

CATHEDRAL OF SAINT MARKELLA

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

With the Blessings of His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius

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Protopresbyter Fr. Theodoros Giannakopoulos • Archimandrite Fr. Epiphanius Antoniou

MAY 18TH/MAY 31ST – SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FATHERS OF THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

Τὸ Ἀναστάσιμον. ᾠχος πλ. β'.

Ἀγγελικαὶ Δυνάμεις ἐπὶ τὸ μνήμᾳ σου, καὶ οἱ
φυλάσσοντες ἀπενεκρώθησαν, καὶ ἴστατο
Μαρία, ἐν τῷ τάφῳ ζητοῦσα τὸ ἄχραντόν σου
σῶμα· ἐσκύλευσας τὸν Ἄδην, μὴ πειρασθεὶς ὑπ'
αὐτοῦ, ὑπήντησας τῇ Παρθένῳ, δωροῦμενος
τὴν ζωὴν. Ὁ ἀναστὰς ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, Κύριε
δόξα σοι.

Της Ἁγίας τοῦ Ναοῦ. ᾠχος πλ. α'. Τὸν Συνάναρχον Λόγον

Παρθενίαν τηρήσασα ἀδιάφθορον, ουρανίως
θαλάμοις νῦν συνηρίθμισαι, του πατρός το
ασεργές αποκρούσασα, τους μαστούς και
κεφαλήν απετιμήθης πάρ αυτού, Μαρκέλλα
Χίου το κλέος, και νῦν ως μάρτυς στεφθείσα,
πηγή θαυμάτων ἀφθονος δείκνυσαι.

Ἀπολυτίκιον. ᾠχος πλ. δ'.

Ὑπερδοξασμένος εἶ Χριστέ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, ὁ
φωστῆρας ἐπὶ γῆς, τοὺς Πατέρας ἡμῶν
θεμελιώσας, καὶ δι' αὐτῶν, πρὸς τὴν ἀληθινὴν
πίστιν πάντας ἡμᾶς ὀδηγήσας, Πολυεύσπλαγγχε
δόξα σοι.

For the Resurrection. Plagal of 2nd Tone.

O Christ, the angelic powers appeared at your
tomb, the guards were as dead, and Mary stood
by the sepulcher, seeking your sacred body. You
despoiled Hades and remained untouched by its
corruption. You met the Virgin and bestowed
Life. O You who are risen from the dead, glory to
You!

For the Saint of this Temple. Plagal of 1st Tone. Let Us Worship the Word

Thy virginity thou didst preserve most incorrupt
and now thou has been numbered among those
who dwell in the mansions of heaven. Thou didst
reject thy father's advances for which he severed
thy breasts and head O Markella; the glory of
Chios! And now crowned as a martyr thou wellest
forth abundant miracles.

Apolytikion. Plagal of 4th Tone.

You are greatly glorified, O Christ our God, who
established our Fathers as luminaries upon the
earth, and through them led us all to the true
Faith. O Most compassionate, glory to You.

ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ

Πράξεις Αποστόλων τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα (20:16-18; 28-36)

