

**St. Sophia/SS. Faith, Hope & Agape Greek Orthodox Church**  
**June 1, 2025**



**St. Sophia/SS. Faith, Hope & Agape**  
**Greek Orthodox Church of Valley Forge**

900 South Trooper Road  
Jeffersonville, PA, 19403

Tel.: (610) 650-8960 • Fax: (610) 650-8961

[www.saintsophiachurch.org](http://www.saintsophiachurch.org) email: [office@saintsophiachurch.org](mailto:office@saintsophiachurch.org)

Sunday Worship: 8:45 am - Orthros: 10:00 am Divine Liturgy  
Office Hours - 10 am to 4 pm

**Rev. Fr. Symeon Williams**  
[frsymeon@saintsophiachurch.org](mailto:frsymeon@saintsophiachurch.org)  
Metropolis of New Jersey



June 1, 2025  
Fathers of the 1st Council  
Justin the Philosopher and Martyr and his Companions  
Pyrros the Hieromartyr

**ENTRANCE HYMNS**

**Apolytikion of the Feast – Anelifthis en doxi (“You ascended in glory”)**

*You ascended in glory, O Christ our God, after You filled the Disciples with joy, by promising to send them the Holy Spirit, and You blessed them and established their faith, that You are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.*

**Resurrectional Apolytikion – Angelike Dhinamis (“Angelic Powers”)**

*Angelic Powers were in Your Sepulchre and those who guarded You became as men long dead. And standing there was Mary by Your Tomb seeking Your pure and sacred Body, O You despoiled Hades yet tempted not by him were You. You did meet the Virgin O Life Bestower, O You Who rose from the dead, Glory to You O Lord.*

**Apolytikion for the Holy Fathers – Iperdhedhoxasmenos I, Christe (“Supremely glorified are You, O Christ”)**

*Supremely blessed are You, O Christ our God. You established the holy Fathers upon the earth as beacons, and through them You have guided us all to the true Faith, O greatly merciful One, glory be to You.*

**Apolytikion of St. Sophia/Ss. Faith, Hope & Agape**

**Greek**

*Ὁς ελαία κατὰ καρπὸς ἀνεβλάστησας, ἐν ταῖς ἀνταῖς τοῦ Κυρίου, Σοφία μάρτυς σεμνή, καὶ προσήγαγες Χριστῷ καρπὸν ἡ δύτατον, τοὺς τῆς νηδύος σου βλαστούς, διὰ γόνων εὐαγῶν, Ἀγάπην τε καὶ Ἐλπίδα σὺν τῇ θεόφρονι Πίστει, μεθῶν δυσώπει ὑπὲρ πάντων ἡμῶν.*

**English Phonetics for Greek**

*Os elea kata karpos anevlastisas, en tes avles tu Kyriou Sofia martys semni, ke prosigages Christo karpon idytaton, tus tis nidyos su vlastus, di' agonon evagon, Agapin te ke Elpida, syn ti theofroni Pisti; meth' on dysopi yper pandon imon.*

**English**

*As an olive tree laden with fruit you sprouted forth, in the courtyards of the Lord, Sophia martyr dignified, and you brought to Christ a fruit most sweet, Namely your womb's own sprouts, brought up by instructive deeds: your daughters Love and Hope, along with God-minded Faith; together intercede with God for us all.*

**Kontakion of the Feast – Tin iper imon plirosas (“When for us You had fulfilled”)**

*When You had fulfilled the dispensation for our sake, \* and united things on earth with the things in heaven, \* You were taken up thither in glory, O Christ our God, \* going not away from any place, \* but continuing inseparable, \* and to them that love You crying out: \* “I am with you, and there is, therefore, none against you.”*

**CAMP GOOD SHEPHERD**

**Maryland**  
Camp Wo-Me-To  
1200 Knopp Rd,  
Jarrettsville, MD 21084  
June 15 - 21, 2025  
Early Bird: \$625  
Register by April 30, 2025  
\$675 Regular Tuition

**Virginia**  
Camp Piankatank  
1586 Stampers Bay Rd  
Hartfield, VA 23071  
July 6-12, 2025  
\$650 Tuition

**New Jersey**  
Camp Linwood MacDonald  
1 Flatbrook Rd,  
Sandyston, NJ 07826  
July 13 - 19, 2025  
\$750 Tuition

**REGISTER HERE!**

<https://www.nj.goarch.org/camp-good-shepherd>  
908-301-0500

## Project Mexico 2025 – WE NEED YOUR HELP!



Since October our team has worked tirelessly raising funds for building supplies. We are VERY close to meeting all the financial needs of our team.

**As of today, we are just \$2,750 short on our final goal.**

Our team from St Sophia has committed to build a home with the help of other Orthodox Christians through Project Mexico. Led by John Pogas, the team includes Lukas Richie, Demetrios Lowry, Stefan Lowry and the newly illumined Tyler Ball and Anthony Trioli.

You can help us reach our goal by donating through the church donation page and earmarking your funds for Project Mexico. If you would like to learn more about this incredibly rewarding mission, please email John Pogas, the group leader, at [johnpogas@gmail.com](mailto:johnpogas@gmail.com) or call him at 215-896-1963.



Link to donation page

### Epistle Reading

The reading is from Acts of the Apostles 20:16-18, 28-36

*Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers.*

*Verse: For you are just in all you have done.*

IN THOSE DAYS, Paul had decided to sail past Ephesos, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost. And from Miletos he sent to Ephesos and called to him the elders of the church. And when they came to him, he said to them: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities, and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.'" And when he had spoken thus, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

### Ἀνάγνωσις ἐπιστολῆς

Πράξεις Ἀποστόλων 20:16-18, 28-36 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα

*Εὐλογητὸς εἶ, Κύριε, ὁ Θεὸς τῶν Πατέρων ἡμῶν.*

*Στίχ. Ὅτι δίκαιος εἶ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν, οἷς ἐποίησας ἡμῖν.*

Ἐν ταῖς ἡμεραῖς ἐκείναις, ἔκρινεν ὁ Παῦλος παραπλευσαι τὴν Ἔφεσον, ὅπως μὴ γένηται αὐτῷ χρονοτριβῆσαι ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ· ἔσπευδεν γάρ, εἰ δυνατόν ἦν αὐτῷ, τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς Πεντηκοστῆς γενέσθαι εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα. Ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς Μιλήτου πέμψας εἰς Ἔφεσον μετεκαλέσατο τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας. Ὡς δὲ παρεγένοντο πρὸς αὐτόν, εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, προσέχετε οὖν ἑαυτοῖς καὶ παντὶ τῷ ποιμνίῳ, ἐν ᾧ ὑμᾶς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἔθετο ἐπισκόπους, ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ κυρίου καὶ θεοῦ, ἣν περιεποιήσατο διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος. Ἐγὼ γὰρ οἶδα τοῦτο, ὅτι εἰσελεύσονται μετὰ τὴν ἄφιξίν μου λύκοι βαρεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς, μὴ φειδόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου· καὶ ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν ἀναστήσονται ἄνδρες λαλοῦντες διεστραμμένα, τοῦ ἀποσπᾶν τοὺς μαθητὰς ὀπίσω αὐτῶν. Διὸ γρηγορεῖτε, μνημονεύοντες ὅτι τριετίαν νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν οὐκ ἐπαυσάμην μετὰ δακρύων νουθετῶν ἕνα ἕκαστον. Καὶ τὰ νῦν παρατίθεμαι ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, τῷ θεῷ καὶ τῷ λόγῳ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ, τῷ δυναμένῳ ἐποικοδομῆσαι, καὶ δοῦναι ὑμῖν κληρονομίαν ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πᾶσιν. Ἄργυρίου ἢ χρυσοῦ ἢ ἱματισμοῦ οὐδενὸς ἐπεθύμησα. Αὐτοὶ γινώσκετε ὅτι ταῖς χρεαίαις μου καὶ τοῖς οὖσιν μετ' ἐμοῦ ὑπῆρέτησαν αἱ χεῖρες αὐταί. Πάντα ὑπέδειξα ὑμῖν, ὅτι οὕτως κοπιῶντας δεῖ ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν ἀσθενούντων, μνημονεύειν τε τῶν λόγων τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, ὅτι αὐτὸς εἶπεν, Μακάριόν ἐστιν μάλλον διδόναι ἢ λαμβάνειν. Καὶ ταῦτα εἰπὼν, θείς τὰ γόνατα αὐτοῦ, σὺν πᾶσιν αὐτοῖς προσηύξατο.

