

SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE FIRST COUNCIL



Icon of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea

June 5, 2011

SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

Festal Tone

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 6 - JUNE 12

SATURDAY, JUNE 11 – *THE HOLY APOSTLES BARTHOLOMEW AND BARNABAS – 5TH ALL SOULS SATURDAY*

9:30 AM – DIVINE LITURGY ✙ *ALL OUR DEPARTED LOVED ONES*

6:00 PM – Great Vespers with Lytia for Pentecost

SUNDAY, JUNE 12 – PENTECOST SUNDAY

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

– Kneeling Prayers

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.

Fathers Day

On Sunday, June 19th, we will celebrate Fathers Day with a special Luncheon following the Divine Liturgy. Please join us as we celebrate that often forgotten yet critical role in the Christian Family – the Father.

Buy your tickets early at a reduced price and be eligible for a drawing to win two free nights at a cabin in Julian (\$250.00 value). Price will be higher at the door.

THOUGHTS ON STEWARDSHIP

From Parish Publishing, LLC

All of us are caretakers. Nothing belongs to us; everything belongs to God. Not all men and women realize this, but Christians do and strive to please God in the use of all that God has put in their care. Yes, you are a caretaker... God’s caretaker!

Think of time as a priceless gift; develop an awareness of its incomparable value and examine your conscience in this light. Are you using your time according to God’s plan, or are you throwing it away? If tomorrow were never to dawn, what would you do for God today?

Sacred Times – Holy Days

Art. 170 – Although every Catholic may fulfill his obligation by assisting at the Divine Liturgy, Vespers or Matins on Sundays and holy days in any Catholic church, *our faithful should as a rule attend their own parish church.*

Art. 460 – The celebration of the Canonical Hours, especially Matins and Vespers must be introduced where they have fallen into disuse in parishes, especially since the decision of the Holy See now allows these canonical services to satisfy the Sunday and Holydays obligation of the faithful by their participation in them.

Art. 467 - In accordance with the decision of the Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Church (September 14-20, 1997) and can. 880 CCEO, the clergy and the faithful are bound to observe these holydays under a serious obligation:

1. All Sundays of the year.
2. The Nativity of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ (December 25)
3. Theophany of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ (January 6)
4. Ascension of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ (40th Day of Pascha)
5. Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos (March 25)
6. Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos (August 15)
7. The Prime Apostles Peter and Paul (June 29)

– *Pastoral Guide of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the United States of America (1999)*

Please Note: When you go on vacation, please don't forget that the church still relies on your contributions. Our bills do not go on vacation. The summer months are most difficult due to the decrease in attendance. Your absence on any Sunday does not negate your obligation to support your home parish.

Biblical Questions and Answers

Q. Who was the greatest financier in the Bible?

A. Noah. He was floating his stock while everyone else was in liquidation.

Q. Who was the greatest female financier in the Bible?

A. Pharaoh's daughter. She went down to the bank of the Nile and drew out a little prophet.

Q. What kind of man was Boaz before he got married?

A. Ruth-less.

Q. Who was the most flagrant lawbreaker in the Bible?

A. Moses. Because he broke all 10 commandments; at once.

Q. What kind of motor vehicles are in the Bible?

*A. David's Triumph was heard throughout the land.
&
A. Honda...because the apostles were all in one Accord.*

Q. Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible?

A. Samson. He brought the house down.

Q. What do they call pastors in Germany?

A. German Shepherds.

What is tithing?

In Sacred Scripture, tithing is the setting aside of 10% of the "first fruits" of one's labors. Many Protestant congregations strongly encourage and sometimes even require their faithful to tithe. While we don't require it, I certainly encourage you to consider tithing. If not 10%, perhaps 5%.

If your monthly income is:

**A 10% tithe would be
per month**

**A 5% tithe would be
per month**

\$1,000
\$2,000
\$4,000
\$6,000
etc...

\$100
\$200
\$400
\$600

\$50
\$100
\$200
\$300

On Missing Church

Adapted from an article by Abbot James (Deschene)

The fecundity of the Orthodox mind is nowhere more evident than in the rich variety of excuses and reasons it can invent for not attending Sunday Liturgy. After two decades of being Orthodox, I am still taken aback by those who find it seemingly easy to excuse their absence from Mass on Sundays or feasts, or from Saturday or feast-day Vespers.

Roman Catholicism in the last days of the pontificate of Pius XII - and this may come as a surprise to some "cradle" Orthodox or converts to Orthodoxy from a Protestant background - remarkably strict and observant about many things spiritual and religious. ... The Roman church in those days imposed - and enforced - strict regulations on such things as fasting, abstinence, and of course church attendance.

No Roman Catholic in those days took lightly the requirement - for it was seen as a divinely ordained rule - to attend Mass on Sunday and certain feast days (known then as holydays of "obligation"). Certainly some catastrophes - earthquake, flood, plague - could suspend the obligation. It was understood too that some medical conditions might legitimately excuse one from church attendance. Such things as measles or contagious disease, an appendectomy, the loss of a limb, or total paralysis might convince a Roman Catholic mother to keep her ailing child at home. Certainly no lesser ailment - a serious cold, a headache, a sprained muscle, a broken ankle - merited any consideration at all. And any complaints of tiredness or general lassitude would make on her no impression whatsoever. It was a simple and absolute rule: you went to Mass unless you were absolutely prevented from going.

Nor did travel away from home, or vacations, make a whit of difference. Wherever one

happened to be - whether in an unfamiliar metropolis or the boondocks of Maine, one sought out, at whatever inconvenience of time or distance, the nearest Roman church and got to Mass. In those days, of course, you had to do all this on Sunday morning since Roman Catholics did not then have Saturday evening Masses.