Ἐν ταῖς ἡμεραῖς ἐκεῖναις, ἔκρινεν ὁ Παῦλος παραπλεῦσαι τὴν Ἔφεσον, ὅπως μὴ γένηται αὐτῷ χρονοτριβῆσαι ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ· ἔσπευδεν γάρ, εἰ δυνατὸν ἦν αὐτῷ, τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς Πεντηκοστῆς γενέσθαι εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα. Ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς Μιλήτου πέμψας εἰς Ἔφεσον μετεκαλέσατο τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας. Ὡς δὲ παρεγένοντο πρὸς αὐτόν, εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, προσέχετε οὖν ἑαυτοῖς καὶ παντὶ τῷ ποιμνίῳ, ἐν ᾧ ὑμᾶς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἔθετο ἐπισκόπους, ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ κυρίου καὶ θεοῦ, ἣν περιεποιήσατο διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος. Ἐγὼ γὰρ οἶδα τοῦτο, ὅτι εἰσελεύσονται μετὰ τὴν ἄφιξίν μου λύκοι βαρεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς, μὴ φειδόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου· καὶ ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν ἀναστήσονται ἄνδρες λαλοῦντες διεστραμμένα, τοῦ ἀποσπᾶν τοὺς μαθητὰς ὀπίσω αὐτῶν. Διὸ γρηγορεῖτε, μνημονεύοντες ὅτι τριετίαν νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν οὐκ ἔπαυσάμην μετὰ δακρῶν νουθετῶν ἕνα ἕκαστον. Καὶ τὰ νῦν παρατίθεμαι ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, τῷ θεῷ καὶ τῷ λόγῳ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ, τῷ δυναμένῳ ἐποικοδομῆσαι, καὶ δοῦναι ὑμῖν κληρονομίαν ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πᾶσιν. Ἀργυρίου ἢ χρυσίου ἢ ἱματισμοῦ οὐδενὸς ἐπεθύμησα. Αὐτοὶ γινώσκετε ὅτι ταῖς χρεῖαις μου καὶ τοῖς οὖσιν μετ' ἐμοῦ ὑπηρέτησαν αἱ χεῖρες αὐταί. Πάντα ὑπέδειξα ὑμῖν, ὅτι οὕτως κοπιῶντας δεῖ ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν ἀσθενούντων, μνημονεῦειν τε τῶν λόγων τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, ὅτι αὐτὸς εἶπεν, Μακάριόν ἐστιν μᾶλλον διδόναι ἢ λαμβάνειν. Καὶ ταῦτα εἰπὼν, θεῖς τὰ γόνατα αὐτοῦ, σὺν πᾶσιν αὐτοῖς προσήξατο.

Κυριακὴ των Ἁγίων Πατέρων τῆς Α' Οικουμενικῆς Συνόδου

Ἐκ τοῦ Κατὰ Ἰωάννην Ἁγίου Εὐαγγελίου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα (17:1-13)

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ ἐπῆρε τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ εἶπε· πάτερ, ἐλήλυθεν ἡ ὥρα· δόξασόν σου τὸν υἱόν, ἵνα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς σου δοξάσῃ σε, καθὼς ἔδωκας αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν πάσης σαρκός, ἵνα πᾶν ὃ δέδωκας αὐτῷ δώσῃ αὐτοῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. αὕτη δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωὴ, ἵνα γινώσκωσί σε τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν Θεὸν καὶ ὃν ἀπέστειλας Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. ἐγὼ σε ἐδόξασα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὸ ἔργον ἐτελείωσα ὃ δέδωκάς μοι ἵνα ποιήσω· καὶ νῦν δόξασόν με σύ, πάτερ, παρὰ σεαυτῷ τῇ δόξῃ ἣν εἶχον πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι παρὰ σοί. Ἐφανέρωσά σου τὸ ὄνομα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις οὓς δέδωκάς μοι ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου. σοὶ ἦσαν καὶ ἐμοὶ αὐτοὺς δέδωκας, καὶ τὸν λόγον σου τετηρήκασι. νῦν ἔγνωκαν ὅτι πάντα ὅσα δέδωκάς μοι παρὰ σοῦ ἐστίν· ὅτι τὰ ῥήματα ἃ δέδωκάς μοι δέδωκα αὐτοῖς, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔλαβον, καὶ ἔγνωσαν ἀληθῶς ὅτι παρὰ σοῦ ἐξῆλθον, καὶ ἐπίστευσαν ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας. Ἐγὼ περὶ αὐτῶν ἐρωτῶ· οὐ περὶ τοῦ κόσμου ἐρωτῶ, ἀλλὰ περὶ ὧν δέδωκάς μοι, ὅτι σοὶ εἰσι, καὶ τὰ ἐμὰ πάντα σὰ ἐστί καὶ τὰ σὰ ἐμὰ, καὶ δεδόξασμαι ἐν αὐτοῖς. καὶ οὐκέτι εἰμι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, καὶ οὗτοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ εἰσί, καὶ ἐγὼ πρὸς σὲ ἔρχομαι. πάτερ ἅγιε, τήρησον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ᾧ δέδωκάς μοι, ἵνα ὧσιν ἐν καθὼς ἡμεῖς. ὅτε ἤμην μετ' αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, ἐγὼ ἐτήρουν αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου· οὓς δέδωκάς μοι ἐφύλαξα, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀπώλετο εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας, ἵνα ἡ γραφὴ πληρωθῇ. νῦν δὲ πρὸς σὲ ἔρχομαι, καὶ ταῦτα λαλῶ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἵνα ἔχωσιν τὴν χαρὰν τὴν ἐμὴν πεπληρωμένην ἐν αὐτοῖς.

EPISTLE AND GOSPEL READINGS

Lesson from the Acts of the Apostles (20:16-18; 28-36)

In those days, Paul had decided to sail past Ephesos, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost. And from Miletos he sent to Ephesos and called to him the elders of the church. And when they came to him, he said to them: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities, and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.' " And when he had spoken thus, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council Gospel According to St. John (17:1-13)

At that time, Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work which you gave me to do; and now, Father, you glorify me in your own presence with the glory which I had with you before the world was made. "I have manifested your name to the men whom you gave me out of the world; yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you; for I have given them the words which you gave me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you did send me. I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are mine; all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves."

ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ ΤΩΝ ΑΓΙΩΝ ΠΑΤΕΡΩΝ ΤΗΣ Α΄ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΗΣ ΣΥΝΟΔΟΥ

Κατά την έβδομη από τοῦ Πάσχα Κυριακή εορτάζει ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας τήν μνήμη τῶν ἁγίων 318 θεοφόρων Πατέρων τῆς Α΄ ἐν Νικαία Οἰκουμενικῆς Συνόδου. Ἡ μεγάλη αὐτή Σύνοδος συνεκλήθη, ὡς γνωστόν, ἀπό τόν πρῶτο χριστιανό αυτοκράτορα, τόν Κωνσταντῖνο, στήν Νίκαια τῆς Βιθυνίας τόν Μάιο τοῦ ἔτους 325, κατεδίκασε τήν αἵρεσι τοῦ Ἀρείου καί ἀνεκήρυξε τόν Χριστό Θεό, ὁμοούσιο πρὸς τόν Πατέρα. Στίς 29 Μαΐου βρίσκομε σέ πολλά χειρόγραφα νά σημειώνεται ἡ μνήμη τῶν Πατέρων τῆς Συνόδου αὐτῆς.

Ὁ εορτασμός τῆς μνήμης των κατά τήν παροῦσα Κυριακή ὀφείλεται, ὅπως εἶναι φανερό, στό γνωστό καί ἀπό ἄλλες περιπτώσεις ἔθος τῆς Μεγάλῃς Ἐκκλησίας, νά μεταθέτη σέ Κυριακές τίς μῆνες τῶν μεγάλων ἁγίων. Ἡ έβδομη ἀπό τοῦ Πάσχα Κυριακή δέν εἶχε ιδιαίτερο εορτολογικό θέμα καί προτιμήθηκε ὡς ἡ καταλληλότερα καί ἡ πλησιεστέρα πρὸς τήν μνήμη τῶν Πατέρων γιά νά μεταφερθῆ σ' αὐτήν ὁ εορτασμός των.

Τήν Κυριακή τῶν ἁγίων Πατέρων θά ἀκούσωμε μαζί μέ τήν συνήθη ἀναστάσιμο ἀκολουθία τῆς Κυριακῆς νά συμπλέκονται τροπάρια μεθέορτα τῆς Ἀναλήψεως τοῦ Κυρίου, πού εωρτάσαμε, ἀλλά καί προεόρτια τῆς εορτῆς πού θά πανηγυρίσωμε μετά ἀπό ὀκτώ ἡμέρες, τῆς ἁγίας Πεντηκοστῆς. Ἐτσι Ἀνάστασις, Ἀνάληψις, Πεντηκοστή καί Πατέρες ἀπό κοινοῦ θά ὑμνηθοῦν αὐτήν τήν ἐνδιάμεσα τῶν μεγάλων αὐτῶν εορτῶν Κυριακή. Παρ' ὅλα τά ἐκ πρώτης ὄψεως ἀσυμβίβαστα αὐτά εορτολογικά θέματα, δέν λείπει ἀπό τήν ἀκολουθία τῆς ἡμέρας αὐτῆς μία σχετική ἀρμονία, πού τήν συνθέτουν ἀκριβῶς οἱ διαφορές καί οἱ ἀντιθέσεις τῶν ἐπί μέρους θεμάτων. Ἐν μάλιστα τήν τοποθετήσωμε στό ὅλο πλαίσιο τοῦ Πεντηκοσταρίου θά διακρίνωμε μέ πόση νηφαλία κρίσι καθωρίσθη ἡ διαδοχή αὐτῆ τῶν εορτῶν ἀπό τούς συντάκτας τοῦ εορτολογίου μας. Χάρις, πράγματι, στά θέματα αὐτῆς τῆς Κυριακῆς ἐπιτυγχάνεται ἡ δημιουργία ἐνός μεταβατικοῦ σταθμοῦ μεταξύ τῶν μεγάλων εορτῶν πού εωρτάσαμε καί ἐκείνης πού ἐπίκειται.

