



CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF JUNE 8, 2008

SUNDAY, JUNE 8TH

FATHERS OF THE 1ST COUNCIL

8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour

MONDAY, JUNE 9TH

7:00p.m. Bible Study

SATURDAY, JUNE 14TH

9:00a.m. Memorial Service
6:00p.m. Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JUNE 15TH

HOLY PENTECOST

8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
Kneeling Vespers
Coffee Hour

Please Remember in Prayer

Carol Boris, Nina Gordon, and Jane Koshutko who are recovering from treatment, as well as Constantina and Christos, and Alan and Virginia. If you have a prayer request, let Fr. John know.



Bible Study – Monday, June 9th

The topic for tomorrow night will be the very first days of the Church as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Please see the monthly calendar for the Orthodox Movie Night and Orthodoxy 101 times.

Feast of Pentecost – Sunday, June 15th

On Sunday, June 15th, we celebrate the Descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, 50 days after Pascha. As a reminder, on this day we will have Vespers with the Kneeling Prayers immediately following the Divine Liturgy.



Fasting Notes

During the week following Pentecost, 6/15 through 6/22, we do not fast on any day, including Wednesday and Friday. Then we have a week of fasting, 6/23 through 6/28, in preparation for the Feastday of Ss. Peter and Paul, June 29th. As a reminder, fasting is not a legalistic endeavor, it is a spiritual one which helps purify ourselves to receive more of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism of Troy Duker – Saturday, June 28th

On Saturday, June 28th, at 5:00pm, we will welcome Troy Duker into the Orthodox Church through Holy Baptism. This is a great event in Troy's life, as well as in the life of our Mission, please set aside this time to celebrate this special event!

Open House at the Rectory – Sunday, June 29th

will be held on Sunday, June 29th, following a very brief coffee hour at the church. More info can be picked up at the candle stand. Everyone is invited!

Donors Sought: Two Important Projects

1) We are looking for donors for the new icons going into the altar. The icons have been completed and will be installed in the next few weeks. 2) We are also looking for donors for cabinets / counter tops / and a sink which are being installed into our coffee hour area. If you would like to make a donation towards either of these projects, please see Fr. John or Susan Pappas, our Treasurer. Thank you!



Memorial Service

It is the tradition of the Church to offer prayers for the departed on the Eve of Pentecost. We will have a Memorial Service on this day, Saturday, June 14th, at 9:00am.



Witnessing – Acts 1:8

And the Lord said to them... "You shall receive power, the Holy Spirit coming upon you. And you shall be witnesses to Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth.



READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, June 15th

Kathy Parrish

Sunday, June 22nd

Jodi McElwee



The Finance Committee

will meet next on Wednesday, June 18th at 7:00pm.

The Parish Council

will meet next on Sunday, July 6th, following coffee hour.



MY IDEAL SINGERS

By the VRev. Vladimir Berzonsky



"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God" (Colossians 3:15,16)

Our nation's pop culture is enthralled with the television program American Idol. One singer is selected from among hundreds of contestants voted by the public to be awarded the title. We Christians, like Jews, are reluctant, even averse, to making idols of anything or anybody; nevertheless, throughout my life I've honored the singers who have enhanced my spiritual growth. They include choirmasters and choir singers who lift up our prayers and lay them at the holy

throne of the Almighty. They give another meaning to the famous phrase of Dostoevsky: "Beauty shall save the world." In each cycle of our prayer

life - the daily cycle, the monthly cycle of saints, the liturgical year from The Birth to the Dormition of the blessed Theotokos - songs are sung for our salvation. From the joy of baptism through the poignant passing in falling asleep of our beloved, the choir sings praises to our Lord. One non-Orthodox family member noted: "It sounded

as if they were bearing up Dad's soul to heaven." And unlike the TV program, it's done in harmony of many voices, not in competition or to select one singer, but to add our hymns to the sounds of many across the globe and in heavenly places.

