

# SOBORNOST

## St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

(301) 638-5035 Church  
4419 Leonardtown Road  
Waldorf, MD 20601

Rev. Father Joseph Edgington, Pastor  
(703) 532-8017

[fredgington@gmail.com](mailto:fredgington@gmail.com)

[www.apostlethomas.org](http://www.apostlethomas.org)

*American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese*

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE  
OF CONSTANTINOPLE

## SERVICES

**Wednesday: Lay Vespers 6:30 PM**

**Saturday: Vespers 5 PM**

**Sunday: Matins 8:45 AM**

**Sunday School 9:30 AM**

**Divine Liturgy 10 AM**

**July 16, 2023 – 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost**

## Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils

By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos

[For homilies on the first five Ecumenical Councils, see the archived bulletins beginning May 28, 2023. - Ed.] When one reads Church history, beloved brethren, one realizes that there are living spiritual organisms, that is, members of the Church, as were the great Fathers, who lived the mystery of theosis, which means that they participated in various stages of the uncreated purifying, illuminating and divinizing energies of God. At the same time there were other contemplative theologians who tried to theologize in a philosophical way. This created a big problem for the Church.

Also, what one sees is that, unfortunately, politics enters the Church in different ways, which is why some emperors tried to reconcile things, to find some way with a few phrases to unite the Orthodox with the heretics. This was what we might call ecclesiastical and theological diplomacy.

After the Fifth Ecumenical Synod, at which Monophysitism was condemned, that is, the Christians who did not accept the decisions of the Third and Fourth Ecumenical Synods and formed their own communities, the emperors of the Roman Empire sought ways to unite all the Christians, with the purpose of cutting



off the Arabic onslaught. That is, the emperors believed that if they reconciled with the Monophysites of Egypt and Syria, they would defend themselves against the Muslim Arabs, instead of surrendering without battle because of the differences in their faith with the Orthodox.

Thus, at first, Emperor Heraclius wanted to reconcile things and consulted with the Patriarch of Constantinople Sergius, who argued that in Christ there are two natures, which are united "inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably" in one person, as was decided at the Fourth Ecumenical Synod, but he added that Christ had one will and energy. Then, in 638, Emperor Heraclius issued a decree, called the "Ekthesis", which imposed this teaching, that in Christ there is one energy, one will, and at the same time forbade any discussion on this issue.

The Patriarch of Jerusalem, Saint Sophronios, then reacted to this heretical teaching, and then Saint Maximus the Confessor. The Orthodox teaching on this subject is that every nature has both its own energy and its own will, therefore it cannot be argued that while there are two natures in Christ, nevertheless there is one will. This means that the will is an appetite of nature and not of the hypostasis-person. Thus, the Church spoke of a natural will and not of a hypostatic will. Of course, the will is expressed through the person, but it is natural and not hypostatic.

Emperor Constans, in order to stop the reactions, issued another decree, in 648, which was called the "Typos" by which he forbade talking about one or two wills in Christ, and thus canceled the "Ekthesis" of Heraclius, where he imposed one will and forbade any discussion on this issue. However, this theological problem could not be limited to diplomacy and silence.

That is why the Sixth Ecumenical Synod was convened by Emperor Constantine the Bearded in Constantinople in the year 680-681, which was presided over by Patriarch George of Constantinople and present were representatives of the Pope of Rome. This Synod condemned Monoenergism, that says in Christ there is one energy, and Monothelitism, that says in Christ there is one will. Thus, according to the Orthodox teaching, in Christ as there are two natures united in one person, there are two energies and two wills, divine and human, which do not oppose each other, since they act in the same person, but the human will follows and submits to the divine and almighty will.

This teaching is a consequence of the experience of the Apostles and the Fathers, who know that Christ is the God-man, who has two natures and consequently has two energies and wills. His human energy is created, because human nature is created, and His divine energy is uncreated, because the divine nature is uncreated. Thus, in Christ the created was united with the uncreated, but one is the person of Christ.

This will be analyzed even more later by Saint Gregory Palamas and the Hesychast Fathers, who confessed from their experience that people participate in the uncreated energy of God and not His nature.

