



HOLY FATHERS AND THE CREED  
1<sup>ST</sup> ECUMENICAL COUNCIL - 325 AD

# CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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## BULLETIN OF MAY 31, 2009

### Please Remember in Prayer

Carole Boris (newly-departed), Archpriest Michael, Monk Christian, Nadia, Kathy & Bill Parrish, Diane Evanusa, Marie, Thomas, Judith Kocinski, Jane Koshutko, Robert Evanusa, Nicholas & Linda, Nicholas, Anna, Yvonne, Katherine, Michael, Gregory, Todd & Olga Leisure, Nina Gordon, Constantina & Christos. Requests? Let Fr. John know.

### Brief Parish Council Meeting Today

Parish Council members are asked to please stay today for a very brief meeting – one item on the agenda. The next regular meeting will be on Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, following the coffee hour. All welcome.

### Orthodoxy 101 – Class Cancellation

The class scheduled for Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, has been cancelled.



### Memorial Service – Saturday, June 6<sup>th</sup>

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 6<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00am.

### Feast of Pentecost – Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>

On Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 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.



## SUNDAY, MAY 31<sup>ST</sup>

### FATHERS OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> COUNCIL

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

## SATURDAY, JUNE 6<sup>TH</sup>

### MEMORIAL SATURDAY

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

## SUNDAY, JUNE 7<sup>TH</sup>

### HOLY PENTECOST

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

### Interested in Hosting Our Annual Picnic?



Please speak with Fr. John. A date has not yet been set but we are currently looking for volunteers to host the parish get-together. Thank you!

### Baptism of Constantine Michael Cook

On Sunday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, Baby Constantine Cook will receive Holy Baptism. The Baptismal-Divine Liturgy will begin at 9:00am. Following the service there will be a luncheon in his honor. All are invited!



### Can You Offer a Ride to Church?

Please see Fr. John. Why not fill your empty seat with a fellow traveler to the Kingdom of God?



### Photos from the Memorial Day Pilgrimage

can be found on our website – check them out! Many thanks to those who were able to make the long journey!

### Special Conference on Orthodoxy in America

On page 4 of this bulletin is information on a special conference offered this summer at Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary in Crestwood, New York. If you have interest in attending, please let Fr. John know as soon as possible.



The First Ecumenical Council was held in Nicaea in A.D. 325 and set a pattern for all later Ecumenical Councils. It primarily addressed the issue of Arianism, produced the original version of the Nicene Creed, and set a universal pattern for calculating the date of Pascha.

### READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>

Troy Duker

Sunday, June 14<sup>th</sup>

Kathy Parrish





**ON DEVELOPING THE HEART**  
*By Saint Theophan the Recluse*



Developing the heart means developing within it a taste for things holy, divine, and spiritual, so that when it finds itself amidst such things it would feel as though it were in its element. Finding them sweet and blessed, it would be indifferent to all else, with no taste for anything else; and even more -- it would find anything else revolting. All of man's spiritual activity centers in the heart. The truths are impressed in it, and good dispositions are rooted into it. But its main work is developing a taste for the spiritual, as we have shown. When the mind sees the whole spiritual world and its different components, various good beginnings ripen in the will. The heart, under their influence, should taste sweetness in all of this and radiate warmth. This delight in the spiritual is the first sign of the regeneration of a soul deadened by sin. Therefore the heart's development is a very important point even in the early stages. The work directed at it is all of our Church services in all forms -- common and personal, at home and in church -- and it is mainly achieved through the spirit of prayer moving within it. Church services, that is, all the daily services, together with the entire arrangement of the church's icons, candles,



censing, singing, chanting, movements of the clergy, as well as the services for various needs; then services in the home, also using ecclesiastical objects such as sanctified icons, holy oil, candles, holy water, the Cross, and incense -- all of these holy things together acting upon all the senses -- sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste -- are the "cloths that wipe clean" the senses of a deadened soul. They are the strongest and the only reliable way to do it. The soul becomes deadened by the spirit of the world, and possessed by sin that lives in the world. The entire structure of our Church services, with their tone, meaning, power of faith, and especially the grace concealed within them, have an invincible power to drive away the spirit of the world. In freeing the soul from the world's onerous influence, it allows the soul to breathe freely and to taste the sweetness of spiritual freedom. Walking into church we walk into a completely different world, are influenced by it, and change according to it. The same thing happens when we surround ourselves with holy objects. Frequent impressions of the spiritual world more effectively penetrate within and more quickly bring about a transformation of the heart.

**Ask Father: 2 Questions / 2 Answers**

**Q. As Orthodox Christians, people of the New Testament, are we required to keep the Sabbath?**

A. This is a good question for a couple of reasons: 1) you are concerned about what God requires of us, and 2) you ask about that often misunderstood day called the Sabbath.

Let's look at the question about what is required of us. The short answer is that nothing is required of us. When God gave us free will, He meant it. The Lord didn't create robots with remote controls. He created human beings in His image and likeness -- totally free to make decisions for themselves, totally free to choose right or wrong, good or evil, life or death. The Lord doesn't require anything of us.

