

SOBORNOST

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

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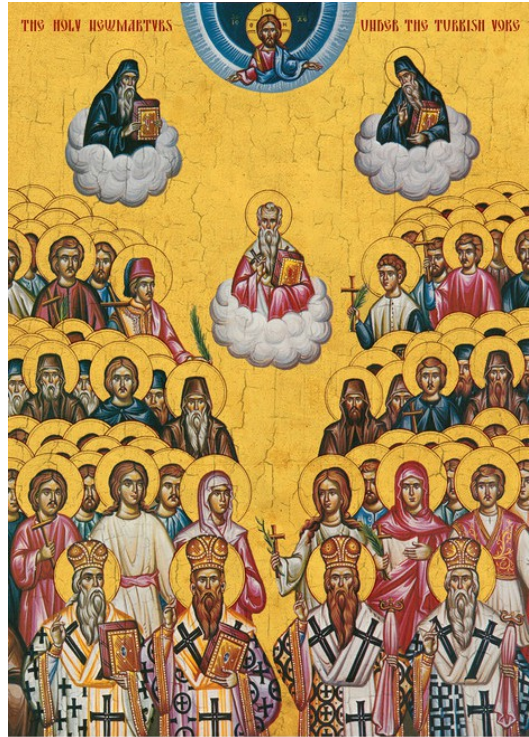
Wed: Reader Vespers 6:30 PM

Saturday: Vespers 5 PM

Sunday: Matins 8:45 AM

Divine Liturgy 10 AM

**July 14, 2024 – 3rd Sunday After Pentecost | New
Martyrs of the Turkish Yoke | Holy Fathers of the
First Six Ecumenical Councils**



On the third Sunday after Pentecost, the Orthodox Church commemorates those who were martyred by the Turks after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Among them are the Four Crypto-Christian Neomartyrs Emmanuel, Anezina, George and Maria of Kissamos.

The New Martyrs of the faith, Emmanuel, Anezina and their children George and Maria, were cryptochristians and had the following Turkish names: the father was called "Ibraim Ibni Abdullach" and his wife was "Fatme Ibni Abdullach", the daughter was called "Hatizie" and the son "Mustafa". Also the father, Emmanuel, was 40 years old, while his wife Anezina was 38, the son, George, was 18 and the daughter, Maria, was 16.

As Muslims, they lived in the village Melissourgio of Kissamos and worked peacefully out in their fields. One day a neighbor saw them cross themselves as they sat to eat and turned them in to the Turks. They were spied on again, where they were seen doing their cross before going to bed, and taken to court, which decided for them to be beheaded, because they did not deny any of that which they

were accused of. Instead they boldly said: “We were born Christians and we will die Christians.” It is worth mentioning that after they were told the court decision, they were presented before the court again and were told that if they returned to the religion of Islam they would live. Yet again they refused the offer and chose Christ.

They were sentenced to death by decapitation and their bodies were thrown outside of the fortress in Hania, to be eaten by wild animals and vultures.

The only record found about the New Martyrs from Melissourgio of Kissamos is the decision of the court, which is translated below.

The Decision of the Court

There has appeared before myself, the sacred judge of Hania, Ishmael Haki Hafiz Ali Oglou of Melissourgio, the following complaint:

Eight years ago there appeared before the sacred judge of Kissamos Ibraim Ibni Abdullach "Manolis of George", who stated that he was a Christian, and his wife Fatme Ibni Abdullach "Maria", with a wish to become Muslims along with their children, a female and a male, of their own will.

With the above decision they became Muslim in accordance with their desire according to the rule of Sacred Law, and the parents received their sacred names, and their children were named Mustafa and Hatizie, and the four lived as Muslims, being regarded by the faithful as true Muslims.

Their neighbor, Moura Aga, saw them a month ago in the village of Plakalona of Kissamos, in the afternoon as they sat to eat, and before they began they did the cross of Christians. After eating they and their children did their cross and were followed. He came immediately and told me to persuade me to follow them together with Galip, Bahrin and Hasan, and we saw them with our eyes, while they were preparing to sleep on the threshing floor, that all four did their cross.

I brought the above witnesses and the four Higianets in order to be punished as the Sacred Law dictates. There is no God but Allah!

I ordered for the three witnesses to appear with the four Higianet unbelievers shackled with 86 okas in the neck and waist, and having questioned the faithful before the accused they were asked to apologize. The parents were between the ages of 38-40 and the children between 16-18, and they replied: “We were born Christians and we will die Christians.”

I asked them if they had become Turks, and they replied that they did only in their body and not in their soul, and they did not mean to deny Christ and venerate the prophet of God Muhammad, who a few years ago before all they appeared to falsely venerate. They sinned by the phrase.

They received the decision of the Sacred Law, according to Decision No. 28 Fetfan of the glorious Moutfi Seiroullach efendi and the statements of the three faithful as well as the witness of the accused.

I condemn the four unbelievers Manolis of George age 40, George of Manolis age 18, Anezina of Constanti age 38, and Maria of Manoli age 16, to death by beheading, which will be conducted by the brave Corps of Jannisary of Hania above on the eastern side of the fortress Pehlivan within the week in the evening, and their stinking corpses are to be thrown outside the fortress in the dung heap (Hentek). Their property will go to Beitul Mal.

God knows the good - The Sacred Judge of Hania, Ishmael Haki

After the promulgation of the decision, and the accused having heard it, they were invited again before myself in shackles in order to repent and return to the religion of Islam, in order to save their present life and that of the future in heaven, and they replied again: "We were born Christians and we will die Christians."

