

SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS
OF THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL



Icon of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council

May 20, 2012
POST-FEAST OF ASCENSION
SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE 1ST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL
THE HOLY MARTYR THALALEUS AND HIS COMPANIONS
FESTAL TONE

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF MAY 21 – MAY 27

THURSDAY, MAY 24 – 3RD FINDING OF THE HEAD OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIZER

9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy (*note time change*)  Yaroslava, Mykola, Ivan, Emelia, Anastasia; Req: Larysa Kotselska

SATURDAY, MAY 26 – 5TH ALL SOULS SATURDAY; *THE HOLY APOSTLE CARPUS, ONE OF THE SEVENTY APOSTLES*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

 Helen Davis (40th day)

6:00 PM – Great Vespers

SUNDAY, MAY 20 – *DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (PENTECOST); TRINITY SUNDAY; THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR THERAPON, BISHOP OF SARDIA*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners

Welcome!

We warmly welcome the students from St. Augustine High School and their families and all those who are visiting us today. It is good to have you all with us!

Haven't Seen Someone in a While?

Give them a call. See how they are doing. Let them know that you not only miss them but also care enough to see if everything is okay. A kind word can go a long way.

If You Are Hospitalized

please be sure to let your priest know. Even if you do not want a visit, prayers (private and/or communal) should be offered on your behalf. Your priest is not clairvoyant and will not know that you are in the hospital unless you tell him. When you check into the hospital, be sure to put yourself in the hands of the Divine Physician as well as an earthly one!



Bічна Пам'ять! Eternal Memory!

This Saturday, May 26, marks the 40th day since the falling asleep in the Lord of Helen Davis. There will be a Divine Liturgy at 9:30 on that day.

On Tuesday, May 29th at 10AM there will be a Parastas fp;;pwat 10:00 AM for Stephanie Olinyk who fell asleep in the Lord on May 11. Internment will follow. Let us remember Helen and Stephanie and their families in our prayers.

LEAVE ALL HUMAN INJUSTICES TO THE LORD, FOR GOD IS THE JUDGE, BUT AS FOR YOURSELF, BE DILIGENT IN LOVING EVERYONE WITH A PURE HEART, AND REMEMBER THAT YOU YOURSELF ARE A SINNER AND IN NEED OF GOD'S MERCY.

– St. John of Kronstadt

PICNIC POSTPONED

THE PARISH PICNIC ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 2 HAS BEEN POSTPONED. A NEW DATE HAS NOT YET BEEN SET.

Last Sunday's Bulletin

If you haven't yet picked up last Sunday's bulletin, it is available in the church hall, or on our website, stjohnthebaptizer.org.

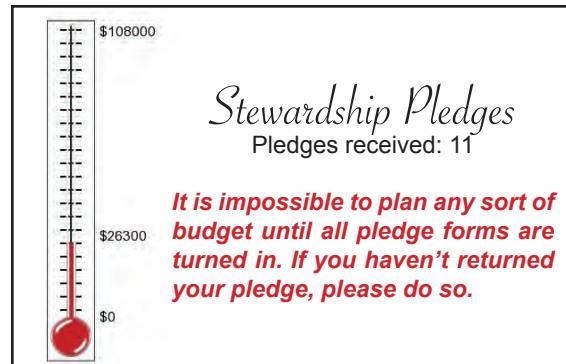
THE FIRST COUNCIL OF NICAEA

From Wikipedia.org

The First Council of Nicaea, held in Nicaea in Bithynia (present-day Iznik in Turkey), convoked by the Roman Emperor Constantine I in 325, was the first Ecumenical council of the Christian Church, and most significantly resulted in the first uniform Christian doctrine, called the Nicene Creed. With the creation of the creed, a precedent was established for subsequent 'general (ecumenical) councils of Bishops' (Synods) to create statements of belief and canons of doctrinal orthodoxy—the intent being to define unity of beliefs for the whole of Christendom.