Μέ τήν μνήμη ἐξ ἄλλου τῶν Πατέρων τῆς ἐν Νικαία Συνόδου τονίζεται ἡ πιστότης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας στήν ἀληθινή καί ὀρθή διδασκαλία, ὅπως τήν ἄκουσε ἀπό τό στόμα τοῦ Κυρίου καί ὅπως τήν εἶδε ἀνάγλυφῃ στό ὅλο σωτηριῶδες ἔργο τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Αὐτό ἀκριβῶς ὑπογραμμίζει καί τό συναξάριο τῆς Κυριακῆς τῶν ἁγίων Πατέρων. «Τήν παροῦσαν εορτήν εορτάζομεν δι' αἰτίαν τοιαύτην. Ἐπειδή γάρ ὁ Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός τήν καθ' ἡμᾶς φορέσας σάρκα, τήν οικονομίαν ἅπασαν ἀρρήτως ἐνήργησε καί πρὸς τόν πατρῶον ἀποκατέστη θρόνον, θέλοντες δεῖξαι οἱ ἅγιοι ὅτι ἀληθῶς ὁ Υἱός τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος καί τέλειος ἄνθρωπος Θεός ἀνελήφθη καί ἐκάθισε ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς, καί ὅτι ἡ σύνοδος αὕτη τῶν ἁγίων Πατέρων οὕτως αὐτόν ἀνεκήρυξε καί ἀνωμολόγησεν ὁμοούσιον καί ὁμότιμον τῷ Πατρί. τούτῳ τῷ λόγῳ μετά τήν ἐνδοξον Ἀνάληψιν τήν παροῦσαν ἐθέσπισαν εορτήν, ὡσανεὶ τόν σύλλογον τῶν τοσοῦτων Πατέρων προβιβάζοντες τοῦτον δὴ ἐν σαρκί ἀναληφθέντα Θεόν ἀληθινόν καί ἐν σαρκί τέλειον ἄνθρωπον ἀνακηρυττόντων».

Στόν ναό τῆς Ἁγίας Σοφίας Κωνσταντινουπόλεως κατά τόν Ι΄- ΙΑ΄ αἰῶνα ἐώρταζαν τήν Κυριακή αὐτή ἐκτός ἀπό τούς Πατέρας τῆς Α΄ καί τούς ἄλλους Πατέρας τῶν ἐξ οἰκουμενικῶν Συνόδων, προφανῶς γιά τόν ἴδιο λόγο. γιά νά παρασταθῆ δηλαδή ἡ ἐνότης τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς διδασκαλίας καί ἡ συνέπειά της πρὸς τήν διδασκαλία τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου. Λείψανο τοῦ κοινοῦ αὐτοῦ εορτασμοῦ βρίσκομε στό δοξαστικό τῆς λιτῆς τῆς ἀκολουθίας. Σ' αὐτό ἐκτός ἀπό τόν Ἄρειο ἀπαριθμοῦνται καί ὁ Μακεδόνιος, ὁ Νεστόριος, ὁ Εὐτυχῆς, ὁ Σαβέλλιος καί ὁ Σεβήρος, ἡ διδασκαλία τῶν ὁποίων κατεδικάσθη ἀπό τās ἄλλας Οἰκουμενικάς Συνόδους. Τελικά ὅμως ἡ εορτή διετήρησε μόνον τό ἀρχικό της θέμα, τήν μνήμη τῶν 318 Πατέρων τῆς Α΄ Οἰκουμενικῆς Συνόδου.