Well, then you say, why does He punish us if we don't keep His commandments? Another excellent question, but believe it or not, the truth of the matter is that the Lord actually doesn't punish us. When we break God's commandments we do suffer, yet the suffering is not God taking out His wrath on us; this type of language is used only to instruct beginners in the spiritual life who will only turn to the Lord out of fear. Proverbs 9:10 says that this fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom but the knowledge of God's holiness is understanding. God is infinitely good and loving. He does not look down from heaven to rain down a thunderbolt upon the next per-



son who sins. In fact, just the opposite is true, He looks down with love and compassion, even coming down Himself from heaven to die for us in order to bring us up into His Father's Kingdom. When we break God's commandments, we suffer, not because of God's vengeance, but because we ourselves have chosen something that is not good for us, we have chosen evil over goodness, death over life. God's commandments are nothing more than the laws or ways which lead to happiness and blessedness, the ways which lead to our Heavenly Father, the Source of all goodness and life. When we choose not to follow the commandments, we choose to separate ourselves from God, and in so doing we choose the only alternative to His goodness and life, that is, evil and death. The suffering we experience when we sin is simply the result of using our free will unwisely. Moses spoke of this when after he presented the Israelites with God's 10 Commandments he said to them: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, so that both you and your children may live, so that you may love the Lord your God, and that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him. For He is your life and the length of your days." (Deut. 30:19-20)

Now on to part two of your question: The Sabbath was given by God as a day of rest, a day in which the Israelites were commanded not to work, so that they might give thanks to God for everything He had given them: His divine presence, their fellow human beings, and the whole world. They were told to keep this day holy as an everlasting commandment (Exodus 31:16). As God Himself "rested" after the creation of the world so too man must learn to rest after his work; and the rest man needs most is rest in God. This resting in God is necessary to experience life in its fullness. Resting refreshes us and makes us ready, not just for more work again, but more importantly for what is truly essential – life with God and each other. As we know, Christians from the earliest days of the Church experienced this true life with God and each other most perfectly on Sundays. Therefore it seemed to them both natural and providential that God had ordained the Sabbath day's rest on the day before the Lord's Day, so that they would be fully refreshed and renewed to celebrate the Resurrection. Each week, they performed their earthly work, rested from these labors on the Sabbath (Saturday) and then fully replenished celebrated the Lord's Day with worship, fellowship, study, and charitable service. In short, the Sabbath rest allowed the first Christians, as it allows us today, to have Sunday as a day of joyous activity, a day to live life more abundantly with the Lord and each other, a day to experience the Kingdom of God on earth.

**Q. My work responsibilities make it nearly impossible for me to have Saturdays off or even to be in Church on Sundays for that matter, what should I do?**

A. This is not an easy question to answer. Economic pressures and financial responsibilities weigh on us very heavily these days. Working long hours and many days a week, leaves us physically, emotionally, and spiritually spent. And ironically, we feel like we cannot take the main remedy the Lord offers for our exhaustion – the weekend. Remember, God gives us Saturday and Sunday to lay aside our heavy earthly burdens for a while so that we might be refreshed and renewed, enjoying life with Him and each other. He even cries out, "Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!" (Matt. 11:28) Unfortunately, though, not fully responding to this invitation to godly rest can sometimes make us feel guilty, frustrated, or upset. What can be done?

For some people, it might be time to find a different job, for others there might be a way to reorganize our work schedule or perhaps take a different day off during the week to refresh ourselves, and for still others the situation might just simply need to be struggled through for a period. But generally speaking, if we find ourselves unable to observe both days, then at the very least we should do everything possible to be present on Sunday when the community gathers to worship in the Church. This should be the most important part of not just our weekend but the entire week itself.

Finally, I would say that probably the best thing to do is to talk with your priest about your personal situation. As with anything in the spiritual life, speaking with one's priest indicates to God that you have humility and are truly seeking the best course of action. Asking for advice also alleviates the conscience, and the last thing the Lord wants is for anyone to be burdened by these Holy Days. After all, He gave these days to loose our burdens, not to add to them. This is why He said, "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." (Mark 2:27) The Lord wants us to rejoice in these holy days, crying out TGIF (Thank God its Friday), time for the weekend – rest, praise and joy – time for God and each other!





## 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.



## SUMMER CONFERENCE ON THE PAST AND FUTURE OF ORTHODOXY IN AMERICA

*St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary – Crestwood, New York – June 18-20<sup>th</sup>*

Recent exchanges of views about Orthodoxy in America, the role of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the forthcoming pan-Orthodox sessions that will deliberate about the "diaspora," emphasize how vital it is to reflect upon events that shaped the current landscape. As a foundational part of its mission, St. Vladimir's Seminary is a venue where controversial topics can be discussed openly and freely. All are invited!

Noting the importance of this summer conference for the future of American Orthodoxy, generous underwriters have made it possible for SVS to announce that the posted fees for the conference are being reduced by 50%.

From June 18–20, 2009 the seminary will host a summer conference titled, "The Council and the Tomos: Twentieth-century Landmarks towards a Twenty-first-century Church." Conference speakers will focus on two watersheds that have shaped the Orthodox Church in America (OCA): the All-Russian Council (Sobor) of 1917–18 and the Tomos of Autocephaly granted in 1970 by the Russian Orthodox Church to its daughter church, the Orthodox Church in America, then known as the "North American Diocese." The conference will address the significance of the OCA's presence in North America, and future paths and possibilities open to it, including its interface with the multi-jurisdictional Orthodox Christian communities in the U.S. and Canada.

Speakers at this important conference include among others:

Metropolitan Jonah (OCA), Archbishop Nathaniel (Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of OCA), Bishop Basil of Amphipolis (Ecumenical Patriarchate), Archimandrite Kirill (Ukrainian Orthodox Church), Fr. Mark Arey (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese), Mr. Charles Ajalat, Chancellor (Antiochian Archdiocese)

***If you have interest in attending, please let Fr. John know as soon as possible.***

