

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE

SERVICES

Wed: Moleben to the Theotokos 6:00 AM

Friday: Moleben to the Cross 6:00 AM

Saturday: Confession 5:00 PM,

Great Vespers 5:30 PM

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

Children's Sunday School 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.

July 14, 2019 – 4th Sunday After Pentecost | Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils | Apostle Aquila of the LXX

Today we have a double celebration: we celebrate Sunday, the day of the Resurrection of Christ. And today we also commemorate Holy Fathers of the first six Ecumenical Councils. The Gospel reading of this Sunday tells us about giving sight to the two blind men and healing of the man possessed by a mute demon. Another Gospel is the Pontifical Prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ at the Last Supper where He is praying to God the Father that His Disciples may have eternal life. And eternal life is to know the true God.

Holy Fathers of the Six Ecumenical Councils in the course of several centuries (from the 4th until the 7th century) were working on defining the true Christian faith, were spelling out what orthodoxy means and in what we must believe in order to be saved.

True faith, knowing the true God gives eternal life. It also makes people seeing spiritual truth. While in today's Gospel our Lord gave sight to the blind men who begged Him to have pity on them, acceptance and professing Christ gives all the people spiritual sight. Thanks to the Holy Fathers we may know how to use that sight and set it in a right direction.



True faith also makes people free from slavery to the evil one. While today's Gospel tells about freeing a man from a mute spirit, acquiring and learning true faith sets us free from evil and from any wrong spirit or error. "*You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free*" – says the Lord (Jn. 8, 32).

– archpriest Igor Tarasov (*from stgeorge.ruschurchusa.org*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 6:18-23

Brethren, having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human *terms* because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members *as* slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness *leading* to *more* lawlessness, so now present your members *as* slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 8:5-13

At that time, when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this *one*, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does *it*." When Jesus heard *it*, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Amen, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, *so* let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Blessed be God, who opened the gates for Adam's repentance, who prepared healing medicine for the sick, who appointed the gift of the resurrection for those lying sick, who revealed to the human race the one truly to blame for sin, who exposed to all the enemy of the true image of God. No longer is Eve restrained by

the enemy's fetters; no longer does she contemplate the gloom of her deceit since she is able to observe the enemy in the light; as in the day, she knew the robber's treachery and to him she directs the covenant of the renunciation.

I renounce you, Satan, and your pomp and your service and your angels and all your works. No longer do I serve your purposes, nor do I open to you the doors of my own desire. I have experience of this and I reject your bait. *I renounce you, Satan.* Slanderer, depart from my presence. Enemy, keep your plotting away from me. No longer do you trap me by your temptation, no longer do I follow your words towards blasphemy. You do not lead my eyes astray to pleasure, I do not give you my hands for evil work, I do not set my feet towards mischief, I do not appoint my limbs for evil works; I cast aside the veil of your falseness. You taught me to believe in the gods who have no being, so that I forsake the true one; you invented lustful pleasures for me, so that you might seduce the mind by wantonness; you proclaimed the adulteries of the gods, so that you might kindle in me the fire of lust; you painted the forms of idols for me, so that you might adorn the sickness of my delusion; you concocted for me delight in theaters, so that you might display an outrage to marriage, that you might excite my nature into a frenzy for pleasure; the inventiveness of your evil with wild beasts to introduce to the spectacle the sickness of savagery; you added the snare of horse[race]s, so that from every side you might dissipate life by harmful things. Being a wise man, I renounce all the rest of your evil things. *I renounce you.* He dispossessed you of your own body; I am not your shadowy cave, I do not guard in me the instruments of your evil, I do not become for you a minister of one's own perdition, I do not serve you by adultery, I do not serve you by envy, I do not serve you by drunkenness, I do not attend upon you by thieving.

Deception you may order, I am not taken in. Fornication, I reject. You may prescribe a [magic] charm for health, I will not receive it. I despise your pretended kindness as a trap. You do not heal like a physician, but as an enemy you bring to an untimely birth; you do not bring about health out of compassion for me, but being evil you teach apostasy. This is the reason for our deliverance from the destroyer. You declared these things by words, you will demonstrate them by deeds; by what you do, you will confirm the confession. You said, *I renounce you, Satan.* You shall not be offered up for destruction by the slanderer. You may not return from whence you fled; you left once and for all, keep away.

