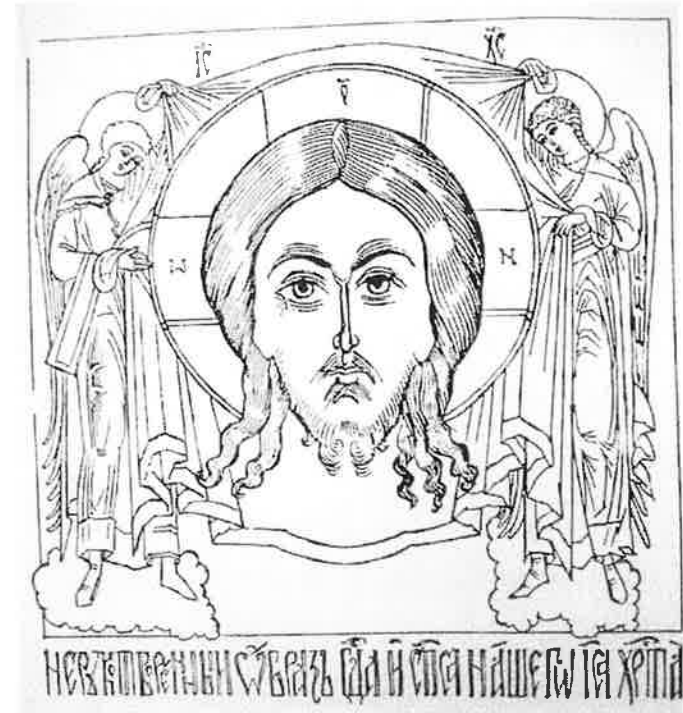


St. John of Damascus and the Holy Icons

St. John of Damascus in the 8th Century derived his defense of icons directly from the God-Manhood of Christ. Before He was made Man only symbols and "shadows" were possible. In a certain sense the whole world is full of "natural images" of God, but something completely new began from the moment that the "word became flesh". "When He Who is without a body and without form, Who has neither quantity nor magnitude, Who is incomparable with respect to the superiority of His nature, Who exists in Divine form, accepts a bondservant's appearance and submits to it, both as to quantity and size, and arrays Himself in bodily form, then do thou trace Him upon wood, and rest thy hopes in contemplating Him, Who has permitted Himself to be seen." But because God has united with man forever, an image of the Man Christ is also an image of God: "everything that is human in Christ is now the living image of God" (G. Florovsky). And in this union "matter" Itself is made new and becomes "worthy of praise". "I do not bow down to matter, but to the Creator of matter, Who for my sake took on substance and Who through matter accomplished my salvation, and I shall not cease to honor matter, through which my salvation was accomplished." This means that everything in the world and the world itself has, taken on a new meaning in the Incarnation of God, everything has become accessible to sanctification, matter itself has become a channel of the grace of the Holy Spirit, it no longer divides us from God but opens up for us the way to union with Him. We "honor" all things because Christ has honored all things, and each act of worship of God Himself Who is in all things.

~ Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, *Byzantium, Iconoclasm, & the Monks*

“Let us Attend! ”



“With depict Thee in words and Images!”

A PARISH BULLETIN OF
ALL SAINTS ORTHODOX CHURCH

Olyphant, Pennsylvania

Rev. Paul J. Witek, Ph.D., Rector

201.315.5722

13 October 2024

16th Sunday after Pentecost

Holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council

Bulletin, Sunday, 13 October 2024

16th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone

7. Fathers of the 7th Ecumenical Council. Martyrs Carpus, Papylus, Agathadorus, and Agathonica, at Pergamum (251). Ven. Benjamin of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—14th c.). Martyr Florentius of Thessalonica (1st–2nd c.). Martyr Benjamin, Deacon, of Persia (421–424). St. Niké̄tas the Confessor of Paphlagonia (838). New Martyr Zlata of Meglena, Bulgaria (1795). Translation of the “Ivéron” (“Iberian”) Icon of the Mother of God to Moscow (1648). “Seven Lakes” Icon of the Mother of God (17th c.).

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 6:1–10 (Sunday) ; Hebrews 13:7–16 (Holy Fathers) **Gospel:** Luke 8:5–15 (Sunday); John 17:1–13 (Holy Fathers)

Our souls and minds are strengthened and fortified by the regular reading of the Holy Scriptures. Daily readings can be found on the parish’s wall calendar, or online by visiting the OCA’s daily reading page <https://www.oca.org/readings>.

Schedule

- **Monday – Thursday, Food Sale Preparation. See Ann Schlasta for Details.**
- **Friday, 18 October 2024: 11–AM–4PM. Parish Ethnic Food Sale.**
- **Saturday, 19 October 2024. 5:00–5:45PM. Fr. Paul available for Confession ; 6PM Great Vespers.**

- **Sunday 20 October 2024, 17th Sunday After Pentecost. 9:30AM Divine Liturgy, Followed by Agape Coffee Hour Fellowship.**

Announcements

~ A warm welcome to all our visitors. Please join us downstairs for Agape Coffee Hour Fellowship.

~ Please note this Tuesday evening, 15 October 2024 at 7pm St. Tikhon’s Seminary will hold its fall Founder’s Day lecture. This year Babette Basil, the great-granddaughter of Metropolitan Platon (successor to St. Tikhon) will give a presentation on this great hierarch of our Church. The Lecture is free and all are welcome to attend.

~ Our thanks to those who donated to aid the faithful of St. Theodosius Cathedral in Cleveland. By God’s grace and the generosity of our faithful, our parish will be sending \$2,000.00 to aid the cathedral in this time of need. God bless all who gave generously.

~ Our parish’s Ethnic food sale will take place this Friday, 18 October 2024 from 11–4. Help will be needed throughout the week for food preparation as well as for the day of the sale itself. For more information, please see Ann Schlasta.

SATURDAY

Fast-free

OCTOBER 12

1 Corinthians 10:23-28; Luke 6:1-10

The soul is restored to health by silence. It is therefore necessary to train oneself to silence—and this is a labor that brings sweetness to the heart. It is through silence that a man reaches peace from unwanted thoughts.

St. Isaac the Syrian

VENERABLE EPIKTETOS THE WONDERWORKER. In the twelfth century, there were 300 Greeks who lived in Germany. They went to Jerusalem during the Second Crusade to venerate the holy places and then went to live in asceticism in the area of the Jordan. But when other religions threatened them, they decided to go to Cyprus. The ship was nearly destroyed in a storm, but they arrived safely. They went off in different directions to live separately. Epiktetos settled in Kazafani, where he found a cave and lived in asceticism. His bed and headrest were made of stone. After he died, the locals who venerated him built a church dedicated to him above his grave. St. Epiktetos was known as a wonderworker, healing the blind, the possessed, and the paralyzed. God would send him in visions to answer the prayers of those who ardently prayed on their knees and with tears for healing.



COMMEMORATIONS: Martin, Bishop of Tours; Symeon the New Theologian; Domnina of Anazarbus and Anastasia of Rome; Probus, Tarachus, and Andronicus at Tarsus; Maximilian of Noricum; Theodotus of Ephesus; Jason of Damascus; Epiktetos the Wonderworker; Juventinus and Maximinus of Antioch; Euphrosyne the Faster of Siberia; Amphilocheus, Macarius, Tarasius, and Theodosius of Glushitsa Monastery; Theosevios the God-bearer of Arsinoe; Martyrs Andromachos and Diodoros; Arsenius of Syvatogorsk; Juvenal of Ryazan; Lawrence Levchenko of Optina; Martyrs Malfethos and Anthea; 70 martyrs beheaded; Nicholas Mogilevsky of Alma-Ata; Edwin of Northumbria; Wilfrid of York; Mobhi of Ireland; Synaxis of All Saints of Athens; Translation of the relics of St. Sabbas the Sanctified from Rome to Jerusalem; Transfer of a part of the Life-creating Cross of the Lord from Malta to Garchina; *Jerusalem, Rudensk, and Kaluga* Icons of the Mother of God; (Saturday of or after 10/11: Synaxis of the Saints of Barking).