Now it is easy to criticize this as the product of western or Roman legalism, but the fact is it worked. No even moderately lukewarm Roman Catholic could stay home from Mass without a massive sense of guilt at committing a mortal sin that had to be expunged by confession as soon as possible. The bottom line was that nearly all Roman Catholics would attend Mass on a Sunday morning, except for those in open defiance of their church or those lying, if only temporarily, on their putative deathbeds. In all of this, the hope was that one would be impressed by the seriousness of the obligation into seeing something of the awesome importance and spiritual reality of the liturgical mysteries.

Now for Orthodox people today, at least in parts of the United States, there is sometimes the legitimate problem that there is no easily available church to attend. Certainly members of the Ukrainian Orthodox church, wishing to attend a Ukrainian church, sometimes have to travel a good distance to do so. Others will attend whatever Orthodox church is available. Still others, of various jurisdictions, refuse to attend any church but that of their own jurisdiction - part of the bane of American jurisdictionalism. For those seeking a western-rite Orthodox liturgy, the difficulty can be even greater. The question must be asked: is it not better to attend an Orthodox liturgy in some church even outside one's jurisdiction, than not to attend at all?

While I do not propose to answer that question (merely to raise it), I do think the corrective for any laxity in Sunday attendance is best countered not by the imposing of a harrowing legalism such as existed in pre-Vatican II Roman Catholicism, but by holding a proper view of what Sunday Liturgy should mean for the Orthodox believer.

Not long ago I was on the scene when an Orthodox woman of my acquaintance (though not of my parish) described how she aggressively maintained Orthodox morality against some opinion of her neighbour of another denomination. Apparently, after settling her neighbour's hash, she ended with a resounding 'We're Orthodox - we don't do those things!' This is perhaps in itself only mildly disedifying, though the smugness (to say nothing of the accuracy) of that last taunt is a mite questionable and a tad pharisaical. But the point of the story lies in the fact, known to me (and undoubtedly to the neighbour), that this woman rarely darkens the door of any Orthodox church.

To be Orthodox means more than holding "right doctrine" - it means engaging in "right praise" - i.e., right worship. And it means doing this at the right times, i.e., when the Orthodox Church realises itself and becomes most itself and most visible - in its celebration of the Holy Eucharist, especially on Sundays, the day of Resurrection. To be absent from this occasion - this moment when the Orthodox Church becomes most embodied, most visible, most alive - is in a real sense a failure to be truly Orthodox. It is by being part of the occasion at that time and in that place that we truly are (and are seen to be) Orthodox in the fullest sense of that word.

What truly Orthodox believer would ever easily or readily excuse himself from joining in this living Mystery? And how paltry, in the light of the radiance and glory of the divine Mysteries, are our shoddy excuses? 'The church is too far away.' 'I was tired from watching the late show.' 'We had company Saturday night and couldn't make it to Vespers.' 'I was invited out for Sunday dinner and would be late if I went to church.' 'We had to get an early start to get beach parking.' Hopefully, we all have the good sense to be ashamed when we fall back on such excuses.

Moreover, we owe it to our brothers and sisters in the faith to support their presence in church by our own presence. Especially in smaller congregations is the absence of an individual or family obvious and keenly felt. We know that - however small the congregation, however few the worshippers - the fullness of the Church is manifested wherever the Liturgy is celebrated. At that moment and in that place Orthodoxy lacks nothing. But it is equally true that, from a purely human perspective, the absence of some members of a parish family or community is always felt and always tends to undermine the joy of the Orthodox parish family gathering in its Father's house to celebrate our Saviour's victory over sin and death.

It is the nature of Christian joy to wish to share itself with others -- to awaken others to God's welcoming home in his Church. So we seek to proclaim the joy and truth of holy Orthodoxy to others and to invite them in. How sad it is then, when we do this, when we bring newcomers into God's house, to find that those long a part of God's family are missing from that joyous homecoming.

— Father James is a Hegumen of Christminster Orthodox Monastery



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Knowledge of the True God Nurtures Us to Eternal Life

Are we saying that knowledge is eternal life? Are we saying that to know the one true and living God will suffice to give us complete security for the future without need of anything else? Then how is "faith apart from works dead?" When we speak of faith, we mean the true knowledge of God and nothing else, since knowledge comes by faith. The prophet Isaiah tells us this: "If you do not believe, neither shall you understand." But he is not talking about a knowledge that consists in barren speculations, which is entirely worthless. For one of the holy disciples said, "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe and shudder." What then shall we say to this? How is it that Christ speaks the truth when He says that eternal life is the knowledge of God the Father, the one true God, and with Him of the Son? I think, indeed, we must answer that the saying of the Savior is completely true. For this knowledge is life, laboring as it were in birth of the whole meaning of the mystery and

granting to us participation in the mystery of the Eucharist, whereby we are joined to the living and life-giving Word. And for this reason, I think, Paul says that the Gentiles are made fellow members of the body and fellow partakers of Christ, inasmuch as they partake in His Blessed Body and Blood. And our members may in this sense be conceived of as being members of Christ. This knowledge, then, which also brings to us the Eucharist by the Spirit, is life. For it dwells in our hearts, reshaping those who receive it into son-ship with Him and molding them into incorruption and piety toward God through life, according to the Gospel. Our Lord Jesus Christ, then, knowing that the knowledge of the one true God brings to us and promotes our union with the blessings of which we have spoken, says that it is eternal life. It is the mother and nurse of eternal life, being in its power and nature pregnant with those things that cause life and lead to life.

St. Cyril of Alexandria