



On Thursday we commemorate the **Holy Martyr Longinus**. He was from Cappadocia but was in the service of Pontius Pilate at the time of Christ's Passion and was one of the soldiers commanded to guard Christ's tomb. While standing guard at the Cross, he witnessed the miracles that surrounded the Passion: the earthquake, the darkening of the sun, the rendering of the veil of the temple, and the opening of the graves of the saints. The eyes of his heart were opened and he cried out with fear, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matt. 27:54). After the Resurrection, Saint Longinus forsook the military and departed for Cappadocia, his homeland, where he preached Christ. But, by the agency of Pontius Pilate, Tiberius Caesar had him arrested and beheaded.

Sunday 12 October 2014 is the Sunday of the Seventh Ecumenical Council

Matins Gospel: John 20:1-10

Epistle: Titus 3:8-15

Gospel: Luke 8:5-15

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, and while soldiers were guarding your most pure Body, you rose, O Saviour, on the third day, giving life to the world. Therefore the heavenly Powers cried out to you, Giver of life: Glory to your Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to your Kingdom! Glory to your dispensation, only lover of humankind!

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Readings and saints for this week:

Monday: Philippians 1:1-7; Luke 7:36-50
Carpus, Papyrus, Agathodorus, & Agathonica; Benjamin the Deacon

Tuesday: Philippians 1:8-14; Luke 8:1-3
Martyrs Nazarius, Gervasius, Protasius, & Celsus; Cosmas the Hagiopolite

Wednesday: Philippians 1:12-20; Luke 8:22-25
Hieromartyr Lucian; Righteous Sabinus

Thursday: Philippians 1:20-27; Matthew 27:33-54
Longinus the Centurion

Friday: Romans 9:18-33; Luke 9:12-18
Prophet Hosea; Martyrs Cosmas and Damian of Arabia

Saturday: Colossians 4:5-11, 14-18; Luke 10:16-21
Luke the Evangelist; Martyr Marinus the Elder



Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

12 October 2014

Archbishopric of Good Hope
Patriarchate of Alexandria & All Africa

The Seed of the Kingdom of God

Today we hear Saint Luke's account of the parable of the sower. Jesus Christ tells His listeners of a sower who went out to sow seed. Some of it fell on the path and was wasted, some of it fell on rocks and could not grow well, and some of it was choked by thorns. But some fell on good soil and grew well to produce a hundredfold.

When His disciples asked about the meaning of this parable, the Lord explained that the seed is the Word of God. God, or Christ, sows the seed, but, like the seed that is sown on the path, or among thorns, it may not be able to grow well. Only the seed that is sown on good soil produces a harvest.

In this parable Jesus Christ challenges us to look at the conditions that are necessary if God's Word is to take root within us. Our hearts are the soil where the seed is sown, and if we want it to bear fruit in our lives we need to ensure that they provide a positive environment in which His Word can grow in us.

The reasons that Jesus gives for why the seed was not fruitful give us clues about the conditions that we need if our Christian life is to be fruitful. For seed to grow it needs a certain protection from the hustle and bustle of the road and so we need to find times of withdrawal and silence. It also needs to be regularly watered and nourished and protected, which we can do through prayer and spiritual reading. It needs to be protected from harmful influences, so we should be discerning in the voices that we listen to. These things will vary from person to person, but we need to be conscious about preparing the soil of our own hearts so that the Word of God may germinate, take root and bear rich fruit in our lives.



He is truly the Sower of all that is good, and we are His farm. The whole harvest of spiritual fruits is by Him and from Him. He taught us this when He said, "Without me you can do nothing."