This fact shows that theological issues are the fruit of spiritual experience and cannot be trapped in diplomacy and politics. The Fathers of the Church, as Saint Maximus the Confessor did in this matter, fought to the death, with imprisonment and abuse, in order not to accept the entry of diplomacy into the Church and into Orthodox theology. We owe them much and thank them for their teaching, their work, and their sacrifices. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

### **Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 13:7-16 EOB**

Brethren, remember your leaders, those men who proclaimed the word of God to you. Considering the results of their conduct, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried away by all sorts of strange teachings. It is good that the inner person should be strengthened by grace, not by food which is of no profit to those who are so preoccupied by it! We have an altar from which those who offer divine service [in] the holy tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals (whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin,) are burned outside of the camp. This is why Jesus suffered outside of the gate, so that he might sanctify the people through his own blood. Let us therefore go out [of the city] to him who is outside of the camp and let us bear his disgrace. For we do not have here [below] an enduring city, but we seek the one that is to come. Through him, [Jesus], let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, g the fruit of our lips which confessed his Name. But do not forget to do what is good and to share because God is well pleased with such sacrifices.

### **Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint John 17:1-13 EOB**

**At that time,** Jesus, lifting up his eyes to heaven, said, "Father, the time has come! Glorify your Son, so that your Son may also glorify you. Even as you gave him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. This is eternal life: that they should know you, the only true God, and him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ. I have glorified you on the earth! I have accomplished the work which you have given me to do! Now, Father, glorify me with yourself with the glory I had with you before the world existed. I have revealed your Name to the people whom you have given me out of the world. They were yours, and you have given them to me; they have kept your word. Now, they have known that all things you have given me are from you. The words you have given me, I have given to them. They have received them and they have known for certain 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. All things that are mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. I am no longer in the world, but these are [still] in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them through your Name which you have given me, so that they may be one, even as we are [one]. While I was with them in the world, I protected d them in your Name. Those whom you have given me I have kept. None of them is lost, except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to you, and I say these things in the world, so that they may have my joy made full in themselves. ”

## **Homilies on the Divine Liturgy: The Antiphons**

By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasiou

We will continue today with some comments on the Divine Liturgy, which is the greatest good that God has given us, because in it we can feel His love, pray to Him, partake of the Body and Blood of Christ and we taste of Paradise. Because by participating in the Divine Liturgy and by trying to concentrate our mind and live out everything that happens in it, we are in a certain sense preparing to participate in the great festival of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Today we will take a look at the two antiphons which we sing at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, and the trisagion hymn that we sing after the Small Entrance. In the Divine Liturgy we pray in many ways, such as with chanting, since there are many hymns chanted by the chanters and the priests; with the prayers that the priest recites secretly and in a low voice at the Sacred Bema; and with the melodic reading which is used in the readings, both for the Apostolic and the Gospel readings.

Antiphons are what we call certain small hymns, which are sung antiphonally, that is, alternately by the chanters. The two antiphons are: "Through the prayers of the Birth-giver of God, O Savior, save us." "O Son of God, risen from the dead, save us who sing to you: Alleluia." These are followed by the "apolytikion" (troparion or dismissal hymn) of the day with which the Small Entrance takes place, the entrance with the Gospel.

The central message of the antiphons is that our true Savior is Christ, who became man, was crucified and resurrected to overcome death, sin and the devil. No other human being can save us except Christ. And of course, we feel the need to entreat Christ and ask for the intercessions of the Saints and the Theotokos, precisely because they were united with Christ and constitute the true Church and because in this way we will learn what the Saints did to be saved. This is how the Saints will teach us how we too can be united with Christ.

After the second antiphon, a wonderful hymn of the 6th century is sung, which begins with the phrase "O Only-begotten Son and Word of God ...," and is a wonderful summary of our entire faith. We can learn it and chant it often, because in this troparion one can find triadology, the mystery of the divine economy and soteriology.

The Trisagion hymn, chanted after the Small Entrance, is the well-known "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us," and is one of the best pieces of our divine worship. This hymn consists of the hymn of the angels (the Holy, Holy, Holy Lord Sabaoth) and (in the hierarchal Divine Liturgy) various Psalms of David which refer to the greatness and glory of God.