The purpose of the council was to resolve disagreements in the Church of Alexandria over the nature of Jesus in relationship to the Father; in particular, whether Jesus was of the same substance as God the Father or merely of similar substance. St. Alexander of Alexandria and Athanasius took the first position; the popular presbyter Arius, from whom the term Arian controversy comes, took the second. The council decided against the Arians overwhelmingly (of the estimated 250–318 attendees, all but 2 voted against Arius). Another result of the council was an agreement on when to celebrate the Resurrection, the most important feast of the ecclesiastical calendar. The council decided in favor of celebrating the resurrection on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox, independently of the Hebrew Calendar (see also *Quartodecimanism*). It authorized the Bishop of Alexandria (presumably using the Alexandrian calendar) to announce annually the exact date to his fellow bishops.

The Council of Nicaea was historically significant because it was the first effort to attain consensus in the church through an assembly representing all of Christendom. "It was the first occasion for the development of technical Christology." A precedent was set for subsequent general councils to create creeds and canons.



Sunday offering for May 13

Amount	Number
\$5.00	1
\$10.00	2
\$20.00	3
\$25.00	2
\$30.00	1
\$40.00	4
\$50.00	2
\$75.00	3
\$100.00	2
\$200.00	1
<hr/>	
\$1050.00	

Parishioner Total: \$1030.00

Visitor Total: 20.00

Average / parish household (39): \$26.41

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Shortfall: (\$1095.00)

"If the solar system was brought about by an accidental collision, then the appearance of organic life on this planet was also an accident, and the whole evolution of Man was an accident too. If so, then all our present thoughts are mere accidents—the accidental by-product of the movement of atoms. And this holds for the thoughts of the materialists and astronomers as well as for anyone else's. But if their thoughts—i.e. of materialism and astronomy—are merely accidental by-products, why should we believe them to be true? I see no reason for believing that one accident should be able to give me a correct account of all the other accidents. It's like expecting that the accidental shape taken by the splash when you upset a milk jug should give you a correct account of how the jug was made and why it was upset."

— C.S. Lewis

Making the truth Lovable

The Gospel has its austere side. As Pascal says, if it were nothing but geometry few would refuse to accept it. That there are three Persons in God is not the truth that worries most people. The Gospel contains a moral code, it demands a manner of acting and a behavior in which nature sees nothing but restraints, and therefore nature fears it. And this is especially true of the young. At an age when senses, desire and curiosity are beginning to awake, any prospect of restraint is repellent.

It is a mistake, especially with the young, to present the religion of our Saviour Jesus Christ from the purely *negative* side: what is forbidden, what must not be done. Christianity thus appears as a barrier-religion, a religion which makes for the attenuation of being and life, whereas the Gospel is essentially and chiefly quite the opposite.

The doctrine of our Saviour offers a magnificent vista of expansion. The Son of God did not come on earth to bind us hand and foot, to impose various police regulations, more or less of an unreasonable character. If He became man it was in order to bring us something unique, something absolutely extraordinary.

Bergson concludes *Les Deux Sources* with an incisive sentence. He calls upon the human race “to make the effort necessary to accomplish upon our refractory planet the essential function of the universe, which is a machine for the making of gods.”

His words are more true than he imagines. Is it not literally true that of us it has been said “ye are gods,” and that we are to become “sons of God”? Let us give to these expressions there fullness of Christian meaning.

First and foremost, then, the baptized must learn to appreciate the incomparable privileges they have received by that sacrament which, in making them Christians, has brought the Blessed Trinity to dwell in their souls, and given them power to live the divine life, if only they will, and so long as they will. Let us lift up our heads; let us bear proudly the proud dignity of our baptism.

In the days when it was not the custom to go about the streets with head uncovered, there was at Montmartre a good old man, of whom Léon Bloy tells us that he went about in all weathers carrying his hat in his hand. Why? Because he was always walking in the presence of God, and therefore he always went with head uncovered. An eccentricity, if you will; but a fine act of faith.