Number 67 of the enforceable judgment.

27th of the Lunar month Tzemaziel Ahir 1092 of Egira.

To the Most-brave Commander of Hania, Hussein Agan Tsaousin of the Corps of Jannisary 8 in Hania.

The carrying out of the above indictment took place, and the stinking corpses were eaten by crows and dogs. (14 July 1861 - Christian chronology) (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

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The Church held councils to resolve issues when less formal dialogue failed to produce a consensus. Most councils were local, although in some cases their decrees gained wide acceptance (such as the Seven **Ecumenical Councils**). The first council of the Church was held by the Apostles in Jerusalem during the first century (refer to Acts 6:1-7).

The seven General Councils of the entire Christian Church are known as the Ecumenical Councils. They cover the period between 325-757 AD and their decisions are at the foundation of Christian doctrine accepted by both the Eastern and Western segments of the Christian Church. The decisions of these Ecumenical Councils were made under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as promised by Jesus Christ to His Apostles.

At these Ecumenical Councils many **Canons**, or laws governing the administration of the Church, were composed. A detailed listing of all of these Canons is available at the [Wheaton University](http://www.wheaton.edu/~libr/etext/etext.htm) website.

The Western Church accepts subsequent Councils as Ecumenical, that were convened and attended only by the authorities and delegates of the Roman Church. These Councils, the last of which is the second Vatican Council (1962-1965), are not accepted by the Orthodox Church as bearing either the validity or the authority that the seven truly Ecumenical Councils possessed; and for that matter; no decisions of these Roman Catholic Councils have any bearing on the Orthodox Church. For better appreciating the reasons for being convened and the decisions reached, all seven Ecumenical Councils are presented in sequence rather than in alphabetical order.

First Ecumenical Council

The First Ecumenical Council was summoned by Emperor Constantine the Great in 325, May 20th. The Council assembled at Nicaea in the province of Bithynia of Asia Minor and was formally opened by Constantine himself. The Council passed 20 canons including the Nicene Creed (described below), the Canon of Holy Scripture (Holy Bible), and established the celebration of Pascha (Easter).

The main reason for its being called was the Arian controversy. Arius, a presbyter (priest) from Alexandria, held that Jesus Christ was created by God and denying Christ's divinity. Arius argued that if Jesus was born, then there was time when He did not exist; and if He became God, then there was time when He was not. Arius' original intent was to attack another heretical teaching by which the three persons of the Godhead were confused (Sabellianism).

A number of bishops followed Arius, and the Church went into her first and perhaps deepest division of faith. Up to then, statements of faith were incorporated into Creeds recited by a candidate to Baptism. A baptismal Creed representing Arianism was submitted to the Council by Eusebios of Nicomedia but was at once rejected. Another Creed, representing the baptismal Creed of Jerusalem, was finally accepted with the addition of the very important term 'homoousios', meaning of the 'same substance'. Thus, the view that Christ was of the 'same substance' with the Father was received as orthodox. This Creed is known as the Nicene Creed, which read:

We (I) believe in one God. The Father Almighty. Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light; true God of true God; begotten not made; of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures. And ascended into

heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; whose Kingdom shall have no end. [And in the Holy Spirit.

But as for those who say, There was when He was not, and, before being born He was not, and that He came into existence out of nothing, or who assert that the Son of God is from a different hypostasis or substance, or is created, or is subject to alteration or change – these the Catholic Church anathematizes.]

Another important decision of this Council was the establishing of a calendar formula by which Pascha (Easter) ought to be celebrated. Pascha occurs on the first full moon following the spring equinox and following the Hebrew Passover feast.

The Council also regulated matters of ecclesiastical importance regarding territorial and moral questions pertaining to both clergy and laity. One particular delegate, deacon Athanasios from Alexandria, proved the champion of Orthodoxy by his statements of faith and the draft of the Creed that bears his name.

Another delegate, who by his eloquent argument against imposing compulsory celibacy on all ranks of Clergy prevented outright celibacy in the Orthodox Church, was Paphnutios, an Egyptian who had been a disciple of St. Anthony. He had suffered such hardships and cruelty during the persecution of Maximin that his mutilated body proved an object of veneration to the assembled bishops, and his recommendations were highly respected.

The number of bishops who attended the Council was 318. Hence, this Council is also known as the Synod of the 318 Fathers. It closed on July 25, 325. Their memory is commemorated by the Orthodox Church on the Seventh Sunday after Pascha (Easter).

Second Ecumenical Council

The Second Ecumenical Council was convened by Emperor Theodosius I at Constantinople in 381, which was attended by 150 bishops. Theodosius proved to be a champion of the orthodox faith, and his intent in calling this Council was to completely eradicate Arianism, and condemn Macedonios and Apollinarianism by establishing the teaching on the unity of the Holy Trinity and the complete manhood in Christ.

Macedonius, He taught that the Holy Spirit was not a person ('hypostasis'), but simply a power ('dynamic') of God. Therefore concluding that the Holy Spirit was inferior to the Father and the Son. The Council condemned Macedonius' teaching and defined the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. This doctrine decrees that there is 'one God in three hypostases'; proclaiming that the Holy Spirit is fully God, equal to the Father and the Son, and of one essence with them. This became the base of the Christian faith.

The Nicene Creed, received by the First Ecumenical Council, was then supplemented with five canons setting forth doctrines on the Holy Spirit, the Church, the Sacraments, resurrection of the dead and life of the age to come: which read:

And (We believe) in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; Who spoke by the Prophets. In One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge One Baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Creed was thereafter known as the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed or Symbol of Faith.

In matters of hierarchical privileges, the Council decided that the Bishop of Constantinople should have honorary precedence over all Churches, save that of Rome. Two of the more important bishops who played a great role in the development of Christian doctrine were St. Gregory the Theologian (of Nazianzus who presided over the council) and St. Gregory of Nyssa.

Third Ecumenical Council

The third Council was convened at Ephesus in 431 by Emperor Theodosius. The Council condemned the doctrines of Nestorios, Archbishop of Constantinople, who taught that there were two separate persons in the Incarnate Christ, the one Divine and the other Human.

Nestorios over-emphasising the human nature of Christ at the expense of the divine, teaching that the Virgin Mary gave birth to a man (Jesus Christ), and not God (the 'Logos' and Son of God). The Logos (or 'Word') only dwelled in Christ, as in a Temple. Christ, therefore, was only the Theophoros or the 'Bearer of God'. This was directly opposite to the orthodox doctrine by which the Incarnate Christ was a single Person, at once God and Man.

One of the high points of Nestorios' teaching was the rejection of the name 'Theotokos' (bearer of God) for the Virgin Mary. Nestorios called the Virgin Mary Christotokos (bearer of Christ) rather than [Theotokos](#). Hence, giving the name to the 'Christological controversies'.

The Council reiterated the Church's teaching that Our Lord Jesus Christ is one person, not two separate 'people'. The Council decreed that Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Logos), is perfect God and perfect Man with a rational soul and body. The union of the two natures of Christ took place in such a fashion that one did not disturb the other. The Council established the name 'Theotokos' in the liturgical and theological usage of the Church, and affirmed the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed forbidding any addition or deletion to it.

Two hundred bishops attended this Council among whom St. Cyril of Alexandria who proved to be the orthodox champion and the force behind the condemnation and anathematizing of Nestorios.

Fourth Ecumenical Council

This Council was convened at Chalcedon, on the Asian side of Constantinople, by Emperor Marcian and his wife Poulcheria in 451. It had to deal with another controversy about the Person of Christ. Eutyches, an Archimandrite in Constantinople, held that the human (less perfect) nature of Christ had been completely absorbed by His divine nature and thus the two had been confounded into one. Thus, after this union, Eutyches held, there was only one nature in Christ. Hence his heresy was called 'monophysitism' (of one nature). The Council condemned this teaching and affirmed that there were two perfect natures in the one Person of Christ unified 'unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, and inseparably'.

The Council was attended by 650 bishops. The dogmatic decisions of this Council were expressed by a statement of faith since then called the Chalcedonian Definition. Among other important enactments there was one that the Western Church did not accept: canon 28 by which the Archbishop of Constantinople was given the title of Patriarch thus reiterating the decision of the Second Ecumenical Council by which the Bishop of Constantinople was given honorary precedence over all other Churches, save that of Rome. Canon 28 of this Council further recognised to the Archbishop of Constantinople extensive administrative rights over a number of provinces around Constantinople and thus made him a Patriarch. This was rejected in the West on the excuse 'that the interests of the older Eastern Patriarchates should be protected'.

Fifth Ecumenical Council

The Fifth Ecumenical Council met in Constantinople in 553 and was convoked by Emperor Justinian I. The Monophysite controversy continued unabated even after the condemnation of Eutyches and the issuing of the Chalcedonian Statement of Faith.

Personal quarrels among bishops and the interference of the palace in theological and ecclesiastical matters helped to create an unfortunate situation in the Church that even Justinian's great authority and influence failed to correct.

Justinian favored at first the Monophysites but later sided with the formal Orthodox view against it. However, empress Theodora encouraged the Monophysites to create new problems by stirring up a new controversy regarding the theological positions of three distinguished theologians already dead for a century, these were the three Antiochian bishops and renowned teachers, Theodore

of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Ibas of Edessa. The accusation was that the writings of all three, tainted with Nestorianism, had been condemned by the Third Ecumenical Council.

The Monophysite-accusers wished all three to be condemned even though they were dead. Justinian was compelled by the fury of the controversy to call this Fifth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople which opened on May 5, 553 and was presided over by the Patriarch of Constantinople Eutychios.

One hundred sixty five bishops attended, and the writings of the three famous teachers were condemned and they themselves were anathematised. This decision was not easily accepted in the West. During the Council a quarrel erupted between Eastern and Western bishops as to anathematising the dead, and for a time the name of the Pope was erased from the diptychs. But as a result of Justinian's efforts, a permanent rupture between East and West was prevented.

The Council confirmed the Church's teaching on the dual nature of Christ, and reaffirmed that He is both Truly God and Truly Man. Emperor Justinian himself confessed his Orthodox faith in a form of the famous Church hymn "Only begotten Son and Word of God" which is sung during the Divine Liturgy.

Sixth Ecumenical Council

The Sixth Ecumenical Council met in Constantinople in 680 AD and was convened by Emperor Constantine IV (Pogonatos) and was attended by 170 bishops.

Monothelism (one will), in spite of the decisions of the Fifth Ecumenical Council and in spite of the strict laws and other repressive measures against it by subsequent emperors, continued to be a serious disturbance to both Church and State. It actually was used as the foundation for the creation of new and independent Churches such as the Armenian, Abyssinian, and others.

As a result of the reconciliatory endeavors of Emperor Herakleios for the purpose of bringing back the Armenians to the Orthodox Church, a new teaching in regard to the Person of Christ began to spread. By it, there is only one will in the God-man Christ. Hence this teaching was called 'monothelism' and was originally proposed as a midpoint between Monophysitism and Orthodoxy designed to bring back the Monophysites at a time the Byzantine empire was threatened by the Persians and later by the Mohammedans.

Both the Patriarch of Constantinople Sergios and Pope Honorius accepted the Emperor's formula by which there were two natures in Christ but only one mode of 'activity'. But in a statement of doctrine, the Pope used the unfortunate expression 'of one will' in Christ which from that point on replaced the expedient 'one energy' agreed upon by both parties.

After some tumultuous developments, the monotheletic controversy was finally resolved by the Sixth Ecumenical Council. Monothelism was condemned together with its adherents.

The Council proclaimed that "Christ had two natures with two activities: as God working miracles, rising from the dead and ascending into heaven; as Man, performing the ordinary acts of daily life. Each nature exercises its own free will". Christ's divine nature had a specific task to perform and so did His human, without being confused nor subjected to any change or working against each other. "The two distinct natures and related to them activities were mystically united in the one Divine Person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ".

The Quinisext or Trullan Council

This is not the Seventh Ecumenical Council but rather a supplement to the Fifth and Sixth Ecumenical Councils. It met in Constantinople in the hall under the great dome (Trullus) of the Imperial Palace. Hence it is known as the Trullan Synod while in Greek it is known as the 5th-6th where from the Latin Quinisext came.

The Council was called by Justinian II in 692. Both the Fifth and Sixth Ecumenical Councils fully occupied their time with the Christological problem and issued no canons pertaining to ecclesiastical government and order. Actually, the Quinisext may be considered to be the continuation of all the preceding Ecumenical Councils inasmuch as by its 2nd canon it received and ratified all of their canons and decisions. It also ratified the so-called "Eighty-five Apostolic Canons", the canons of local synods, and the most important of the canons of the principal Fathers of the Church, thus empowering all of them with Ecumenical authority.

The disciplinary canons of the Quinisext, however, were not accepted by the Pope, and even though most of them were not completely observed in the East, they contributed appreciably to the widening of differences between East and West. For example, canons 13, 30, and 48 relating to the marital status of the clergy, others regulating the age of ordination, and still others relating to canonical impediments to matrimony, were contrary to already established different practices in the West that the Roman See did not wish to change on directives from the Quinisext Council. However, the same Council tabulated by its 6th canon a shaky practice in the East by which marriage could not be contracted after one had been ordained in any one of the three ranks of priesthood. Thus, and for the first time, priesthood as a sacrament was accorded precedence and superiority over the sacrament of matrimony. And though there is no dogmatical justification for this doctrinal demoting of the sacrament of matrimony, the prohibition of marriage after ordination continues in the Orthodox Church to this day. (*from orthodoxchristian.info*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 5:1-10 EOB

Brethren, being justified by faith, we have a peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we also have our access by faith into this grace in which we stand. And we rejoice in hope of the glory of God! Not only this, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, one will hardly die for someone righteous, but perhaps for a righteous person someone would even dare to die. But God entrusts his own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Even more so then, since we are now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from wrath through him! For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more shall we be saved by his life!

Today's Gospel Lesson - Saint Matthew 6:22-33 EOB

The Lord said, "The lamp of the body is the eye! If therefore your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Mammon. Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, wondering what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? See the birds of the sky: they do not sow, or reap, or gather into barns. Your heavenly Father feeds them! Are you not of much more value than they? Which of you, by being anxious, can add one moment to his lifespan? Why then are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They do not toil or spin, yet I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was not dressed like one of these! But if God clothes the grass of the field which today exists and tomorrow is thrown into the oven in such a way, will he not much more clothe you, you of little faith? Therefore, do not be anxious, saying: 'What will we eat?,' 'What will we drink?' or, 'What will we wear?' It is the Gentiles who seek after all these things, but your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. "

Homily for the Third Sunday of Matthew (St. Luke of Simferopol)

"The lamp of the body is the eye" (Matt. 6:22). Through the eyes we perceive the light, everyone knows and understands this. Science has accurately studied everything that happens in the eyes and in the brain when light acts on the eye. But

science cannot explain at all what is meant by what follows: “If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matt. 6:22-23). We do not see that our bodies emit light. But Jesus Christ says that our whole body can be light - science does not understand this. God reveals to us the mystery of being, which is known to Him alone, the Creator of the world. And we need to understand the meaning of these amazing words of the Lord.

You saw a rainbow in the sky. You know that she shines in various colors: green, yellow, red, purple. A rainbow is caused by the refraction of sunlight in clouds. Passing through the clouds, sunlight, which seems homogeneous to us, breaks down into its component parts. This is how we learn that it contains the wonderful colors that we see in the rainbow. Hence, the composition of sunlight includes all these different rays. Sunlight appears white to us due to the fact that they mix.

But everyone who has studied physics knows that not only heavenly clouds can refract sunlight. It is known that if a ray of the sun is passed through a glass prism, it also breaks up into many colors. We will see a band consisting of different colors, which is called the solar spectrum, but it contains not only those visible rays that we know by color, but also many invisible ones. It is known that those rays that we do not see, but which are contained in sunlight, have extraordinary, mysterious properties, quite unlike the properties of sunlight in its totality. We do not know how invisible rays affect our body. Only the Lord knows the actions of all the rays that make up the sunlight.

All living things reach for the sun. You know how bright and joyful we feel on a clear, sunny day. What kindness, cheerfulness, energy, what a joyful mood takes possession of us! Our whole body seems to glow from the energy of light. This is what Jesus Christ is talking about, but the essence of which we do not understand. The Lord told us about ordinary, solar light in order to show the difference between this light and spiritual light, the light that shines not only on the souls, but also on the bodies of saints. The face of the great prophet Moses shone with such a spiritual light when he descended from Mount Sinai, holding the tablets with the commandments inscribed on them with the finger of God.

This is the light that, by the will of God, our Venerable and God-bearing Father Seraphim of Sarov showed to his dearly beloved friend, the landowner Motovilov. While talking with him, Father Seraphim suddenly said: “Look at me.” Motovilov was terrified when he saw how his face shone with divine light. “Look, don’t tell anyone about this, I showed it to you alone,” the monk warned.

The whole being of good people is permeated with the light of the soul, the light of a pure nous. For many blind people, their grave misfortune turns out to be a great beneficence of God, for they, not entertained by anything, seeing nothing vain, deeply concentrated, look into their own heart, note its every movement, and such observation gives them spiritual light. The saints were always immersed in the contemplation of their hearts, and their whole being shone with great spiritual light.

Twilight light is inherent in the souls of people who are completely devoted to the cares and passions of this age, to worldly fuss. They live in spiritual twilight. There is no light of truth and love in their souls. And only occasionally, when the Lord visits them with His grace, sending them misfortune and suffering to stop them on their vain path, to make them think and evaluate their lives, then the light of their souls flashes brightly for a while.

There are people who are completely devoid of spiritual light. Their hearts are always filled with eternal darkness. These are all bitter, prideful enemies of God who have rebelled against Christ. Many of them think they bring light because they are well educated. But they are deeply mistaken: the whole body and all their thoughts, which they consider deep, are dark and devoid of truth, for the truth is only in God, who said: “ I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6). Whoever rejects Him rejects life itself.

The Lord speaks of these unfortunate ones: “So, if the light that is in you is darkness, then what is the darkness?” If you yourself are dark, great spiritual darkness surrounds you, and you see everything in darkness, because you do not carry spiritual light in your heart and mind. Such were the scribes and Pharisees, and, denouncing them after the healing of the blind man, Jesus Christ said: “If you were truly blind, then you would not be guilty of sin; but since you consider yourself to be seeing, then woe to you, for you do not understand that you are in outer darkness, and call yourself teachers of the people, and undertake to teach people” (see John 9:41).

Let us reach out with all our souls to the light of Christ, so that eternal darkness does not embrace us. Amen. (*from mystagogyresourcecenter.com*)

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Prooimion – Let us praise Christ, the Healer of our offenses and the One who has wiped out our sins by the magnitude of His mercies through the apostles with the hope of faith.

The Scripture exhorts all to pray ceaselessly and to cry to the Lord everywhere as inspired by God. For those who pray by night and by day He gives mercy, glory,

grace and forgiveness. And if one turns zealously to the multitude of saints, prophets, and apostles, he will find that as all the righteous pray, they are able to be successful in all cases; for to the extent that the apostles were able to be successful through the virtues of their deeds, so much the more did they hasten to be masters with the hope of faith.

Those who were full of fervor and reverence strove after prayers; and because of their zeal, they acquired all virtue because they feared that they might be deprived of the wealth of the spirit and find themselves further away from grace. Hence, the twelve apostles, both as a group and individually, persevered in prayers. They were shown as well-disposed to the King and to God, and they became mediators of salvation for all, since they were both in the world and departing from it; for they became bearers of light and guides with the hope of faith.

They became unseen allies of the faithful and visible physicians of sufferings. They did not care for them with medicines and herbs, nor were they cured by the surgeon's knife nor other such things, but by a word and faith in Christ, which they held like a flame for their incurable ill. They pursued the diseases with great authority, enlightening men with the illumination of their fire. But now, come, let us learn of Peter and John, for they returned to be addressed in prayer, and they offered the hope of faith.

At the ninth hour of prayer, it says, Peter and John went up into the Temple, where the Jews held their services (the lawless ones laid bare all wickedness). Hurrying there – indeed everywhere – the disciples held the lamp of faith. Consuming with fire all the wounds, illumining those who looked on, they healed diseases of the spirit and those of the body, as they presented men with the hope of faith.

Let us hear the Scripture, and let us understand the marvelous and awesome miracles of Christ, the things done by Peter and by John in the power and working of the Spirit. Even if Peter performed the miracle alone – for he had this power of the Holy Spirit – let no one suppose that it was achieved without John's share. But, since Peter was chief of the twelve, Luke is eager to grant seniority to him. Still, let us enter the names of both with the hope of faith.

The holy men proceeded with haste to pray. A certain lame man was lying at the gate of the Temple; by chance he was known to all, since he was a piteous, wretched beggar. He was lame from his mother's womb, and after he was born, he endured hardships as he begged for alms. The womb became worse than beggary for him; poverty caused more hardship than the womb. The womb bound his feet; poverty extended his hands. By both he was slain until there came the hope of faith. Pain from his handicap was rooted in him; hope of any healing was taken away from him. His illness was so great and of such long standing, this disease

struggled to put an end to him from the time he was born. The weakened man was stretched out before all as they came into and departed from the Temple. Always, as he looked around at all the people, he entreated them, saying, “Have pity on me, men who love goodness. As you behold me, give me nourishment for one day, since I lie here powerless until there comes the hope of faith.”

As the Scripture reports, when the invalid saw the two disciples of Christ hastening into the Temple, he said, “Give me a little money for nourishment, for I see two people with wealth inexhaustible.” These are the things he called out to them. They were pierced to the heart with pangs of sympathy, as they said, “The one who lies here is a piteous sight, and we do not have any coin at hand that we might give the poor wretched fellow, for we have come here without money; but let us give the hope of faith.”

“Now, as disciples of Christ, let us not overlook him; let us not be useless, nor leave the lame man unanswered entirely, but let us wait for a minute, and even if we do not possess what the beggar asks, let us give him ungrudgingly what we do have. What we have grace offers, the grace that he may take from the Lord. Let us afford to him hope of this gift; let us converse with him and exhort him. One must care earnestly for his spirit before his feet, in order that thus he may have the enjoyment of healing through the hope of faith.”

The distressed people stood around, and Peter, stretching out his hand to the lame man, said, “Look, O man, look only at the two of us, and for a short time turn your gaze away from all the people. Thus wholly give yourself to contemplation, neglecting observance of those who are coming and going. Pay no heed to the crowd and begging; await only what is given by us – not from this one and then another, but ignore all the others, lest to your sorrow you may destroy the hope of faith.”

“A While ago you were asking many people for food, making an effort for a few coins from all at one time. Now pay no heed to all of them, but turn your glance on us, for now we shall afford you rich return. It remains for you to estimate what has been offered to you by us and what has been given you by others up until now.” When the man heard Peter at this time, he had no hope at all for a healing of his suffering. He made his hands ready for the promise of Peter, for he expected gold; he did not expect this hope of faith.

Peter promised in his speech a wealthy gift. As he saw the lifted right hand extended, he uttered his defense for his method of treatment, for he offers the boast of poverty as though it were wealth: “We do not have silver or gold.” He exposes his want of resources as though it were a glory of great wealth. “I have not possessed gold or silver. I have left the world behind; I passed it by without

heeding it; at the time I was one of the Master's nets, hunting fish. I have left those things behind, and I possess the hope of faith.”

As he said this, he raised his eyes, and as John prayed with him, he earnestly cried to the Lord with these considerations: “Christ, King, our god, with knowledge of all hearts, hear my voice, since You are good. Make this disease subject to me, since You are the mighty Creator of all (for many people are standing hereof those who crucified You. They considered You as man, Lord, defenseless), in order that they may have faith and cry with us, 'You are our God who offers the hope of faith.’”

After this prayer to Him, the Lord spoke, though He was invisible: “We promise to all of you, my apostles, the gift of healing; neither suffering nor disease will dispute you. As merciful, I sent all of you out to the world as physicians of soul and body; call on my name, and both this man and all men will be healed, wherever you call; the angels will praise my name as great, though it is deemed worthless by the Hebrews; it invokes the hope of faith.”

As Peter pulled up the fish in a special act of grace, he was immediately bound in faith, just as though in possession of an ancestral purse; and so, Christ approached him, released him, and showed favor to him. “O man, I dwell in you, and I shall be at our disposal,” He said. “I give you what I have and what you do not have for one in need. Even now I give healing, like a piece of bread; and as from my store of power, I provide the enlivening agent for walking – not as to one released, but as to one lying there from cowardice – I command you and speak to you that you may act in the hope of faith.”

Now let us truly see the remarkable, strange thing of how severe poverty happened to the lame man, and rather what is more useful than this, the poverty of his mother and of the father who sired the man – for those who brought him into the world as lame indeed disregarded him and ignored him on earth; but need roused him to action and regenerated him; it raised him upright as though he were not suffering; it called him to take nourishment; but instead of food he receives healing as though it were a rebirth in hope of faith.

What did Peter immediately answer the lame man? He stretched out his right hand and commanded him as he said, “In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk unflinchingly, O man.” At once the sick fellow rose up, and he advanced running before them and those who were present; for at once his legs, which had been without power, were straightened out, and his ankles were made strong immediately, and he who had been without motion began to move like a child. He became manly and ran forth in the hope of faith.

Pestilent and jealous sons became amazed, and they said to Peter, "From whence, O man, come these deeds of yours, which you may present to anyone you like? Are you indeed completely wealthy, as you say, 'What I have, I give'? From what source do you have the power that you have? Tell us. For we recognize you; you were born the son of Jonah; the catching of fish happened to be your trade. How is it that all at once you possess limitless wealth? You boast in the special treasures of Jesus, for you write off the dying as living in hope of faith."

At once Cephas answered them in this way, as the collection of people became crowded together: "Look upon the man, the lame man whom you observed especially because he had, formerly had this disease. For he had been violently shaken like a spider's web of dust. Henceforth do not consider me as a liar of a man warring with words; you see the man whom you beheld as unable to move now moving, leaping up, and standing here. I tell all of you confidently the manner of the healing, for I am eager of all to be cured in the hope of faith.

"Formerly I was a fisherman for fish; I have become a fisher of men by the word of god. Formerly I sewed up the nets, which had become loosened; now I have tightened his feet, which had become enfeebled. The invalid asked for alms; I had no silver or gold with me in my possession. Instead of silver, I possessed undying faith. I have faith in Christ instead of gold. Love for god and men is my only possession; this I share with those who ask for hope in faith."

"If you wish to know the truth, stop gazing at us and learn; do not ascribe to us a great miracle – for indeed we are men like all others – instead, kneel before Jesus, the Giver of grace and the Creator of the whole universe. We tell you of Jesus of Nazareth whom you crucified and put to death, for we did not do this in our own power; but we possess the Lord, who gives the hope of faith."

