



**Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the
1st Ecumenical Council – May 31, 2020**



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: www.patriarchate.org

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: www.goarch.org

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: www.atlanta.goarch.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: www.saintchristopherhoc.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



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Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis, Chancellor

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, May 31, 2020

ON THIS DAY, THE *SEVENTH* SUNDAY OF PASCHA, THE SUNDAY FOLLOWING THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD, GOD, AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, THE CHURCH REMEMBERS THE 318 BISHOPS AND OTHER GREAT MEN OF THE CHURCH WHO CAME TOGETHER AT THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF NICAEA NEAR CONSTANTINOPLE IN 325 A.D. AND DECIDED UPON THE CONTENT AND FORM OF THE NICENE CREED, THE SYMBOL OF OUR FAITH. WE ALSO COMMEMORATE Hermias the Martyr at Comana; Eusebius and Haralambos the Monk-Martyrs; and Eustathios, Patriarch of Constantinople. *Through the holy intercessions of the 318 God-bearing Fathers and Saints we remember today, Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.*

Thank You for Your Understanding

We welcome our parishioners who pre-registered and are attending services in person today and we also welcome those who are viewing our online video streaming at home. Let us comply with the guidelines we have provided everyone. We appreciate your kind understanding that our church is beginning phase one of the re-opening of our doors. Fr. George is deeply appreciative to you and all who are assisting during worship services.



Church Re-Opening Guidelines

During the first phase of the re-opening of St. Christopher Church, a limited number of households will be permitted at each worship service *by following two simple steps*. Extra services will be offered to accommodate our St. Christopher Parish Family if your first choice is not available.

Step 1: [Click here to Read and Agree to "Returning to Worship: Important Information"](#)

Step 2: [Click here to "Pre-Register for Services"](#)

****Please note that unless you pre-register, you will not be permitted to enter the Church. We cannot accommodate walk-ins at this time.***

FROM THE PENTECOSTARION

On this Sunday we celebrate the memory of the Bishops and other great men of the Church who came together at the first Council of Nicaea near Constantinople in 325, in which the doctrine of the Holy Trinity was defined. Arius (280-336), a priest of Alexandria, had taught the heresy that the Son was not equal to the Father, neither of the same essence nor infinite nor eternal; but that He was a creature, albeit the most perfect creature of God, but not yet God, and consequently his Mother was not the Mother of God. His Archbishop, St. Athanasios, opposed these errors with all his might. He eloquently exposed the true teaching that the Word of God was indeed God in reality, and that through the Incarnation He became a real man. The controversy raged throughout the Roman Empire, creating turmoil everywhere. Emperor Constantine decided to settle the matter by submitting it to

the judgment of the Universal Church, and so he called the general council that convened in Nicaea. From the discussion came the Nicene Creed in which the answer to Arianism (as the false teaching of Arius is called) is answered in the following passage: “I believe in Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father.”

SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL ENTRANCE

1. Hymn for Second Antiphon – (Hymnal-p.28):

On the occasion of the Feast of the Ascension, we sing the following hymn instead of the regular Sosen imas. “Save us, O Son of God”: “Save us, O Son of God, Who rose from our midst, to the heavens in glory, as we sing to You: Alleluia!”

2./4./8. Hymn of the Ascension of our Lord – (Hymnal-pp.168-169):

Sung before the Small Entrance, after the Small Entrance, and after the distribution of Holy Communion: You ascended in glory, O Christ our God, having gladdened Your disciples by Your promise of the Holy Spirit. And Your blessing confirmed their belief that You are indeed God’s Son, the Redeemer of the world.

3. Resurrectional Hymn (Plagal of the 2nd Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.118-121):

It is sung after the Small Entrance by Fr. George: The angelic powers appeared at Your tomb, the soldiers guarding it became as dead men, and Mary stood at Your grave seeking Your most pure body. But You made hell a captive; You were untouched by its might. You came to the Virgin and granted life. O Lord, Who rose from the dead, glory to You.

5. Hymn Commemorating the 318 Holy Fathers– (Hymnal-pp.170-171):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: Unending glory be Yours, O Christ our God, for making our holy fathers radiant lights to all the world. Through them You led us to the true faith. Compassionate Savior, glory to You.

6. Hymn Commemorating St. Christopher – (see music distributed):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: Made comely with garments woven from your venerable blood, you stand before the Lord, the King of Heaven and earth, O famed Martyr Christopher. With the choirs of Angels and the Martyrs you chant, singing the thrice-holy hymn and most awesome praises. Thus, by your intercessions with God, save us, your servants.

7. Kontakion for the Ascension of our Lord – (Hymnal-pp.278-279):

It is sung after the Small Entrance by Fr. George: When You had joined earth to heaven and fulfilled Your plan of redemption, You ascended in glory, O Christ our God, while remaining in our midst. For You assured us who love You that no one can prevail against us since You Yourself are with us.

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S ORTHROS & DIVINE LITURGY

The Scriptures were not given us for this only, that we might have them in books, but that we might engrave them on our hearts. – St. John Chrysostom

Gospel Reading During Orthros Service (John 21:1-14)

After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and He showed Himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered Him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off. When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask Him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after He was raised from the dead.