The central message of this hymn is twofold. The first is the glory and majesty of God. That is, God is holy, mighty, immortal. The second is that we are human, sinful, weak and mortal. That is why we ask this God for His mercy and compassion. We are like beggars of God and ask for mercy and forgiveness. Who can feel justified and sinless? We are all sinners and hope in God's love and mercy.

These short hymns, namely "Through the prayers of the Birth-giver of God, O Savior, save us." "O Son of God, risen from the dead, save us who sing to you: Alleluia", "O Only-begotten Son and Word of God ..." and "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us", we should chant daily. Living in this spirit, that is how our life will change. (*adapted from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

## A Word From the Holy Fathers

Believing in God is different from believing god. To believe God is to regard His promises to us as sure and true, but to believe in Him is to have a right understanding of Him. Both are necessary for us and we must speak correctly in both respects, in such a way that people with correct understanding can be confident that we are faithful before the God to Whom our faith is directed and that, being faithful, we shall be justified by Him. "Abraham believed God", it says, "and it was counted unto Him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:3, Gen. 15:6, cf. Gal. 3:6, Jas. 2:23). Why was Abraham counted as righteous because he believed? He had received a promise from God that in his seed, that is, in Isaac, all the tribes of Israel would be blessed (Gen. 17:16; cf. 26:3-5, 24). Then he was commanded by God to sacrifice Isaac (Gen. 22:1), through whom alone the promise could be fulfilled (Gen. 17:21; 21:12), while he was still a child. "Without contradicting he, the father, was hastening on his way to become his son's murderer while at the same time regarding the promise concerning his son as infallibly sure (Gen. 22:1-18).

Do you see what sort of faith brings justification? But Christ also promised us that we would inherit eternal life, pleasure, glory and the kingdom, while then He commanded us to be poor, to fast, to live in lowliness and affliction, to be ready to die and to crucify ourselves together with our passions and desires (cf. Gal. 5:24). If therefore we eagerly do these things while at the same time believing God's promise to us, then we shall have really believed God in the way Abraham did, and it will be counted to us as righteousness.

Notice the consequence of these events. The fact that Abraham agreed to offer Isaac for slaughter was not just powerful evidence and proof of his faith. Because of it Christ, through Whom all the tribes of the earth were blessed and the promise was fulfilled (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; cf. 26:4-5), was born of Abraham's seed (Matt. 1:1-16). It was as if God was under an obligation to the man who gave his only-begotten true son for His sake, to give him in return His only-begotten True Son for his sake and the sake of the promise made to him. It is exactly the same in our case. If because of God's commandments we are chaste, righteous, humble, patiently submit to every kind of evil-doing and share out our possessions, if we submit our bodies to hardship through fasts and vigils, if, in a word, we crucify ourselves together with our passions and desires (cf. Gal. 5:24), this is not just proof that we truly believe Christ's promises, but it also, as it were, obliges God to give us in return eternal and incorruptible life and pleasure, glory and the kingdom.

Christ looked at His disciples and said, "Blessed are the poor: for yours is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are the merciful. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake" (Matt. 5:3-4, 7, 10). But "woe to those who are rich. Woe to those who laugh. Woe to those who are full. Woe to you when all men shall speak well of you" (Luke 6:24-26). How, I ask you, is it credible that someone believes God if he does not aspire to what the Lord pronounces blessed but to what He pronounces wretched? "Show me", it says, "your faith by your works" (Jas. 2:18). And, "Who is a wise man? let him show out of good conduct his works" (Jas. 3:13).

The fact that we truly believe God, that we understand that His promises and warnings to us are true and sure, even though they have not happened yet, is shown by our good works and by our keeping of His commandments. But what proof is there that we have a right belief in God, that we have a trustworthy and devout understanding of Him? It is that we confess the same faith as our God-bearing Fathers. Sincerely believing God provokes opposition not only from the physical passions and the evil one's snares, but also from people in the grip of passions who lure others and drag them down with themselves into wicked pleasures. In the same way, having a right belief in the one true God provokes opposition not only from ignorance and the enemy's promptings, but also from godless men who

treacherously pull believers down into the depths of their own destruction. In both aspects of faith our greatest help comes not just from God Himself and our God-given faculty of knowledge, but from the good angels and from God-fearing people who live according to His will.