Saint Cyril of Alexandria

Joining Heaven and Earth

An Introduction to the Orthodox Understanding of Icons

We saw last week that, while icons may differ in style, they nevertheless have certain common features. These stylistic elements enable the iconographer to not just depict outward appearances, but also to convey a deeper, spiritual reality. Some of the ways in which the spiritual world of the icon are conveyed include the following:



Light from Within

We do not find deep contrasts of light and shade in an icon because the icon depicts the light as coming from *within* the persons who are depicted. Christ, the Mother of God, and the saints are radiant with the brilliant light of God and it is this light that illumines the universe. They are also depicted in their glorified state in heaven, where there is no need for the sun to give light (and therefore shade) because God Himself is their light. (See Revelation 22:5)

Inverse Perspective

This perspective is often used and means that the lines in an icon do not converge on a point on the horizon, but rather come out to meet us and converge on us, the viewers. This serves to include us in the action depicted, making us aware that the action being depicted is not simply a sacred event in the past

but is also a contemporary reality that invites us to participate in it. As the Church's hymns constantly remind us, "Today Christ is born ... Today Christ is Risen..."

Flatness

Icons are different from statues and they also do not seek to create a sense of depth. There is enough perspective for us to know that the material world is depicted and that it is viewed as good, but icons do not seek to depict the world in a naturalistic way. This is so that we can pass through the icon and encounter the person or event depicted. The icon does not replace the person depicted, but seeks to bring us into a living relationship with them.

Multiple View

The flatness of an icon, and the fact that it does not present scenes in a naturalistic way also allows a more symbolic presentation of the person or event presented. Sometimes an icon contains multiple scenes, as we see, for example, in the icon of the Nativity of Christ where the midwives are shown washing the infant Christ at the bottom, while He is also depicted with His Mother in the centre of the icon. We see something similar when a building is shown from both left and right, reminding us that our own viewpoint is limited and that the icon goes beyond space and time to present reality as God sees it.

To be continued...

As the fire formed the golden vessels, and they became an idol, so does the Lord, who copies the intentions of faithful and good souls, and forms an image even now in the soul according to their desire, and at the resurrection it appears external to them, and glorifies their bodies within and without.

Saint Macarius the Great

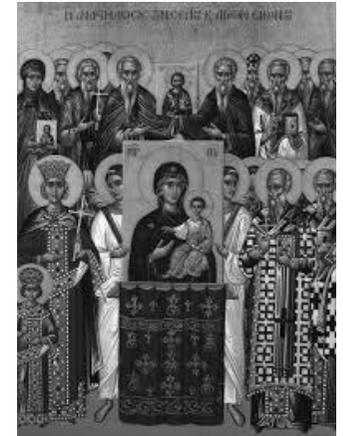
The Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council

Today, on the Sunday that falls immediately after the eleventh of October, we commemorate the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council. This council was convoked by the Empress Irene and met at Nicaea in 787, with Patriarch Tarasios presiding.

The council was called to put an end to the iconoclastic heresy which was threatening to divide the Church. The council Fathers established the veneration of icons as basic to the belief and spirituality of the Church. Many of the Fathers of this council were to die as confessors and martyrs during the second iconoclastic controversy in the following century.

In defending the veneration of icons, the Fathers of the Council were defending the integrity of the Church's faith in the Incarnation of the Son of God. For, as Saint John of Damascus insisted, if Jesus Christ has truly become human and has shared our material life, then it is most appropriate to depict and venerate His image and that of His saints.

This Council is often seen as the last ecumenical Council that is generally recognised by the Church, although this does not rule out the possibility of other councils in the future. But the Seventh Ecumenical Council does represent the closing of an era of the dogmatic disputes in the first centuries of the Church's life. In this it clearly set up the boundaries of the Orthodox Faith.



***You are greatly glorified,
O Christ our God,
who established our
Fathers as luminaries
upon the earth,
and through them led us
all to the true Faith.
O Most compassionate,
glory to You.***

Apolitikion for the Fathers of
the Seventh Ecumenical
Council

Let us plant ourselves upon the rock of faith and the Tradition of the Church, removing not the landmarks set by our holy Fathers, nor giving room to those who are anxious to introduce novelties and to undermine the structure of God's holy ecumenical and apostolic Church. For if everyone were allowed a free hand, little by little the entire Body of the Church would be destroyed.

Saint John of Damascus