

The unspeakable
and prodigious fire
hidden in the
essence of things, as
in the bush, is the fire
of divine love and
the dazzling
brilliance of God's
beauty inside
everything.

St Maximus
the Confessor

*Sunday, 4 July 2013, is the
Sunday of the Holy Fathers*

Matins Gospel: Mark 16:9-20

Epistle: Titus 3:8-15

Gospel: Matthew 5:14-19

**Apolytikion for the
Sunday 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.

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Readings and saints for this week:

Monday: 1Corinthians 13:11-14; 14:1-5; Matthew 17:24-27; 18:1-4
Martyr Julitta & Cyricus; Vladimir, Equal to the Apostles

Tuesday: Romans 10:11-21; 11:1-2; Matthew 11:16-20
Hieromartyr Athenogenes; Virgin Martyr Julia

Wednesday: Galatians 3:23-29; 4:1-5; Mark 5:24-34
Great Martyr Marina; Veronika & Speratos the Martyrs

Thursday: Romans 11:13-24; Matthew 11:27-30
Emilian; Martyrs Paul, Thea & Oualentine

Friday: Romans 11:25-36; Matthew 12:1-8
Righteous Macrina; Righteous Dius of Antioch

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



Archbishopric of Good Hope,
Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa

Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

14 July 2013

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 pane 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



A Mercy of Peace, a Sacrifice of Praise

An introduction to the Divine Liturgy (continued)

Having begun the Great Litany, asking for God's peace and praying for the gift of faith, reverence and the fear of God, we then pray for the the whole Church which gathers to celebrate the Liturgy:

"For our Archbishop (name), for the honoured order of presbyters, for the diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord."

A community gathered around its bishop

In the early Church it was the bishop who presided at the Eucharistic Liturgy and it was his presence that gave the gathered community the assurance that they were united both to Christ



and the Apostles, and to all the other Churches throughout the world, for the Church involves a communion that transcends both time and space. Writing at the end of the first century, Saint Ignatius of Antioch wrote that "The Eucharistic Mystery performed by a bishop, or by one who has received permission from him, is the Mystery that should be considered valid." He is the one who assures us of Christ's presence because he is focal point of unity in the gathered community. Therefore, Saint Ignatius tells us, "We should look upon the bishop as the Lord Himself."

In the course of time a parish system developed and in most Churches today it is not the bishop who serves the Liturgy, but rather a priest appointed by him. However, the priests and deacons exercise their ministry in the Church in the name of the bishop and can only do so with his blessing. Even though the bishop may not often be present in a particular Church, the Liturgy reminds us that it is the bishop who is the

focal point of unity in the Church. Thus even when the bishop is not present, before the opening blessing the deacon proclaims "Master, give the blessing!" reminding us that the priest is serving in the name of the bishop.

This focus on the bishop is not for the sake of glorifying him as an individual, but rather because he is the one who holds together the whole Church in unity and in harmony. After praying for the bishop we continue to pray for the priests, the deacons and the people. We are all called to live and serve in communion and harmony. The task of the bishop is to preserve and promote this communion, for we are all, clergy and people, called to present a harmonious symphony to God. We are all called to be united in the one faith, and yet we know that we need God's continual help in order to sustain this unity. It is for this reason that we respond to this petition with "Lord have mercy!"

If someone from the congregation commanded you to pray privately for the salvation of the bishop, every one of you would shrink from it, believing the burden to be beyond your powers. But when all of you together hear the deacon directing you and saying, "Let us pray for the bishop...", you do not shrink from carrying out his commission, but zealously raise your prayer, because you know the power of your gathering."

Saint John Chrysostom

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!

Yet the contribution of these Fathers is 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.



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.