

Sunday of the Holy Fathers (7th after Pascha)

Devoting this Sunday to the memory of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council, the Holy Church sings: "Let us, the pious assembly of true believers, celebrate today in prayerful memory the God-bearing Fathers from every part of the world who assembled in the brilliant city of the Nicaea. For these pious wise ones put down the godless teachings of the terrible Arius, and expelled him from the unity of the Catholic Church _), and clearly taught everyone to profess their faith in the consubstantial and coeternal Son of God, existing before the ages, expressing this clearly in the symbol of faith". The heresy of Arius was one of the most destructive heresies. It concerned the teaching about the divinity of the Son of God, i.e. that main doctrine of Christianity, on which all our faith and the whole Church of Christ is founded, which makes it the unique basis for all hope of our salvation. If the Arian heresy, rejecting the divinity of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, then exasperated the whole Church and carried away with itself a great many pastors and shepherds; if this heresy had overcome the true teaching of the Church and was made dominant; then for a long time Christianity itself would no longer exist and the whole world would be plunged into its former darkness of unbelief and superstitions. The Holy Fathers at the First Ecumenical Council laid down the Orthodox teaching, having established it universally. And the Holy Church, after a comfortable time, glorifies these same Holy Fathers of Nicaea on the Sunday after the Ascension because the most glorious Ascension of the Lord serves as clear proof of the inseparable connection of the two natures in Jesus Christ, the divine and the human.

In the service for the present day, the Holy Nicaean fathers are hymned, as "the hierarchs of Christ", "hierarchs, glorious pastors", "most blessed fathers of divine knowledge", "as luminous stars bright with the truth of Christ", "keepers of the known apostolic traditions", "O divine array, God-proclaiming knights of the Lord's company, most brilliant stars of the spiritual firmament, impregnable towers of the mystical Zion, fragrant flowers of Paradise, all-golden mouths of the Word, the praise of Nicaea, the adornment of the universe".

Commemorating the efforts of the Holy Fathers of the Nicaea Council, the Holy Church glorifies them because they, "gathered all pastoral art and righteous ascetic passion, avenging the difficult rotten and pernicious wolves, with the sling of the spirit casting them out from church performance", "preaching peace, with the peace most of the world was united", and "all the gathered spiritual art and through the Divine Spirit immediately seeing the heavenly and honorable symbol of faith divinely written sketched out", i.e. as St. Demetrius of Rostov says, "a true canon of the Christian faith". According to the manual of this hierarch, firmly containing this canon of the Orthodox faith in Christ, as the bright candlestick in the darkness of this world, we should go the way of the commandments of the Lord, in order for us to inherit a bright and blessed place. With all our life we should confess, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the true God and the perfect man, and He, our Savior, will call us true servants and His confessors (Mt. 10:_2). With a loud voice we should most sweetly glorify the name of Christ, before

whom every heavenly, earthly, infernal worldly knee bends, but the Lord will glorify us with heavenly glory for He says: "I will glorify those who glorify me". Continuously we should hymn Him as the true God, and He will bless us in this contemporary life with the fulfillment of His grace, and for the praise of our mouths He will satisfy our flesh and souls with the glory of eternal life in His kingdom of heaven where He in unapproachable glory reigns with the Unoriginate Father, the Coeternal and Life-creating Spirit to ages of ages without end.

Troparion of the Fathers, tone 8

**Most glorious are You, O Christ our God!
You have established the Holy Fathers as lights on the earth!
Through them you have guided us to the true faith!
O greatly Compassionate One, glory to You.**

Kontakion of the Fathers, tone 8

**The apostles' preaching and the fathers' doctrines have established one faith for the Church.
Adorned with the robe of truth, woven from heavenly theology,
It defines and glorifies the great mystery of piety.**

Paramoedas: see July 16. **Matins Gospel:** 10th. **Epistle:** Acts 20:16-18, 28-36; sel. 44. **Gospel:** John 17:1-13; sel. 56.

_) By the way, in the service of the present day we commemorate the wonderful vision of one of the Holy Fathers who attended the Council of Nicaea, St. Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria. This zealous advocate of the Orthodox faith, "seeing Christ like the Child on the holy offering table, dressed in a torn robe" asked: "who are you, O Savior, in torn clothes?" "Arius", replied the Lord. "Truly", as St. Demetrius of Rostov says, "this wolf (Arius) tore the clothes of the Lamb of God, when he denied His divinity, when the Creator of all called creation as created, when the faithful people, through the blood of Christ, were divided from the unity of faith and love, when the only begotten Son was called the servant and attendant to God the Father. But for tearing the clothes of the Lamb, the blasphemer accepted the reward for his deeds. For the Lord tore the belly of Arius, (all his innards dropped out), as a second Judas, and at the same time also tore the impious soul from the corrupt body, as an example and lesson to other heretics, blasphemers".

*S. V. Bulgakov, Manual for Church Servers, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp 0604-0606
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