Epistle Reading (Acts 20:16-18; 28-36)

For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; he was eager to be in Jerusalem, if possible on the day of Pentecost. From Miletus he sent a message to Ephesus, asking the elders of the church to meet him. When they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the entire time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, Keep watch over yourselves and over the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that He obtained with the blood of His own Son. I know that after I have gone, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Some even from your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to warn everyone with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the message of His grace, a message that is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing. You know for yourselves that I worked with my own hands to support myself and my companions. In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" When he had finished speaking he knelt down with them all and prayed. There was much weeping among them all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, grieving especially because of what he had said, that they would not see him again. Then they brought him to the ship.

Gospel Reading (John 17:1-13)

After Jesus had spoken these words, He looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify You, since You have given Him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom 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 glorified You on earth by finishing the work that You gave Me to do. So now, Father, glorify Me in Your own presence with the glory that I had in Your presence before the world existed. "I have made Your name known to those whom You gave Me from the world. They were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have

kept Your word. Now they know that everything You have given Me is from You; for the words that You gave to Me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I am asking on their belief; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom You gave Me, because they are Yours. All Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, protect them in Your name that you have given Me, so that they may be one, as We are one. While I was with them, I protected them in Your name that You have given Me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to You, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE (TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):

"...we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us..." (Romans 5:3-5)

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

This past Thursday and through this coming Friday, we celebrate the Feast of the Ascension of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ - both His physical departure from the world and His glorification with God the Father. Having completed His earthly mission of bringing salvation to all people, Jesus physically was lifted up from this world into Heaven. In ascending to the Father, He raises earth [you and me] to Heaven with Him. As the Kontakion hymn for this Feast expresses: *"When You [Jesus] had joined earth to heaven and fulfilled Your plan of redemption, You ascended in glory, O Christ our God, while remaining in our midst. For You assured us who love You that no one can prevail against us since You Yourself are with us."*

Indeed, as Orthodox Christians, we affirm a belief in the Son, Jesus Christ and His mission of redemption of humankind. We say that God took on human form,

came and lived among us, suffered the same trials that we suffered, and experienced the same feelings that we experienced. Jesus was purely human and purely divine. Jesus is God incarnate.

What do Christians mean by the incarnation of our Lord? God came and lived among us. We can be glad that this happened for two reasons. One, it shows beyond a shadow of a doubt that God is with us, that He is on our side, and that He loves us. Secondly, it gives us a first-hand view of what the mind of God is really all about. When people ask what God is like, we as Christians point to the person of Jesus Christ. God Himself is incomprehensible. But in Jesus Christ, we get a glimpse of His glory. In the person of Jesus, we are told that God created the stars and the universe, that God is willing to go all of the way, even to a cross, so that each of us, and indeed, all of humanity may be saved.

Glory to God always! Today, may we worship our Ascended Lord with the words that I exclaimed during today's Small Entrance during the Divine Liturgy: *"God has risen with a loud cry, the Lord, at the sound of the trumpet. Save us, O Son of God, Who rose from our midst, to the heavens in glory, as we sing to You: Alleluia!"*

On the Seventh Sunday of Pascha, we commemorate the Holy God-bearing Fathers of the First Ecumenical Synod.

(continued from back bulletin cover)

With Patriarch Alexander of Alexandria came his deacon, Athanasius (who later became Patriarch of Alexandria). 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 Synod. 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 of 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 Hell (Rev. 13).

The Fathers of the Synod declined to accept a Symbol of Faith (Creed) proposed by the Arians. Instead, they affirmed the Orthodox Symbol of Faith. Saint Constantine asked the Synod 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 Synod 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 Synod also issued Twelve Canons on questions of ecclesiastical administration and discipline. Also decided was the date for the celebration of Holy Pascha. By decision of the Synod, Holy Pascha should be celebrated by Christians on the first Sunday after the first full moon of the vernal equinox (which occurred on March 22 in 325). *- Reprinted from johnsanidopoulos.com*



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On this the 808th Sunday of our St. Christopher's parish community, we continue to thank each of you for your presence and support. Although it may seem like we are just a handful of men, women and children, if we commit ourselves to serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we will experience the miracle of growth as the Holy Spirit brings others into His service to help us build His new church in the Peachtree City, Georgia area for the glory of God!

COMMUNITY SCHEDULE (CHECK WEB CALENDAR FOR MORE...)

Sunday, May 31 (Sunday of the Fathers of the 1st Ecumenical Council):

- 7:30 a.m. Orthros Service
- 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy
- 10:15 a.m. Memorial Service – Stavros & Paraskevi Farmakis
- 3:00 p.m. Virtual Coffee Hour – [Use one-click to join your parish family!](#)

***Your continued support and mutual encouragement
are essential and appreciated!***

On the Seventh Sunday of Pascha, we commemorate the Holy God-bearing Fathers of the First Ecumenical Synod.

The Commemoration of the First Ecumenical Synod 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 hades shall not prevail against it” (Mt. 16:18). Although the Church of Christ on earth will pass through difficult struggles by 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, because the persecutor’s sword is shattered by the Cross of Christ.

Though the Church has always been persecuted by outside forces, heresies have also risen from within the Church itself to destroy it through poisonous doctrines. 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 (of one essence) with the Father but is only a created being.

A local Synod, 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 Synod. 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 Synod. In 325, 318 bishops representing local Christian Churches from various lands gathered together at Nicaea. Among the assembled bishops were many confessors who had suffered during the persecutions, and who bore the marks of torture upon their bodies.

– *Continue reading inside bulletin.*

+Fr. George Tsahakis