

SUNDAY, JULY 19, 2020
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY FATHERS
OF THE FIRST SIX ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

GREAT VESPERS

LORD I CALL Four stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 5, followed by three stikhera for the Fathers Resurrection, tone 5:

By Your precious Cross, O Christ,
You have put the devil to shame.
By Your Resurrection, You have blunted the sting of sin
and saved us from the gates of death.//
We glorify You, the only begotten One.

Christ was led as a sheep to the slaughter
in order to grant Resurrection to the human race.
The princes of hell were frightened by this,
for the gates of sorrow were lifted.
Christ the King of glory had entered,
saying to those in chains: “Go forth!”//
And to those in darkness: “Come to the light!”

Oh, great wonder!
The Creator of the invisible suffered in the flesh in His love for mankind
and rose again immortal.
Come, O sons of nations,
let us worship Him,
for delivered from error by His compassion,//
we have learned to sing of one God in three Persons!

We offer You our evening worship,
O never setting Light,
Who came in these last days to the world in the flesh;
Who even descended to hell to dispel its darkness.
You have revealed the light of Resurrection to the nations.//
Glory to You, O Lord and Giver of light!

Holy Fathers, tone 6:

You were begotten from the Father before the Morning Star,
but Arius taught wrongly that You were created.
In his ignorance he designated You as a creature,
yet the Fathers of the Council in Nicea, O Lord,
proclaimed that You are the Son of God,//
co-enthroned with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

O honored Fathers,

you skillfully stitched together the garment of Christ,
which had been divided and torn apart by barking dogs.
You found it unbearable to see His nakedness,
as, of old, Shem and Japheth could not bear to see the nakedness of their father.
You put to shame the wretchedness of Arius and those who agreed with him, //
and who professed the madness that bears his name.

The Macedónians and Nestórians, the Eutýchians and Dióscorenes,
the Appolinárians, Sabéllians, and Séverans,
who were revealed as oppressive wolves in sheep's skins,
you, as true shepherds, drove far away from the Savior's flock,
having stripped the thrice-wretched ones of their sheep's skins. //
Therefore, we call you blessed, O holy Fathers.

GLORY... Holy Fathers, tone 6:

Today let us praise the mystical trumpets of the Spirit,
the God-bearing Fathers, who stand in the midst of the Church, singing true theology,
praising the changeless Trinity.
They laid low the errors of Arius and upheld the Orthodox Faith. //
They always entreat the Lord to have mercy on our souls.

NOW AND EVER... the Dogmatikon of the Resurrection in tone 5:

In the Red Sea of old,
a type of the Virgin Bride was prefigured.
There Moses divided the waters;
here Gabriel assisted in the miracle.
There Israel crossed the sea without getting wet,
here the Virgin gave birth to Christ without seed.
After Israel's passage, the sea remained impassable;
after Emmanuel's birth, the Virgin remained a Virgin.
O ever-existing God, Who appeared as Man, //
O Lord, have mercy on us!

THREE OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

The reading is from the book of Genesis.

And Abram, having heard that Lot his nephew had been taken captive, numbered his own home-born servants three hundred and eighteen, and pursued after them to Dan. And he fell upon them at night, he and his servants who were with him, and he smote them and pursued them as far as Chobal, which is on the left of Damascus. And he recovered Lot his nephew, and all his possessions, and the women and the people. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after he returned from the slaughter of Chodollogomor, and the kings with him, to the valley of Saby; this was the king's dale. And Melchisedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was the priest of the Most High God. And he blessed Abram, and said: Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, Who made heaven and earth, and blessed be the Most High God, Who delivered your enemies into your power. ***Genesis, (14:14-20)***

The reading is from the Book of Deuteronomy.

Thus said Moses to the sons of Israel: Behold, God has delivered the land before you; go in and inherit the land which I swore to your fathers Abraham and Issac and Jacob, to give it to them and to their seed after them. And I spoke to you at that time, saying: I shall not be able by myself to bear you. The Lord your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are today as the stars of heaven in multitude. The Lord God of your fathers add to you a thousandfold more than you are, and bless you as He has spoken to you. So I took of you wise and understanding and prudent men, and I set them to rule over you as rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, and rulers of tens, and instructors for your judges. And I commanded your judges at that time, saying: Hear causes between your brethren, and judge justly between a man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. You shall not have respect to persons in judgment, you shall judge small and great equally; you shall not shrink from before the person of a man, for the judgment is God's. *Deuteronomy, (1:8-11, 15-17)*

The Reading is from the Book of Deuteronomy.

