

# St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

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## Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council

May 28, 2017



On the seventh Sunday of Pascha, we commemorate the holy God-bearing Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council.

The Commemoration of the First Ecumenical Council has been celebrated by the Church of Christ from ancient times. The Lord Jesus Christ left the Church a great promise, “I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mt. 16:18). Although the Church of Christ on earth will pass through difficult struggles with the Enemy of salvation, it will emerge victorious. The holy martyrs bore witness to the truth of the Savior’s words, enduring suffering and death for confessing Christ, but the persecutor’s sword is shattered by the Cross of Christ.

Persecution of Christians ceased during the fourth century, but heresies arose within the Church itself. One of the most pernicious of these heresies was Arianism. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, was a man of immense pride and ambition. In denying the divine nature of Jesus Christ and His equality with God the Father, Arius falsely taught that the Savior is not

consubstantial with the Father, but is only a created being.

A local Council, convened with Patriarch Alexander of Alexandria presiding, condemned the false teachings of Arius. However, Arius would not submit to the authority of the Church. He wrote to many bishops, denouncing the decrees of the local Council. He spread his false teaching throughout the East, receiving support from certain Eastern bishops.

Investigating these dissensions, the holy emperor Constantine (May 21) consulted Bishop Hosius of Cordova (Aug. 27), who assured him that the heresy of Arius was directed against the most fundamental dogma of Christ’s Church, and so he decided to convene an Ecumenical Council. In 325, 318 bishops representing Christian Churches from various lands gathered together at Nicea.

Among the assembled bishops were many confessors who had suffered during the persecutions, and who bore the marks of torture upon their bodies. Also participating in the Council were several great luminaries of the Church: Saint Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia (December 6 and May 9), Saint Spyridon, Bishop of Tremithos (December 12), and others venerated by the Church as holy Fathers.

With Patriarch Alexander of Alexandria came his deacon, Athanasius (who later became Patriarch of Alexandria (May 2 and January 18). He is called “the Great,” for he was a zealous champion for the purity of Orthodoxy. In the Sixth Ode of the Canon for today’s Feast, he is referred to as “the thirteenth Apostle.”

The emperor Constantine presided over the sessions of the Council. In his speech, responding to the welcome by Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, he said, “God has helped me cast down the impious might of the persecutors, but more distressful for me than any blood spilled in battle is for a soldier, is the internal strife in the Church of God, for it is more ruinous.”

Arius, with seventeen bishops among his supporters, remained arrogant, but his teaching was repudiated and he was excommunicated from the Church. In his speech, the holy deacon Athanasius conclusively refuted the blasphemous opinions of Arius. The heresiarch Arius is depicted in iconography sitting on Satan’s knees, or in the mouth of the Beast of the Deep (Rev. 13).

The Fathers of the Council declined to accept a Symbol of Faith (Creed) proposed by the Arians. Instead, they affirmed the Orthodox Symbol of Faith. Saint Constantine asked the Council to insert into the text of the Symbol of Faith the word “consubstantial,” which he had heard in the speeches of the bishops. The Fathers of the Council unanimously accepted this suggestion.

In the Nicene Creed, the holy Fathers set forth and confirmed the Apostolic teachings about Christ’s divine nature. The heresy of Arius was exposed and repudiated as an error of haughty reason. After resolving this chief dogmatic question, the Council also issued Twelve Canons on questions of churchly administration and discipline. Also decided was the date for the celebration of Holy Pascha. By decision of the Council, Holy Pascha should not be celebrated by Christians on the same day with the Jewish Passover, but on the first Sunday after the first full moon of the vernal equinox (which occurred on March 22 in 325).

## **WISDOM OF THE FATHERS**

“If something good happens – bless God, and the good will remain. If something bad happens – bless God, and the bad will transform. Glory to God for all things!” + *St. John Chrysostom*

## **APOLYTIKION OF THE ASCENSION IN TONE FOUR**

Thou hast ascended in glory, O Christ our God, and gladdened Thy Disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit, having become confident of the blessing. Verily, Thou art the Son of God, and Deliverer of the world.