## GOSPEL READING

### The Gospel According to John 17:1-13

At that time, Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work which you gave me to do; and now, Father, you glorify me in your own presence with the glory which I had with you before the world was made.

"I have manifested your name to the men whom you gave me out of the world; yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you; for I have given them the words which you gave me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you did send me. I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are mine; all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves."

## ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ

### Ἐκ τοῦ Κατὰ Ἰωάννην 17:1-13 Εὐαγγελίου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ ἐπήρε τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ εἶπε· πάτερ, ἐλήλυθεν ἡ ὥρα· δόξασόν σου τὸν υἱόν, ἵνα καὶ ὁ υἱός σου δοξάσῃ σε, καθὼς ἔδωκας αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν πάσης σαρκός, ἵνα πᾶν ὃ δέδωκας αὐτῷ δώσῃ αὐτοῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωὴ, ἵνα γινώσκωσί σε τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν Θεὸν καὶ ὃν ἀπέστειλας Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. ἐγὼ σε ἐδόξασα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὸ ἔργον ἐτελείωσα ὃ δέδωκάς μοι ἵνα ποιήσω· καὶ νῦν δόξασόν με σύ, πάτερ, παρὰ σεαυτῷ τῇ δόξῃ ἣ εἶχον πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι παρὰ σοί. Ἐφανέρωσά σου τὸ ὄνομα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις οὓς δέδωκάς μοι ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου. σοὶ ἦσαν καὶ ἐμοὶ αὐτοὺς δέδωκας, καὶ τὸν λόγον σου τετηρήκασι. νῦν ἔγνωκαν ὅτι πάντα ὅσα δέδωκάς μοι παρὰ σοῦ ἐστίν· ὅτι τὰ ῥήματα ἃ δέδωκάς μοι δέδωκα αὐτοῖς, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔλαβον, καὶ ἔγνωσαν ἀληθῶς ὅτι παρὰ σοῦ ἐξήλθον, καὶ ἐπίστευσαν ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας. Ἐγὼ περὶ αὐτῶν ἐρωτῶ· οὐ περὶ τοῦ κόσμου ἐρωτῶ, ἀλλὰ περὶ ὧν δέδωκάς μοι, ὅτι σοὶ εἰσι, καὶ τὰ ἐμὰ πάντα σὰ ἐστί καὶ τὰ σὰ ἐμὰ, καὶ δεδόξασμαι ἐν αὐτοῖς. καὶ οὐκέτι εἰμι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, καὶ οὗτοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ εἰσὶ, καὶ ἐγὼ πρὸς σὲ ἔρχομαι. πάτερ ἅγιε, τήρησον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ᾧ δέδωκάς μοι, ἵνα ὡσιν ἐν καθὼς ἡμεῖς. ὅτε ἤμην μετ' αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, ἐγὼ ἐτήρουν αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου· οὓς δέδωκάς μοι ἐφύλαξα, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀπώλετο εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας, ἵνα ἡ γραφὴ πληρωθῇ. νῦν δὲ πρὸς σὲ ἔρχομαι, καὶ ταῦτα λαλῶ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἵνα ἔχωσιν τὴν χαρὰν τὴν ἐμὴν πεπληρωμένην ἐν αὐτοῖς.



*Facing the needs of our neighbors, together.*

FOCUS North America exists to serve the poor by bringing together Orthodox Christian churches and community partners to provide Food, Occupation, Clothing, Understanding, Shelter, and other assistance to address the needs of local communities.

FOCUS Philadelphia – based out of Saint Sophia and led by John Pogas as Center Director – is committed to understanding and addressing the needs of our neighbors. As Christ said, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of my brothers and sisters, you did for me” - Matthew 25:40

## We serve hot meals in

- Norristown every Wednesday evening at 7:00 PM
- Philadelphia every Thursday evening at 8:00 PM

Discover how you can support this vital ministry either by volunteering, donating food, funding or simply spreading the word. Visit [www.focusphiladelphia.org](http://www.focusphiladelphia.org) to learn more or use our SignUpGenius (link below).



[Link to SignUpGenius](#)

## PRAYER MINISTRY



*"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7*

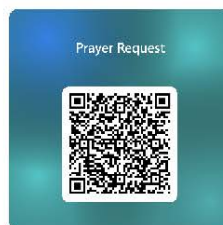
*"And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing you will receive." Matthew 21:22*

*"For with God, nothing will be impossible." Luke 1:37*

Clearly, there is nothing more powerful than the power of prayer. Imagine someone struggling or suffering and then having multiple people praying for them daily! Our "Prayer Warriors" do just that. They will pray for individuals added to the list daily.

If you know of someone in need, you can add them to our prayer list using one of the following methods:

1. Fill out a request form at the box found in the church narthex *OR*
2. Send an email to [Prayers@SaintSophiaChurch.org](mailto:Prayers@SaintSophiaChurch.org) *OR*
3. Use the anonymous online form (the link is found under Prayer Ministry on our website), or you can use this link <https://forms.office.com/r/LZAHY16LSZ> *OR*
4. Use the QR form below (also found on the box in the narthex) which takes you to the anonymous form.



## THE NICENE CREED (The Confession of Faith)

I believe in one God, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages;

Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not created, of one essence with the Father, through 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.

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried;

And He rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father;

And He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; His kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Creator of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke through the prophets.

In one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.  
I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
I look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the age to come.

Amen

### ENGLISH

Our Father, who art in heaven;  
hallowed be Thy name, Thy  
Kingdom come, Thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses, as  
we forgive those who trespass  
against us; and lead us not into  
temptation, but deliver us from  
evil.

### GREEK

Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς  
ἁγιασθήτω τό ὄνομά σου,  
ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου,  
γενηθήτω τό θέλημά σου, ὡς  
ἐν οὐρανῷ καί ἐπί τῆς γῆς.

Τόν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τόν  
ἐπιούσιον δός ἡμῖν  
σήμερον καί ἄφες ἡμῖν τά  
ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὡς καί ἡμεῖς  
ἀφίεμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν καί  
μη εἰσενέγκης ἡμᾶς εἰς  
πειρασμόν, ἀλλά ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπό  
τοῦ πονηροῦ.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

### ENGLISH PHONETICS

Pá-ter i-món o en tis ou-ra-nís  
a-gi-as-thí-to to o-no-má Sou,  
el-thé-to I va-si-lí-a Sou,  
ge-ni-thí-to to thé-li-má Sou, os  
en ou-ra-nó ke e-pi tis ghis.

