

St. Nikolai Orthodox Church, Divine Liturgy, 9:30 / Saturday Vespers, 5 pm.

Book study/Christian Education following Vespers

Parish Council meetings 2nd Wednesday of the month, 7pm (open to parishioners)

9837 State Street, Louisville , Ohio 44641

Right Rev. Bishop Alexander, Bishop of Toledo, Orthodox Church in America

Very Reverend Father Joseph Cervo, Archpriest (AOCANA-retired)

Rev. Protodeacon James Gresh, Mission Administrator (OCA)

June 12, 2016: Sunday after Ascension/ Fathers of 1st Ecumenical Council

Website: <http://www.stnikolaiorthodoxmission.com>

Facebook page: "<http://www.facebook.com/SaintNikolaiOrthodoxMission> of Alliance

Welcome to Visitors. Thank you for coming and praying with us today. In the Orthodox Church, Holy Communion is reserved only for Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and confession during Great Lent. We invite you to introduce yourself to Father Joe and Deacon James at the end of the Liturgy and receive a piece of the blessed bread and join us for fellowship and Christian education. We look forward to seeing you again and encourage you to learn more about the Orthodox Faith.

The First Antiphon

Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

For the Lord, the Most High is terrible; a great God over all the earth.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

He subdued peoples under us, and nations under our feet.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will solve my riddle in psalmody.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet!

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

The Second Antiphon

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised in the city of our God.

Refrain: O Son of God, Who ascended in glory, save us who sing to You: "Alleluia!"

Mount Zion in the far north, is the city of the Great King.

Refrain: O Son of God, Who ascended in glory, save us who sing to You: "Alleluia!"

Within her citadels God is known when He defends her.

Refrain: O Son of God, Who ascended in glory, save us who sing to You: "Alleluia!"

For lo, the kings assembled; they came on together.

Refrain: O Son of God, Who ascended in glory, save us who sing to You: "Alleluia!"

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. Only-begotten Son.....

The Third Antiphon

Hear this, all peoples! Give ear, all inhabitants of the world!
The earth-born and the sons of men, rich and poor together.
My mouth shall speak wisdom; the meditation of my heart shall be understanding.
I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will solve my riddle in psalmody.

Tone 4 Troparion

You ascended in glory, O Christ our God,
granting joy to Your Disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit.
Through the blessing, they were assured
that You are the Son of God, //
the Redeemer of the world.

Entrance Verse

God has gone up with a shout; the Lord with the sound of a trumpet!

Tone 6 Troparion (Resurrection)

The angelic powers were at Your tomb; the guards became as dead men.
Mary stood by Your grave, seeking Your most pure body. You took captive hell, // not
being tempted by it. You came to the Virgin, granting life. // O Lord, Who rose from the
dead, glory to You.

Tone 4 Troparion (Ascension)

You ascended in glory, O Christ our God, granting joy to Your Disciples by the promise
of the Holy Spirit. Through the blessing, they were assured, that You are the Son of
God, // the Redeemer of the world!

Tone 8 Troparion (Fathers)

You are most glorious, O Christ our God! You have established the Holy Fathers
as lights on the earth. Through them You have guided us to the true Faith. // O greatly
compassionate One, glory to You!

Tone 4 Troparion (St. Nikolai)

In truth you were revealed to your flock as a rule of faith, an image of humility and a
teacher of abstinence; your humility exalted you; your poverty enriched you. Hierarch
Father Nikolai, entreat Christ our God that our souls may be saved!

Tone 8 Kontakion (Fathers)

The Apostles' preaching and the Fathers' doctrines have established one Faith for the
Church. Adorned with the robe of truth, woven from heavenly theology, // It defines
and glorifies the great mystery of piety.

Tone 6 Kontakion (Ascension)

When You had fulfilled the dispensation for our sake, and united earth to heaven,

You ascended in glory, O Christ our God, not being parted from those who love You, but remaining with them and crying:// “I am with you, and there is no one against you!”

Epistle: Acts 20:16-18, 28-36

Tone 4 *Prokeimenon*

Blessed are You, O Lord God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Your name forever!

v: For You are just in all that You have done for us!

Tone 1 Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

v: The Lord, the God of gods, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

v: Gather to Me, My venerable ones, who made a covenant with Me by sacrifice!

Gospel: John 17:1-13

(Instead of “It is truly meet ...,” we sing)

Magnify, O my soul, Christ the Giver of Life, Who has ascended from earth to heaven! We magnify you, the Mother of God, who beyond reason and understanding gave birth in time to the Timeless One.

Communion Hymns

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest!

Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous; praise befits the just!

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

(Instead of “We have seen the True Light,” we sing the Troparion of Ascension)

Holy Synod issues Statement, Petitions on the Holy and Great Council

SYOSSET, NY [OCA]

The [Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America](#) has [issued a Statement](#) on the Holy and Great Council, slated to be convened on the Island of Crete from June 16 through 27, 2016. Concurrently, petitions have been made available and are to be included in the Litany of Fervent Supplication at all Divine Services, beginning immediately.

The Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America Statement on the Holy and Great Council to be convened on the Island of Crete June 16-27, 2016

We greet you in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Way and the Truth and the Life (John 14:6).

For many decades, the Orthodox Church has witnessed the efforts to assemble a Holy and Great Council as a contemporary witness to the Holy Orthodox Faith. The initiative in this modern endeavor belonged to the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras. The long pilgrimage toward the Holy and Great Council began in the 1960s. There were long pauses in this pilgrimage, followed by a renewed period of intense preparation at the initiative of His All Holiness Ecumenical

Patriarch Bartholomew. Through the decades, Pan-Orthodox conferences, consultations, and meetings of patriarchs and primates have revised the list of topics. During recent months, as the churches have reviewed draft documents and reflected on their formulations, new proposals have been brought forth and fresh disagreements have arisen.

Even at this late stage, participation in the Holy and Great Council is uncertain, and its outcome is equally uncertain. In the midst of all this uncertainty, there is one certainty: the Orthodox Church in America, not being universally recognized as an autocephalous church, is not invited to be a participant. Our reaction to this is one of sadness, but not alienation. With gratitude to God, we affirm our identity as the Orthodox Church in America. We also affirm with gratitude to God our autocephaly, as granted to us by the Russian Orthodox Church, and as recognized by the Churches of Georgia, Bulgaria, Poland, and the Czech Lands and Slovakia. We affirm with profound gratitude to God our Eucharistic communion with all Orthodox Churches, beginning with the Ecumenical Patriarchate. We therefore accept and affirm our right and duty to accompany the Holy and Great Council with love and reflection and prayer.

The discussions and debates surrounding the draft documents express concerns and objections that emerge in the Orthodox Churches. It is argued that the intensity of the objections demonstrates that the Holy and Great Council should be postponed so as to avoid possible schism. Such a conclusion appears to reject the conciliar vision and practice of the Orthodox Church. The challenges of our time require more theological reflection and debate, not less. The urgency of such theological reflection and debate calls for more conciliarity, not less.

At the heart of concerns and objections to the Council and its draft documents is the fear of eroding the Orthodox identity and self-understanding, diluting Orthodox theology (the truth about God) and ecclesiology (the truth about the Church). Today's challenge to the Orthodox Church is the same it has always been: to bring to all people the Christ who is the way and the truth and the life, to bring the Gospel of Christ to all people with love and compassion, to worship God eucharistically in Spirit and in Truth. In faithfulness to this Orthodox way lies deliverance from fear and growth in life and faith and spiritual understanding (Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom).

The commitment of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to the building of consensus, as shown by periodically convening the Synaxis of Patriarchs and Primates, has opened the path to the Holy and Great Council. Even at these last moments of preparation the obstacles on this path are emerging with even greater strength than before. The most recent sign of the crisis came at the meeting of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church on June 3, 2016. The minutes of this meeting enumerate the procedural and substantive challenges faced by the Orthodox Churches on the eve of the Council – including the unresolved dispute between the Patriarchates of Antioch and Jerusalem, the demands for changes in some of the draft documents coming from the Churches of Georgia, Serbia, and Greece, and also from the Monasteries of Mount Athos, and finally the decision of the Church of Bulgaria insisting on the postponement of the Council and declaring categorically that she will not participate in the Council set for the end of June 2016. The Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church concludes that this extraordinary situation may be resolved by the convening of an extraordinary Pan-Orthodox Preconciliar Consultation not later than June 10. This Consultation would have as its purpose a review of the existing situation and a study of the proposed changes to the Council documents. On the basis of the conclusion of the Consultation the Churches could determine whether the convening of the Council on the announced dates is possible.

The convening of the Holy and Great Council as a sign of unity and as a witness to unity is a worthy vision for Orthodoxy pursued with patience and determination by His All Holiness the

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. The painful difficulties in realizing this vision have always been evident. The dangers on the road towards this vision are now seen in bold relief, yet the beauty of the vision is clear as never before. Today, the Orthodox Churches stand before the world unable to conceal the wounds of our fractured relationships. Yet the vision of unity will not be denied, because it comes from the heart of the Orthodox Faith and is intrinsic to the Good News of Christ. Whatever the difficulties and wounds we bear, we are following the Risen Christ and are empowered by Pentecost to witness to the Gospel of Christ everywhere and at all times.

It is our sincere hope and fervent prayer that the pilgrimage towards the convening of the Holy and Great Council will bear fruit for the Orthodox Church's unity and for her mission and witness in the world. Just as we pray in the Divine Liturgy for the descent of the Holy Spirit on us and on the gifts that are offered, so let us pray that the Holy Spirit may descend on us all and on the gifts of conciliarity that are offered to God.

Petitions for the Holy and Great Council

To be Included in the Litany of Fervent Supplication at All Services

Furthermore we pray: O Lord our Almighty and Eternal God, Source of all wisdom and understanding! As Thou didst send Thine All-Holy Spirit upon Thine apostles and disciples, gathered on the great day of Pentecost, confirming them in the fullness of the faith which they proclaimed to the ends of the earth, fill the hearts and minds of our Holy Fathers gathered in Council with that same Spirit, enabling them to discern Thy holy will, that they may serve and glorify Thee, enlightened with right judgment and good purpose to the building up of Thy Holy Church throughout the world, we pray Thee, hear us and have mercy...

Again we pray: O Lord our God, Giver of every good gift, look with favor upon Thy Church and bless and guide the minds and hearts of those gathered in Thy Name, granting them and us by the grace of Thine All-holy Spirit an increase in faith and understanding, that in vigilance, fasting and prayer they may discern Thy holy will with one heart and one mind, we pray Thee, hear us and have mercy...

Again we pray: O Lord our God, send Thy Holy Spirit upon them and upon us so that, inspired by Thy gifts of discernment and understanding, Thy will might be accomplished throughout the world in these turbulent times, for the good of all Thy People, that all might be one, even as Thou—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—are one, we pray Thee, hear us and have mercy...

Again we pray: O Lord our God, in Thy holy and providential care for Thy Church, grant our Holy Fathers gathered in Council wisdom, understanding, mutual love and respect, sanctity, and the faith and hope to reflect and reveal Thy abundant love for mankind throughout the world, so that Thy Holy Church may be that light on the lampstand and salt of the earth in loving service to Christ our God and thus to one another, we pray Thee, hear us and have mercy...

***St. Nikolai* - CONTEMPLATION:**

Contemplate the Ascended Lord Jesus:

1. How the Lord, blessing His disciples, was raised above the earth and borne to

- heaven;
2. How the disciples watched Him as He ascended until a cloud hid Him from their sight.
 3. How by His Ascension, the Lord showed Himself to be above the laws of nature.
 4. How by His Ascension, He manifested His Divine Nature and His Divine Might;
 5. How by His Ascension into heaven, He reveals to man that there exists a better, loftier world and life: a heavenly world and heavenly life.
 6. How by His Ascension, He teaches us that we should direct all of our aspirations toward heaven and not toward earth.
 7. How He first resurrected bodily and then ascended bodily;
 8. How after death the souls of righteous men first ascended into heaven while the body awaits the general resurrection, general transfiguration and general ascension.

On the seventh Sunday of Pascha, we commemorate the holy God-bearing Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council.

The Commemoration of the First Ecumenical Council has been celebrated by the Church of Christ from ancient times. The Lord Jesus Christ left the Church a great promise, "I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18). Although the Church of Christ on earth will pass through difficult struggles with the Enemy of salvation, it will emerge victorious. The holy martyrs bore witness to the truth of the Savior's words, enduring suffering and death for confessing Christ, but the persecutor's sword is shattered by the Cross of Christ.

Persecution of Christians ceased during the fourth century, but heresies arose within the Church itself. One of the most harmful of these heresies was Arianism. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, was a man of immense pride and ambition. In denying the divine nature of Jesus Christ and His equality with God the Father, Arius falsely taught that the Savior is not consubstantial (one in essence) with the Father, but is only a created being.

A local Council, convened with Patriarch Alexander of Alexandria presiding, condemned the false teachings of Arius. However, Arius would not submit to the authority of the Church. He wrote to many bishops, denouncing the decrees of the local Council. He spread his false teaching throughout the East, receiving support from certain Eastern bishops.

Investigating these dissensions, the holy emperor Constantine (May 21) consulted Bishop Hosius of Cordova (Aug. 27), who assured him that the heresy of Arius was directed against the most fundamental dogma of Christ's Church, and so he decided to convene an Ecumenical Council. In 325, 318 bishops representing Christian Churches from various lands gathered together at Nicea.

Among the assembled bishops were many confessors who had suffered during the persecutions, and who bore the marks of torture upon their bodies. Also participating in the Council were several great luminaries of the Church: St Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia (December 6 and May 9), St Spyridon, Bishop of Tremithos (December 12), and others venerated by the Church as holy Fathers.

With Patriarch Alexander of Alexandria came his deacon, Athanasius (who later became Patriarch of Alexandria (May 2 and January 18). He is called "the Great," for he was a

zealous champion for the purity of Orthodoxy. In the Sixth Ode of the Canon for today's Feast, he is referred to as "the thirteenth Apostle."

The emperor Constantine presided over the sessions of the Council. In his speech, responding to the welcome by Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, he said, "God has helped me cast down the impious might of the persecutors, but more distressful for me than any blood spilled in battle is for a soldier, is the internal strife in the Church of God, for it is more ruinous."

Arius, with seventeen bishops among his supporters, remained arrogant, but his teaching was repudiated and he was excommunicated from the Church. In his speech, the holy deacon Athanasius conclusively refuted the blasphemous opinions of Arius. The heretic Arius is depicted in iconography sitting on Satan's knees, or in the mouth of the Beast of the Deep (Rev. 13).

The Fathers of the Council declined to accept a flawed statement of faith proposed by the Arians. Instead, they affirmed the Orthodox Symbol of Faith (Creed). St Constantine asked the Council to insert into the text of the Symbol of Faith the word "consubstantial," which he had heard in the speeches of the bishops. The Fathers of the Council unanimously accepted this suggestion.

In the Nicene Creed, the holy Fathers set forth and confirmed the Apostolic teachings about Christ's divine nature. The heresy of Arius was exposed and repudiated as an error of self-aggrandizing reason. After resolving this chief dogmatic question, the Council also issued Twelve Canons on questions of churchly administration and discipline. Also decided was the date for the celebration of Holy Pascha. By decision of the Council, Holy Pascha should not be celebrated by Christians on the same day with the Jewish Passover, but on the first Sunday after the first full moon of the vernal equinox (which occurred on March 22 in 325).

*If you wish to list someone on the parish prayer list, you must advise Father monthly.
The next prayer list update will take place after the June 12 bulletin.*

PRAYERS requested:

For The Health and Salvation of:

Julian (Georgie & Corbin's grandson)
Gloria (Fr. Joe's nephew Dan's M-I-L)
Andrea Bartol (Steve & Sandy Bozeka's daughter)
Letitia Bella (Lynette Baier's mother)
Olympia Tillman (Father David's mother)
Helen (Father David's aunt)
Carl (friend of Father David)
Lisa "
Kitty "
Father David & Family
Father John Zdinak & Family
Gregory Cervo
Ann Cervo
Harper (13 yr. who just received heart transplant)
Arika (missing person) her mother Renee & sisters Ashley and Chloe.
Xavier Fox (abducted and abused child)

For The Repose of the Souls of the newly departed Servants:

+ Nicholas Tomich (friend of Fr. Joe)

+Subdeacon +Alexander McNeer (Antiochian Choir director, Huntington, WV)

+Carol Ritchey (Fr. Joe's cousin-in-law)

Many Years:

TJ and Laura Cotterman, (1st Anniversary) June 6

Joe Novak, June 17

Coffee Hour: Today, Steve & Sandy Bozeka. Next Sunday - Open

Alex Ralich Graduation Party, June 12, from 1-4 pm at St. George Serbian Hall. RSVP TO SUZYSOTA1@AOL.COM or call her cell# 330-705-9338.

Final thought for the day: “Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away.” (James 4:14). “*True faith depends completely on God and seeks ways to do good works. But to plan as if we know what exactly what will happen is arrogance.*” (Orthodox Study Bible commentary).