



My Beloved Ones,

This week we were blessed to experience our Lord's glorious Ascension into Heaven, with His beautiful promise that, *"...I am with you always, to the end of the age."* (Matthew 28:20) While this appears to be the conclusion of a story which began with our Lord's Nativity & Ministry, and continued with His Passion & Resurrection, the Ascension is not an ending, but a new beginning: The Apostolic Age.

However, before we can celebrate the coming of Holy Spirit at Pentecost, this Sunday, the Church has seen fit to honor the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council of 325. These holy and great men were so determined to defend the Union of the Son of God with the Father, that they created a statement of belief which is common to all Christians who believe in the Holy Trinity: the Nicene Creed

Arius was an Egyptian Bishop, and the heresy he preached—that Christ was not the preexisting Son and Logos, but an ordinary human being “adopted” by God—created great conflict in the Church. Therefore, St. Constantine called the first Ecumenical Council, in the city of Nicaea. The clergy who gathered denounced Arius, by declaring their belief:

*“...in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten of the Father  
Light of Light, true God of true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father  
By whom all things were made...”*

This Creed is familiar to all of us, but did you know that the Creed of 325 ended with this statement? *“But those who say: 'There was a time when he was not;' and 'He was not before he was made;' and 'He was made out of nothing,' or 'He is of another substance' or 'essence,' or 'The Son of God is created,' or 'changeable,' or 'alterable' — they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church.”*

My beloved ones, this Sunday, may we offer our heartfelt prayers to these Holy Fathers who were not swayed and stood firm in the understanding of what they had been taught from the Apostles. Our Church remains grateful that these wise teachers remained focused on the Truth, and so should we thank them, for teaching us by their examples.

**+ALEXIOS**  
Metropolitan of Atlanta