From my childhood to the present I've been gloriously blessed with loveliness of choir music. From my earliest years I recall hearing the voices of my grandfather's choir. After that to the seminary singers and on to the New York City cathedral's magnificent choir led by Nikolai P. Afonsky. Then through over four decades here listening to our beloved choir of Holy Trinity, the sound of harmonious prayers fills my soul with joy. When I reflect on my various visits to countries outside of the USA, I remember all the churches, cathedrals and monasteries I've visited, and most of all I call up

the awesome sounds of the choirs: So many in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, especially in Russia and Paris, or as in the main church of St. Sergius monastery, where the inner part of the icon screen is a catwalk on which unseen from the nave the monks stand, tenors at the top and basses near the bottom, sounding as though it were the saints on the icons singing from the altar. The beauty of worship is enhanced by the varieties of styles from country to country and from one era to another. Many in our time are intent on simplicity rather than polyphony in prayer, simple singing done by the congregation rather than exotic renditions re-

quiring experienced, even professional singers. It's a matter of taste and of the times in which we live.

Orthodox Christians give a new meaning to the phrase: "I will sing to the Lord as long as I live." And we do normally with a spiritual remuneration, unlike the winners of the American Idol who expect and receive monetary rewards.

And I might add singers I've heard match and surpass the voices of our nation's pop singers. We have raised countless generations of believers who count it an honor to raise their prayers to the Lord by returning the gifts of their beautiful voices to the Giver of those gifts. Even those who have made a professional career in singing often thank the Lord by singing in church choirs.

And what shall it be like in the Kingdom of heaven, after this lifetime is completed? All indications from the sacred scriptures reveal choirs of angels and saints making melody with songs of joy and praise to the Holy Trinity. No soloists, none standing out from the rest, but euphoria in blending with the voices from all the ages into one magnificent tribute in song to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



Orthodox choir at the 101st Annual Pilgrimage to St. Tikhon's Monastery, under the direction of Alexei Shipovalnikov.





THE FIRST COUNCIL OF NICAEA

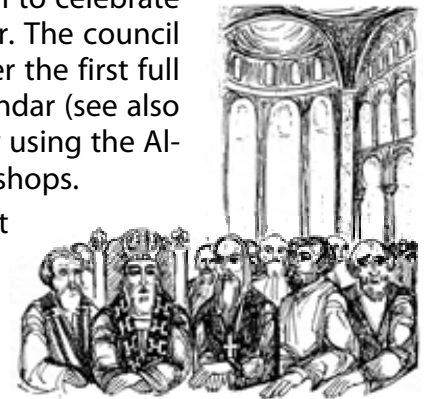
From Wikipedia.org



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.



FROM THE HEART: RESTING IN THE ASCENSION

By Douglas Cramer, Editor Antiochian.org

Summer is almost here. It's a good time to just take a deep breath, and relax. You know, go to the beach if you live close to it, have a barbeque, invite some friends over. I remember doing this on a grand scale as a child growing up in New Jersey. But how often do most of us do this anymore? We're so busy, we've forgotten that true rest and relaxation, the kind that really restores you, is vital to our survival.

This week the Church celebrated the Ascension of our Lord, and our worship since Pascha has been rooted in our joy in the Resurrection. In the light of this glorious, peaceful and fulfilling period of the calendar of our Church we should be totally relaxed and fully in the presence of our Risen Lord. But we still struggle to relax and unclench, to be at peace. Why? In part, because we live our lives in a kind of emotional and spiritual shallows. We're so busy, we don't pause to reflect, to listen, to under-

stand our motivations. We are busy for busyness's sake. We allow others to set our timetable. We often aren't aware of the reasons we have for doing what we do. We all act a little crazy sometimes, bustling about with all our tasks and projects and responsibilities. It's important for us to act. But it's just as important for us to relax, to quietly find our center, to understand what's driving us to do what we do, to make sure that our choices and actions flow from our deepest values.

How do we turn this around? We start from the heart!