Thus said Moses to the sons of Israel: Behold, the heaven, and the Heaven of heaven, belong to the Lord your God, the earth and all things that are therein. Yet the Lord chose your fathers to love them, and above all nations, as at this day He chose you out of their seed after them. Therefore you shall circumcise the hardness of your heart, and you shall not harden your neck. For the Lord our God, He is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great, and strong, and terrible God, Who does not respect persons, nor will He by any means accept a bribe; executing judgment for the stranger and orphan and widow, and He loves the stranger to give him food and raiment. You shall fear the Lord your God, and serve Him, and shall swear by His Name. He is your boast, and He is your God, Who has wrought for you these great and glorious things, which your eyes have seen. *Deuteronomy, (10:14-21)*

APOSTIKHA: All stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 5:

We magnify You in songs of praise,
O incarnate Christ and Savior.
By accepting the Cross and death for our sake,
as the Lord and Lover of mankind,
You overthrew the gates of hell,//
and arose on the third day, saving our souls.

By being pierced in the side, O Lover of mankind,
You have poured out drops of life and salvation for all.
By accepting death in the flesh, You have granted us immortality.
You have freed us by being placed in the tomb,
and have resurrected us with Yourself in glory, as God.//
Glory to You, O Lord and Lover of mankind!

Your crucifixion and descent into hell are awesome, O Lover of mankind.
You have captured it, releasing the ancient prisoners.
You have opened Paradise and given it to us.
Grant us purification of sins,
who glorify Your Resurrection on the third day!
Make us worthy of Paradise//
and save us, O Lover of mankind!

For our sake, You accepted death in the flesh,
to rise from the dead on the third day.

Heal us from our earthly passions,
and restore us from our evil transgressions;//
and save us, O Lover of mankind!

GLORY... Holy Fathers, tone 4:

Today we celebrate the annual memorial
of the God-bearing Fathers who assembled in Nicea.
They laid low the godless doctrines of Arius,
driving him from the unity of the Catholic Church,
and teaching us how to confess the consubstantial and co-eternal Son of God.
They expressed this clearly in the Symbol of Faith,
and we follow their divine doctrines,
believing in and serving the Son with the Father and the all-Holy Spirit;//
the consubstantial Trinity and one Divinity.

NOW AND EVER... Resurrectional Theotokion in tone 4:

Look on the entreaties of your servants, O blameless one!
Stop all the terrible attacks against us,
freeing us from every affliction,
for we have only you as our sure and firm anchor!
Lady, do not let us be put to shame,
for we call on you for our intercession!
Hasten to pray for those who call in faith:
“Rejoice, Lady, Help of all://
the Joy and Shelter and Salvation of our souls!”

DIVINE LITURGY

TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 5

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word,
Coeternal with the Father and the Spirit,
Born for our salvation from the Virgin;
For He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh,
To endure death,
And to raise the dead
By His glorious Resurrection.

Fathers, tone 8

You are most glorious, O Christ our God!
You have established the Holy Fathers as lights on the earth!
Through them you have guided us to the true faith!
O greatly Compassionate One, glory to You!

KONTAKIA

Resurrection, tone 5

Thou didst descend into hell, O my Savior,

Shattering its gates as almighty;
Resurrecting the dead as Creator,
And destroying the sting of death,
Thou hast delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of Man,
And we all cry to Thee O Lord, save us!

Fathers, tone 8

The apostles' preaching and the fathers' doctrines
have established one faith for the Church!
Adorned with the robe of truth, woven from heavenly theology,
It defines and glorifies the great mystery of piety.

Steadfast Protectress of Christians

Steadfast protectress of Christians,
Constant advocate before the creator:
Do not despise the cry of us sinners,
But in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in
faith.
Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos,
for you always protect those who honor you.

Prokeimenon, tone 5: Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us from this generation for ever!
vs. Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly.

2nd Prok., Tone 4: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our Fathers and praised and glorified is Thy Name
forever.

EPISTLES: (110) Romans 12:6-14 Brethren, having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; or he who teaches, in teaching; or he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, let him do it with simplicity; he who rules, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you; bless and do not curse...