Settle far from the enemy, keep your soul away from the tyrant's weapons. As one who is well disposed, go straight to the Lord; here is the Father extending his arms, here is the Savior holding out both hands. Go to the Savior, save yourself from the enemy; say only, *I attach myself to you, O Christ.*

As one in his right mind, acknowledge the Lord; as one who is well-disposed, return to your benefactor. From the battle, cleave to the king; from the rough see, approach the safe harbor; from hard labor, receive respite; say, *I attach myself to you, O Christ.* I understood that he escaped my notice for a while, the dawn was shining its light on me and I knew I could not see.

As a blind man, I recovered my sight by knowledge, the mist of error has been dispelled, the cloud of deceit has been scattered; no longer do I avert my eye from the radiant light. I know the Creator and I worship him who called me. I hold onto him who approaches me out of his compassion, I hold onto him who comes to me out of pity and by his will. Being humble, I cease to reject greater things; I found the Incorporeal One by whom I am able to conquer; I found the Immortal One by whom I am able to understand.

I believe in the one and only true God. Faith leads me to the Creator. Faith makes me ascend to the Infinite One. Faith presents to me him who is unseen. Faith depicts for me the Ineffable One. Faith traces for me him who is without limit. Faith is a doorkeeper of the divine things, established for those in need; it opens up the entrance to ineffable things; it places those who wish at the royal treasury. I do not need the racecourse for understanding; I do not need physical work for discovery, nor by my bodily limbs do I attain the spiritual: it is the victory of the mind. I will believe, I do so already; I will yearn, I have already drawn near; I shall desire, I have already been enlightened.

I believe in the one and only true God, whom creation acknowledges by its works, whom heaven declares by its wonders, whom earth demonstrates to me by its nature, to whom the sea truthfully bears witness. *I believe in the one and only true God.* He over whom the liar, or cheat, has not cast his shadow, who is manifestly the only One in truth, who is acknowledged above all creation, who by his nature is immortal, just as he is immutable. He who exists in the beginning before every origin and temporal thought, who has power corresponding to his will, who established heaven on high, who has set the earth upon the waters, who with the sea ordained the desert's limit, who revealed the air's nature, who by his command placed a light to make everything visible, who determined the sun's course and the moon's orbit, who caused the placing of the stars and the regulating of the multi-colored firmament, who covered the upper regions in waters, who has brought forth fruits from the earth, who ordered all things to be by his Word: *I believe in the one and only true God, Creator of all things.*

I know God who is revealed in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. I know God who is conceived as undivided in Trinity; I know God declared single by nature. I know God proclaimed in Three Persons by his attributes; I know God

worshiped as one in essence. I know the Father; the Father eternally, the Father indescribably, the Father ineffably, whom time did not make, nor a progression increase. For the immaterial does not imitate the material, the bodiless does not proceed by bodies, nor does the perfect submit to progression. So, he is God and Father, self-sufficient and begetter, impassible and eternal.

I know the Son who is consubstantial with the Father, the only Son, the Son legitimately, the Son inseparably. I know the Son as Word, united to the Father, indivisible in nature, inseparable in their relationship. As God, eternally with God; as from God, like an offspring. As one begotten, making known the image of the begetter. As Word he is impassable, bodiless and undivided, beyond time and measure, co-eternal radiance. God in the form of God, hypostasized image of God, eternal Wisdom, immutable power. I do not separate the begotten from the offspring. I do not divide those which are indivisible with a lie, nor do I introduce earthly shortcomings to the divine. I do not make up any old or new thing, or invent fables big or small. I do not apply the equality of the body to those who are bodiless. I do not contain the infinite ineffable one in time and season, nor do I underestimate the greatness of the most divine economy for kindness.

I know power and I know weakness; I know what applies to him and what applies to me. I know the Son to be both God and man: as one who was from above from the Father, but as one from a mother he was born according to the flesh. I present faith offerings to both natures, but I lift up my voice to only one Person. I call the Son 'bodiless' before the dispensation, the very same I call 'Son' after the incarnation with a body. I apply the abasements to a human being, the exaltations I consider to be by God. Just as he declared, so I say, 'I and the Father are one'; I say, 'My Father is greater than I,' just as I have been taught. Should I see some small saying concerning him, I am not confused; if I see a greater text about him, this I believe. I have proof of his flesh and his divinity: whenever I look upon this mystical table, I call to mind the image of his flesh; whenever I neglect the transformation of the world, I consider the power of his divinity.

I cleave to the bridegroom and praise God for his deeds, I embrace the Lamb and proclaim the Creator for his wonderful works. I receive Matthew's teaching concerning him: 'An account of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, Son of David, Son of Abraham.' I receive John's theology about him: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.' I know that he from whom life comes is the truth, I confess the distinction of the natures, but proclaim the unity of the Person. As an apostle of Paul, I offer you this teaching: 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.'