This is why the Church of Christ, the spiritual Mother and Nurse of us all, clearly and publicly celebrates today those who were illustrious in their piety and virtue, their holy Councils and the godly doctrines these Councils proclaimed. At the same time the Church briefly denounces the supporters of ungodliness and their evil pursuits and purposes, so that we can turn away from them, follow those whose understanding accords with God's intention, and believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, from Whom and through Whom and in Whom all things were made; Who is before all things and over all things and in all things and beyond all things, Unity in Trinity, Trinity in Unity, united without confusion, undividedly divided, Almighty Unity and Almighty Trinity.

The Father is timeless, without beginning and pre-eternal. He is the sole cause and root of the divinity beheld in the Son and the Holy Spirit; not the sole Creator, but the sole Father of the only Son and the sole producer of the one Holy Spirit. He is forever, He is the Father forever, and He is the sole Father and the sole Producer forever.

His one Son is co-eternal with Him. Like Him, the Son is without beginning in time, but inasmuch as He has the Father as begetter, root, source and origin, He is not without beginning [source]. Before all ages He alone was begotten of Him without a body, without passion or change, and was not divided from Him. Being God from God, He is not one thing as God and another as Son. He is forever, He is the Son forever and He is with the Father forever without confusion. He is the living Word, the true light, the enhypostatic Wisdom, cause and origin of all created things, for by Him all things were made. When the fullness of the ages had come (cf. Gal. 4:4), as the prophets foretold, He emptied Himself, took our human form for our sake, was conceived by the ever-virgin Mary through the gracious will of the Father and the co-operation of the Holy Spirit, and was conceived and was born. He was truly made man and became like us in everything apart from sin (cf. Heb. 4:15), while remaining true God in one person even after His incarnation. He acted as God in all divine matters, as man in all human matters, subjecting Himself to such human passions as are blameless. Although as God He was and remained above suffering and immortal, as man He chose to suffer in the flesh for our sake, to be crucified, to die and to be buried. He rose again on the third day and by His death and resurrection He destroyed him that had the power of death. After the resurrection He showed Himself, ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father, sharing the same honor and throne with Him, thereby

making our nature equal with God. He will come once more in glory with this same human substance to judge the living and the dead brought back to life by the power of His coming, and He will repay each one according to his works. Knowing that what He assumed from us is both visible and circumscribed, we devoutly portray and reverence the Virgin who gave Him birth and those who have been perfectly pleasing to Him. We honor and reverence the symbols of His sufferings, especially the Cross, as divine trophies of victory over our common enemy. Day by day we commemorate Him as He commanded, consecrate the Holy Gifts and partake of them. First of all, in accordance with His commandment we are baptized and baptize others into the one honorable, adored name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

From the eternal Father Who is without beginning the Holy Spirit also proceeds. As timeless He is together with the Father and the Son without beginning, but He is not without beginning, inasmuch as He has the Father as root, origin and cause, from Whom He proceeded before all ages, without passion or change. He was not divided from the Father or the Son when He came from the Father and rested in the Son, for He was united with Them without confusion and indivisibly distinct. Being also God from God, He is not one thing as God and another as Comforter, inasmuch as He is the hypostatic existence of the Holy Spirit. He has His existence from the Father and is sent through the Son, as the first fruits of eternal life and the earnest of the everlasting good things to come. He too is the cause of all created things, for in Him all things were made. He does not differ from the Father and the Son except that He is neither unbegotten nor begotten. He was sent by the Son to His disciples, that is to say, He was made known to them by the Son, for this is the only sense in which He could be sent Who is everywhere present and does not leave the Sender. He is sent by the Father as well as the Son, and also comes on His own behalf, for sending, that is to say revelation, is the common work of the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

