



Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

Sunday, December 15, 2019 - The Great Supper

26TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 1

Sunday of the Forefathers. Hieromartyr Eleutherius, Bishop of Illyria, and his mother, Martyr Evanthia.



Hymns for Today

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: “Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy Kingdom! // Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind!”

Through faith Thou didst justify the Forefathers, betrothing through them the Church of the gentiles. These saints exult in glory, for from their seed came forth a glorious fruit: she who bore Thee without seed. // So by their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy on us!

Ye did not worship the graven image, O thrice-blessed ones, but armed with the immaterial Essence of God, ye were glorified in a trial by fire. From the midst of unbearable flames ye called on God, crying: “Hasten, O compassionate One! Speedily come to our aid, // for Thou art merciful and able to do as Thou dost will!”

Epistle Reading - Ephesians 3:4-11

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness,

which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Gospel Reading - Luke 14:16-24

Then He said to him, “A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, ‘Come, for all things are now ready.’ But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’ Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.’ And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.’ Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.’”

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

TODAY: 9:00 AM - 3rd & 6th Hours (8:40AM), Divine Liturgy, Coffee Hour, Church School, Adult Education - Intro to Divine Liturgy

DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS: A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from Holy Trinity Orthodox Church. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive the Holy Sacrament through prayer and fasting.

Parastas offered today for Julia Talpash by the Talpash family, and for Walter and Helen Cherkis by the Cherkis family

WED: DEC 18, 6:30 AM - Divine Liturgy
SAT: DEC 21, 9 AM-1 PM - Annual Cookie Sale
SAT: DEC 21, 4:00 PM - Great Vespers
SUN: DEC 22, 9:00 AM - 3rd & 6th Hours (8:40AM),
Divine Liturgy, Coffee Hour & Christmas Yolka
TUES: DEC 24, 7:00 PM - Nativity Compline &
Matins w/ Lity
WED: Dec 25, 9:00 AM - Divine Liturgy for the Great
Feast of the Nativity of our Lord

Attendance & Donations - 12/8/19

Attendance: 74 | Regular: \$1448
Improvements: \$252 | Candles: \$270

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Living: Cynthia Dulsky, Josie Bisset, Theodore & Elenor Sovryda, Nancy Valletta & Family, Nadine Breisch, Luke Austin, Susan Goobic Howell, Rosalie Bagenski

Calling all Parishioners!

INTRODUCTION TO DIVINE LITURGY
A brief intro to the Liturgy w/ Fr. Innocent
NEXT CLASS -TODAY!

NATIVITY FAST CONFESSIONS: As we approach the Great Feast of the **Nativity of Our Lord** all are encouraged to participate in the sacrament of Confession. Confession will be available 30 minutes before and after all services between now and Nativity, or by appointment. Anyone who receives communion on a regular basis should go to confession during each of the 4 fasts at a minimum and of course anytime necessary in between. As we draw close to Him, may we all have a blessed Feast and experience the birth and renewal of Christ's presence in our hearts!

THIS WEEKEND! OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS COOKIE SALE: Time is flying very quickly and it is already time for our Betty Crockers and Pillsbury dough boys to get their cookie sheets out for

baking cookies for our annual Christmas cookie sale. New bakers are always welcome and greatly appreciated. A sign up sheet is in the back for your name and what type of delicious cookie you will be making. We are asking each baker to bake 12 dozen cookies. Assembly day is Dec 20th starting at 9:00 am and pick-up on the 21st from 9:00 am to 1:00pm. Looking forward to welcoming new bakers along with our regulars.

THE COOKIE ORDER SIGN-UP SHEET is now in the back of the church. Contact Person for the orders is Nora Clark at 570-313-2180. Prices as follows: ½ lb - \$5.00 // 1 lb - \$10 // Welch Cookies \$8. We appreciate all the orders we can get, so spread the word. This is one of our good fundraisers. ANY questions ask Mary Ann Kudey or Josie Bisset.

ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION REMINDER - 2019 is rapidly coming to a close. With that in mind we would like to put out a gentle reminder to anyone who has not yet had an opportunity to contribute their annual \$80 to the Paving & Painting Loan payoff. As you know, a 5-year loan was originally obtained so that much needed repairs to the drives and parking areas could be accomplished. This year a similar initiative was approved, via a special parish meeting, to obtain a loan to pay for the painting of the church interior. With consolidation of both loans annual parishioner contributions of \$80 annually for a 5-year period was approved and implemented. If any parishioner is not able to afford this amount any contribution within your means would be appreciated. Thank you in advance for your contributions in caring for the upkeep and growth of our parish.