Ton ár-ton i-món ton  
e-pi-ou-si-on dos i-mín  
sí-me-ron ke á-fes i-mín ta  
o-fe-lí-ma-ta i-món, os ke i-mís  
a-fí-e-men tis o-fí-lé-tes i-món ke  
mi i-se-nég-kis i-más is  
pi-ras-món, al-la rí-se i-más a-pó  
tou po-ni-roú.

Phonetics by Dr. Christine Kerxhali,  
orthodoxtoday.wordpress.com



## Schedule of Events SUNDAY - JUNE 1

- 10 AM Divine Liturgy (Church Respectful Attire, Please)
- 12 PM Big Tent Opens
- 1 PM Rides & Games Open
- 1 PM Church Tour
- 1:30 PM St. Sophia Jr. Asteria Dancers
- 2 PM Spirit of Macedonia Dancers
- 3 PM Church Tour
- 3 PM St. Sophia Sr. Asteria Dancers
- 5 PM Final Church Tour
- 6 PM The fun must end. See you next year!

(Times subject to adjustment)

## June Poor Box Donations Thank you for considering a gift!

Please consider supporting the philanthropic outreach of our Church through the Philoptochos Poor Box located in the Pangari. Each month 100% of the donations are designated to a specific charitable organization selected by Philoptochos.

Donations made to the Philoptochos Poor Box in June will be provided to Marvin's Home, a Montgomery County nonprofit that furnishes homes for young adults aged out of foster care. You can learn more about this worthwhile organization at [www.marvinshome.org](http://www.marvinshome.org).

Thank you for your generosity in support of St. Sophia Philoptochos's efforts in supporting organizations in our mission to "help the poor, the destitute, the hungry, the aged, the sick, the unemployed, the orphaned, the imprisoned, the widowed, the handicapped, the victims of disasters, to undertake the burial of impoverished persons and to offer assistance to anyone who may need the help of the church through fundraising efforts".

**Senior Citizen Ministry:** St. Sophia's Senior Parea is open to all senior citizens of the community. The meetings take place on Thursdays from 10:00 am to 12 noon. on the following link: <http://www.youtube.com/@stsophiaVF>

**Sponsor Coffee Hour:** Thank you to everyone who has sponsored coffee hour recently. If you are interested in sponsoring a coffee hour, please sign up on the Coffee Hour Sponsor Sheet on the window at the back of the hall near the coffee/refreshments table. **Please note that the church will supply coffee, creamer, juice, and paper products to eliminate waste and clutter. We ask that coffee hour sponsors donate \$25 (made payable to St. Sophia Church) to offset these expenses. Thank you!**

## Communion Prayers

*I believe and confess, Lord, that You are truly the Christ, the Son of the living God, Who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the first. I also believe that this is truly Your pure Body and that this is truly Your precious Blood. Therefore, I pray to You, have mercy upon me, and forgive my transgressions, voluntary and involuntary, in word and deed, in knowledge or in ignorance. And make me worthy, without condemnation, to partake of Your pure Mysteries for the remission of sins and for eternal life. Amen.*

*Behold, I approach for Divine Communion. O Maker, burn me not as I partake, For You are fire consuming the unworthy. But cleanse me from every stain.*

*O Son of God, receive me today as a partaker of Your mystical supper. For I will not speak of the mystery to Your enemies, nor will I give You a kiss, as did Judas. But like the thief, I confess to You: Remember me, Lord, in Your Kingdom.*

*Tremble, O man, as you behold the divine Blood. It is a burning coal that sears the unworthy. The Body of God both deifies and nourishes me: It deifies the Spirit and wondrously nourishes the mind.*

*You have smitten me with yearning, O Christ, and by Your divine eros You have changed me. But burn up with spiritual fire my sins, and grant me to be filled with delight in You, so that, leaping for joy, I may magnify, O Good One, Your two comings.*

*How shall I, who am unworthy, enter into the splendor of Your saints? If I should dare to enter into the bridal chamber, my vesture will condemn me, since it is not a wedding garment; and being bound up, I shall be cast out by the angels. Cleanse, O Lord, the filth of my soul, and save me, as You are the one Who loves mankind. In Your love, Lord, cleanse my soul, and save me.*

*Master Who loves mankind, Lord Jesus Christ, my God, let not these Holy Gifts be to my judgment because I am unworthy, but rather for the purification and sanctification of both soul and body and the pledge of the life and Kingdom to come. It is good for me to cleave unto God and to place in Him the hope of my salvation.*

*O Son of God, receive me today as a partaker of Your mystical supper. For I will not speak of the mystery to Your enemies, nor will I give You a kiss, as did Judas. But like the thief, I confess to You: Remember me, Lord, in Your Kingdom.*

June 1, 2025  
Fathers of the 1st Council  
Justin the Philosopher and Martyr and his Companions  
Pyrros the Hieromartyr



**St. Sophia/Ss Faith, Hope & Agape Vigil Candle:** If you are interested in sponsoring a vigil candle, please see a Parish Council member at the Pangari – no advance signup necessary and several individuals or families can sponsor each week. The proceeds of these donations will go to our Mortgage Reduction Fund. Each vigil candle lasts one week; the asking donation is \$10.

**Standing versus kneeling on Sundays:** Each Sunday is a joyful celebration of Pascha – of Christ's victory over death and sin. We experience the Resurrection from Pascha until Pentecost by standing in prayer during all liturgies and do not kneel; kneeling and prostrations are demonstrations of repentance. As every Sunday is a "little Pascha", we are reminded that the Church teaches us to remain standing on Sundays during the invocation (Ἡ Ἐπίκλησις) of the Holy Spirit (the Consecration of the Body and Blood of our Lord). In contrast, during weekday services throughout the year it is customary to kneel during the Consecration. *In lieu of kneeling on Sundays, please bow your heads reverently and pray along with the choir.*

**Saturday Before Pentecost – Saturday of Souls:** On this day we remember all pious and Orthodox Christians who have fallen asleep in the Lord. Saturday of Souls is on **June 7<sup>th</sup>**, with **Orthros at 8:45 am** and **Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am**. Forms for the names of the departed are available at the Pangari (and attached). Please submit your names to the Parish office by 12 noon on **Friday, June 6<sup>th</sup>**. **PLEASE DO NOT text the names or submit them via Facebook.** Also, remember your loved ones by not only submitting their names, but by making koliva and attending the holy services to offer your own prayers for their eternal rest. **Please PRINT CLEARLY, AND ONLY BAPTISMAL FIRST NAMES ARE NECESSARY.**

**Mortgage Reduction Campaign:** As of April 30, 2025, our mortgage balance is \$298,692.75. Thank you to our Stewards and friends who participated this month, and please help us continue to reduce the mortgage to \$0 in the near future.

**Live-streaming of Services:** Liturgical services are now live streamed on **YouTube**. You **DO NOT** need a **YouTube** account to access the on-line services, nor do you need to subscribe. Simply click

**SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS**

|                            |         |   |
|----------------------------|---------|---|
| Fri. May 30 <sup>th</sup>  |         | Grecian festival continues – 11:00 am – 8:00 pm   |
| Sat. May 31 <sup>st</sup>  |         | Grecian festival continues – 11:00 am – 8:00 pm   |
|                            | 5:00 pm | Great Vespers   |
| Sun. June 1 <sup>st</sup>  | 8:45 am | Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy<br>Fathers of the 1 <sup>st</sup> Council<br>Last day Grecian festival – 12 noon – 6:00 pm     |
| Sat. June 7 <sup>th</sup>  | 8:45 am | Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy<br>Saturday of Souls   |
| Sun. June 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 8:45 am | Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy; Kneeling Vespers<br>Holy Pentecost  |
| Sat. June 14 <sup>th</sup> | 4:05 pm | Parish Phillies Game  |
| Sun. June 15 <sup>th</sup> | 8:45 am | Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy<br>Sunday of All Saints<br>Father's Day  |
| Mon. 6/15 – Fri. 6/20      |         | Fr. Symeon is away at Camp Good Shepherd (Maryland)   |
| Sun. June 22 <sup>nd</sup> | 8:45 am | Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Matthew<br>General Assembly Meeting immediately following Liturgy |
| Sun. June 29 <sup>th</sup> | 8:45 am | Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy<br>Peter and Paul, the Holy Apostles   |
| Mon. June 30 <sup>th</sup> | 8:45 am | Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy<br>Synaxis of the Twelve Holy Apostles   |

**Festival Help Needed: If you haven't yet helped with this festival, do so today! Help is needed in all areas:**

- Welcome booth;
- Serving/preparing food (inside and in the tent);
- Cashiering (inside and tent);
- We will also need helpers for cleanup tonight!

