



# HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## Parish Newsletter

New Parish Center: 20937 Ashburn Rd., #110, Ashburn, VA July 2016

### THE WEEKS OF MATTHEW WILL FERRY US TO THE END OF THE CHURCH YEAR

*No Saturday evening Vespers during July & August.*

#### JULY—DAY 14 HOURS, NIGHT 10

- 3 Sun<sup>2•I•Mt2</sup> 10:00 a.m. **Common Confession Rite** *in conjunction with the post-Pentecost season* followed by the Divine Liturgy at ~10:30 — **Coffee Hour: Zieg**
- 10 Sun<sup>3•II•Mt3</sup> 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Adams**
- 11 Mon *St. Olga, Grand Princess of Rus', baptized on Crimea in 954 A.D.*
- 15 Fri *St. Vladimir, Grand Prince of Rus', baptized in 988 A.D.*
- 17 Sun<sup>4•III•Mt4</sup> 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Belinsky**
- 22 Thu *24<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sudden exodus of Fr. John Meyendorff (+1992) St. Mary Magdalene, Equal-to-the-Apostles*
- 24 Sun<sup>5•IV•Mt5</sup> 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Busenberg**
- 31 Sun<sup>6•V•Mt6</sup> 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Doyle**

#### AUGUST—DAY 13 HOURS, NIGHT 11

- 1 Mon *Begins the Dormition Penitential Season*
- 6 Sat **↓** *Transfiguration of Our Lord—Bless grapes and fruit*
- 7 Sun<sup>7•VI•Mt7</sup> 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Ellmore**
- 9 Tue *St. Herman of Alaska*
- 14 Sun<sup>8•VII•Mt8</sup> 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Krisa**
- 15 Mon **↑** *Dormition of the Theotokos—Bless flowers*
- 21 Sun<sup>9•VIII•Mt9</sup> 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Lynch**
- 28 Sun<sup>10•I•Mt10</sup> 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Matyuf**

#### SEPTEMBER—DAY 12 HOURS, NIGHT 12

- 4 Sun<sup>11•II•Mt11</sup> 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Miller**
- 11 Sun<sup>12•III•Mt12</sup> 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Morrow**

#### FOOD PANTRY WISH LIST

Canned items—Peanut butter, Jelly, Juices (100% Fr.uit), Vegetables, Canned Fr.uit, Canned beans, Tomato products, Stews, Soups. Boxed Items—Macaroni and cheese, Cereal, Pasta, Rice, Potatoes, Crackers. Other Items—Sugar, Powdered milk, Coffee, Tea bags, Dry beans. Needs for the Homeless—Pop-top canned foods, Individual serve items, Can opener. Infant Needs—Diapers (all sizes), Baby personal hygiene. Personal Hygiene—Deodorant, Shampoo and conditioner, Bath/hand soap, Tissues, Tooth paste, Toothbrush, Laundry soap, Women's hygiene products, Shaving cream and razors. Distribution Center Supplies—Ziploc bags (all types), Paper towels, Disposable gloves, Disinfectants, Bleach, Window cleaner, Antibacterial hand soap, Copy paper (white and colors), File folders.

#### Summer School?

During July and August, if one or two or three were interested, we could come together and spend some time learning to read notes, talk about some issues raised in our Liturgy Book, or even talk about the ethnic story behind the OCA. Or talk about some other worthwhile topic that might come to mind. Interested? Email Fr. Paul — yegomost@verizon.net.

<sup>16</sup>Therefore, confess your sins one to another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The fervent prayer of a righteous man [meaning a presbyter—Ed.] is very powerful.

<sup>17</sup>Elijah [example of a righteous man—Ed.] was a human being like us; yet he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain upon the land. <sup>18</sup>Then he prayed again, and the sky gave rain and the earth produced its fruit [meaning a presbyter's prayer will produce its fruit—Ed.].

<sup>19</sup>My brethren, if anyone among you should stray from the truth and someone bring him back, <sup>20</sup>he should know that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

—James's Catholic Epistle 5

#### Common Confession Rite.

As we have been doing these many years in conjunction with the post-Pentecost penitential season, we will have a Common Confession Rite leading into the Divine Liturgy. The rite will begin at 10:00 a.m., Sunday, July 3. Be sure to come. Be sure to come on time. And come in the right frame of mind. If you choose not to participate, keep in mind that the Divine Liturgy proper will start at around 10:30.

When you have nothing better to do, read our brochure on the *place* for Confession. Back in 1976, when our Bishops circulated their Encyclical on the Spiritual Life of the Church, calling for the revitalization of the Church's sacramental life, they were in fact inviting all to participate in discerning the mind of the Church in her Prayer.

#### Candles.

Fr. Nikolai Tkatschow's candle operation in Upstate New York has sent us a fresh supply of beeswax candles. These many months we've been using other thinner tapers we had on hand. These new candles fit our stands; in fact, our candle stands were made for these particular candles. So, there's no need to melt the bottom of the candle before putting it in place. As you will see, the new candles fit perfectly.

## THE EXPECTATION.

### Mark Stokoe: On the Great and Holy Council, the OCA, and the Future.

May 13, 2016

Thirty-one years ago this summer, the World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth, SYNDESMOS, invited scores of young people from around the globe to the Orthodox Academy of Crete, located in a small village in western Crete, named Kolymbari, for the inaugural World Festival of Orthodox Youth. After five days of fellowship, prayer, and discussion on the theme of the then-forthcoming "Great and Holy Council," the young people wrote an "Open Letter" to the bishops of the Orthodox Church that did not so much offer answers, as ask questions about the mission of the Orthodox Church in the contemporary world.

One Orthodox bishop actually replied. His words still resonate with all who read them: "The Church," Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) wrote, "must be everywhere Christ would have been.... We must go into darkness of the world, into the twilight of the world. Where there is suffering, we must be there—and be Christ's compassion. Where there is sin, we must be there—and be the salt of the earth that saves it from corruption. Where there is evil, we must take it into ourselves, and fight it, and overcome it... You must understand that [the Church's] place is not where it is safe. Our place is where things are evil, where things need salvation."

Two years ago, the Ecumenical Patriarch announced that the Great and Holy Council would, at last, be held in June 2016 at the Church of Holy Peace (*Agía Irēnē*) in Istanbul, site of the Second Ecumenical Council in 381. However, recent conflicts between Turkey and Russia have forced the Patriarchate to find an alternative site outside of Turkey, so that the Russians may participate. Call it synchronicity, call it serendipity, but the Patriarch has chosen to invite scores of Orthodox bishops to hold the Great and Holy Council of 2016 in the Orthodox Academy of Crete in Kolymbari, the very same place where SYNDESMOS so fruitfully discussed it, so many years ago.

#### ***Mutatis Mutandis***

Originally envisioned in 1961 on the model of the forthcoming Second Vatican Council, that is, as a worldwide gathering of all Orthodox hierarchs, the "Great and Holy Council" has been scaled back to a smaller gathering of representative bishops from each Orthodox Church, each delegation to be led by their Primate. In 1961, Constantinople wanted to invite all Orthodox bishops to attend—seeing as how Greek titular bishops from non-existent dioceses dominated the Orthodox hierarchy. In 2016, however, as there are more actual diocesan bishops in just the Russian Church alone than the entire Greek hierarchy, titulars and all, Constantinople felt, *mutatis mutandis*, full conciliarity

should give way to more limited synodality.

Unfortunately, it is unclear whether all invited will in fact attend. The Synaxis of Primates in Chambesy in January was held without primates of several local Churches. The Patriarch of Antioch and Archbishop of Warsaw cited ill health as their reason for not attending. The Archbishop of Athens did not attend, as he explained it, "...due to recent actions of Constantinople that undermine the authority and reputation of the Church of Greece." All these Churches were represented by delegations of lesser bishops, and the Antioch delegation would not participate in the Liturgy because of the interruption of ecclesiastical communion with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The two Churches are at odds over money in Qatar. Since no resolution of this conflict seems to be in sight, the Patriarch of Antioch or his delegation may not attend Kolymbari—not because of the civil war raging in Syria, but because the Patriarch of Jerusalem and his delegation will still be present.

The primates and bishops of several other Orthodox Churches were simply not invited. No hierarchs from the Church of Finland or the Orthodox Church in America—the only indigenous churches in the West—were asked to attend. The Great and Holy Council organized by Constantinople in the third millennium appears to have the same problems as those it organized in the first: money, political power, questions of prestige, and a fear of barbarians. The Ecumenical Patriarchate argues that the importance of the Great and Holy Council of 2016 lies not in the number of bishops attending, or where they may be from, *mutatis mutandis*, but in the fact that the Council itself is finally being held.

#### ***Barba Crescit, Caput Nescit***

The original 10 agenda items for the Great and Holy Council adopted in 1976 have been reduced for the meeting which will take place in 2016. Only those topics on which a prepared statement could be agreed to in advance, and agreed to unanimously, will be allowed to be discussed. A less pentecostal or charismatic gathering of bishops can hardly be imagined. So, *mutatis mutandis*, several topics have been tabled sine die, since, in 40 years of discussion, no consensus could be reached on questions of autocephaly, the diptychs, the calendar, or relations with other Christians.

Consensus has been reached on the following agenda items: fasting, about which there was never any debate; the diaspora, although no non-Greek bishops from the diaspora were actually invited to join the discussions; autonomy, although no bishops from any autonomous churches were invited to participate; and marriage, although only celibate bishops were able to discuss the issue. The way forward is apparently ever so much clearer when there is no one with actual experience in the discussion.

This was never more evident than in the statement the bishops will publish regarding the only other question on the table at Kolymbari, “The Mission of the Orthodox Church in Today’s World” — the same question Orthodox young people were asking there 30 years ago. The Great and Holy Council of 2016, composed largely of bishops from authoritarian states in Eastern Europe, Asia Minor, and the Middle East, has agreed to affirm that “...in carrying out her salutary mission, the Church again reminds the world that almost all challenges and problems of modern society are caused by the fact that people are forgetting God’s law, loosing moral guidelines, and have distorted views on human freedom, dignity and justice.” After 1200 years, truly, the beard grows, but the head grows no wiser.

### ***Mirabile dictu***

Does this mean that Orthodox Americans and Orthodox in the Americas should ignore the Great and Holy Council of 2016, even as it ignores all of us and the world we live in? Nothing said in Kolymbari is likely to materially affect the OCA—or the world, for that matter. Yet Kolymbari cannot be ignored. Its importance for the OCA and its future lies not in what those bishops have agreed to say in June, but in what already happened in March.

Last February, Metropolitan Tikhon, Primate of the OCA, received an unexpected, last-minute invitation to visit Istanbul to concelebrate the Sunday of Orthodoxy. The OCA, with remarkable decorum, posted only a personal e-note from the Metropolitan, describing the liturgical celebrations but eschewing the whys, hows, and wherefores of this singular and unprecedented invitation. No previous Primate of the OCA had officially visited the Phanar, let alone publicly concelebrated the Divine Liturgy, on the Sunday of Orthodoxy itself, nonetheless. (Canonical-naysayers of the OCA take note!)

In fact, the Phanar, recognizing that its Great and Holy Council is less significant than it had hoped, has begun to realize that its plans for the “Assembly of Canonical Bishops of the United States” are also fatefully flawed. It is too late to do something about the former matter this time around, but the latter might still be able to move forward if things change. From this acknowledgement came the recognition that the OCA might be the only real ally Constantinople has in regards to Orthodox unity and progress in North America. Hence the quiet invitation to Met. Tikhon—who went to Istanbul armed with 45+ years of OCA-Phanar archival correspondence to help re-ignite the relationship.

### ***It may have worked.***

The Ecumenical Patriarchate is reported to be seriously mulling over whether to invite the OCA to Kolymbari as “Observers.” The OCA is seriously mulling over whether to accept if asked, since the handful of invited “Observers” will only be allowed to “observe” the opening and

closing Liturgies, not the sessions themselves. It’s a long flight just to watch a Liturgy. But even if the OCA does not “Observe” this Council, it will surely be at the next “Great and Holy” Council, planned for the next decade—and perhaps not just as “Observers”.

Mirabile dictu, the insignificance of the Great and Holy Council of 2016 may have provided an opening for rapprochement between the OCA and the Ecumenical Patriarchate—a rapprochement which a more meaningful Great and Holy Council (one that actually discussed issues like Autocephaly) could not have accomplished.

At the very least, the Great and Holy Council of 2016 has forced Constantinople and Syosset to come out of the trenches, if only for tea. (No, really, they all had tea.) Given the long, sad history of Orthodoxy in the 20th Century and its dolorous history already in the 21st, celebrating the Divine Liturgy together and having tea afterwards is a small step forward. That, more than anything else, is what the young people of SYNDESMOS were seeking in Kolymbari in 1985. Call that Providence.

*Mark Stokoe was the Secretary General of SYNDESMOS and more recently the Editor of OCAnews.org.*

*In Memoriam: Nikita Struve (16 February 1931–7 May 2016)*

## **THE REALITY.**

### **Pan-Orthodox Meltdown Ahead of Great Council?**

NEWS ANALYSIS:

by VICTOR GAETAN 06/13/2016

The Holy and Great Council of Orthodox patriarchs, meeting for the first time in 1,139 years, appears to be unraveling.

June 19 — Pentecost Sunday for Eastern-Orthodox Christians — is when the Pan-Orthodox Council is scheduled to open at a theological academy on the island of Crete.

But on June 1, leadership of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church announced the council should be postponed until numerous unspecified issues are addressed, from guest seating and procedures for editing texts to costs. The Church said it would boycott the meeting if held this month.

Five days later, another Church announced it could not participate: the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, based in Damascus Syria, which has been embroiled in a jurisdictional dispute with the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem. The two churches have broken communion.

Since the disagreement has not been settled, and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople scheduled mediation for after the council, the Antioch Church considers it impossible to attend a council dedicated to unity.

The unraveling accelerated by the end of the week, with the Serbian Orthodox Church and Orthodox Church of Georgia piling on, adding a specific complaint about the agenda item on ecumenical dialogue.