VISITATION PROGRAM FOR SHUT-INS, ELDERLY, & SICK: Holy Trinity will begin a structured visitation program for our elder parishioners who are no longer able to be at Church or participate in our community. If you are interested, please sign up in the vestibule or speak with Fr. Innocent.

The Creed: A Brief Commentary

From the book, The Heavenly Banquet

I BELIEVE - Faith means, "to be sure of the things we hope for and to be certain of the things we cannot see." Faith (trust and confidence in things that are not

“proven”) fills our life. The food we eat, the house we live in, the car we drive are accepted by us as safe by faith and trust. Faith is necessary for our existence. As we live by faith in our everyday life, so also we live by faith in our spiritual life. Faith is a light by which we see everything else. It takes more faith to deny the existence of God than to believe in God. Our faith does not consist in clever human ideas; it is based on Christ the incarnate Son of God, as He revealed it in His Church.

ONE GOD – Marvelous things are given witness to in the Creed, or Symbol of Faith. What are they? First and foremost is the belief in *one God* – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – the Holy Trinity, not three Gods, but one God. Our God is not a "lonely God, but a communion of Persons.

When we say, "I believe in one God," we do not profess belief merely in the existence of God; we state that we put our trust and rely on this God as "Father".

FATHER – The first Person (neither the word "Person" nor the word "Trinity" is included in the Creed itself – or in the Bible) is known as the "Father". This was revealed to us by Jesus Christ, His eternal Son, who became a human being for our sake: "Teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Mt.28:19). God is called Father, because He gave birth to the Son "before all ages," from before all eternity, outside of time.

ALMIGHTY – God is the *Pantocrator*, as we see Him depicted in the domes of our churches, the All-governing, Ruler of all, stern and awesome, but also "one who manifests His power in the form and degree adopted to leading creation towards full communion with Himself." Our God is not an oppressive Ruler, as conceived in the West, but an assuring, benevolent God, Who loves the world He created and governs. Metropolitan Hierotheos says, He "is not like a watchmaker, who makes a watch, winds it up and abandons it, letting it work of its own accord. Rather, He continues to govern the world Himself personally."

CREATOR – The Father is the "Creator of heaven and earth." We believe that the world did not come into being by itself. God created, that is, He brought the world out of non-existence into being. In bringing the world into existence God does not create *ex nihilo* (from nothing) because *nihil ex nihilo fit* (nothing can come out of nothing). Instead God created the world out of things that did not exist, which is not the same as saying that He created from nothing. We believe that God the Father created the world by the power and wisdom of the divine Logos, and the energy of the Holy Spirit, acting through

the divine energies. Self-existing God, the "I AM WHO I AM (THE EXISTING ONE) in the creative act calls "the non-beings as beings," communicating to them an attribute of His: being, existence.

God created not only the visible or material world we are aware of through our five senses, but an invisible and immaterial, or spiritual world as well, which we perceive through our faith. He created and continues to create every soul, the immaterial, spiritual angelic powers, and all the "ages" which the human mind cannot comprehend.

We do not believe in a mere "supreme being." We are not deists. We believe in a providential God, a loving God, who provides for His children and loves them, just as a human father does.

SON – Then, marvel upon marvel, we believe in God the Son, not another God, not God existing or manifesting Himself in another way, but God that shares everything with God the Father, except being what He is in a unique way: God the Son. He is not a lesser God or another God: "He is the true God and eternal life."

Christ was a historic figure – as much as Mohammed and Alexander the Great were historic figures. He was not declared divine by His followers, or by Emperor Constantine, but declared Himself to be the Son of God: "He... was calling God His own Father, **thereby making Himself equal to God**. That is why we declare, "You are our God, we know of no other God beside You (Matins Service).

This Son of God was also Son of Man. He came down from heaven, but did not fall from the sky. He was born without human seed yet His flesh was fashioned of the pure blood of the Virgin Mary. Though he was God in human form He accepted to die in order to conquer death by coming alive again in a glorious body, and thus redeem humanity. He died and rose again not for Himself to become something He was not before, or out of compulsion, but *for us and for our salvation*. Those who live His life will live with Him eternally when He will return in glory. Those who reject Him will suffer eternally the consequences of having rejected Him.

