with You, then, to listen to my prayer and teach me where to walk, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and when my tendency is to follow crooked ways,

don't be gentle with me, but force me back on the narrow way to You.

By Your Lord's power, let me cling to what is good.

Preserve me from every word or deed that corrupts the soul, and from every impulse that would harm another creature.

Teach me what to say and how to say it; and if it's appropriate to remain silent, then give me the inspiration to remain silent and not be bothered by it.

Let me live by Your commandments and not stray from the illumination of Your laws to my last breath of life, so that Your commands may be the only rules in this lifetime and throughout eternity.

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY

Bulletin 31 – Volume LVII

May 31, 2020

ASCENSION - WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Because it falls on a Thursday, the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord is often overlooked. It is, however, a beautiful and theologically rich holy day. We owe our descriptions about the Ascension to the Evangelist St. Luke, both in his Gospel and in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. Following the Crucifixion, all of the Apostles were overcome with shock, but this gradually changed after several appearances of the Risen Christ. By the fortieth day, the Apostles had come to see that in His Resurrection, Jesus brought about a new spiritual reality, something that they felt and rejoiced in. As He was about to leave, Christ blessed His disciples saying that He will “send the promise of my Father.” After His ascending to heaven, the disciples

“returned to Jerusalem with great joy,
continually in the temple blessing God” (Luke 24:45,53).

The Feast of the Ascension can be understood as the divine revelation that enables humanity’s experiential ascent into God’s Kingdom. The hymns of the Feast describe how Jesus Christ “renewed humanity in Himself” bringing it “above every principality and power.” In His Ascension, Christ brings “Adam’s form” with Himself into Heaven, to sit at the right hand of God. These theological concepts are at the heart of Christian worship. This is emphatically made evident in the Divine Liturgy. During the Anaphora, when the priest raises the chalice and paten, which are about to be consecrated as the Eucharist, he says, “*Our Lord proclaimed: ‘Do this in remembrance of Me,’ and so at this present time we remember that holy commandment and all of the things that came to pass for us, His Cross, the Tomb, the Resurrection on the third day, His Ascension into heaven, the sitting at the right hand, and the second and glorious Coming.*” The Ascension is the event in the life of Jesus Christ which becomes one of the foundational principles of the Divine Liturgy and all Sacraments. Christ taking up sanctified human flesh into heaven made it possible for us to experience heavenly life. This occurs by virtue of our participation in the Sacraments, such as Baptism and the Eucharist.

Ascension is a spiritual “bridge” connecting the joyous exaltations of the Paschal forty days to Pentecost and the “regular” Church life that follows. It is a beautiful liturgical day of which I have some personal memories that are special. It was one of the very first liturgical services that I served in my first parish assignment in Buffalo, NY. I was quite apprehensive; made some mistakes, though I don’t remember which ones. Even more memorable was the Ascension at our parish in Long Island, which was one of the last I served before taking a position at the OCA Chancery. Metropolitan Herman came to the parish, and he used the occasion to give me the jeweled Pectoral Cross. Making it very special was that my father was able to be there, and it was one of the last times that he and I served together. It was a gorgeous May day, and on that Ascension Thursday we actually had a very full church!

Fr. Alexander Garklaus