

Such is the loving-kindness of God; He never turns his face away from a sincere repentance.

But, if anyone has pushed on to the very extremity of wickedness, and chooses to return thence towards the path of virtue, God accepts and welcomes, and does everything so as to restore him to his former position.

And He does what is yet more merciful; for even should anyone not manifest complete repentance, he does not pass by one which is small and insignificant, but assigns a great reward even to this.

Saint John Chrysostom



**19 July 2015 is the  
Sunday of the Holy Fathers**

**Matins Gospel:** John 20:1-10

**Epistle:** Titus 3:8-15

**Gospel:** Matthew 5:14-19

**Resurrectional Apolytikion:**

Angelic powers were above Thy tomb, and they that guarded Thee became as dead. And Mary stood by the grave seeking Thine immaculate Body. Thou hast despoiled Hades and wast not tried thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst grant us life. O Thou Who didst arise from the dead, Lord, glory be to Thee.

**Apolytikion of the Holy Fathers:**

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.

### ***Readings and saints for this week:***

**Monday:** James 5:10-20; Luke 4:22-30  
Prophet Elias

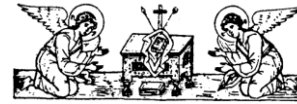
**Tuesday:** 1 Corinthians 10:5-12; Matthew 16:6-12  
John & Simeon; Parthenius, Bishop of Rabobysidius

**Wednesday:** 1 Corinthians 9:2-12; Luke 8:1-3  
Mary Magdalene; Virgin Martyr Markella

**Thursday:** 1 Corinthians 10:28-33; 11:1-8; Matthew 16:24-28  
Hieromartyr Phocas; Prophet Ezekiel

**Friday:** 1 Corinthians 11:8-23; Matthew 17:10-18  
Great Martyr Christina; Athenagorus the Apologist

**Saturday:** Galatians 4:22-27; Luke 8:16-21  
Dormition of St. Anna; Olympias the Deaconess



# ***Evangelion***

***A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith***

19 July 2015

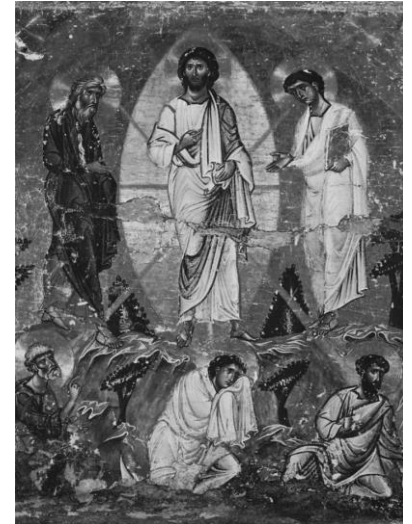
## **You are the Light of the World**

Today, on the Sunday of the Holy Fathers, we listen to Jesus' words telling us how we are to be the light of the world. He tells us that we are to let our light shine before other people so that, seeing it, they may give glory to God.

We are used to thinking of Jesus Christ as the Light of the world, but here He tells us that we are the ones whose light must shine and that, in this, we give witness to our faith. We might find this a little daunting and perhaps wonder if we really should draw attention to ourselves.

The truth is that there is only one light, and that is the Light of Christ Himself. We are not called to draw attention to ourselves, but rather, to allow His Light to shine through us. We are called to become transparent to His Light. Just as the cleaner a plane of glass is, the more light it allows through, so the more we become purified from our passions, the more we are able to reflect Christ's Light. It is not so much a matter of trying to be something that we are not, but rather of allowing ourselves to be purified of all that keeps His Light from shining through.

The closer we come to Christ, the more we become enveloped in His Light. Indeed, we see this in the lives of the saints who themselves became bearers of light. The light that they radiate – and which we are called to be purified by and to radiate – is the Light of Christ Himself.



The person characterised by humility, gentleness, mercy and righteousness does not build a fence around good deeds. Rather, that one ensures that these good foundations overflow for the benefit of others. One who is pure in heart and a peacemaker, even when persecuted for the sake of truth, orders his way of life for the common good.

Saint John Chrysostom

# What God has Joined Together

*A series on the meaning of Christian Marriage*

We have seen that the sacrament of marriage is intended to be a school of holiness in which a married couple grows in love for God, for each other, for their family, and for others. This Christian understanding of marriage is expressed in the Orthodox marriage service, which is the formal recognition of the couple's unity and the beginning of their married life together.