How few of the baptized appreciate this sublimest of all revelations; That God dwells in the man who is in the state of grace? This is the campaign that is most

urgently needed: to help each and every one to realize fully, perhaps for the first time, the divine dignity that Baptism confers by engrafting us upon Christ himself, making us a living member of the mystical body of Christ, which is the Church, communicating to us the very life of the Blessed Trinity, making us partners in the royal priesthood of Christ and His Church, uniting us in a common kinship with all our baptized brethren by this spiritual solidarity which is the communion of saints, consecrating us a living chalice, as living temples to the personal and social worship of the true God.

Does not this discovery fill us with enthusiasm? Let us beware in our spiritual lives of concentrating exclusively upon sin. Sin becomes an obsession: one sees it everywhere, its power and its fascination are exaggerated; you would almost think that the power of Satan is equal to that of God, the power of Anti-Christ equal to that of Christ. Why give sin this halo, why make it loom so large that it blocks all else out of sight? Sin exists, of course. It would be foolish to deny it. But it exists in its own place, and that is not the first place. The first thing I have to do is, not to avoid sin, but to live the divine life. First comes the splendour of the state of grace; sin, wickedness, fills us with horror. True spiritual hygiene consists not in being hypnotized by the world of evil, but in concentrating upon the good, upon the world of God, upon the vision of light.

“It is not by the repugnance of ugliness,” writes Péguy, “that we must teach beauty, but by the attractiveness of beauty itself.” He is right. Are we, or are we not, sons of a King? Are we, or are we not, sons of God? Are we, or are we not, living tabernacles of the Blessed Trinity? Are we, or are we not, living prolongations of Christ? This is what counts, this is more important than anything else.

That in consequence of this baptismal glory we must always in all circumstances behave as a baptized person should behave, as behoves a living tabernacle of the Blessed Trinity, a child of the Redemption, one who is truly consecrated, of this there can be no doubt. And if the fulfilment of this royal programme, if the task of making our work, our gestures, our words, thoughts and feelings worthy of a baptized person entails sacrificing some indulgence, some visit, a half-a-pint of beer, a cinema, then let us be glad to make the sacrifice. Restriction? Not at all. We are the richer thereby. To transform the shapeless block of marble into the radiant statue of his dreams the sculptor strikes and chips the marble. To spoil his marble? No, to give it a new beauty.

It is one of the most subtle temptations of the Evil One

to persuade you that self-conquest means self-weakening, that to train oneself means to enfeeble one's energies. Renan once said, in his sceptical apparently detached manner: "Truth is perhaps an unpleasant thing." Claudel writing to Jacques Rivièvre, rightly stigmatizes "the detestable words of this hideous Renan," and tells how they revolted him even before his conversion. "Already in my heart I knew that the only true reality is joy in God, and that the man who knows it not will never do the work of an artist as he will never do the work of a saint."

Gide does not even retain the "perhaps" of the statement of Renan. For him it is a dogma. Having for a long time resisted the sting of the flesh he succumbed in the end and—as the weak are wont to do—he tried to give an explanation of his fall. To fall, he says, is to become enriched. We should taste every joy, strike every note of the keyboard, drink at every source. No distinctions is to be made between forbidden joys and healthy joys; all is good, all is healthy. You can never have too wide an experience. All honour to the man that has experienced everything, even the worst.

As if it did no harm to mix poison with pure flour! Truly it must take a massive credulity to accept such sophistry.

Evil does not enrich. Sin has no beauty; it fascinates man, it is true; but in itself it is not fascinating. Man is attracted by a mirage. The Devil is not amusing. He can amuse; which is something quite different. Not that he has in himself a power of attraction, but because there is in us a power of misunderstanding and illusion; because we remain content with appearances and do not go to the heart of reality. Evil is non-being, evil is a void. It may wear a mask, but that is what it is essentially. And therefore instead of developing our powers it attenuates them; instead of giving true joy it yields boredom. And that is proved evidently by the experience of those who have reached a certain limit in evil. That taste of ashes in the mouth, that rancour, that emptiness—that is the true taste of sin. Evil is an unpleasant thing.