He is not revealed, however, in His essence, for nobody has ever seen or declared God's nature, but in the grace, power and energy common to the Father, Son and Spirit. Each has His own hypostasis, and the characteristics seen to belong to that hypostasis. They have in common not only Their undisclosed essence, which is above all names and in which we cannot share, but also the grace, power, energy, radiance, incorruption, kingdom, and everything else by which God has communion with the holy angels and with men. He is united with them through grace without losing His unity and simplicity either by the division and difference between the hypostases, or the diversity and variety of the divine powers and energies. So we believe in one God, in one tri-hypostatic and all-powerful Godhead, we celebrate those who have pleased God with such a faith, and we



reject those who, instead of holding this faith, either started their own heresies or followed others who started them. You should be aware, brethren, that evil passions and godless doctrines open the door to one another, finding their place once God has had reason to depart.

The Great Paul teaches us that ungodliness makes room for a dense swarm of sins when he writes of the Greeks, “As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge” (Rom. 1:28), “but when they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor honored him” (cf. Rom. 1:21), “God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, covetousness and the like” (Rom. 1:28). The fact that sin opens the door to ungodliness is proved by the many wretched people who suffered in the way. When Solomon had surrendered himself to physical pleasures he slid into idolatry (2 Kgs. 11:1-6). Once Jeroboam had been utterly overcome by love of power he sacrificed to the golden calves (2 Kgs. 10:29, cf. 2 Chr. 13:8). And Judas the traitor, sick with love of money, sank to murdering God (Matt. 26:15).

Faith without works is dead and chaotic, and works without faith are empty and useless. Today, in this noble season of fasting and virtuous effort, the grace of the Holy Spirit has combined the celebration of those who taught the word of our faith correctly with the denunciation of those who chose to do otherwise. This is so that we, eagerly pursuing both faith and works together, may show our faith by our works and carry off the prize for our labors through faith.

Evil passions and godlessness not only open the door to one another, they are also similar. I should like to say a little to your charity about the non-Orthodox believers who have appeared in our day. Adam was given authority by God to eat from every tree in paradise but he was not satisfied with them all. Once he had been convinced by the counsel of the serpent, the originator of evil, he ate from that one tree which he had been commanded not to touch. In the same way God sets before us all His riches and truly beneficial gifts to share if we wish, in accordance with the words, “The person who has been deified by grace will be in every respect as God is, except for His very essence.” There are, however, people who teach that we can also share in God’s supraessential essence and proclaim that this essence can be authoritatively named. They imitate the serpent, the originator of evil, by misinterpreting and distorting the words of the saints just as he did to the words of God. But we have received power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. Without difficulty we can crush all the tricks and snares he devises against piety and the devout way of life. And when we have openly gained the victory over him in every respect we shall attain to heavenly and incorruptible crowns of righteousness in Christ Himself, to the impartial Judge

Who gives to each his due, to Whom belong all glory, honor and worship, with His Father without beginning and the all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

– St. Gregory Palamas, *Homily 8*

## **Homily on the Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Synod**

By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasiou

*“You are the light of the world” (Mat. 5:14)*

The God-man Christ called His disciples, "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). This characterization has a real meaning and not a moral one. This means that the disciples are the "light of the world", not simply because they have some external works, but because they are connected to Christ Who is the true "Light of the world" (John 8:12).

The Fathers of the Church interpret that the "light of the world" are those people who, having surpassed all the senses of the world, reached with an illuminated nous the supersenses, were united with Christ and then "utter" from their pure hearts good words in the midst of the Church. They became spiritual, having previously cleansed the flesh with fasting and vigilance, with tears they refined the fatness of the heart, with laborious toils they put to death their members, with prayer and study they filled the nous with light, with the renunciation of material goods they separated the souls from the effort of the body. Such were all the Saints and especially the Holy Fathers.

It must be emphasized that the Orthodox Church is patristic, not because it once had its God-bearing Fathers, who preserved the true faith from the danger of heresies, but because there are always Fathers. The Orthodox Church was, is and will be Patristic, because it is the real Body of Christ and within it is the Holy Spirit. In order to somehow understand this, we must examine what we mean by the term "Fathers".