SUNDAY 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. Persecution of Christians ceased during the fourth century, but heresies arose within the Church itself. One of the most pernicious of these heresies was Arianism. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, was a man of immense pride and ambition. In denying the divine nature of Jesus Christ and His equality with God the Father, Arius falsely taught that the Savior is not consubstantial with the Father, but is only a created being. 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 the year 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: Saint Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia (December 6 and May 9), Saint 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. Saint 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. By decision of the Council, Holy Pascha should not be celebrated by Christians on the same day with the Jewish Passover, but on the first Sunday after the first full moon of the vernal equinox (which occurred on March 22 in 325).

SAINTS OF THE WEEK

Monday, June 1st

Commemorated on May 19th

Hieromartyr Patrick, Bishop of Prusa, and those with him (362)

St. Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury (988)

Tuesday, June 2nd

Commemorated on May 20th

Martyr Thalalaeus at Aegae in Cilicia and his companions, Martyrs Alexander and Asterius (284)

St. Ethelbert, King and Martyr (793)

Wednesday, June 3rd

Commemorated on May 21st

Holy Emperor Constantine (337) and his mother Helen (327)

St. Cassian the Greek, Monk of Uglich (1504)

Thursday, June 4th

Commemorated on May 22nd

Hieromartyr Basiliscus, Bishop of Comana (308)

Commemoration of the Second Ecumenical Council (381)

Friday, June 5th

Commemorated on May 23rd

St. Michael the Confessor, Bishop of Synnada (818)

Martyr Salonas the Roman

Saturday, June 6th

Commemorated on May 24th

St. Symeon Stylites of the Wonderful Mountain (596)

Nun Martyr Martha of Monemvasia (990)



FROM "THE PEOPLE OF GOD, A HISTORY OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH"

By *Presbytera Roberta Carras*

The peace and harmony in the Church did not last long. The devil does not want us to be one with God and since the time of Adam and Eve, he constantly tries to separate us from God. He may use flattery, pride, deceit, persecutions, or heresies. Heresies are false teachings about God and the Faith. Heresies are especially dangerous because their falsehood is not obvious so they lead people away from God. They are a distortion of the truth. Although the teachings seem correct, they cannot guide people to salvation or help them become one with God because they teach about a god of their own making and not the true God. In the time of St. Constantine, a great dissension arose in the Church because of the false teachings of Arius, who was a priest in Alexandria, Egypt. He spread his own false ideas about our Lord that were based on pagan Greek philosophy. Arius taught that there was a time when the Son of God did not exist and that God created or made Him at some point in time. He said that the nature or essence of our Lord was not the same as God the Father's but was only **like** God's. According to Arius' logic, our Lord Who came to earth for our salvation was not God. These ideas are completely against every teaching of the Church and everything in Holy Scripture. The Son of God, Who is also called the Word, always existed. There was never a time when He did not exist. He was begotten of the Father, not made or created. The nature or essence of our Lord is the **same** as God the Father's and not merely like God's nature. Our Lord is "*true God of true God, begotten not made, being of **one essence** with the Father*". When our Lord became incarnate (became man), He was still God.

The Bishop of Alexandria corrected Arius, but he would not listen. The Bishop called other clergy in the area to meet in a council to decide the issue. The council affirmed the correct teachings of the Church and instructed Arius to stop his false teachings. He refused and the council excommunicated (separated) him from the Church. He disobeyed the Church council and boldly continued to serve as a priest. Many people and clergy were led astray by his heresy. The Church had always faced heresies, but this one was particularly disruptive because it spread to many parts of the Empire and caused a great deal of turmoil in the Church. Its falseness was not immediately obvious and many accepted the heresy as the truth. Clergy and people argued about what was the correct way to believe, accused each other of heresy, and refused to serve together. St. Constantine saw that the unity of the Church was threatened. In 325 A.D. he called Bishops from all over the Empire to meet in the city of Nicea near Constantinople to decide the correct teaching of the Church. This was later called **The First Ecumenical Council**.