**We greatly appreciate any time you can offer!**



Patriarchal and Synodal Encyclical  
Issued on the Occasion of the 1700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea

Prot. No. 335

+ B A R T H O L O M E W

By God's Mercy, Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome  
and Ecumenical Patriarch

To the Plenitude of the Church: May God's Grace and Peace be with you!

We offer a hymn of thanks to the almighty, all-seeing, and benevolent God in Trinity, who vouchsafed that His people reach the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, which bore spiritual witness to the authentic faith in divine Word born without beginning and truly consubstantial with the Father, "who for us and for our salvation descended, was incarnate and became human, suffered and arose on the third day, and ascended to the heavens, who will come again to judge the living and the dead."

The Council of Nicaea constitutes an expression of the synodal nature of the Church, the culmination of its "earliest conciliarity," which is

inseparably linked to the eucharistic realization of church life as well as of the practice of assembling together for decisions “with one accord” (Acts 2:1) on current matters. The Council in Nicaea also signifies the emergence of a new conciliar structure, namely of Ecumenical Councils that would prove definitive for the development of church affairs. It is noteworthy that an Ecumenical Council does not comprise a “permanent institution” in the life of the Church, but an “extraordinary event” in response to a specific threat to the faith, aiming at restoring the ruptured unity and eucharistic communion.

That the Council of Nicaea was convened by the Emperor, that Constantine the Great attended its deliberations and embraced its decisions with the status of imperial law, does not render it “an imperial synod.”<sup>1</sup> It was an unquestionably “ecclesiastical event” whereby the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, decided about its internal affairs, while the Emperor implemented the principle “Render unto Caesar the things that belong to Caesar and to God the things that belong to God” (Mt. 22:21).

In the face of the Arian heresy, the Church, in council, formulated the essence of its faith, which is experienced uninterruptedly. The pre-eternal Son and Word of God, “consubstantial to the Father . . . true God of true God,” through His incarnation, saves humankind from enslavement to the enemy and opens up to us the way of deification through grace. “He became

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<sup>1</sup> Metropolitan John of Pergamon, *Works, Vol. 1: Ecclesiological Studies* (Athens: Domos Books, 2016), 675-6.

human so that we might become divine.”<sup>2</sup> The Symbol of Nicaea proclaims the sure conviction that the ongoing heretical deviation constitutes a denial of the potential for human salvation. In this sense, it is not simply a theoretical declaration, but a confession of faith, just like all the dogmatic texts of the Church, a genuine articulation of the living truth within it and through it.

What is of particular theological importance is the fact that the basis of the Sacred Symbol “We believe . . .” comprises a local baptismal Symbol or group of such Symbols. As the genuine bearer of the perennial self-conscience of the Church, the Council recapitulates and reaffirms the Apostolic deposit preserved by the local Churches. Athanasius the Great mentions that the Synodal Fathers “on matters of faith, do not write “It seemed to us . . .” but rather “This is what the catholic Church believes; and at once they confessed what they believe, in order to demonstrate that nothing novel was discovered in what they wrote, but that their mindset is apostolic, in other words exactly as the Apostles had taught.”<sup>3</sup> The conviction of the divinely-instructed Fathers was that nothing was added to the faith of the Apostles and that the truly ecumenical Symbol of Nicaea comprises a proclamation of the common tradition of the catholic Church. The Conciliar Fathers, whom the Orthodox Church worthily honors and hymns as “precise protectors of the apostolic traditions,” adopted the

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<sup>2</sup> Athanasius the Great, *On the Divine Incarnation*, PG 25.192.

<sup>3</sup> Athanasius the Great, *Letter on the Councils of Ariminum in Italy and Seleucia in Isauria*, PG 26.688.

philosophical term “essence” (and its derivative “of one essence”) to express the Orthodox faith about the divinity of the Word, which Arius denied, and along with this denied the entire mystery of the universally salvific incarnate Divine Economy by becoming embroiled in Hellenistic concepts, thereby rejecting the “God of our Fathers” in the name of the “God of the philosophers.”

Another vitally important matter, which the Council of Nicaea was called to resolve for the sake of enhancing ecclesiastical unity in liturgical practice, was “when and how we should celebrate the Feast of Pascha.” The 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the convening of this Council has brought back the timeliness of the matter of a common celebration of the Lord’s Resurrection. The Holy Great Church of Christ prays that Christians all over the world will return, in accordance with the decrees of the Council of Nicaea, to a celebration of Easter on a common day, as by a blessed coincidence this current year. Such a decision would serve as evidence and as a symbol of genuine progress in the struggle for our ecumenical co-sojourn and co-understanding through theological dialogue and the “dialogue of life,” as a tangible witness of our practical respect for what we have received from the undivided Church. The achievement of such a goal, in the context of this year’s anniversary, was the joint vision of the late Pope Francis of Rome and our Modesty. His passing immediately after all of Christendom celebrated

Easter emphasizes our responsibility to continue in this direction without wavering.

Moreover, the canonical work of the Council of Nicaea was also significant, formulating and affirming synodally the perennial canonical conscience of the Church, establishing the beginning and elevating the status of the metropolitan system, as well as of the prominent position and expanded responsibility of certain Thrones, out of which gradually emerged the system of the Pentarchy. Inasmuch as the canonical legacy of Nicaea is a common inheritance for the entire Christian world, this year's anniversary is called to function as an invitation to return to the sources, namely to the primeval canonical regulations of the undivided Church.

The Ecumenical Throne of Constantinople has perennially served as the guarantor of the decisions of Nicaea. This spirit of the Great Church was also described through the Patriarchal and Synodal Encyclical on the 1600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Council "as the first Ecumenical and truly greatest Council of the Church."<sup>4</sup> The decision to celebrate the anniversary with "a festive and, indeed, joint, if possible, event of all Orthodox Autocephalous Churches, in order altogether to manifest the faith and persistence to this day of our Holy Orthodox Church in the teaching and spirit of that Council, whose inspired decision on the one hand established and sealed the one faith of the Church, while on the other also splendidly presenting the unity of the

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<sup>4</sup> Synodal Minutes, *Codex I*, 94 (August 10, 1925), 102–3.

structure of the church through the presence of delegates from all ends of the world.” Unfortunately, however, this event did not prove feasible due to exceptional circumstances and the vacancy of the Ecumenical Throne. On July 19, 1925, the first Sunday after the enthronement of Patriarch Basil III, the “delayed commitment” was fulfilled with the celebration of “a special Patriarchal and Synodal Liturgy” in the venerable Patriarchal Church. What is of particular ecclesiological importance is that the Encyclical underlines the value of adopting the obligation of the Church of Constantinople—“as more directly associated with and responsible for the feast”—to celebrate this anniversary “which is immense for all of Christendom . . .”