Know Thyself

The Psalms focus this teaching in to a single verse: "Seek peace and pursue it." We need peace, but we must be active to find it—we must seek and pursue. What does this mean? What is this pursuit? Saint Isaac of Syria teaches us the answer: "Enter

Continued on page 4...

Resting in the Ascension continued from page 3

eagerly into the treasure house that lies within you, and so you will see the treasure house of heaven. The ladder that leads to the Kingdom is hidden within you, and is found in your soul. Dive into yourself, and in your soul you will discover the rungs by which you are to ascend."

Seek. Pursue. Enter. Ascend. I'm winded just reading this list. However, this is the language of peace. Jesus Christ proclaims: "The kingdom of heaven is within." We are called to go within, to find our heart, our center, our soul. And to begin our journey there.

The classical philosophers of Greece understood this basic truth of our humanity even before the birth of Christ.

The central teaching of Plato, of Socrates, is "Know Thyself."

We must get out of our inner shallows, our superficial sleepwalking through life. We're called to wake up, to dive deep.

This isn't easy. Indeed, it's the work of a life time. So, we just start wherever we are, and work through our stumblings. St. Isaac also said, "There is no virtue which does not have continual struggle yoked to it." Or consider how the abbot of a monastery once answered a question about what the monks do all day: "We fall down and we get up, we fall down and we get up..."

We're all swamped by too much information. There's an Orthodox saying that through most of the 20th century the devil tried to overcome the Church by repressing information, by making it impossible for people to hear God's Word. And sadly, this is still happening in many places. But, the saying goes, today the devil has changed his strategy—he's trying to flood us with words and ideas, with too much information, trying to make it impossible for us to find God's Word amidst all the distraction.

But this doesn't have to stop us. Elder Paisios, a great 20th century teacher of Mount Athos, taught that we must be like bees. A bee will find the one flower in a field of dung, Paisios said. The problem is we often act like flies instead, who find the one pile of dung in a field of flowers. God's will is our flower. We need to question and seek within ourselves, and find Him.

It's Easy To Go Wrong

The reading from the Gospel of St. John for the Sunday of the Blind Man (John 9:1-38), the Sunday

before Ascension, lay out just how easy it is to get caught in the thickets of bad motivations, of how lost people become by trying to do the right things for the wrong reasons. And of how the solution is to remain centered in the peace of Christ.

Why are we doing what we are doing? Know thyself, find the treasure house, and you will find the source of right reasons.

The story of the Blind Man shows us the contrast between being centered in the peace of Jesus Christ, and being lost in a confusion of thoughts and unquestioned assumptions and motivations.

Christ corrects his disciples misunderstanding that the man was born blind as a punishment from God. Christ teaches them the plain truth: "I must work the works of Him who sent Me ... I am the light of the world." He

is light. He is clarity. He is our center and source, the rock on which we can stand firm...

We so often don't know why we do what we do. We're distracted by too much information. We haven't ventured deep in to ourselves. We may be doing good works, but are we doing them for the right reasons? Our salvation depends on the answer. So we all need to relax. To unclench. To seek peace.

Once we turn our attention towards seeking peace in our hearts, we can take that seeking with us to Church. Pursue your peace there. The Church is your gateway. We need community, yet we are fractured by loneliness. But we were not meant to be alone. The whole New Testament is built around the work of the Holy Spirit to create this new community, the Church, to show the world just how people are supposed to be community together. A person who puts his or her best energies into knowing God will discover that God, as Trinity, is the model for community. But knowing God isn't the same as knowing about God. A relationship with God is not simply an intellectual pursuit. It requires opening your heart to an intimate knowledge of God founded on personal communion with God Himself.

The Church is the gateway to the Kingdom. It is also the image of the Kingdom—it is our treasure house. So draw on the treasures in our worship, our Scripture, our icons, our music, our prayer, our theology. Use these treasures on your journey, on your pursuit to peace. Come to this refuge, and depart refreshed.



THE ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN