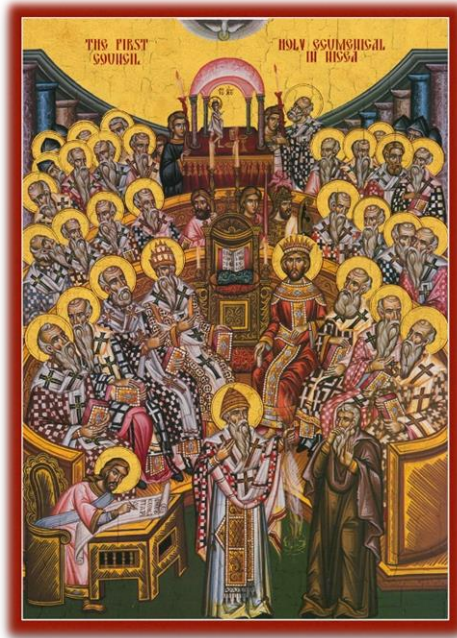


Orthodox Church in America + Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church Williamsport, PA.



7th Sunday of Pascha

The Fathers of the 1st Ecumenical Council

May 28th, 2023

Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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Today's Scripture Readings:

Epistle: Acts 20:16-18, 28-36

Gospel: St. John 17:1-13

Blessed Memorial Day! Memory eternal to all those who have given their lives in service to our Country.

A warm welcome to everyone, and especially to all our visitors this morning! Please join us for some fellowship after in the Parish Hall!

Services, Events & Announcements

- + *Compline / Bible Study - Wednesday May 31st at 5:30*
- + *Great Vespers – Saturday June 3rd at 5*
- + **Pentecost – Feast of the Holy Trinity** - *Hours, Divine Liturgy & Kneeling Vespers – Sunday June 4th at 9:40 - Fellowship following in the Hall.*
- + **MANY MORE BLESSED YEARS** *to the newly illumined child of God, Sophia Mezentsev, and to her Godparents & Family!!*
- + *Our May and June Benevolence collections will go to help Seminarians and their families in our Diocese.*
- + *If you would like to donate toward our ongoing iconography projects, please use the “Designated” envelopes at the **Candle Counter** and specify “for Icons.” If you have any questions about this project, please see Fr Seraphim.*

✝ Beginning this Tuesday morning May 30th, the Church will be open from 7:30am – 8:30am for private prayer. Come to the quiet and spend some time with Our Lord.

Our Giving – May 21st, 2023

Tithes/Offerings - \$785.00 / Online Giving - \$211.00

Candle Offerings – \$63.00 / Benevolence - \$20.00

Memorial Gift - \$1,000.00

Thank you all for your generosity!

Regarding Holy Communion: Only those faithful who are Orthodox Christians and have **properly prepared themselves** by **fasting, prayer [i.e., Prayers Before Communion], recent confession**, and who were *at least present for the reading of the Epistle and Gospel* should approach to receive the Holy Eucharist. *We should all be at peace with everyone too.* If you have any questions about Communion, please see Fr. Seraphim. 😊

✝ ***Volume I - Doctrine and Scripture***
The Symbol of Faith - The Nicene Creed by Fr. Thomas Hopko

The Nicene Creed should be called the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed since it was formally drawn up at the first ecumenical council in Nicea (325) and at the second ecumenical council in Constantinople (381).

The word creed comes from the Latin credo which means “I believe.” In the Orthodox Church the creed is usually called The Symbol of Faith which means literally the “bringing together” and the “expression” or “confession” of the faith.

In the early Church there were many different forms of the Christian confession of faith; many different “creeds.” These creeds were always used originally in relation to baptism. Before being baptized a person had to state what he believed. The earliest Christian creed was probably the simple confession of faith that Jesus is the Christ, i.e., the Messiah; and that the Christ is Lord. By publicly confessing this belief, the person could be baptized into Christ, dying and rising with Him into the New Life of the Kingdom of God in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

As time passed different places had different credal statements, all professing the identical faith, yet using different forms and expressions, with different degrees of detail and emphasis. These credal forms usually became more detailed and elaborate in those areas where questions about the faith had arisen and heresies had developed.

In the fourth century a great controversy developed in Christendom about the nature of the Son of God (also called in the Scripture the Word or Logos). Some said that the Son of God is a creature like everything else made by God. Others contended that the Son of God is eternal, divine, and uncreated. Many councils met and made many statements of faith about the nature of the Son of God. The controversy raged throughout the entire Christian world.

It was the definition of the council which the Emperor Constantine called in the city of Nicea in the year 325 which was ultimately accepted by the Orthodox Church as the proper Symbol of Faith. This council is now called the first ecumenical council, and this is what it said:

We 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.

Following the controversy about the Son of God, the Divine Word, and essentially connected with it, was the dispute about the Holy Spirit. The following definition of the Council in Constantinople in 381, which has come to be known as the second ecumenical council was added to the Nicene statement:

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 worshipped 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.

This whole Symbol of Faith was ultimately adopted throughout the entire Church. It was put into the first person form “I believe” and used for the formal and official confession of faith made by a person (or his sponsor-godparent) at his baptism. It is also used as the formal statement of faith by a non-Orthodox Christian entering the communion of the Orthodox Church. In the same way the creed

became part of the life of Orthodox Christians and an essential element of the Divine Liturgy of the Orthodox Church at which each person formally and officially accepts and renews his baptism and membership in the Church. Thus, the Symbol of Faith is the only part of the liturgy (repeated in another form just before Holy Communion) which is in the first person. All other songs and prayers of the liturgy are plural, beginning with “we”. Only the credal statement begins with “I.” This, as we shall see, is because faith is first personal, and only then corporate and communal.

To be an Orthodox Christian is to affirm the Orthodox Christian faith—not merely the words, but the essential meaning of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan symbol of faith. It means as well to affirm all that this statement implies, and all that has been expressly developed from it and built upon it in the history of the Orthodox Church over the centuries down to the present day. (www.oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/doctrine-scripture/the-symbol-of-faith/nicene-creed)

A Peaceful Heart

Turning to Christ as Our Refuge from the Storm

These difficult times are causing more and more people to lose hope. The struggle just to stay the course has become increasingly stressful for ever increasing numbers of people, and Christians are no exception. When we are down it is good for us to turn our face towards Christ, remembering the words from the Gospel of Matthew, "Thou art indeed the Son of God". This world promises us nothing, but in Christ we have everything, for He is the only refuge in Whom we can turn in times of trial.

"Here on earth there is nothing that can give us inner peace. For neither riches, nor glory, nor honour, nor position, nor family, nor neighbors can give us unshakable inner peace. There is only one giver of life, peace and joy – God (Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica)."

As Christians we must not allow anything to disturb our peace of heart, for we know that this life is transitory. "If you think about finding paradise on earth, even in a monastery, then you are very mistaken. Paradise—full blessedness—does not exist on earth, and cannot, because man was not created for earth, but for heaven (Abbess Thaisia of Leushino)."

*With love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon*

St Isidora the Fool of Tabenna (Egypt) (4th c.)

She was a nun in a monastery in Egypt, and pretended madness and mental weakness in order to hide her virtues and her ascetic life. She did the dirtiest jobs, lived on scraps from the nuns' tables, and was despised by her sisters. An angel appeared to the ascetic Pitirim and revealed Isidora's true sanctity to him. He came to the monastery and, seeing Isidora, prostrated himself before her, at which she prostrated before him. When the sisters told him that she was mad, he answered "It is you who are mad: she is greater before God than either you or me. I only beg God to give me also that which is destined for her at the dreadful Judgement." At this, the sisters' eyes were opened, and they began to treat Isidora with honor. But she, to avoid being honored by anyone, fled the monastery and was not heard from again. (www.abbamoses.com)

***May All of You and Your Families Have a Blessed and Safe
Memorial Day Weekend!***



Prayers For the Health and Salvation of those in need: Many Years!

Priestmonk Ambrose (Young), Abbot Tryphon, Mitred-Archpriest Nicholas (Harris), Mitred-Archpriest Daniel & Mat. Myra (Kovalak), Archpriest Moses (Berry), Pres. Eva (Koutroulelis), Pres. Rosy (Tanveer), Mat. Mary Lynn (Henry), Mat. Deborah (Belonick), Mat. Seraphima (Hunter) & Xenia Crews & the children to be born of them, Paul Beard, Evelyn Chabal, Phoebe Davis, Michael Kuzmiak, Juliana Matusiak, Elias Ciaccio, Elizabeth Wadsworth, Sebastian Fillar, Infant John, Infant Wyatt, Isaac Bannister, Vera Christopher, Paisios Sundin, Christine Perrin, Agnes Andrianoff, Michael Juran, Edward Hojnicky, & those suffering from the war in Ukraine.

Prayers for the Newly Departed: Memory Eternal!

Phillip Kundis +4/28, Ian Young +5/10, Dawn Faulkner +5/19 & Those who have lost their life in the war in Ukraine.