The Council of Nicaea constitutes a milestone in the formation of the doctrinal identity and canonical structure of the Church. It remained the model for handling problems of faith and canonical order on an ecumenical level. The 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary since its convening reminds Christianity of the traditions of the ancient Church, the value of mutual struggle against misconceptions of the Christian faith, and the mission of the faithful to contribute to the multiplication of the “good fruits” of the life in Christ, according to Christ, and directed toward Christ in the world.

Today, we are called to highlight the enduring message of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, the soteriological dimensions and anthropological implications of the term “homo-ousios,” the inseparable link between Christology and anthropology in an age of anthropological

confusion and intense efforts to emphasize the “meta-human” as an open horizon and self-divinizing perspective of human evolution, with the contribution of science and technology. The principle of “divine-human reality” comprises the answer to the impasse of the contemporary vision of a “man-god.” Therefore, reference to the “spirit of Nicaea” presents an invitation for us to turn to the essential aspects of our faith, the nucleus of which is the salvation of humankind in Christ.

Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is the full and perfect revelation of the truth about God and man. “Whoever has seen me has seen my father” (Jn 14:9). The incarnate Word of God demonstrated “first and alone,” as St. Nicholas Cabasilas writes, “the true and perfect human being, exemplary in conduct, in the way of life, and in every other respect.”<sup>5</sup> This Truth is represented in the world by the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church; it is the same Truth that nurtures her, the same Truth that she ministers to. The Church bears the robe of Truth, “woven by theology from above,” always rightly expounding and glorifying “the great mystery of piety,” evangelizing the word of faith, hope, and love, while anticipating the “endless day that knows no evening and no succession,”<sup>6</sup> the coming kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>5</sup> Nicholas Cabasilas, *On the Life in Christ*, PG 150.680.

<sup>6</sup> Basil the Great, *On the Hexaemeron*, PG 29,52.

The task of theology is to reveal the soteriological dimension of doctrine and its interpretation in existential terms, which, along with participation in the ecclesiastical event, demands sensitivity and genuine interest for the human being and the adventure of its freedom. In this sense, the proclamation of our faith in the incarnate divine Word must be accompanied by our tangible response to His saving word: “This is my commandment to you, that you love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12).

In memory, then, of the ineffable gifts that He made and makes in the world, we unceasingly glorify the most-holy and most-splendid name of the Lord of all and God of love, through whom we have known the Father and through whom the Holy Spirit came into the world. Amen!

On June 1<sup>st</sup>, in the year of the Lord 2025.

Πατριαρχική καὶ Συνοδική  
Ἐγκύκλιος Ἐπιστολή  
γιὰ τὸν ἑορτασμὸ  
τῆς χιλιοστῆς ἑπτακοσιοστῆς ἐπετείου τῆς  
Πρώτης Οἰκουμενικῆς Συνόδου στὴ Νίκαια

Ἀριθμ. Πρωτ.: 335

**† Β Α Ρ Θ Ο Λ Ο Μ Α Ι Ο Σ**  
ΕΛΕΩι ΘΕΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ  
ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΕΩΣ - ΝΕΑΣ ΡΩΜΗΣ  
ΚΑΙ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΣ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΗΣ  
ΣΕ ΟΛΟ ΤΟ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΧΑΡΗ ΚΑΙ ΕΙΡΗΝΗ ΑΠΟ ΤΟ ΘΕΟ

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Ὑμνο εὐχαριστίας ἀναπέμπουμε στὸν πανσθενουργό, παντεπόπτη καὶ παντευεργέτη Θεό, ὁ ὁποῖος εἶναι Τριάδα, σὲ αὐτὸν ποὺ ἀξίωσε τὸ λαό του νὰ φθάσει στὴ χιλιοστὴ ἑπτακοσιοστὴ ἐπέτειο τῆς Πρώτης Οἰκουμενικῆς Συνόδου τῆς Νίκαιας, αὐτῆς ποὺ μὲ Πνεῦμα Ἅγιο μαρτύρησε τὴν γνήσια πίστη στὸν συνάναρχο μὲ Αὐτὸν ποὺ τὸν γέννησε καὶ ἀληθινὰ ὁμοούσιο μὲ Ἐκεῖνον Θεὸ Λόγο, «τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν κατελθόντα καὶ σαρκωθέντα καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα, παθόντα καὶ ἀναστάντα τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, καὶ ἐρχόμενον κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς».

Ἡ Σύνοδος τῆς Νικαίας ἀποτελεῖ ἔκφραση τῆς συνοδικῆς φύσης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, κορύφωση τῆς «ἀρχεγόνου συνοδικότητος» αὐτῆς, ἀρρήκτως συνδεδεμένης μὲ τὴν εὐχαριστιακὴν πραγμάτωση τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ζωῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ μὲ τὴν πρακτικὴ τῆς ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συνελύσεως πρὸς λήψη «ὁμοθυμαδόν»<sup>1</sup> ἀποφάσεων ἐπὶ τρεχόντων θεμάτων. Ἡ Σύνοδος τῆς Νικαίας σηματοδοτεῖ ταυτόχρονα καὶ τὴν ἀνάδυση μιᾶς νέας συνοδικῆς δομῆς, αὐτῆς τῆς Οἰκουμενικῆς Συνόδου, ἡ ὁποία ἔμελλε νὰ ἀποβεῖ καθοριστικὴ γιὰ τὴν πορεία τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν πραγμάτων. Ἀξιομνημόνευτο εἶναι ὅτι ἡ Οἰκουμενικὴ Σύνοδος δὲν ἀποτελεῖ «μόνιμο θεσμό» στὴ ζωὴ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ἀλλὰ «ἔκτακτο γεγονός», ἀπάντηση σὲ μία συγκεκριμένη ἀπειλὴ κατὰ τῆς πίστεως, ἡ ὁποία ἀποβλέπει στὴν ἀποκατάσταση τῆς ἐνότητος καὶ τῆς εὐχαριστιακῆς κοινωνίας ποὺ ἔχει διαρραγεῖ.

Τὸ ὅτι ἡ Σύνοδος τῆς Νικαίας συνεκλήθη ἀπὸ τὸν Αὐτοκράτορα, ὅτι ὁ Μέγας Κωνσταντῖνος παρακολούθησε τὶς ἐργασίες καὶ περιέβαλε τὰ ἀναθέματά

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<sup>1</sup> Πράξ. β', 1.

της με τὸ κύρος κρατικοῦ νόμου, δὲν τὴν καθιστᾶ «αὐτοκρατορική σύνοδο»<sup>2</sup>. Ὑπῆρξε ἀμιγῶς «ἐκκλησιαστικὸ γεγονός», κατὰ τὸ ὁποῖο ἡ Ἐκκλησία, καθοδηγούμενη ἀπὸ τὸ Ἅγιο Πνεῦμα, ἀποφάσισε γιὰ τὰ τοῦ οἴκου της, ἐνῶ ὁ Αὐτοκράτορας ἐφάρμοσε τὴν ἀρχὴ «Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος τῷ Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ»<sup>3</sup>.

Ἐνώπιον τῆς Ἀρειανικῆς πλάνης, ἡ Ἐκκλησία διατύπωσε συνοδικὰ τὸ οὐσιῶδες τῆς διηνεκῶς βιουμένης ἐντὸς αὐτῆς πίστεως. Ὁ «ὁμοούσιος τῷ Πατρὶ» προαιώνιος Υἱὸς καὶ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, «Θεὸς ἀληθινὸς ἐκ Θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ», σώζει διὰ τῆς σαρκώσεώς του τὸν ἄνθρωπο ἀπὸ τῆ δουλεία τοῦ ἀλλοτρίου καὶ διανοίγει σὲ αὐτὸν τὴν ὁδὸ τῆς κατὰ χάριθ θεώσεως. «Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν»<sup>4</sup>. Τὸ Σύμβολο τῆς Νίκαιας διατρανώνει τὴ βέβαιη πεποίθησι ὅτι ἡ αἰρετικὴ ἀπόκλισι πὺ σοβοῦσε ἀποτελεῖ ἄρνησι τῆς δυνατότητος τῆς σωτηρίας τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Μὲ αὐτὴ τὴν ἔννοια, δὲν εἶναι ἀπλᾶ θεωρητικὴ διακήρυξι ἀλλὰ ὁμολογία πίστεως, ὅπως ὅλα τὰ δογματικὰ κείμενα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, αὐθεντικὴ διατύπωση τῆς ζωντανῆς ἀλήθειας, ἡ ὁποία ὑπάρχει ἐντὸς της καὶ μέσω αὐτῆς.

Ἰδιαίτερη θεολογικὴ βαρύτητα ἔχει τὸ γεγονός ὅτι βάση τοῦ Ἱεροῦ Συμβόλου «Πιστεύομεν...» ἀποτελεῖ ἓνα τοπικὸ βαπτιστήριον Σύμβολον ἢ ὁμάδα τέτοιων Συμβόλων. Ὡς γνήσιος φορέας τῆς διαχρονικῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς αὐτοσυνειδησίας, ἡ Σύνοδος ἀνακεφαλαιώνει καὶ βεβαιώνει τὴν Ἀποστολικὴ παρακαταθήκη, τὴν ὁποία διαφυλάσσουν οἱ κατὰ τόπους Ἐκκλησίαι. Ὁ Μέγας Ἀθανάσιος ἀναφέρει ὅτι οἱ Συνοδικοὶ Πατέρες ὅσον ἀφορᾶ «περὶ τῆς πίστεως δὲν ἔγραψαν Ἀποφασίσαμε», ἀλλὰ: Ἔτσι πιστεύει ἡ καθολικὴ Ἐκκλησία· καὶ εὐθὺς ὁμολόγησαν πῶς πιστεύουν, ὥστε νὰ δείξουν, ὅτι τὸ φρόνημά τους δὲν εἶναι κάτι νεώτερον, ἀλλὰ ἀποστολικό, καὶ ὅτι ὅσα ἔγραψαν δὲν εἶναι εὕρημα δικό τους, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἴδια, ἐκεῖνα πὺ δίδαξαν οἱ ἀπόστολοι»<sup>5</sup>. Πεποίθησι τῶν θεοδιδάκτων Πατέρων ἦταν ὅτι τίποτα δὲν προστέθηκε στὴν πίστη τῶν Ἀποστόλων καὶ ὅτι τὸ ὄντως οἰκουμενικὸ Σύμβολο τῆς Νίκαιας ἀποτελεῖ διακήρυξι τῆς κοινῆς παράδοσι τῆς Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Οἱ Συνοδικοὶ Πατέρες, τοὺς ὁποίους ἡ Ὁρθόδοξη Ἐκκλησία ἐπαξίως τιμᾶ καὶ ὑμνεῖ ὡς «Ἀποστολικῶν παραδόσεων ἀκριβεῖς φύλακας», χρησιμοποίησαν τὸν φιλοσοφικὸ ὄρο «οὐσία» (καὶ τὸ «ὁμοούσιον») γιὰ τὴν ἔκφρασι τῆς ὀρθόδοξης πίστεως στὴ θεότητα τοῦ Λόγου, τὴν ὁποία ἀρνοῦνταν ὁ Ἄρειος, καὶ μὲ αὐτὴν ἀρνοῦνταν τὸ ὅλο μυστήριον τῆς πανσωστικῆς ἔνσαρκης

<sup>2</sup> Μητροπολίτου Περγάμου Ἰωάννου Ζηζιούλα, Ἔργα Α'. Ἐκκλησιολογικὰ Μελετήματα, ἐκδ. Δόμος, Ἀθήνα 2016, σ. 675-6.

<sup>3</sup> Ματθ. κβ', 21.

<sup>4</sup> Ἀθανασίου τοῦ Μεγάλου, Λόγος περὶ τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως τοῦ Λόγου, PG 25, 192.

<sup>5</sup> «περὶ δὲ τῆς πίστεως ἔγραψαν οὐκ ἔδοξεν, ἀλλ', Οὕτως πιστεύει ἡ καθολικὴ Ἐκκλησία· καὶ εὐθὺς ὁμολόγησαν, πῶς πιστεύουσιν, ἵνα δείξωσιν, ὅτι μὴ νεώτερον, ἀλλ' ἀποστολικόν ἐστιν αὐτῶν τὸ φρόνημα, καὶ ἃ ἔγραψαν, οὐκ ἐξ αὐτῶν εὐρέθη, ἀλλὰ ταῦτ' ἐστίν, ἅπερ ἐδίδαξαν οἱ ἀπόστολοι», Ἀθανασίου τοῦ Μεγάλου, Ἐπιστολὴ περὶ τῶν γενομένων ἐν τῇ Ἀριμίνῳ τῆς Ἰταλίας, καὶ ἐν Σελευκείᾳ τῆς Ἰσαυρίας συνόδων, PG 26, 688.

Θείας Οικονομίας, εμπλεκόμενος σὲ ἑλληνοιστικά νοητικά σχήματα καὶ ἀπωθώντας τὸν «Θεὸ τῶν Πατέρων» ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ «Θεοῦ τῶν φιλοσόφων».

Ἄλλο κεφαλαῖωδες ζήτημα, τὸ ὁποῖο κλήθηκε νὰ ἐπιλύσει ἡ Σύνοδος τῆς Νίκαιας, πρὸς ἐνίσχυση τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἐνότητας στὴ λειτουργικὴ πράξη, ἦταν τὸ «πότε καὶ πῶς πρέπει νὰ ἐπιτελοῦμε τὴν ἑορτὴ τοῦ Πάσχα». Ἡ χιλιοστὴ ἑπτακοσιοστὴ ἐπέτειος τῆς σύγκλησης τῆς Συνόδου ἐπανέφερε στὴν ἐπικαιρότητα τὸ θέμα τοῦ κοινῆς ἑορτασμοῦ τῆς Ἀναστάσεως τοῦ Κυρίου. Ἡ Ἁγία τοῦ Χριστοῦ Μεγάλῃ Ἐκκλησίᾳ εὐχεται οἱ ὅπου γῆς Χριστιανοὶ νὰ ἐπανέλθουν, σύμφωνα πρὸς τὶς προσταγές τῆς Συνόδου τῆς Νίκαιας, στὸν ἑορτασμό τοῦ Πάσχα σὲ κοινὴ ἡμέρα, ὅπως κατὰ εὐτυχῆ συγκυρία συνέβη κατὰ τὸ τρέχον ἔτος. Ἡ ἀπόφαση αὐτὴ θὰ λειτουργήσῃ ὡς ἔνδειξη καὶ σύμβολο γνήσιας προόδου στὸν ἀγῶνα τῆς οἰκουμενικῆς συμπόρευσης καὶ ὁμονοήσεως διὰ μέσου τοῦ θεολογικοῦ διαλόγου καὶ τοῦ «διαλόγου τῆς ζωῆς», ὡς ἀπτή μαρτυρία περὶ τοῦ ἔμπρακτου σεβασμοῦ τῶν κεκτημένων τῆς ἀδιαίρετης Ἐκκλησίας. Ἡ ἐπίτευξη τοῦ στόχου αὐτοῦ, στὸ πλαίσιο τῆς ἐφετεινῆς ἐπετείου, ὑπῆρξε κοινὸ ὄραμα τοῦ ἀειμνήστου Πάπα Ρώμης Φραγκίσκου καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας Μετριότητος. Ἡ ἐκδημία του, τὴν ἐπαύριο τοῦ παγχριστιανικῆς ἑορτασθέντος Πάσχα, ἐπιτείνει τὴν κοινὴ εὐθύνη νὰ συνεχίσουμε ἀταλάντευτα πρὸς τὴν ἴδια κατεύθυνση.