In the Holy Bible, the name "Father" is used as a hypostatic idiom (mode of existence) of the Father to show His relationship with the other Persons of the Holy Trinity, insofar as the Father gave birth to the Son and Word of God before all ages and from the Father proceeds the All-Holy Spirit. The Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit created the world and man, but also recreated man. The Son and Word of God became human to give life to man. Man was dead and could not be revived by himself. Therefore, Christ in relation to His Father is called Son, in relation to people he is called Father, because He imparts life to people.

Also, all those who were reborn in Christ are called Fathers, because they received the Holy Spirit, who formed Christ in them, became dwelling places of the Holy Triune God and then passed on their experiences to their spiritual children, with the result that they were reborn. Such were the holy Apostles who became the "light of the world". The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4:15). He is aware of his fatherhood, that is why he says about his disciple Timothy: "He is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord" (1 Cor. 4:17).

And the holy Hierarchs, successors of the holy Apostles, are "the light of the world", they are called Fathers, because they were united with the Son of God by nature, they are also sons of the Heavenly Father by Grace. Thus, they regenerated their flock and acquired spiritual children. Let us not forget that the teaching of the Holy Fathers is not a dry scientific knowledge, but the true knowledge of God. Their life and their teaching are indeed the "light of the world", because they were united with the "Light of the world", Christ.

Also, every reborn person is a Father to those who approach them to receive their gentle teaching, which is the fruit of an Orthodox life. Of course, it is understood that this takes place within the sacramental life of the Orthodox Church.

However, it must be noted that spiritual fatherhood is closely connected with sonship. Christ is the Son of God, who obeyed His Father until death and is the Father of Christians. He, therefore, who is united with Christ and is by Grace the son of God, is at the same time also by Grace the father of others. This means that sonship is associated with discipleship and obedience, while fatherhood is associated with sacrifice and pain.

However, in order to be a real spiritual father, one must be a son of God at the same time. Only as a child of God can he acquire the Tradition and can then pass it on, not in mechanical and external ways, but mysteriously and become a father to other people. Everything, as is natural, begins with obedience to God and the contemporary holy Fathers. The disobedient ceases to be a disciple and a son. The obedient is regenerated and can regenerate others.

Of course, it is the teaching of the Holy Fathers that spiritual fatherhood within the Church does not mean the abolition of brotherhood in Christ. Christ, while He is the Father of men, nevertheless "is not ashamed to call them brothers" (Heb. 2:2). Thus, the spiritual father for his disciple is a father, but at the same time a brother in Christ. They are members of the Body of Christ.

Also, spiritual fatherhood is closely connected with motherhood. And here we have the example of Christ, who said: "How I have desired to gather your children, as a

hen gathers its own chicks under its wings..." (Matt. 23:37). As we also have the example of the Apostle Paul, who writes: "My children, I am giving thanks for the formation of Christ in you" (Gal. 4:19). This means that the spiritual father is more a mother than a father. He has affection and love in Christ, and in this climate of love in Christ, spiritual children grow and are perfected.

Therefore, the Saints are spiritual fathers, i.e. "the light of the world", because they regenerate us, they enliven us, they direct us with patience and affection towards deification, they illuminate us constantly since they became the abodes of the Three-sunned Deity. Let us have their blessing and let us place ourselves under their spiritual guidance in order to complete ourselves spiritually. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

### **Virgin Martyr Julia of Carthage**

The Virgin Martyr Julia was born in Carthage into a Christian family. While still a girl she was captured by the Persians. They carried her off to Syria and sold her into slavery. Fulfilling the Christian commandments, Saint Julia faithfully served her master. She preserved herself in purity, kept the fasts and prayed much to God. No amount of urging by her pagan master could turn her to idolatry.

Once the master set off with merchandise for Gaul and took Saint Julia with him. Along the way the ship stopped over at the island of Corsica, and the master decided to take part in a pagan festival, but Julia remained on the ship. The Corsicans plied the merchant and his companions with wine, and when they had fallen into a drunken sleep, they took Julia from the ship. Saint Julia was not afraid to acknowledge that she was a Christian, and the savage pagans crucified her.

