

SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE
FIRST SIX ECUMENICAL COUNCILS



Icon of Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils

July 18, 2010
Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday of the Fathers of the Six Ecumenical Councils

Tone 7

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 19 – JULY 25

SUNDAY, JULY 25 – 9TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

9:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY

FOR ALL PARISHIONERS



Remember in your prayers



Please remember in your prayers those members of our parish, our family and friends who are ailing, are in hospitals, nursing homes and those who are not able to

join actively in their community. Remember especially the following: Katherine Andrus, Sr. Marie Arendes, Walter & Isabella Bachynsky, Susie Boyko, Sonya Cronin, Helen Davis, Lorene Lagrone, Maria Laszok, Natalie, Maria Leskiw, Lesya Loznycky, Sonia Shashkewych, Sophia Skop and Ariadna Wall. Please let Fr. James know if there is anyone else who should be remembered.

Blessing of Automobiles Today

There will be a blessing of automobiles immediately following today's Divine Liturgy. Following the final hymn, please go and stand by your car while Fr. James makes his way around the parking lot with the Holy Water.

PLEASE NOTE:

Fr. James will be away from July 26th until August 16th. Fr. Robert Pipta will celebrate the Divine Liturgy on August 1st and 8th. Due to Fr. Robert's schedule the Divine Liturgy here will be at 12:00 noon. Please make a note of this! Fr. Nicholas Zachariadis will be celebrating the Liturgy on August 15th at the normal time of 9:30 AM. In case of an emergency please contact either Fr. Robert Pipta at (858) 277-2511, Fr. Sabba Shofany at (619) 410-7868, or Fr. Myron Mykyta at (323) 663-307.

Remember Those In The Armed Forces

Let us especially remember in our prayers those family members and friends who are actively serving their countries in the Armed Forces: Luke and Slavamira Haywas, Elizabeth Heltsley, Oksanna Hirniak,



Andrew Hrynkiw, Zenon and Susan Keske, Michael Lopes, Vasyl Lylak, Thomas Orr, Paul Richelmi and Brian Tuthill. Please give any names of those you would like remembered in the *Liturgies to Fr. James.*



50th anniversary project



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

Old Heresies Renewed and the Symbol of Faith

If someone knocked on your door, said they wanted to talk about Jesus, and then said that He wasn't the Son of God, but was really the Archangel Michael in human form, would you know how to respond? Or if the persons who knocked on your door to talk with you about Jesus told you that He is the Son of God; but that His Father is Adam, who had physical relations with Mary; and that the "spirit brother" of Jesus is Lucifer – would you know what to say?

We sometimes seem to think that all of the heresies are old, going back to the earliest days of the Church – and that is usually correct. However, sometimes we also think that, because the Church identified these are heresies long ago, the problem has been solved. It has – for those who accept the decisions and teachings of the saints we remember and celebrate today: the holy fathers of the first six Ecumenical Councils. But I hope it doesn't surprise you to find that most of these heresies are still being taught today, still being believed today. Our work isn't finished yet; and we must begin by being certain that we know what we believe, and why we believe it – and then we'd better be sure we know how to explain it.

That may sound like a rather difficult task. In fact, it's not – at least, not if you've been paying attention during the reading of your Morning Prayers, and during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. If you have been paying attention at these times, you'll find that we, as Orthodox Christians, recite daily something called the "Symbol of Faith." This creed – "creed" means, "I believe" – was written by the fathers of the first two Ecumenical Councils. It is, in a way, a "summary" of what we believe, talking about God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, the Church, baptism, the resurrection to come, and life in the kingdom Of God. According to the fathers of the first six Councils, those who do not believe what is found in the Symbol of Faith are not members of the Catholic Orthodox Church, nor followers of the Catholic Orthodox Faith.

There are serious implications that give us good reason to be careful about the teaching of the Church, and to avoid the teachings of the heretics. If Jesus only appeared to be human (the heresy of docetism), then who was saved? If Jesus was a man who found favor with God, but not the Son of God incarnate, but rather was given that title as one "adopted" by God (the heresy of adoptionism) then

how could He have saved us? Arius taught that Jesus was not of one essence with the Father, and that the Son of God was created. Nestorius taught that Mary was not the Theotokos – not the Mother of God – but only the "Christotokos" – the Mother of Christ; ultimately denying (by calling into question) the divinity of our Lord.

Eutyches, in his zeal to show the errors of the teaching of Nestorius, went too far, saying that the divinity of the Son of God "swallowed up" the humanity of Jesus as the ocean consumes a drop of water. Sabellius taught that the three Persons of the holy Trinity are simply different appearances of the one God (the heresy of modalism). By contrast, St. Athanasios – who was present at the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D., when the teachings of Arius were condemned, and who had a part in the writing of the Symbol of Faith – teaches us that Christ became one with us so that we might become one with Him. If He is not fully human, this cannot be true. If He is not truly divine, then He has no power to save us. If His human will was completely overwhelmed by His divine will (the heresy of monothelism), again, He is not like us, and so cannot help us.

Truth be told, apart from the question of whether or not we are prepared to meet the arguments of those who today have revived one or more of the old heresies, or perhaps even a new heresy (if such a thing is possible), most of us are capable of going through life without giving these questions any serious thought. But if we do so, we neglect our study of the Faith we confess, and the way of life that arises from our faith. Brothers and sisters, I would not want any of you to have to come before the Throne of the Lord on the great and terrible Day of Judgment unprepared. Each of us would do well to take some time – such as during one of the seasons of fasting in the Church year – to read the Symbol of Faith, not as an act of worship only, but as a form of study. What does it say? What does it mean? If we will go to the text of the Symbol, and seek to go more deeply into its meaning, we will find great treasures for us from the storehouses of the fathers of the first six Councils – treasures that can take part in the transformation of our being, so that Christ may be seen increasingly in each of us.

Holy Fathers of the first six Ecumenical Councils, pray to God for us!

– Fr. John McCuen

Святкуємо 50-років!

Celebrating 50 Years!

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Fencing the Mysteries

The life of the Church in the earlier Byzantine period is dominated by the seven General Councils. These Councils fulfilled a double task. First, they clarified and articulated the visible organization of the Church, crystallizing the position of the five great sees or *Patriarchates*, as they came to be known. Secondly, and more important, the Councils defined once and for all the Church's teaching upon the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith - the Trinity and the Incarnation. All Christians agree in regarding these things as "mysteries" which lie beyond human understanding and language. The bishops, when they drew up definitions at the Councils, did not imagine that they had explained the mystery; they merely sought to exclude certain false ways of speaking and thinking about it. To prevent men from deviating into error and heresy, they drew a fence around the mystery; that was all.

The discussions at the Councils at times sound abstract and remote, yet they were inspired by a very practical purpose: the salvation of man. Man, so the New Testament teaches, is separated from God by sin, and cannot through his own efforts break down the wall of separation which his sinfulness has created. God has therefore taken the initiative: He became man, was crucified, and rose from the dead, thereby delivering humanity from the bondage of sin and death. This is the central message of the Christian faith, and it is this message of redemption that the Councils were concerned to safeguard. Heresies were dangerous and required condemnation, because they impaired the teaching of the New Testament, setting up a barrier between man and God, and so making it impossible for man to attain full salvation.

Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia