



St. Alexander Nevsky Orthodox Cathedral

7th Sunday of Pascha. Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council. Afterfeast of the Ascension.
Epistle: Acts 20:16-18, 28-36
Gospel: St. John 17:1-13
Ven. Theodore the Sanctified, disciple of Ven. Pachomius the Great.

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Sunday, May 16, 2010

Today's Announcements

- The Parish Council will meet following today's Liturgy.
- The Women's Association is planning to clean and organize the church hall. We need to find a place for the wooden chairs and tables that we no longer use. Therefore, we would like to offer our parishioners a chance to purchase these items. A suggested price is \$10 for 4 wooden chairs; tables are being given away for free. We would like to sell as many as possible this Sunday. If you are interested please contact Sandy Pysh.

Tuesday – May 18

- Charity meal at The Table. We will meet in the church kitchen at 3 pm to finish food preparation, depart at 4 pm to the South Side to serve and plan on leaving at 7 pm. If you are interested in helping, please contact Mat. Mary Wusylko.

Saturday – May 22

- Women's Association Tea Party – 11 am
- Vespers – 5 pm

Next Sunday – May 23

- Divine Liturgy – 10:00 am

Coming Events – Mark Your Calendar!

- Change to Summer schedule (Vespers 7 pm, Divine Liturgy 9:30 am) – June 5-6
- Church School Summer Camp – July 26-30
- Women's Association Golf Classic – July 30

Fundability Tip of the Week: It's Spring, and that means Graduations! You can use gift cards from St. Alexander Fundability to buy a gift for that special graduate, or you can just give the card and let the graduate make the selection – you never know what they want anyway! And don't forget to pick up a card to get supplies for that upcoming party or picnic! Thanks for your support of this important fundraiser.

Today's Dynamis Meditation: Judge Righteously: Deuteronomy 1:8-11, 15-17 SAAS, especially vs. 16: "Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying, 'Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the resident alien with him.'" We speak of a Judeo-Christian tradition, a term that reveals the consistency in God's revelation to His People through the ages of history. Thus, the command of the Holy Prophet Moses quoted above dominated the courts of ancient Israel, the Councils of the Church, and the judicial proceedings of Orthodox Christian nations. In fact, the Prophet's charge lays down what God expects of any findings called just.

Whatever travesties men may make of judiciaries - to distort them to their personal favor, to conform decisions to popular ideological inventions, or to bend judgments to benefit the powerful or wealthy - God sees and condemns all such as aberrations. The fact is that, from a Judeo-Christian perspective, all courts in all lands are themselves judged under this Mosaic command, for the great Seer gave to God's People truth for all peoples at all times in all places.

Therefore, we should not be surprised to find the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" charging the faithful: "Do not cause division, but make peace between disputants. Judge justly. Do not show partiality in reproofing transgressions. Do not be of two minds whether or not something should be." Nor should we be surprised, as we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Fathers of the First Council, to see that their deliberations exactly fit the Prophet's charge.

First of all, great Moses enlarged the command to judge righteously by stating the truth both negatively and positively, as well as by applying it specifically: "You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall judge the small and the great" (vs. 17). This is the rule the First Ecumenical Council followed in the case of the Priest Arius from Alexandria.

As a Priest serving the large and wealthy parish of Baucalis in the city of Alexandria, Arius' views concerning the Person of Christ drew much interest and support. In an open discussion of his views in the Clericus of Alexandria, he and his Bishop could openly disagree. Local Councils were called in support of both sides. Then the matter was taken to the first of the Ecumenical or general Council of the Church sponsored by the Emperor Constantine at Nicaea. Arius was given his day in court, until finally his views were roundly condemned by the majority of the assembled Holy Fathers. They strove to act impartially in resolving what began as a matter between a Priest and his Bishop, the small and the great in the Church being given equal hearing.

Likewise, despite strong support from many throughout the Church for Arius' views, including the popular Bishops of three influential dioceses (Nicomedia, Nicaea, and Chalcedon), the Holy Fathers of the First Council did "...not shrink before any man's presence, for the judgment is God's" (vs. 17). They sought to be faithful to the truth of Divine revelation as they had received it, for the very life-giving and saving truth of God was at stake. For this reason, only after no other phrases of Holy Scripture could be found did they utilize the non-Biblical word *homousion*, of one essence, to express the relation of God the Father and God the Son.

Nicaea itself was the final court of appeal, for numerous Councils had been held in the East and West, as well as within the jurisdiction of the See of Alexandria. When the "...case was too hard" (vs. 17) for the regional Councils to settle definitively, appeal was necessary, as Moses charged, to "...wise and understanding and knowledgeable men" (vs. 15). Thus, appeal was made to the highest authority (vs. 17). In the Church it required an Ecumenical Council.

Ye have given all, O thrice-blessed Fathers, to know the Trinity clearly, He being the Cause of the creation of the world, for ye have appeared as champions of the Orthodox word.