(Fathers) (334) Hebrews 13:7-16 Brethren, remember them which rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever... Do not be carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with meats which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. We have an Altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own Blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth unto Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Alleluia in the fifth tone: I will sing of Thy mercies, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Thy truth from generation to generation.

vs. For Thou hast said: Mercy will be established forever; Thy truth will be prepared in the heavens.
vs. The Lord, the God of gods, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

GOSPELS: (29) Matthew 9:1-8 At that time, He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!" But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" –then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men. **(56) John 17:1-13 (Fathers)** Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

Communion Hymns: Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest. Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous. Praise befits the just! Alleluia

The Commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils: In the Ninth Article of the Nicea-Constantinople Symbol of Faith proclaimed by the holy Fathers of the First and Second Ecumenical Councils, we confess our faith in "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church." By virtue of the catholic nature of the Church, an Ecumenical Council is the Church's supreme authority, and possesses the competence to resolve major questions of church life. An Ecumenical Council is comprised of archpastors and pastors of the Church, and representatives of all the Local Churches, from every land of the "oikumene" (i.e. from all the whole inhabited world).

[Trans. note: The Church Slavonic word "Sobornyi" -- in English usually translated merely as "catholic", has actually a deeper and more profound meaning than commonly understood in the West, and it reflects linguistically the Greek word "katholike" as interpreted by Holy Tradition for Sts. Cyril and Methodios. The adjective form "Sobornyi" has its root in "Sobor," meaning an "assembly" or "council." The erudite might also see a similarity with the word "Sobornost," a term emphasized in ecclesiology by the Russian religious philosopher A. S. Khomiakov in the 1800s. "Sobornost" is translated sometimes as "catholicity or conciliarity," but often also as "communality." This latter nuance signifies the "catholicity" of the Church, not as a formal external quality of the Church as worldly institution and outward authority, but rather as a spiritual and dynamic quality within each believer.

It is the Gospel that defines the locus of the Church saying: "The Kingdom of God is within you." This, however, does not imply the fragmented individualism of belief often seen in Protestantism. The Church as "ekklesia" (assembly of believers) is "one" in Christ in the apostolicity and holiness of its faith in Christ. Our own oneness is with the authentic faith of the Holy Apostles in the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, preserved as Holy Tradition throughout all the generations of believers. The "Communality" or "Communion in Christ Jesus" is not merely with our fellow believers in the Church in the present, but with all the generations of the faithful who have gone before us. All the Four Marks of the Church, One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, are interconnected. The catholicity of the Church extends universally not merely through space, but also back through time, it is the "Church Triumphant" as well as the "Church Militant.]"

The Orthodox Church acknowledges Seven Holy Ecumenical Councils:

The **First Ecumenical Council (Nicea I)** ([May 29](#), and also on 7th Sunday after Pascha) was convened in the year 325 against the heresy of Arius, in the city of Nicea in Bithynia under the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine the Great.

The **Second Ecumenical Council (Constantinople I)** ([May 22](#)) was convened in the year 381 against the heresy of Macedonias, by the emperor Theodosius the Great.

The **Third Ecumenical Council (Ephesus)** ([September 9](#)) was convened in the year 431 against the heresy of Nestorios, in the city of Ephesus by the emperor Theodosius the Younger.

The **Fourth Ecumenical Council (Chalcedon)** ([July 16](#)) was convened in the year 451, against the Monophysite heresy, in the city of Chalcedon under the emperor Marcian.

The **Fifth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople II)** ([July 25](#)) "Concerning the Three Chapters," was convened in the year 553, under the emperor Justinian the Great.

The **Sixth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople III)** ([January 23](#)) met during the years 680-681, to fight the Monothelite heresy, under the emperor Constantine Pogonatos.

The **Seventh Ecumenical Council (Nicea II)** (Sunday nearest October 11) was convened at Nicea in the year 787 against the Iconoclast heresy, under the emperor Constantine and his mother Irene.

The Church venerates the Holy Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils because Christ has established them as "lights upon the earth," guiding us to the true Faith. "Adorned with the robe of truth," the doctrine of the Fathers, based upon the preaching of the Apostles, has established one faith for the Church. The Ecumenical Councils, are the highest authority in the Church. Such Councils, guided by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and accepted by the Church, are infallible.

The Orthodox Church's conciliar definitions of dogma have the highest authority, and such definitions always begin with the Apostolic formula: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us..." (*Acts 15: 28*).

The Ecumenical Councils were always convened for a specific reason: to combat false opinions and heresies, and to clarify the Orthodox Church's teaching. But the Holy Spirit has thus seen fit, that the dogmas -- the truths of faith, immutable in their content and scope, constantly and consequently are revealed by the conciliar mind of the Church, and are given precision by the holy Fathers within theological concepts and terms in exactly such measure as is needed by the Church itself for its economy of salvation. The Church, in expounding its dogmas, is dealing with the concerns of a given historical moment, "not revealing everything in haste and thoughtlessly, nor indeed, ultimately hiding something" (St. Gregory the Theologian).

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