SUNDAY

Sunday of the Seventh Ecumenical Council

Fast-free

OCTOBER 13

Titus 3:8-15; Luke 8:5-15

People tend to live like they are going to live forever here on earth. But it is not going to happen. We should think about our soul, be wakeful in our spiritual life, and acquisitive to the Church teaching instead of arguing and going against it, pretending that we, modern people, know better. We only know better one thing—how to lose our salvation. . . . Those who travel by sea, when overtaken by a storm, do not worry about their merchandise but throw it into the waters with their own hands, considering their property less important than their life. Why, then, do we not follow their example, and for the sake of the higher life despise whatever drags our soul down to the depths? Why is fear of God less powerful than fear of the sea?

St. Neilos the Ascetic of Sinai

VENERABLE BENJAMIN OF THE KIEV CAVES. Benjamin was a wealthy fourteenth-century merchant. Once during the Liturgy, he heard the words of the Psalmist, “the mouth that speaks lies and the tongue that has set forth deceit,” and he said to himself, “Where is the merchant that has never told a lie and who will be able to escape punishment?” And he remembered the words of Christ, “It is difficult for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (Mt. 19:23). So, Benjamin gave his wealth to the needy, became a monk at the Kiev Caves Lavra, and prayed and fasted in poverty and obedience to the end of his life. St. Benjamin was buried in the Far Caves of St. Theodosius.



COMMEMORATIONS: Karpos, Papylos, Agathodoros, and Agathonike at Pergamus; Zlata (Chryse) of Meglin; Dioscoros of Egypt; Nicetas the Confessor; Florentius of Thessalonica; Benjamin of Persia; Venantius of Tours; Benjamin of the Kiev Caves; Jacob of Hamatoura; Anthony of Chkondidi and James the Elder; Martyr Antingonus; Luke of Demena; Cogman of Lochaish; Gerald of Aurillac (Gaul); Bosiljka of Pasjane; Translation of the relics of St. Savvas the Sanctified from Venice to Jerusalem; Uncovering of the relics of St. Thaddeus Uspensky, Archbishop of Tver; Translation into Moscow of the *Iveron* Icon of the Mother of God.

OCTOBER 14

Ephesians 1:22-2:3; Luke 9:18-22

But if we do not obey our conscience, it will abandon us and we shall fall into the hands of our enemies, who will never let us go. ... The conscience is called an 'adversary' because it opposes us when we wish to carry out the desires of our flesh; and if we don't listen to our conscience, it delivers us into the hands of our enemies.

St. Isaiah the Solitary

VENERABLE PACHOMIOS OF CHIOS. Pachomios was born in the aftermath of the great massacre of the Greek population of Chios in the nineteenth century. Seeking a better life in Constantinople, Pachomios once found himself accused of murder. While defending himself, he was imprisoned, and he feared being put to death. He prayed continuously to the Theotokos to be released and to live a life of repentance. Pachomios was released, and he became a monk at the Lavra of St. Savvas in Jerusalem. He prayed, fasted, studied, repented completely of his crime, and acquired a deep knowledge of the heavenly mysteries. He returned to Chios and founded the Skete of the Holy Fathers on Mount Provateiou. It attracted many men and women, thus revitalizing monasticism in Chios. He never ceased studying the sacred books and established a majestic library at his Skete. St. Pachomios wrote a book, *Defense of Truth*, about the salvation of the soul. St. Nektarios, the wonderworker of Aegina, was his spiritual child, and he became a monk at this monastery.



COMMEMORATIONS: Cosmas the Hymnographer, Bishop of Maiuma; Silvanus of Gaza and with him 40 martyrs of Egypt and Palestine; Nazarius, Gervasius, Protasius, and Celsius of Milan; Ignatius, Metropolitan of Mithymna; Cosmas, abbot of Yakhromsk; Peter Apselamus of Eleutheropolis in Palestine; Nikola Sviatosha, prince of Chernigov; Ignatios, Metropolitan of Mithymna; Parasceva (Petka) the New of the Balkans, whose relics are in Iasi, Romania; Pachomios of Chios; Protasius of Milan; Manacca, abbess of Cornwall; Burchard, first bishop of Wurzburg; Commemoration of the miracle of St. Paraskevi on the island of Chios; *Yakhromsk* Icon of the Mother of God.

OCTOBER 15

Ephesians 2:19-3:7; Luke 9:23-27

The Lord has given the Holy Spirit upon the earth, and in whomsoever He dwells, that one feels paradise within himself. You might say: why hasn't this happened to me? Because you have not given yourself over to the will of God, but you live according to yourself. Look at the one who loves his own will. He never has peace in himself and is always displeased with something. But whoever has given himself over to God's will perfectly has pure prayer. His soul loves the Lord, and everything is acceptable and good to him.