Today, there are many so-called Christians and "theologians" who deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, like "Bishop" Spong and the other "Jesus Seminar" scholars. They deny His virgin birth, the miracles He performed, His bodily Resurrection and Ascension into heaven. Our Church accepts the biblical accounts of the life, teachings, miracles and Resurrection of the Lord from the grave as true.

AND BECAME MAN - The Greek word, *anthropos*, although grammatically is of masculine gender is sex-inclusive: "a human being."

HOLY SPIRIT - The Holy Spirit completes the triad of the divine Persons: "Unity, having from all eternity arrived by motion at duality, found its rest in Trinity" (St. Gregory the Theologian). Christ placed the Holy Spirit on the same level with the Father and the Son, this teaching us to honor all three equally, as the Apostle Paul does.

According to a formulation by Bishop Theophan the Recluse (1894), we are saved by the good will of the Father through the merits of the Son by the grace of the Holy Spirit: It is peculiar to Orthodox services that nearly all of the prayers end with praise to the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

How do the three divine Persons differ from each other? Again the Theologian explicates: "The Father is the Begetter and the Emitter... The Son is the Begotten, and the Holy Spirit [is] the Emission. The Person of the Father alone is the source of divinity of His Son and *Logos*, and of His Spirit. He communicates His essence to both of Them. God the Father in His Person is the source of unity. Both the Son and the Holy Spirit derive their essence from the Person of God the Father. Whatever the Father and the Son have in common is shared by the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit receives His being from the Father alone, the only source of divinity, Just as the Son receives His being from the Father alone.

THE CHURCH - The construction of the Creed is "I believe in one God... and in one Lord... and in the Holy Spirit." After the two "and" and the period, we continue, "In one holy catholic and apostolic Church. This "in" is tied to the first "in" so what we say here is "I believe in the Church - that is why the phrase is set in the objective case (ecclesian). As we believe in the triune God, so we believe In the Church. The Church is an object of our faith, as God is.

The Church is not identified with just the clergy or the hierarchy. The Church is comprised of all the people of God in union with Christ. The Church encompasses the living and the dead, the human beings and the angels. As we cannot define Christ, so we cannot define His Body, the Church. One thing we can do, however, - and we do - is to identify her with the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Church is not part of the Church, She is not one of the Churches - She is *the* Church. "Outside the Orthodox Church there is no other Church, only heresies."

The often quoted statement, "We know where the Church is but we cannot be sure where it is not," is

troublesome. The Church is visible, and so are her members. Members of the Church are those who maintain communion with the Body of Christ. They have life precisely because they are In communion with Christ. Those who are not in communion" have no life in them.

ONE BAPTISM - The "one baptism" we confess is the one granted in and by the Church. According to St. Nektarios (1920). "Those who are not reborn by the divine grace in the only ONE HOLY, CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH, do not belong to any church, either visible or invisible." There are no Mysteries (Sacraments) outside the Church. The Church is the great Mystery in which all the Mysteries of God are realized.

Baptism does not free man from the inheritance of the original sin (understood in the West as guilt), but from the power of death. Baptism renders man partaker of Christ's incorruption and immortality, and bestows upon him divine sonship and inheritance of God's Kingdom, although God allows corruption and death to continue as an opportunity for man to cooperate in the work of his salvation. In this life of testing and trial we are strengthened by the Church our Lord instituted, and by her Holy Mysteries, which unite us with Him by the power and energy of the Holy Spirit, Who guides and sanctifies the faithful.

RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD and LIFE ETERNAL - These two articles of faith complete the Creed. The Lord taught us that the dead will rise: "Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear it will live". How will such a thing happen? The Apostle Paul answers that as a seed is sown and a new life springs out of it after it dies, so also a body "is sown in corruption and it is raised in incorruption."

Influenced by the ancient Greek philosophy, we speak of the immortality of the soul. And although it is true that the soul keeps living on after the body is disintegrated, the body too will rise from its corrupt state and, reunited with the soul, it will live forever in incorruption, that is in union with God. Salvation is to live eternally with God to be one with God. Who is the existing One. "Redemption means liberation from finitude," and union with the Infinite God.

AMEN - "The term 'Amen' has two meanings. The first is a prayer and the second is a confirmation. In reciting the Creed, we both confirm what is confessed, and pray that all this is realized within our own personal life."