"You are now persuaded that no mere human power could do this. It is possible that all these things were done by God alone – this causing the man who had lain in suffering in his natural state to stand up – in order that you may know that He is a great God, Jesus of Nazareth, the Creator of those who are born. I do not mention the name of God, if one is willing and ready to call him God, in order that you may not just add on a surname, because I chanced to remember the name of God, which I preferred; but I mentioned the name in deed as the native land for hope of faith."

The Son of God and the everlasting God is this same Jesus Christ whom the Virgin who knew no marital union produce; then He was crucified, He was buried to the satisfaction of officials, and He arose from the tomb. He was promised in the world as from God; He was heralded to the races as God, the Master. He rose up in glory, but He willed to be in the presence of mortals in the flesh and not just in the Godhead, for He was not separated from the bosom of the Father when He willed to become man for the sake of men in the hope of faith.

Our Savior, Jesus, have mercy as God. O unconquerable Healer, immortal King, You have been importuned by the prayers of the Virgin to spare those in need of Your goodness. O Christ, allay rising anger. Pursue, O Creator, the cruel sufferings of the outcasts. Let Your mother, O Lover of men, summon You. We only shed tears, as unworthy ones, and we approach her in order that she may beg of You, "Lay hold on all of us; come to our rescue; save us in the hope of faith."

– St. Romanos the Melodist, *Kontakion 39 "On the Healing of the Lame Man"*

[*This kontakion was traditionally sung on Thursday of Bright Week, when the related passage from Acts was chanted. – Ed.*]

Saint Nikodemos the Hagiorite As A Model For Our Lives

By Protopresbyter Fr. George Papavarnavas

Under the first icon of Saint Nikodemos the Hagiorite, published in 1819 in the first edition of his work *Interpretation of the 14 Epistles of the Apostle Paul*, there is an epigram/caption which reads:

*Nikodemos, the great boast
Of Orthodox and the wise of Mount Athos,
With this Book grant a goodly nature, beloved
Man of Naxos; praise to your good nature.*

The author of the above epigram managed in a few words to perfectly outline this great personality. Saint Nikodemos was truly great, good natured and wise. Beneath the plain external appearance of this Athonite monk, as well as his simplicity and deep humility, there hid a truly wonderful splendor. This is because the greatness and value of a person is not measured "by the acre", as the poet says, namely external things (money, property, offices, etc.), but "it is measured with the inflammation of the heart and with blood",* that is, with all those things that honor a person and to acquire it one must literally spill their blood. These things are primarily non-phenomena. They are all those things that consist of the treasures of the soul through which the saints "enrich many", because "having nothing they possess everything". And Saint Nikodemos enriches many with his way of life, as well as through his writings, which are nourishment for all Orthodox. Some of these are: *Spiritual Exercises; Eortodromion; Unseen Warfare; New Ladder; Handbook of Spiritual Counsels; Interpretation of the 14 Epistles of the Apostle Paul; New Martyrology; Interpretation of the Psalms of David; Garden of Graces; Pedalion* (in which he interprets and comments on the sacred Canons et al.).

Saint Nikodemos was born in Naxos in 1749 and his life ended on the Holy Mountain in 1809. He learned his first letters in Naxos from Archimandrite Chrysanthos, the brother of Saint Kosmas the Aitolos, and then he studied five

years at the Evangelical School of Smyrna. After graduating he returned to his homeland and for a certain period of time served the Metropolitan as his Secretary. This period was a turning point in his life and decisive for his subsequent evolution, because he came to know three important Athonite monks, of those called "Kollyvades". They had fled to Naxos after being persecuted on Mount Athos, because of their persistence in the Orthodox Tradition. Among these monks he also met a saint of the Orthodox Church, the former Bishop of Corinth, Makarios Notaras. This acquaintance signaled a long history of collaboration, which had good results for the Church. The book *Philokalia of the Sacred Neptics*, which is an anthology of patristic texts, is the work of Saint Makarios, formerly of Corinth, who delivered it to Saint Nikodemos in 1777 "for further work, completion and publication", and it was published in Venice in 1782.

"From the mid-18th century there began a feud over the ritual of Memorials (Kollyvades were named after the kollyva) taking place on Sunday and not Saturday, as the ancient order of the Church has defined. This gave the opportunity for other distortions to be manifested, such as the opposition to frequent Holy Communion as defined by ecclesiastical tradition, and other issues, so that in the end the movement of the Kollyvades was a standard-bearer of Orthodox Exactitude and a return to the Holy Fathers. The modernized, innovative monks, influenced by western standards, wanted to change many of the traditions of our fathers and those things that were handed down to us. The conflict reached such large proportions, that intervention was sought through the Patriarchate. Despite this the controversy continued for many decades, fortunately with beneficial results for the continuance of our Holy Tradition. The movement of the Kollyvades, which highlighted great figures and important texts, remained a cleansing movement, and its effects on our nation continues still" (Panagiotis M. Sotirchos, *The Great Saint Nikodemos the Hagiorite*, 62-63).

The movement of the Kollyvades was a healthy reaction against the effects of Frankish theology upon the Orthodox way of life, and against secularism, which today threatens to corrupt the spirit of Orthodox monasticism and Orthodox Tradition in general. Saint Nikodemos was a leader in this struggle during those difficult years.