## The Marriage Service

When the marriage service developed in the Church it was patterned after the services for Baptism and Chrismation. The couple confess their faith and their love of God and are led into the Church in procession. They are prayed over and blessed and listen to the readings from the Scriptures. The marriage service can be seen as the baptizing and confirming of human love, which is called to become united with God's love in the Kingdom of God.

The marriage service is divided into two parts, which were held separately in earlier times but are now celebrated together.

## The Service of Betrothal

The central theme of the betrothal service is the blessing and exchange of rings. Rings are rich in symbolism and the prayers said by the priest recall the role of rings in various biblical stories. The rings are blessed and the couple then exchange the rings. The bride's ring is placed on the groom's finger and vice-versa and they are then exchanged again. This symbolizes that each spouse will constantly complement and enrich the other by their union. It also symbolizes that the two are joined in marriage of their own free will and consent.

The betrothal usually takes place in the narthex of the Church and once it is completed the couple proceed into the nave for the Service of Crowning.



*... O Lord God, Who have sent forth Your truth to Your inheritance and Your promise to Your servants, our fathers, who were Your elect, do You give regard unto this Your servant (Name) and Your servant (Name), and seal their betrothal in faith, in oneness of mind, in truth and in love. For You, O Lord, have declared that a pledge is to be given and held inviolate in all things. By a ring Joseph was given might in Egypt; by a ring Daniel was exalted in Babylon; by a ring the truth of Tamar was made manifest; by a ring our heavenly Father showed compassion upon His prodigal son, for He said, "Put a ring upon his right hand, kill the fatted calf, and let us eat and rejoice."*

*Your own right hand, O Lord, armed Moses in the Red Sea. Yea, by the word of Your truth were the Heavens established and the earth set upon her sure foundations; and the right hands of Your servants shall be blessed by Your mighty word, and by Your uplifted arm. Wherefore, O Sovereign Lord, do You Yourself bless this putting on of rings with Your heavenly benediction; and may Your Angel go before them all the days of their life, for You are He that blesses and sanctifies all things, and to You do we send up Glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and to the ages of ages.*

From the Service of Betrothal

# The Sunday of the Holy Fathers

Today, on the Sunday between the 13th and the 19th of July, we commemorate the Holy Fathers who participated in the first seven ecumenical councils.

There are several commemorations of the Fathers during the course of the Church's year, not only individually, but also as commemorations of the victories of particular councils over heresy. Indeed, one might wonder why we attach such great significance to them.

The answer is that these Fathers' contributions were of fundamental importance to the faith of the Church. They were the ones who were given the task of setting the limits of the Church's faith, often in response to dangerous heresies. Most fundamentally, they were responsible for fleshing out and defining what we believe about the humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ, and about the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

We live in an era in which many people, including some Christians, downplay the importance of right belief. For some, truth has become something relative and the details of what we believe are viewed as unimportant. Instead they focus on tolerance and on doing good in the world and struggle to understand how right belief about the Person of Christ can make a difference in the world.

For Orthodox Christians, what we believe about God, and about His revelation in Jesus Christ, is of vital importance. We are created in God's Image, and it is only by being truly human and truly divine that Christ is able to save us and to enable us to share in and reflect the life of the Holy Trinity.

The first source of blessings, the grace of the Spirit, opened your mouths as rivers which sweep away error, glorious Fathers, and give the faithful streams of true religion to drink, the preaching of Prophets and Apostles.

From Matins for the Sunday of the Holy Fathers



## A Summary of the Councils of the Church

In 325 the First Council of Nicaea rejected Arianism and defined the divinity of the Son of God.

In 381 the First Council of Constantinople reaffirmed the faith of Nicaea and defined the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

In 431 the Council of Ephesus defined Christ as the Incarnate Word of God and the Virgin Mary as the Theotokos, or Mother of God.

In 451 the Council of Chalcedon defined Jesus Christ as Perfect God and Perfect man in One Person.

In 553 the Second Council of Constantinople reconfirmed the doctrines of the Trinity and of Jesus Christ.

In 680 the Council of Constantinople III affirmed the True Humanity of Jesus Christ by insisting on the reality of His human will.

In 787 the Second Council of Nicaea affirmed the appropriateness of the veneration of icons as a witness to the reality of the Incarnation of Christ.