## **APOLYTIKION OF THE HOLY FATHERS IN TONE EIGHT**

Thou, O Christ, art our God of exceeding praise Who didst establish our holy Fathers as luminous stars upon earth, and through them didst guide us unto the true Faith, O most merciful One, glory to Thee.

## **KONTAKION OF THE ASCENSION IN TONE SIX**

When Thou didst fulfill Thy dispensation for our sakes, uniting the terrestrials with the celestials, Thou didst ascend in glory, O Christ our God, inseparable in space, but constant without separation, and crying unto Thy beloved: I am with you, and no one shall be against you.

## **THE EPISTLE**

*Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our Fathers. For Thou art just in all Thou hast done.*

### **The Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. (20:16-18, 28-36)**

In those days, Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. And when they came to him, he said to them: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore, be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities, and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" And when he had spoken thus, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

## **THE GOSPEL**

### **The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (17:1-13)**

At that time, Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son that the Son may glorify Thee, since Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him. And this is eternal life, that they know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent. I glorified Thee on earth, having accomplished the work which Thou gavest Me to do; and now, Father, glorify Thou Me in Thy own presence with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was made. I have manifested Thy Name to the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me, and they have kept Thy word. Now they know that everything that Thou hast given Me is from Thee; for I have given them the words which Thou gavest Me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from Thee; and they have believed that Thou didst send Me. I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom Thou hast given Me, for they are Thine; all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name, which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are one. While I was with them, I kept them in Thy Name, which Thou have given Me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves."

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Holy Trinity Parish Feast Day** - As is our practice, we will be joining all of our local Orthodox brethren for the celebration of the feast day of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Spokane on Pentecost Sunday, at 5:00 PM, for the Kneeling Vespers. The Vespers will be followed by the annual feast day dinner and Missions presentation. At that Missions presentation we will renew our gifts for the Orthodox Christian Mission Center, in support of mission priests.

**No Sunday School this Week** – There will be no Sunday School this coming Sunday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, but classes will resume the following Sunday June 1st.

**Parish Directory Updates** - Joy Corey is beginning to work on an updated parish directory. Please contact her with any updates to your family's contact information. Many thanks to Joy for keeping our directory current!

**Here's a way for you to help fund the Benevolence Fund:** Joy Corey is willing to bake (on demand) either Queen Elizabeth or Harvey Wallbanger Cakes (both of which are very popular amongst our little parish) and will pay for all ingredients herself in order that the gross sale price of \$25 per cake be put into the Benevolence Fund to help those who have special needs in our community (and without). That means that for every four cakes ordered, \$100 will be put into the Benevolence Fund. They make great hostess gifts for when you are invited to dinner at someone's home, or to take to someone who is home sick, or to give as birthday presents or to use for special occasion cakes when you have company for dinner. The Q.E. Cake yields 35 pieces and the Harvey Wallbanger cake yields 24 pieces. They are specialty cakes of fine bakery quality and made from scratch. Joy suggests cutting the Q.E. Cake into pieces and placing them in cupcake liners in tupperware and freezing to pull out as you need them - especially when you get unexpected visitors. Both cakes freeze very well. Call Joy at 660-0538 to place your orders and thank you for helping to fund our Benevolence Fund.

**St. Herman of Alaska Scholarship Fund** - St. Herman's Scholarship Fund has been established to help students who wish to pursue, or are currently pursuing, full time study in an institution of learning (two or four year college or university) or a vocational institute. It was created for the purpose of helping young people, who have recently graduated high school or are already in college. This year a student will be selected to receive a stipend of \$2,000. In order to be eligible for the stipend, a student should be a member in good standing at St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church in Post Falls or at Christ the Savior Orthodox Church in Spokane or at Holy Myrrhbearers Orthodox Church in Bonners Ferry, and a full time student at a high school or college with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 on a 4 point scale. Academic excellence, financial need and church /community service will be taken into account in the awarding of the stipend. Please see Fr. Basil or Barbara Garbinski for an application. June 12, 2017 is the deadline.