An angel of the Lord reported the death of the holy martyr to the monks of a monastery, located on a nearby island. The monks took the body of the saint and buried it in a church in their monastery. In about the year 763 the relics of the holy Martyr Julia were transferred to a women's monastery in the city of Brescia (historians give conflicting years of the death of the saint: as either the fifth or seventh century). (*from oca.org*)

### **Holy Martyr Faustus**

*For Faustus the cross was salvation; to this he was affixed due to his faith.* He lived during the reign of Emperor Decius in the year 250. Apprehended for his faith in Christ, he confessed Christ with boldness. Therefore he was nailed to a cross and shot with arrows. For five days he was on the cross, then he delivered his holy soul into the hands of God, from whom he received the crown of the contest. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

## Martyr John of Tarnovo

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church honors the memory of Martyr John (Ioan) of Tarnovo. He was born in Osman Pazar (now Omurtag). For some time he was an apprentice in Tarnovo, then he became a bandit. He was captured and sentenced to death, accepted Islam and the name Mehmed. After 8 years, he repented and renounced Islam, for which he was hanged. *(from focus-news.net)*

## Also Commemorated Today

Hieromartyr [Athenogenes](#), bishop of Pidachthoe, and his 10 disciples (311)  
Hieromartyr [Athenogenes](#), priest in Pontus (196)  
St. [Helier](#) (Hilier) of Tongres & Jersey, hermit-martyr (6th c.)  
New Hieromartyrs Seraphim, Theognostus, and others of Alma-Ata (1921).  
St. Magdalena, schema-abbess of New Tikhvin Convent in Siberia (1934).  
New Confessor [Matrona](#) Belyakova, fool-for-Christ of Anemnyasevo (1936).  
New Hieromartyr [James](#) archbishop of Barnaul and with him Hieromartyrs [Peter](#) and [John](#) priests, Hieromartyr [Theodore](#) and Martyr John (1937).  
Hieromartyr [Ardalion](#) (1938).  
Martyrs [Paul](#) & 2 [sisters](#), Chionia (Thea) & Alevtina (Valentina), at Caesarea in Palestine (308).  
Martyr [Antiochus](#), physician of [Sebaste](#) (4th c.).  
Commemoration of the [Fourth Ecumenical Council](#) (451).  
1,015 [Martyrs](#) of Pisidia (Greek).  
Sts. [Anastasios](#) and Euxithios, bishops of Thessaloniki  
St. [Tenenan](#) (Tininor), bishop of Leon. (c. 635)  
Martyr [Domnio](#) of Bergamo (Italy)(c. 295)  
St. [Generosus](#), abbot of Saint-Jouin-de-Marnes in Poitou (c. 682)  
St. [Irmengard](#), abbess of Buchau and Chiemsee (866)  
Nun-martyrs [Reineldis](#) (Raineldis, Reinaldes), Gondolf, & Grimoald of Saintes (Belgium)(c. 680)  
Hieromartyr [Sisenandus](#), deacon in Cordoba (851)  
Sts. [Edburga](#) and Edith, nuns of Aylesbury (7<sup>th</sup> c.)  
Martyr [Valentine](#), bishop of Trier (c.305)  
St. [Vitalian](#), bishop of Osimo (Italy)(776)  
St. [Vitalian](#), bishop of Capua (8<sup>th</sup> c.)

## Social Team for July 23

Team 1 – Hanbury, P. Blaydoe, Chumak. Thank you!

### **Follow Our Diocese On-Line**

**Diocesan Website:** <http://www.acrod.org>

**Camp Nazareth:** <http://www.campnazareth.org>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese>

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/acrodnews>

**You Tube:** <https://youtube.com/acroddiocese>

***In Your Prayers – Please Remember...*** His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Eminence Metropolitan GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri & Mt. Kenya, Bennett family, Tatyana & Slava Chumak & family, Luke & Marlena Cooper, Roberta Corson, Jon Church, Tina Crull, Mary Diane David, Marlene Doukas, Linda A. Georgiev, Sandi Hebel, Howl family, Helen P. Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Helen, Brian, Luke and Mia Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & family, Nicholas Pavlik, Weston Perry & family, John Reece, Mary Reed, Marge Rusnak, Rose Song, Fr. Nectarios & Ia, Mother Virginia Marie & the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, the suffering people of Ukraine, and those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)