Following the example of the Holy Apostles, when there are problems or heresies in the Church, councils are held to decide the correct action and belief. Holy Scripture, the works of the Apostles and other holy Fathers of the Church, and the decisions of other councils are examined. There were many councils in the history of the Church, but seven are referred to as "**The Seven Ecumenical Councils**". These were called by the rulers of the Byzantine Empire between 325 and 787 A.D. A council is called **Ecumenical**, which means *universal* or *of the whole world* when it has representatives from all the churches and its decisions are accepted by the whole Church. Any church that refuses to accept the decisions of an Ecumenical Council cuts itself off from the Body of Christ. Besides The Seven Ecumenical Councils other councils are Ecumenical in the sense that the whole Church accepts their decisions. Some councils stated incorrect beliefs and are called **false** or **robber** councils by the Church.

Besides fighting the heresy of Arius, the First Ecumenical Council made many important decisions to unify the Church. The Council decided on a way to determine the date of Pascha so all the churches throughout the Empire would celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord at the same time. It chose the books to form the Holy Bible. It forbade kneeling on Sunday to honour the Resurrection of our Lord. Twenty **canons**, which are rules to guide church life and one's spiritual life, were established. The various Confessions of Faith, also called Creeds, were examined. Arius' Creed was rejected and the Council formulated (put together) one that is still used by all the churches. This Creed was finished at the Second Ecumenical Council and is called the **Nicene Creed** after the city of Nicea where the Council took place.

St. Constantine helped financially so Bishops could come from wherever there were churches throughout the vast Empire and 318 Bishops attended. It was very moving to see the holy people who came to defend their beloved Lord again. Many had witnessed for Christ during Diocletian's persecutions and were blind in one eye or crippled because they would not deny the Saviour. St. Paphnutius of Egypt had one eye gouged out and one leg crippled; Bishop Paul from Syria had his hands burned. Other holy confessors were St. James of Nisibis (Mesopotamia), St. Hilary of Poitiers (France), St. Hosius of Cordova (Spain), who was St. Constantine's Father confessor, St. Nicholas of Myra (Asia Minor), and St. Spiridon of Tremithus (Cyprus).

The Bishop of Alexandria brought **St. Athanasius**, who was a young deacon at the time, with him to the council. He expressed the teachings of the Church so well that he was the main defender of the Faith during the debates with Arius. When St. Athanasius spoke about our Lord, he used the Greek word "**homoousios**", which means "*the same essence*" and St. Constantine had this word put into the Creed - "begotten, not made, being **of one essence** with the Father", ("**homoousion** to Patri").

Through the explanations of St. Athanasius and the other Saints and by many miracles, the falseness of Arius' teaching was made evident. St. Nicholas of Myra had become so upset by Arius' blasphemy against Christ that he slapped Arius. St. Constantine had to imprison the Saint because it was against the law to hit anyone in front of the Emperor and against the canons of the Church for a priest to hit anyone. Through Divine intercession, God revealed that St. Nicholas was correct and he was brought back to the Council.

St. Spiridon, Bishop of Tremithus in Cyprus, stood up to defend the Holy Trinity. He wanted to show that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are one in essence or nature; that the Son of God is not of like essence but of the same essence as God the Father. The holy Bishop was not a good speaker and the other defenders of the Faith worried about what he would say. He held a brick in his hand and asked Arius what is used to make a brick. He answered that a brick is made from sand and water and fire. The Saint replied - three elements and yet there is only one object in my hand. Likewise, God is God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; They are Three in One. As he spoke, God gave proof to his teachings and sand, water, and fire came from the brick while the brick itself remained unchanged in his hand!

The First Ecumenical Council upheld the teachings of the Church and condemned Arius, but he did not repent. St. Constantine felt it was his duty as Emperor to enforce the decisions of the Church so he banished Arius and the clergy who agreed with him. Some of the rulers after St. Constantine supported Arius' heresy and the controversy in the Church lasted about 60 years. Sometimes the ruling Emperor exiled the followers of Arius and sometimes the defenders of the truth were exiled. There were times when the majority of the churches willingly or through force followed the heresy of Arius and few remained that taught the truth.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Construction continues on the entryway of the Cathedral. To donate to the Entryway Fund, please see the inside of the Newsletter or speak to someone at the pangari.
- This year's Greek Independence Day Parade has been postponed. We will keep you informed of the date change



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