HOLY MYRRHBEARERS ORTHODOX CHURCH  
*is pleased to announce a series of three talks entitled*

“When the Foundations are Shaken:  
Disasters, Fears, and a Christian Response”

*featuring*

DRS. DAVID AND MARY FORD

Tuesday & Wednesday, 13-14 June 2017  
Holy Myrrhbearers Orthodox Church  
1957 Pleasant Valley Loop, Naples, Idaho

### SCHEDULE

*Tuesday, June 13*

6:30 PM: Refreshments & Registration

7:00 PM: “Insights into Marriage from the Saints Through  
the Centuries” by Dr. David Ford

*Wednesday, June 14*

8:00 AM: Divine Liturgy for Feast of Prophet Elisha

9:00 AM: Breakfast

9:30 AM: “Encouragement in Dark Times from the Book of  
Revelation” by Dr. Mary Ford

11:15 AM: Lunch

12:00 NOON: “Encouragement in Dark Times from the  
Saints-Including Letters from St. John Chrysostom  
to St. Olympia” by Dr. David Ford

Registration fee is \$20 per person (scholarships, family discounts, and other arrangements are available). To register, please contact Gayle Goodsen at 208-772-1910 or email [gaylegoodsen@yahoo.com](mailto:gaylegoodsen@yahoo.com).

## SCHEDULE OF SERVICES & EVENTS

**Saturday, May 27:** Great Vespers 6:00pm

**Sunday, May 28:** Orthros 9:00am, Divine Liturgy 10:00am, Lunch Following

**Tuesday, May 30:** Youth Swing Dance 7:00pm

**Wednesday, May 31:** Vespers 6:00pm

**Friday, June 2:** Spiritual Circle 9:30am

**Saturday, June 3:** Great Vespers for the Great Feast of Pentecost 6:00pm

**Sunday, June 4: +PENTECOST** - Orthros 9:00am, Divine Liturgy 10:00am, Sunday School & Lunch Following; Kneeling Vespers at Holy Trinity followed by Feastday dinner and Annual Missions presentation 5:00pm

## EPISTLE READERS

May 28 Tabitha Townsend

June 11 David Gencarella

June 4 Joy Corey

June 18 Reader Mark Fellego

## LUNCH TEAM

May 28 Team 4: Kelly Peterson, Sandford family, Deacon Joseph and Susan Manion & Foster Caldaroni

June 4 Team 1: Schaefer family, Gallatin family, Ebert family & the Phillips family.

June 11 Team 2: Victoria Purviance, Dale Ayoub & the Bardwell family

June 18 Team 3: Joy Corey, Tecca family, Roth family, David & Lisa Gencarella

## CLEANING ROTATION (nave, narthex, hallway and upstairs restrooms)

Week of 5/28 Fr. Basil

Week of 6/11 Mary Jo Neyman

Week of 6/4 Jeanne Rickert

Week of 6/18 Dn. Joseph & Susan Mannion

**PRAYERS FOR THE LIVING:** Josh Gallatin, Steve Wood, Barbara Schaefer, Sbdcn. Athanasios Schumacher, Helen Odell, Metropolitan Paul Yazigi and Metropolitan Youhanna Ibrahim (hostages in Syria), Suffering Christians throughout the Middle East

**PRAYERS FOR THE DEPARTED:** +Metropolitan Elia, Mary (Jeane Wood's aunt), Victims of Abortion, Departed Christians in Syria, Iraq and Egypt who have died for their Faith.



## A Note Regarding Holy Communion

Since we understand Communion to mean that we have all things in common, sharing an identical Faith, only those who are members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and recent confession may participate in Holy Communion. (We invite all, however, to partake of the blessed bread which is distributed at the dismissal.) Please see the pastor for inquiries on how to become a member.