Σπουδαῖο ὑπῆρξε ἐπίσης τὸ νομοκανονικὸ ἔργο τῆς Συνόδου τῆς Νίκαιας, διὰ τοῦ ὁποῖου ἀποτυπώνεται καὶ ἐπικυρώνεται συνοδικὰ ἢ διαχρονικὴ κανονικὴ συνείδηση τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, καὶ στὸ ὁποῖο βρίσκονται οἱ ἀπαρχές τοῦ μητροπολιτικοῦ συστήματος καὶ τῆς ἀναδείξεως τοῦ κύρους, τῆς ἐξέχουσας θέσης καὶ τῆς διευρυμένης εὐθύνης ὀρισμένων Θρόνων, ἐκ τῶν ὁποίων διαμορφώθηκε προοδευτικὰ τὸ σύστημα τῆς Πενταρχίας. Ἐφ' ὅσον ἡ κανονικὴ παρακαταθήκη τῆς Νίκαιας εἶναι κοινὴ κληρονομία ὁλόκληρου τοῦ χριστιανικοῦ κόσμου, ἡ ἐφετεινὴ ἐπέτειος καλεῖται νὰ λειτουργήσῃ ὡς προσκλητήριον γιὰ ἐπιστροφή σὲ πηγές, στὰ πρωταρχικὰ κανονικὰ θεσπίσματα τῆς ἀδιαίρετης Ἐκκλησίας.

Ἐγγυητὴς τῶν θεσπισμάτων τῆς Νικαίας ἀναδείχθηκε διαχρονικὰ ὁ Οἰκουμενικὸς Θρόνος τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως. Αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς Μεγάλῃ Ἐκκλησίας ἐκφράσθηκε καὶ διὰ τῆς Πατριαρχικῆς καὶ Συνοδικῆς Ἐγκυκλίου μὲ ἀφορμὴ τὴν χιλιοστὴ ἑξακοσιοστὴ ἐπέτειο τῆς Συνόδου<sup>6</sup>, «τῆς πρώτης τῶν Οἰκουμενικῶν καὶ μεγίστης ὡς ἀληθῶς Συνόδου τῆς Ἐκκλησίας». Ἡ εἰλημμένη ἀπόφαση ἢ ἐπέτειος νὰ ἑορτασθεῖ «πανηγυρικὰ καὶ δὴ ἀπὸ κοινοῦ, εἰ δυνατόν, ἀπὸ ὅλες τὶς Ὁρθόδοξες Ἀυτοκέφαλες Ἐκκλησίαις, ὡς πάνδημη ἐκδήλωση τῆς πιστῆς καὶ σήμερα ἀκόμη μὲ τὴ χάρη τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐμμονῆς τῆς Ἁγίας μας Ὁρθόδοξης Ἐκκλησίας στὴ διδασκαλία καὶ στὸ πνεῦμα τῆς Συνόδου ἐκείνης, ἢ ὁποῖα ὅπως,

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<sup>6</sup> Κ.Π.Α. κῶδιξ Α' 94, 10 Αὐγούστου 1925, σ. 102-3. «πανηγυρικῶς καὶ δὴ ἀπὸ κοινοῦ, εἰ δυνατόν, ὑπὸ πασῶν τῶν Ὁρθόδοξων Ἀυτοκεφάλων Ἐκκλησιῶν, εἰς ἐκδήλωσιν πάνδημον τῆς πιστῆς καὶ σήμερον τῆ τοῦ Θεοῦ χάριτι ἐμμονῆς τῆς Ἁγίας ἡμῶν Ὁρθόδοξου Ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ καὶ τῷ πνεύματι τῆς Συνόδου ἐκείνης, ἥτις ὅπως ἐξ ἑνὸς τὴν μίαν πίστιν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας διὰ τῆς ἐν Ἀγίῳ Πνεύματι ἀποφάνσεως αὐτῆς ἐστερέωσε καὶ ἐσφράγισεν, οὕτως ἐξ ἄλλου καὶ τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς συγκροτήσεως διὰ τῆς ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς παρουσίας ἀντιπροσώπων περιλάμπρος παρέστησεν».

ἀπὸ τῆ μίᾳ πλευρᾷ, τῆ μίᾳ πίστι τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μὲ ἀπόφασή της ἐν Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι στερέωσε καὶ σφράγισε, ἔτσι ἀπὸ τὴν ἄλλη πλευρᾷ καὶ τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς συγκρότητος διὰ τῆς ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς παρουσίας ἀντιπροσώπων περίλαμπρα παρέστησε», δυστυχῶς δὲν κατέστη δυνατὸ νὰ πραγματοποιηθεῖ ἐξ αἰτίας τῶν ἐκτάκτων περιστάσεων καὶ τῆς χρείας τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Θρόνου. Τὴν 19<sup>η</sup> Ἰουλίου 1925, πρώτη Κυριακὴ μετὰ τὴν ἐνθρόνιση τοῦ Πατριάρχου Βασιλείου Γ', ἐκπληρώθηκε ἡ «ὀφειλὴ πὺ καθυστέρησε», διὰ τῆς τέλεσης «εἰδικῆς Πατριαρχικῆς καὶ Συνοδικῆς Λειτουργίας» στὸν Πάνσεπτο Πατριαρχικὸ Ναό. Ἰδιαίτερη ἐκκλησιολογικὴ σημασία ἔχει τὸ γεγονός ὅτι στὴν Ἐγκύκλιο τονίζεται ἡ ἀξία τῆς ἐκτέλεσης τοῦ καθήκοντος τοῦ ἑορτασμοῦ αὐτῆς τῆς «μεγάλης γιὰ ὅλη τὴ Χριστιανοσύνη» ἐπετείου ὑπὸ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, «ἡ ὁποία ἔχει ἀμεσώτερη σχέση καὶ ὀφειλὴ πρὸς τὴν ἑορτὴ αὐτή».

Ἡ Σύνοδος τῆς Νίκαιας ἀποτελεῖ σταθμὸ στὴ διαμόρφωση τῆς δογματικῆς ταυτότητος καὶ τῆς κανονικῆς δομῆς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, παρέμεινε δὲ τὸ πρότυπο γιὰ τὴν ἀντιμετώπιση προβλημάτων πίστεως καὶ κανονικῆς τάξης ἐπὶ οἰκουμενικοῦ ἐπιπέδου. Ἡ χιλιοστὴ ἑπτακοσιοστὴ ἐπέτειος ἀπὸ τὴν πραγματοποίησή της ὑπενθυμίζει στὴ Χριστιανοσύνη τὶς παραδοχῆς τῆς ἀρχαίας Ἐκκλησίας, τὴν ἀξία τοῦ κοινῦ ἀγῶνα κατὰ τῶν παρανοήσεων τῆς χριστιανικῆς πίστεως καὶ τὴν ἀποστολὴ τῶν πιστῶν νὰ συμβάλλουν στὸν πολλαπλασιασμὸ τῶν «καλῶν καρπῶν» τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ, κατὰ Χριστὸν καὶ εἰς Χριστὸν ζωῆς μέσα στὸν κόσμον.

