



ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY, May 20, 2018

Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the
First Ecumenical Council

- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Six:

The angelic powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure body. Thou didst capture hades, not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin granting life. O Lord who didst rise from the dead: glory to Thee.

- TROPARION OF ASCENSION, Tone Four:

Thou hast ascended in glory, O Christ our God, and gladdened Thy disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit; and they were assured by the blessing that Thou art the Son of God and Redeemer of the world.

- TROPARION OF THE HOLY FATHERS, Tone Eight:

Most glorified art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast established the Holy Fathers as luminous stars upon the earth, and through them didst guide us all to the true Faith. O Most Merciful One, glory be to Thee.

- KONTAKION OF THE HOLY FATHERS, Tone Eight:

The preaching of the Apostles and the doctrines of the Fathers confirmed the one Faith in the Church. And wearing the garment of truth woven from theology on high, she rightly divideth and glorifieth the great mystery of piety.

- KONTAKION OF ASCENSION, Tone Six:

When Thou didst fulfill the dispensation for our sake and unite earth to heaven, Thou didst ascend in glory, O Christ our God, not being parted from them that love Thee, but remaining with them and crying: "I am with you, and no one will be against you."

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, May 19: 4 PM, Children's Choir Rehearsal
5 PM, Great Vespers
- Sunday, May 20: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School (last class of year); *Noon*, Agape Meal
- Wed., May 23: 6 PM, Vespers
- Thurs., May 24: 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting

- Sat., May 26: 9 AM, Memorial Liturgy for day before Pentecost
 Afternoon—decoration of Church for the feast
 5 PM, Vigil for Pentecost, confessions
- Sun., May 27: 9 AM, Baptism of Jeanie Carl
 10 AM, Festal Divine Liturgy, Kneeling Vespers of Pentecost
 Agape Potluck
- Mon., May 28: Noon, Memorial Day Prayers at Santa Rosa Memorial Cemetery

• SUNDAY USHERS:
 Shannon and Ted.

• SAINT SERAPHIM WEEK:

Our annual “Vacation Bible School” will be held from June 11–15. Daily schedule here at the church will start with arrivals by 10 AM, a morning prayer at 10:15 AM sharp, followed by a brief spiritual lesson with Fr. Lawrence, then crafts, games, snacks, folk dancing, music, and a wrap-up prayer at 1 PM. This year our spiritual focus will be on the miracles of Jesus Christ. Registration and Volunteer forms are available at the candle desk after Liturgy. **We are looking for volunteers, age 17 and older.** Please contact Gloria Collins at (707) 849-6135.

• TODAY’S CELEBRATION

The seventh Sunday after the Feast of Holy Pascha is observed by the Orthodox Church as the *Sunday of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council*. This day commemorates the “318 God-bearing Fathers who gathered in Nicaea” in 325 at the request of the Emperor, Saint Constantine the Great, to address the heresy of Arianism together with other issues that concerned the unity of the Church. Arius was a protopresbyter of the Church of Alexandria, and in 315, he began to blaspheme against the Son of God saying that He was not the true God, consubstantial with the Father, but rather a work or creation of God and different from the essence and glory of the Father. He also falsely maintained that the Son of God had a beginning. This heresy shook the faithful at Alexandria. The Bishop of Alexandria, Alexander, attempted to correct Arius through admonitions, cut him off from communion, and finally deposed him in 321 through a local council. Arius continued with his heretical teachings, creating controversy and division in the churches of other cities, which led to a theological and ecclesiastical crisis throughout the Christian Church. Moved with divine zeal and concern for unity, the Emperor Constantine the Great, equal to the Apostles, summoned the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in 325. The Holy Fathers composed the holy symbol of Faith, the Nicene Creed: “We believe in one God. The Father Almighty...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...” The Fathers also anathematized Arius for his heretical beliefs and teachings, cutting him off from the Church. Recognizing the divine Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council as heralds of the Faith after the divine Apostles, the Church of Christ has appointed this present Sunday for their annual commemoration, in thanksgiving and unto the glory of God, unto their praise and honor, and unto the strengthening of the true Faith. Today’s feast affirms that the One Who rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven, is truly God and truly man, uniting in Himself therefore, heaven and earth. —*borrowed*

- PREPARING FOR THE FEAST—PENTECOST AND CREATION:

Earth is a wondrous place—no matter where we go—how deep, how far, how high, how hot, how inhospitable—in this place we find life. Everywhere we look on our nearest neighbor—Mars—we find—no life. We want to find life. We hope to find life. We theorize life. But we have yet to find it. There is something about life, at least in our earthly experience, that is inexorable. Any individual case of life may be fragile, but life itself endures. In the Genesis account we are told that God blessed this planet and said: *Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth*"; and it was so. *And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.* (Gen 1:11-12 NKJ) Note that the account does not say that God said “Let there be life!” and life just appeared... (Boom! Trees!) But that He blessed this place and commanded that it bring forth grass... herbs... trees... according to their kind... and it was so! The Feast of Pentecost...focuses as much on the Holy Spirit’s work in Creation as it does on the Spirit’s work in the Church. The Church is decorated in green. In Russian tradition, branches of birch are brought into the Church; fresh green grass is placed on the floor; flowers are everywhere. In Soviet times a secular version of the festival remained, called the *Day of Trees*. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Church is not something separate from Creation—nor are the trees a distraction from the Church. They are, together, a proper reminder of the role God’s Spirit plays always, everywhere. He is the “Lord and Giver of Life.” Just as the Spirit moved over the face of the waters in the beginning of creation, so He moves over the face of all things at all times, bringing forth life and all good things. Though I am frequently assaulted with bouts of pessimism, despairing over various aspects of our distorted civilization, the truth is that like the planet itself, civilization with its drive for beauty and order seem inexorable. The history of humanity is not the story of a fall from a great civilization with increasing instances of barbarism and cave dwelling. Great civilizations have risen and fallen, but civilizations continue to occur. Some may already have begun in the ruins that surround us now. The story told in Scripture is not the story of collapse and decay. There are certainly dire warnings of terrible trials and great catastrophes. But these things do not reveal the mystery of God’s will. These things are cracks in the pavement while life continues to burst forth: *God has made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him* (Eph. 1:9-10). What appeared as tongues of flame upon the heads of the disciples at Pentecost was a manifestation of this Divine Purpose at work. With the sound of a mighty rushing wind, the Holy Spirit filled the room. The fullness of the Church burst into the streets proclaiming the Gospel in a multitude of languages. Being birthed in Jerusalem was the New Jerusalem, where there is neither slave nor free, Jew nor Greek, male nor female. Instead there is the fullness that fills all things bringing forth all things in one—in the One Christ Himself. The voice of Pentecost is the voice of creation’s groans being transformed into the “glorious liberty of the children of God.” Stones cry out, trees clap their hands and the song of creation rejoices in the One Christ. —Fr. Stephen Freeman

- PENTECOST—Saturday and Sunday, May 26/27:

Pentecost—the Feast of the Descent of the Holy Spirit—is both the completion of Pascha (the end of the Fifty Days of celebration since Pascha) and our “access” to the Paschal way of life (the Holy Spirit is God’s “seal” upon us, and He enlivens us to share in the Lord’s death and rising).

Our celebration will begin with the Memorial Divine Liturgy on Saturday morning at 9 AM. This is the last in the long series of Memorial Saturdays which began before Great Lent. on this day we commemorate all departed pious Christians, since the departed faithful also participate in this salvation

through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Then, on Saturday afternoon the Church will be extravagantly decorated with lush greenery, trees and flowers in preparation for the Vigil, which begins at 5 PM. The attentive worshipper at this Vigil will hear true theology of the Holy Trinity prayerfully expressed in hymnody—one can learn so much about the faith with this kind of prayer. The Feast of the Descent of the Holy Spirit will then fully blossom with the Baptism of Jeanie Carl at 9 AM the next morning, followed by the Divine Liturgy, the reception of the Holy Eucharist and *Kneeling Vespers*.

- ALL SHOULD COMMUNE ON PENTECOST:

I encourage all of us to make a confession and carefully prepare for Holy Communion for the Feast of Pentecost. All of us should be able to say with confidence: “Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord, and who shall stand in His holy place? He that is innocent in his hands and pure in heart....” Only repentance through Confession, not time, will grant this gift from God. When we are communing of the Lord’s Body and Blood, we are in Jesus Christ. This union makes us into a *holy people* (isn’t this holiness and unity one of the reasons that the Parish exists?). Another great miracle then occurs: the entire Church in heaven and on earth are joined together in Jesus Christ in one song of praise, for in Christ, all are alive and united.

How to prepare ourselves? Prayer and confession in the days beforehand. Confessions will be heard anytime this coming week (just email, call, text or ask), during the hour before the Vigil, then during and after the Vigil. Confessions will NOT be heard before the Divine Liturgy on Pentecost, since there is a Baptism at 9 AM, and Fr. John will be serving at the Kazan Skete. —*Fr. Lawrence*

- ENGAGING WITH OUR NEIGHBORS:

The past few months have seen several heart-rending and shocking stories about children who suffered years of abuse. Some cases have “happy” endings (e.g. the Turpin family and the Allen/Rogers family), in which the children are finally removed from their abusive parents with the hope that their wounds (physical, psychological and spiritual) will heal over time. In at least one case, that of the Hart family, the story ended tragically with the death of the entire family. On hearing such stories, we ask ourselves, “How could this go on for so long without somebody realizing it?” or, even sadder, “People were sounding the alarm on this for years. Why was nothing ever done?” An obvious part of the answer is simply this—healthy neighborhoods and extended families are gravely endangered species, and government agencies make very poor substitutes for these vital parts of society. It wasn’t all that long ago that we really KNEW our neighbors and knew pretty much what was going on in their lives. And there WAS a time that families still lived close to each other and the elders were able to step in before bad situations became desperate. So, no, we can’t blame it on the system. We CAN blame it on society, but we must remember that WE are the society. WE are the problem, and WE must be the solution. Of course, we’re not going to bring back stable neighborhoods and families any time soon, but we all CAN take steps in that direction. Introduce yourself to a neighbor you don’t know. Host a block party. Call your family members and ask how they’re doing (and LISTEN to the reply). Your life will be enriched and you will have played your own role, however small, in keeping another tragedy from happening. —*Mother Melania*

- CONGRATULATIONS:

May God send His blessings on Michael and Rachel Dovey on the birth of their son, on the Feast of Ascension. Many Years!