St. Silouan the Athonite

VENERABLE BARSSES THE CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF EDESSA.

Barses was a renowned wonderworker in fourth-century Edessa, Phoenicia, Egypt, and the Thebaid. He upheld the doctrine of the Orthodox Church. When the Christian-persecuting emperor Valens heard about Barses, he exiled him to the island of Aradus, off the Syriac coast. However, multitudes of people went there to listen to his teachings and to be healed. Therefore, Valens banished him to Egypt, but the saint's reputation preceded him because of his purity of faith and his support of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea. Once again, the emperor exiled him to Algeria, a land of barbarians. St. Barses ended his days there. His relics were transferred back to the island of Aradus according to his instructions.



COMMEMORATIONS: Sabinus, Bishop of Catania; Barses the Confessor, Bishop of Edessa; Lucian, presbyter of Greater Antioch; Lucian, presbyter of the Kiev Caves; John, Bishop of Suzdal; Dionysius, Archbishop of Suzdal; Euthymios the New of Thessalonica; Aurelia of Strasburg; Thecla, abbess of Ochsenfurt (Germany); Valerian Novitsky of Telyadovich; Athanasius, Bishop of Kovrov; Synaxis of the New Hieromartyrs of Belorussia; *Prosperess of Loaves* (Multiplier of Wheat) Icon of the Mother of God.

OCTOBER 13th

1. **The Holy Martyrs Carpus and Papyrus.**

Carpus was Bishop of Thyateira and Papyrus was a deacon. They were born in Pergamum, where they finally suffered for the Christian faith at the hands of the wicked governor, Valerius, in Decius' reign. Valerius bound them behind horses and dragged them off to Sardis, where he put them to harsh torture; but an angel of God appeared to them, healed them of their wounds and strengthened them. Carpus's servant, Agathodorus, followed his master with great sorrow until he also was taken for torture. After that, Valerius again bound them behind horses and dragged them from Sardis to Pergamum. When holy Carpus was tied to a tree and so terribly flogged that his whole body was laid open and his blood streamed down onto the ground, he smiled in the midst of these tortures. When they asked him why he smiled, the holy martyr replied that he saw the heavens open and the Lord sitting on his throne, surrounded by cherubim and seraphim. At the time of Papyrus's martyrdom, this holy martyr healed a man, blind in one eye, by his prayers. Many, seeing this, came to believe in Christ the Lord. Thrown before wild beasts, the martyrs remained unhurt. When they were thrown into a fiery furnace; Agathonica, Papyrus' sister, saw this and leapt into the flames. But the flames did not burn them. Finally, they were all beheaded with the sword in 251. Thus, after great spiritual endeavour, they received the wreath of glory in the Kingdom of Christ.

2. **The Hieromartyr Benjamin the Deacon.**

This soldier of Christ was a Persian, and, zealously preaching the Gospel, brought many pagans, both Persians and Greeks, to the Christian faith. He suffered in the time of the Persian King Yezdegerd, in about 412. When he was thrown into prison, one of the king's nobles pleaded for him to the king. The king was willing to let him go free, on condition that he kept silent and spoke no more to the people about Christ. To this, Benjamin replied: 'I cannot possibly do that. Those who hide the talent they

have received will be given over to greater suffering', and he continued to spread the Christian faith. The king then ordered that thorns be driven under his nails, and had him tortured until he gave his soul into God's hands.

3. The Holy Martyr Zlata of Meglin.

Born in the village of Slatina in the Meglin region, of poor peasants who had three other daughters, St Zlata was a meek and devout girl, wise with Christ's wisdom and golden ('zlata' means 'gold') not only in name but also in her God-fearing heart. When Zlata went out one day to get water, some shameless Turks seized her and carried her off to their house. When one of them urged her to embrace Islam and become his wife, Zlata answered fearlessly: 'I believe in Christ, and know Him alone as my bridegroom; I shall never deny Him even if you put me to a thousand tortures and cut me into pieces.' Her parents and sisters then arrived, and said to her: 'O our daughter, have mercy on yourself and us. Deny Christ publicly, that we can all be happy. Christ is merciful; He will forgive your sin, committed under the pressure of life.' Her poor parents and kinsfolk wept bitterly. But Zlata's heroic soul would not be overcome by devilish seduction. She replied to her parents: 'When you urge me to deny Christ, the true God, you are no longer parents or sisters to me; I have the Lord Jesus Christ as father, the Mother of God as mother and, for brothers and sisters, the saints.' Then the Turks threw her into prison, where she lay for three months, and they took her out every day and flogged her until her blood flowed onto the ground. Finally, they hanged her upside-down and made a fire to choke her to death with the smoke. But God was with Zlata, and gave her strength in her suffering. At the very end, they hanged her from a tree and cut her into small pieces. Thus this martyr-maiden gave her soul into God's hands, and entered into the realm of Paradise, in 1796. Pieces of her relics were taken by Christians to their homes, that they might bring a blessing to them.

* * *

FOR CONSIDERATION

There is nothing more wretched than a man who, in the hour of need, abandons hope in God and flees to a means of safety contrary to God's Law. Such a man not only cannot put right his outward circumstances, but also loses his soul. This is what happened to the Emperor Michael Palaeologus. In order to safeguard his kingdom, terrorised by the Bulgarians and Serbs, he sought help from the Pope and made a Union with him in 1274. What did this gain? The kingdom was not saved and he did innumerable evil deeds, coming rapidly to an unhappy end in a campaign against Prince John Ducas of Epirus in 1282. The Orthodox people were so resentful towards him that his son Andronicus dared not bury him openly, but put him in the ground at night without funeral or prayers. He was rejected by the Orthodox Church and not received by the Roman, and Michael died outside the Church of God. His wife the Empress, after his death, issued the following statement: 'My Majesty hates and regards as loathsome this action (the Union) that has recently come about in the Church and has caused such discord As the holy Church of God has determined not to sanction any official commemoration of my departed spouse, our Lord and King, on account of his aforementioned actions and intrigues, my majesty also, bowing in all things to the fear of God and submitting to the holy Church, approves and accepts her decree, and will never presume to commemorate the soul of my lord and spouse in any way.'

TO PONDER

Let me ponder on the miraculous punishment with which the Apostle Peter punished Ananias (Acts 5):

1. How Ananias, and then his wife Sapphira, lied and kept back money.
2. How the Apostle Peter denounced them, and first the one then the other fell to the ground and expired.

HOMILY

— on the burden of sin, and on freeing from sin.

*Blessed is he whose unrighteousness is forgiven,
and whose sin is covered'*
(Ps. 31:1).

Of sin are born fear and confusion and weakness and infirmity, and the darkening of the mind. By sin a man provokes other people against himself, confuses his own conscience, gathers demons around himself and gives them weapons with which to smite him. By sin, a man separates himself from God, sets himself at a distance from his guardian angel and fences himself off from the Source of all good. Committed sin signifies a declaration of war against God and all the godly powers. This is more incredible than that an autumn leaf should declare war on the wind. It is an incredible thing for a man to declare war on God. This declaration means rapid defeat and destruction if a man does not come to himself, repent and flee to God for mercy.

The great King David was well aware of the terrible situation of a sinner, and he himself described it. He felt great fear and trouble, weakness and loneliness; he felt the arrows of men and of demons. But, being aware of his terrible state, David acknowledged his sin, prostrated in ashes before God, watered the ground with tears of repentance, with words of anguish which burned like fire, and besought the merciful God to forgive him. When all was forgiven him, he felt an indescribable blessedness. This blessedness of the forgiven soul he could not find words to express; he could only proclaim, point out and confirm the elements of his experience of both states: 'Blessed is he whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.' What is this blessing? Freedom and courage and indescribable joy, strength and health, clarity of thought and a quiet conscience, consecration and thanksgiving to God, love for one's neighbour and a sense of life. In brief: light, joy, strength — these are the blessings. They are the blessings that he whose sin is forgiven feels on earth. But what are the blessings that await him in heaven, that 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered

into the heart of man' (I Cor. 2:9)?

O Lord our God, forgive our unrighteousness, and cover our sin in Thine endless mercy. To Thee be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