Away, then, with the theories of Renan and Gide; they are specious but false. Evil is evil, not because it is forbidden but because it is non-being; essentially it is a privation; and to gratify one's appetites with a privation is not to become enriched. You might as well say that dry bread is equivalent to a good dinner.

We must oppose that custom whereby virtue is dissociated from the idea of happiness, and "joy" always associated with sin. It is sin that brings unhappiness. Virtue, whatever sacrifices it may entail, is really and

truly that which gives joy.

It was Ernest Psichari, the grandson of Renan, who said when he was definitely on the way to conversion: "I knew where I was going. I was going towards the abode of peace, I was going to joy. I wept with love, happiness and gratitude." Claudel wrote in a like strain to Jacques Rivièvre: "Whatever you may think, you will never approach happiness without approaching its source, which is God and Christ."

There you have the truth: approaching true joy means drawing near to God; to draw near to God is to draw near to true happiness.

After the example of Christ, therefore we must not present Christian doctrine, especially to the young, under an exclusively negative form. But that is not all: we must strive always to present it under its most attractive aspect.

Let us watch Our Lord. How does He proceed?

He is preaching His sermon on the Mount. He wishes to give to the world His great lessons of detachment, purity and charity, and He knows well that these may easily cause the timid to shrink and even the willing to hesitate. Accordingly He avoids making a series of demands; He gives a recipe for happiness.

Would you be happy? They act thus and thus. He puts in the foreground not His rights but our happiness. "Blessed are those who..." A recipe for happiness must surely be greeted with smiles. That would be worthy buying; anyone would pay a price for that.

Even when Our Lord is speaking directly of the Cross and of the duty of practising needful self-denial, He is careful to add the motive which allures: "If any man would come after me." The service of God is presented as a friendship before it appears as a renunciation. A renunciation is repugnant, but a friendship attracts; and history shows that this friendship has appeared so attractive that multitudes of souls have chosen to follow Our Lord even to the length of giving up all, even to the most perfect imitation, even to the folly of the cross.

Let us use the same method in our apostolate. Not that we are to use deceit in order to hide what Christian doctrine demand of us; but we should begin by pointing out the rich potentialities of development that Christian doctrine contains. Nobody is such a fool as to think that diamonds can be bought for a few pence. And none will think that the precious pearl can be found without paying a price. The important thing is to show the value of the pearl, to present it in a favourable light. Arouse enthusiasm. Sacrifice will follow.

— *Radiating Christ* — Fr. Raoul Plus



**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
Святого Йоана Хрестителя
St. John the Baptizer
Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

4400 Palm Avenue
La Mesa, CA 91941
Parish Office: (619) 697-5085

Website: stjohnthebaptizer.org

Pastor: Fr. James Bankston

frjames@mac.com

Fr. James' cell phone: (619) 905-5278

Christians are to the World what the Soul is to the Body

In a word, what the soul is to the body, Christians are to the world. The soul is dispersed through all the members of the body, and Christians throughout the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body but is not of the body. Likewise, Christians dwell in the world but are not of the world. The soul, which is invisible, is confined in the body, which is visible. In the same way, Christians are recognized as being in the world, and yet their religion remains invisible. The flesh hates the soul and wages war against it, even though it has suffered no wrong, because it is hindered from indulging in its pleasures. Similarly, the world also hates the Christians, even though it has suffered no wrong, because they set themselves against its pleasures. The soul

loves the flesh that hates it and its members, and Christians love those who hate them. The soul is enclosed in the body, but it holds the body together. And though Christians are detained in the world as if in a prison, they in fact hold the world together. The soul, which is immortal, lives in a mortal dwelling. In a similar way, Christians live as strangers amid perishable things, while waiting for the imperishable in heaven. The soul, when poorly treated with respect to food and drink, becomes all the better. And so Christians when punished daily increase more and more. Such is the important position to which God has appointed them, and it is not right for them to decline it.

Letter to Diognetus