Καλούμαστε σήμερον νὰ ἀναδείξουμε τὸ διαχρονικὸ μῆνυμα τῆς Πρώτης Οἰκουμενικῆς Συνόδου στὴ Νίκαια, τὶς σωτηριολογικῆς διαστάσεις καὶ τὶς ἀνθρωπολογικῆς συνέπειες τοῦ «ὁμοούσιου», τῆς ἄρρηκτης σύνδεσης τῆς Χριστολογίας μὲ τὴν ἀνθρωπολογία, σὲ μίᾳ ἐποχῇ ἀνθρωπολογικῆς σύγχυσης καὶ ἔντονων προσπαθειῶν ἀνάδειξης τοῦ «μετανθρώπου» ὡς τοῦ ἀνοικτοῦ ὀρίζοντα καὶ τῆς αὐτοαποθεωτικῆς προοπτικῆς τῆς ἀνθρώπινης ἐξέλιξης, μὲ τὴν συμβολὴ τῆς ἐπιστήμης καὶ τῆς τεχνολογίας. Ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς «θεανθρωπίνου» ἀποτελεῖ τὴν ἀπάντηση στὴν ἀδιέξοδη ὄπτασία τοῦ σύγχρονου «ἀνθρωποθεοῦ». Ἡ ἀναφορὰ στὸ «πνεῦμα τῆς Νίκαιας» ἀποτελεῖ πρόσκληση νὰ στραφοῦμε στὰ οὐσιώδη τῆς πίστεώς μας, πυρήνας τῆς ὁποίας εἶναι ἡ ἐν Χριστῷ σωτηρία τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

Ὁ Κύριος καὶ Σωτὴρας μας Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἶναι ἡ πλήρης καὶ τέλεια ἀποκάλυψη τῆς ἀλήθειας περὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. «Ὅποιος ἔχει δεῖ ἐμένα, ἔχει δεῖ τὸν πατέρα μου»<sup>7</sup>. Ὁ Θεὸς Λόγος πὺ ἐνανθρώπισε ἔδειξε «πρῶτος καὶ μόνος», ὅπως γράφει ὁ Ἅγιος Νικόλαος ὁ Καβάσιλας, «τὸν ἀληθινὸ ἀνθρωπο καὶ τέλειο, λόγῳ καὶ τῶν τρόπων καὶ τῆς ζωῆς καὶ ὅλων τῶν ἄλλων»<sup>8</sup>. Αὐτὴ τὴν Ἀλήθεια ἐκπροσωπεῖ στὸν κόσμον ἡ Μία, Ἁγία, Καθολικὴ καὶ Ἀποστολικὴ Ἐκκλησία, ἀπὸ αὐτὴν τρέφεται, αὐτὴν διακονεῖ. Φορῶντας τὸν χιτῶνα τῆς Ἀλήθειας, «τὸν ὑφαντὸ ἐκ τῆς ἄνω θεολογίας», πάντοτε ὀρθοτομεῖ καὶ δοξάζει

<sup>7</sup> «Ὁ ἐμὲ ἐωρακῶς, ἐώρακε τὸν πατέρα μου», Ἰωάν. ιδ', 9.

<sup>8</sup> Νικολάου Καβάσιλα, *Περὶ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ζωῆς*, PG 150, 680.

«τῆς εὐσεβείας τὸ μέγα μυστήριον», εὐαγγελιζόμενη τὸν λόγον τῆς πίστεως, τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς ἐλπίδας, προσβλέποντας πρὸς τὴν «ἀνέσπερον καὶ ἀδιάδοχον καὶ ἀτελεύτητον ἡμέραν»<sup>9</sup>, τὴν ἐρχόμενην αἰώνια Βασιλεία τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος.

Ἔργον τῆς θεολογίας εἶναι ἡ ἀποκάλυψις τῆς σωτηριολογικῆς διάστασης τῶν δογμάτων καὶ ἡ ἐρμηνεία τους μὲ ὑπαρξιακοὺς ὄρους, ἡ ὅποια ἀπαιτεῖ, μαζὶ μὲ τὴν μετοχὴν στοῦ ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ γεγονότος, εὐαισθησία καὶ γνήσιον ἐνδιαφέρον γιὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον καὶ τὶς περιπέτειες τῆς ἐλευθερίας του. Μὲ τὴν ἔννοια αὐτή, ἡ διατρέξις τῆς πίστεως στοῦ ἐνανθρωπήσαντος Θεοῦ Λόγου ὀφείλει νὰ συνοδεύεται ἀπὸ τὴν ἔμπρακτον ἀνταπόκρισίν μας στοῦ σωτήριου λόγου του: «αὐτὴ εἶναι ἡ δική μου ἢ ἐντολή, νὰ ἀγαπᾶτε ὁ ἓνας τὸν ἄλλον ὅπως σᾶς ἀγάπησα ἐγώ»<sup>10</sup>.

Ἐνθυμούμενοι, λοιπόν, τὶς ἄφατες δωρεές, τὶς ὁποῖες χάρισε καὶ χαρίζει σὲ ὅλην τὴν κτίσιν, ἀκατάπαυστα δοξολογοῦμε τὸ ὑπεράγιον καὶ ὑπέρλαμπρον ὄνομα τοῦ Κυρίου τῶν ὅλων καὶ Θεοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης, διὰ τοῦ Ὁποίου γνωρίσαμε τὸν Πατέρα καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον ἐπιδήμησε στοῦ κόσμου. Ἀμήν!

Κατὰ τὸ σωτήριον ἔτος 2025, κατὰ μῆνα Ἰούνιον (1)

Ἐπινεμήσεως Γ΄

Ὁ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Βαρθολομαῖος ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης.

- + ὁ Κολωνείας Ἀθανάσιος ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
- + ὁ Γορτύνης καὶ Ἀρκαδίας Μακάριος ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
- + ὁ Ἀρκαλοχωρίου, Καστελλίου καὶ Βιάννου Ἀνδρέας ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
- + ὁ Βελγίου Ἀθηναγόρας ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
- + ὁ Λέρου, Καλύμνου καὶ Ἀστυπалаίας Παῖσιος ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
- + ὁ Ἀτλάντας Σεβαστιανός ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
- + ὁ Κυδωνίων Ἀθηναγόρας ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
- + ὁ Σηλυβρίας Μάξιμος ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
- + ὁ Αὐστραλίας Μακάριος ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
- + ὁ Ἑλβετίας Μάξιμος ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
- + ὁ Ἰρλανδίας Ἰάκωβος ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
- + ὁ Μεξικοῦ Ἰάκωβος ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης

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<sup>9</sup> Βασιλείου τοῦ Μεγάλου, *Εἰς τὴν Ἐξαήμερον*, PG 29, 52.

<sup>10</sup> «αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐντολή ἢ ἐμὴ, ἵνα ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους καθὼς ἠγάπησα ὑμᾶς», Ἰωάν. ιε΄, 12.

Νὰ ἀναγνωσθεῖ στοὺς Ἱεροὺς Ναοὺς κατὰ τὴ Θεία Λειτουργία τῆς Κυριακῆς, 1<sup>ης</sup> Ἰουνίου 2025, μνήμη τῶν 318 θεοφόρων Πατέρων τῆς ἐν Νικαίᾳ Α΄ Οἰκουμενικῆς Συνόδου, μετὰ τὸ Ἱερὸ Εὐαγγέλιο.