He is before all ages, he is in the latter days; the same is from the Father and from a mother, yet again he is fatherless and motherless. I do not contradict the former by the latter, but confirm its truth by his works: as one from the Father he is God, as one from a mother he is man. Therefore he is not Fatherless in recent times, nor motherless from before the ages; 'yesterday and today' he is man; 'for ever' he is eternal; 'the same' is proclaimed a Person in unity. Since the Son is one and the Father is one, the one Son is acknowledged in his divinity and in his humanity; the one Son is impossible in his divinity and possible in his humanity.

I know the Holy Spirit proceeding ineffably from the Father. I know the Spirit proclaimed as a unity by the Savior, 'a Spirit of power and might,' a creative Spirit, a life-giving Spirit, an Ad-vocate. This Spirit sanctifies the righteous, inspires prophets, sends out apostles, creates tongues, perfects the uninitiated, restores the weak, raises up those who are brought down, restores those who have perished, reforms those who have grown old, seals those of the household, anoints the unwashed, cleanses those who have been defiled, has raised the dead.

These words of the confession have been thoroughly taught to you. Complete for yourself the adoptive birth by the Trinity, have faith also in the birth pangs, stand firm at the birth. You are imperfect in knowledge; become wise by baptism. You have heard, 'Go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.' Knowing this confession wipes out the record of the debt; for the same, the liberating creed, is your written contract. If you changed even the smallest word, you denuded the whole gift of itself.

You said, 'I believe'; the inexpressible things are not for inquisitive investigation, nor is an inquiry to doubt the Lord; confess the One who fashioned creation, return from slavery to freedom. Lay aside the garment of mortality, be naked as one who is from captivity, as one who mourns the former things, be made to shine; silently make known your shame, assent to having been judged for the world, stretching your hands out to heaven, as a fugitive plead for mercy. The sign of these things is shown by you. You let yourself appear naked, as if fleeing from an enemy; as if your clothes had been snatched away by your enemies. Your foot gives evidence of your need by its nakedness when, grief-struck, you tread upon a cloth of hair.

As one in need, you raise your hands towards heaven, so that you might know in what sorry state the King of all receives you; how in your nakedness, he enriches you by his grace; by chrism, he imparts to you the fragrance of goodness; by oil, he makes you shine radiantly. You set aside mortality by the burial in the pool and a new man is raised up for life by the Spirit. Your body is transformed by bright garments; the lamps held in your hands indicate the illumination of your souls and

David greets you with the victory hymn: 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sins are covered.'

As one who is well-disposed, remain considerate towards those who have sinned. Confess your debt before the judge. Lay before God the knowledge of your offenses. Reject the works of evil by which you are tempted. Banish the disobedience which caused you to suffer. Be like a newly born infant as far as virtue is concerned. You should not surround yourself by the sickness of disobedience, nor cultivate in yourself a pleasure-seeking nature. Do not receive the deceitful counselor, for you may not pursue the enemy from whom you have fled.

You said, 'Our Father who is in heaven!' Being a son, you were trusted with great things, you have been honored before your birth, and reconciled before being born. Your toil did not lead you to healing, nor does the sweat of your brow bring you grace. You were cured by these words, by your honest acknowledgement you have been cleansed. You said, 'I renounce you, Satan,' and immediately you received as a scepter the symbol of faith. You said, 'I believe in the one and only true God' and you have been received by him in whom you believed. You said, 'I believe in the Father, creator of all things' and you have been made worthy by this confession to call him truly Father and Lord, having been adopted by his grace. You said, 'I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God,' and you received the signs of brotherly love for him. You said, 'I believe in the Holy Spirit,' and you entered into this sanctifying fellowship.

As one who is blameless, you have been made righteous; as one who only recently was in debt, you have become rich; as one who was in chains, you have been freed; as one who was condemned, you have been honored; as one who was dirty, you have been made to shine. No one concerns themselves with your former ways, no one inquires about your life. If you were a tax collector, no one said to you, 'you may not come in'; if a prostitute, 'keep away'; if a robber, 'go away!' The creator receives nothing by your honor of those who oppose him. Therefore, I say, 'come all who are burdened and heavy laden.' He himself bid the lame to come to the wedding and ordered the calling of the blind to the dance. I called as I was commanded; not one of your lives did I investigate, I sought only your mind's desire.