He went to Mount Athos in 1775 and settled, first, in the Sacred Monastery of Dionysiou, where he was tonsured a monk. Then, having toured Monasteries and Sketes, he settled in Karyes, where the silence of the countryside was a co-worker in his writings and studies. With the blessing of the Elders he studied in the libraries of the Monasteries for countless hours and utilized the possibility of the memory given to him, and through his gift of writing he offered authentic food to the people of God who hungered and thirsted for truth and the genuine faith. His

words were direct and remain alive today and are relevant, since the time in which he lived was very similar to our own time. Worthy of attention is that which was written by P. M. Sotirchos in his Foreword to the book mentioned:

"He is one of the two great giants, who like Atlas upheld the world on his shoulders. The other pillar is Saint Kosmas the Aitolos... And today we see the same straying away from the path of God, the same furious activity of well-organized heretics, the same catalytic erosions in the daily life of our people, the strong influences received from all the media... This is why the need to hear the voice of Saint Nikodemos is dramatically urgent and apparent." *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

Uncovering of the Relics of Righteous Virgin Glyceria of Novgorod

The scarcity of information about St. Glyceria indicates that she kept the details of her life and ascetical struggles hidden from those around her. She was the daughter of Panteleimon, the chief of the street Legosch in Veliky Novgorod.

On July 14, 1572, her body was found incorrupt 50 years after her death. According to contemporary testimony, an old widow named Nastasia recounted to Archbishop Leonid that she had been healed at the burial of the saint. The Novgorod chronicle under 1572 narrates that the tomb was behind the church of the holy martyrs Florus and Laurus. When St. Glyceria's relics were uncovered, they were found to be completely preserved. After the uncovering of the relics, Archbishop Leonid of Novgorod solemnly laid the relics of the saint in the temple of the holy martyrs Florus and Laurus. On the same day the four-year-old son of the administrator Bogdan Suvorov was healed from disease through the intercessions of the righteous one, after which there were other healings; for example, on August 11, a man was healed by touching her coffin. These healings became the basis for the canonization of the saint.

The Holy Virgin Glyceria is depicted on the ancient icon of the Novgorod miracle workers. From the top of the icon - the image of Sophia - the Wisdom of God with the coming Mother of God and John the Baptist, then there are six rows of images of the saints of Novgorod. Among them in the fourth row - the image of Venerable Anna of Novgorod, and in the sixth row - the holy of righteous Glyceria. In the Tikhvin Church of the Moscow Simonov Monastery in the middle of the XIX century, a side chapel was arranged in honor of St. Glyceria. On icons, Glyceria is depicted as a young girl with an uncovered head, a rounded face and wavy hair coming down on her shoulders. The exact date of her repose is unknown; she is commemorated on May 13 along with Martyr Glyceria of Heraclea (2nd c.), as well as on the 3rd Sunday after Pentecost (Synaxis of the Saints of Novgorod). *(adapted from oca.org)*

Also Commemorated Today

Apostle [Aquila](#) of the 70
St. [Idus](#) of Leinster, Bishop (5th c.)
St. [Deusdedit](#) of Canterbury, archbishop (664)
Ven. [Helli](#) (Elius) of Egypt, wonderworker (4th c.)
Ven. [Onesimus](#) of Magnesia, confessor and wonderworker (reign of Diocletian)
Ven. [Stephen](#) of Makhrishche (incorrupt) (1406)
Martyr [Justus](#) of Rome (1st c.)
New Hieromartyr [Constantine](#) priest (1918) (incorrupt relics uncovered May 31, 2002)
New Hieromartyr [Nicholas](#) priest (1933).
Martyr [John](#) of Merv (Turkmenistan)(11th c.)
Holy Martyrs [Aquila and Hilarion](#)
Holy Martyr [Peter](#) the New, bishop of Crete
Holy Martyr [Heraclius](#)
Sts. [Vladimir and Agrippina](#) wonderworkers of Rzhev (13th c.)
St. [Marcellinus](#) of Utrecht, priest (c. 762) (*Neth.*).
[St. Joseph](#) the Confessor, archbishop of Thessalonica (833).
St. [Heraclius](#), patriarch of Alexandria (246)
Newmartyrs Emmanuel, Anezina, & children George & Maria of [Melissourgio](#) (1861)
Martyr [Libert](#), monk (Belgium)(835)
St. [Optatian](#) of Brescia (c. 505)
St. [Felix](#), bishop of Como (Italy)(c. 390)
Uncovering of the Relics (1993) of St. [Theophilus](#) of Kiev, fool-for-Christ (1853)
St. [Longinus](#), hieroschemamonk of Svyatogorsk Monastery (1882)
St. Elyw (Ellyw) of Wales (5th or 6th c.), daughter or granddaughter of St. Brychan

Camp Nazareth Wishlist

Dear Diocesan Faithful, the 2024 Camp Nazareth Wishlist is now out! Please sponsor one of the items on the list (or even part of one) and help Camp fulfill its Wishlist goal for 2024. Some of the items are related to the Campers, some to the Staff, some to the Kitchen, some to the Camp Church, and some for Programming and New Internship Positions. The Camp Wishlist is a great way for you to support the Camp in its mission. You can access the Wishlist by clicking this link: [2024 Camp Nazareth Wishlist](#). Once you sponsor/reserve an item (or part of an item), you will be sent an email with instructions about how to give towards the item. You will be directed to the "Donate" Tab or the "Support Camp Nazareth" Button on the Camp Website Homepage (campnazareth.org) to make your contribution. Just remember to put in the Memo line the name of the item you are sponsoring. Again, please help us make it to our goal of having each item sponsored by visiting the Wishlist link above.

Social Team for July 21

Team 6 – Gabriella Howl, Elijah Blair, Shannon Johnson, Jameson Barker. Thank you!

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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, Tina Crull, Marlene Doukas, Linda A. Georgiev, Sandi Hebel, Howl family, Helen P. Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Johnson family, 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 & the Holy Land, and those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)