Love one another as you were loved. Run towards God whom you see; being near to the light, shine out; open your eyes to the sunlight. Be rich in his kingdom; radiate your joy in the bride-chamber. Whatever you were, consign it to oblivion; whatever you are, keep it in your memory. You may not take up again that which you put aside; and do not put aside that which you receive. The fornicator

becomes respectable; the chaste keep hold of purity; the rude become benevolent; the compassionate increase in kindness.

Christ is near distributing to you the gifts of heavenly things: a participation in immortality, the enjoyment of adoption, possession of the kingdom, the splendors of the heavenly banquet, the blessing of the immutable host, a share in everlasting joy, the likeness of the Seraphim, the proximity of the Cherubim, the illumination of divine benevolence. As one who is well-disposed, receive the grace which will be measured out according to your desire; become immortal by your own free will, become a true son for righteousness, become an eternal king, become an unsullied bridegroom, be radiant without stain. 'Stand firm in the Lord in this way'; 'be mature, be strong. All things shall come to you in love.' 'Be king to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another as Christ has forgiven you.' To him be glory forever. Amen.

— St. Proclus, Archbishop of Constantinople

Apostle Aquila of the Seventy

Saint Aquila, Apostle of the 70: It is possible that he was a disciple of the Apostle Paul, a native of Pontus and a Jew, living in the city of Rome with his wife Priscilla (they are commemorated on February 13 on the Greek Calendar). During the reign of the emperor Claudius (41-54) all the Jews were banished from Rome, so Saint Aquilla and his wife were compelled to leave. They settled in Corinth. A short while later, the holy Apostle Paul arrived there from Athens preaching the Gospel. Having made the acquaintance of Aquila, he began to live at his house and labored together with him, making tents.



Having received Baptism from the Apostle Paul, Aquila and Priscilla became his devoted and zealous disciples. They accompanied the apostle to Ephesus. The Apostle Paul instructed them to continue the preaching of the Gospel at Ephesus, and he himself went to Jerusalem, in order to be present for the feast of Pentecost. At Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla heard the bold preaching of a newcomer from Alexandria, the Jew Apollos. He had been instructed in the fundamentals of the Faith, but knew only the baptism of John the Forerunner. They called him over and explained more precisely about the way of the Lord. After the death of the emperor Claudius, Jews were permitted to return to Italy, and Aquila and

Priscilla then returned to Rome. The Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans recalls his faithful disciples, “Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my coworkers in Christ Jesus, who put forth their heads for my soul, whom I do not alone thank, but also all the Church of the Gentiles and the church of their household” (Rom. 16: 3-4). Saint Aquila did not long dwell in Rome: the Apostle Paul made him a bishop in Asia. Saint Aquila zealously labored at preaching the Gospel in Asia, Achaia and Heraklia. He converted pagans to Christ, he confirmed newly-converted Christians in the faith, he established presbyters and destroyed idols. Saint Priscilla constantly assisted him in the apostolic work. Saint Aquila ended his life a martyr: pagans murdered him. According to the Tradition of the Church, Saint Priscilla was killed together with him. (*from oca.org*)

Farewell

A couple weeks ago, we bid adieu to both the Sticht (for the second time) and McNeil families. We'll miss you!



Social Team for July 21

Team 5 is up next week – Maher, Osborne, Vallandingham. Thank you!

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In Your Prayers – Please Remember... His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Eminence Metropolitan GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul Yazigi of Aleppo, Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim of Aleppo, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri and Mt. Kenya, Fr. John & Pani Betty Jean Baranik, Presbytera Katie Baker and family, Dn. Steve Hall, Santiago Alzugaray, Jeffrey Carey, Tatyana and Slava Chumak & family, Xenia Chilkowich, Jon Church, Ramius Connour, Curtis Cooper, Luke Cooper, Tina Crull, Mary Diane David, Ron Dominiecki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, John Homick, Cameron Houk, Helen Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Tucker Karl and family, Robert & Pam Karpin, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Brian, Helen, and Luke Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, Dn. Henry Middleton, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & Family, Henry & Lisa Osborne, Westin Perry & Parents, John Reece, Mary Reed, Chris & Kaitlin Rixey, Jerry Von Ronne, Anne Rosario, James, Theodore and Christina Ristas, Samson Family, Sharon Sheptak, Alexander Shostko, Bernie Takabayashi & family, Dawn & Faith Ulmschneider, Lydia Vita, Christine, Marshall, Nathaniel, Subdcn. Nectarios and Ia, the Syrian Christians displaced by war, Mother Virginia Marie and the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)