The discontented communities are close to the most powerful Church in the assembly: the Russian Orthodox Church, with more people and more money than any other.

A total of 350 clerics comprise the council — each patriarch is accompanied by 24 bishops.

Incredibly, at least in light of all of the recent discontent, all 14 churches approved an agenda only five months ago in Switzerland, although some Christian reporters sensed discontent that could derail the gathering, despite planning that stretches back decades.

The discord touches directly on the Catholic Church and its long ecumenical dialogue with the Orthodox Church, dating back to 1964, when Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras met in Jerusalem to begin healing that old wound of division, the Great Schism of 1054.

What is going on?

### **Disunity**

Orthodox churches function, normally, with extensive autonomy.

Most of the 14 autocephalous (self-governing) churches are defined by national jurisdictions — the Orthodox Churches of Albania, Bulgaria, Czech and Slovakia, Georgia, Greece, Poland, Romania, Russia and Serbia — while another five trace histories back to ancient communities: Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, Cyprus and Jerusalem.

With authority flowing from the ancient seat of the Byzantine Empire, Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople is considered “first among equals” in relation to other Orthodox leaders, as a matter of history.

Although he has the power to convene a Pan-Orthodox Council, he can’t command other patriarchs to follow him, a fact the current kerfuffle makes clear.

When dissatisfaction became public, leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church was swift to read discord as potentially fatal.

Metropolitan Hilarion, chairman of the Russian Orthodox Church’s department for external church relations (effectively its foreign minister), recommended that Patriarch Bartholomew convene an emergency meeting to iron out problems before leaders descend on Crete.

Because decisions are supposed to be made by consensus, the absence of even one local Church undermines the meeting’s authority, Hilarion explained to a Russian TV station on June 7.

“If these issues are resolved, then the council will take place. If they are not, then it’s probably best to postpone it,” Metropolitan Hilarion told Russia-24 TV.

Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Chrysostomos Savatos, who will represent his Church at the council, echoed Hilarion in emphasizing that participation of all is critical. But he voiced puzzlement regarding what inspired fractures.

“I am certain that the Holy Spirit will enlighten the

minds of primates,” the Greek leader told La Stampa. “I do not understand why this change has come about. This is an historic moment, and none of the Orthodox Churches must be absent from this Pan-Orthodox Council.”

The patriarchate of Constantinople beseeched all parties to stick with the program, noting “with surprise and wonder” that the Churches already had agreed to it. Plus, further discussion could occur during the council.

But the negative snowball only picked up speed after Bartholomew insisted the Holy and Great Council would go ahead as planned.\

### **Power Struggle?**

Some observers posit that underlying the tempest is a major rivalry between the Orthodox world’s Greek-dominated Hellenistic pole and its Moscow-dominated Slavic pole.

As the Italian analyst Sandro Magister wrote in January, “The rivalry between the powerful Russian Church, which encompasses two-thirds of the world’s Orthodox population, and the ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople, which numbers less than three thousand faithful in Istanbul but boasts a primacy of honor over all of Orthodoxy, has in fact been for years one of the most serious conflicts within the Christian East, with important repercussions for relations with the Church of Rome.”

He continued, “What happens at the Pan-Orthodox Council will show what kind of new equilibrium will emerge between the two most significant leaders of all Orthodoxy, Kirill and Bartholomew.”

“Kirill plainly intends, in fact, to strip Bartholomew of his exclusive status as the top symbolic representative of Orthodoxy in the world,” the Italian journalist predicted.

Yet, just six years ago, the two patriarchs celebrated Pentecost together, in Greek and Slavonic, at a monastery outside of Moscow.

Patriarch Kirill declared, “In raising up praise to God with one heart in different languages, we are once again reliving the miracle of Pentecost,” he said.

And Patriarch Bartholomew has been consistently solicitous of Moscow’s preferences in the lead-up to the council: In fact, the meeting was moved from Istanbul to Crete at the request of the Russian Orthodox Church, concerned about security after the Turkish military blew up a Russian jet.

Originally, the Holy and Great Council was to be held in Hagia Irene, where the Council of Constantinople endorsed the Nicene Creed in 381 — a location that would have affirmed the deeply historical leadership of Bartholomew and his predecessors.

### **Weakness of Bartholomew**

Instead, the specter of churches peeling off just days before the council convenes underscores Bartholomew’s weakness with regard to settling inter-Church disputes

— an especially precarious aspect of relations within Orthodox Christianity, according to Father Cyril Hovorun, a research fellow at Yale Divinity School, who previously served as chairman of the department for external relations of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and as first deputy chairman of the educational committee of the Moscow Patriarchate.

At first, it seems surprising that a community facing genocide, as is the Orthodox Church of Antioch, would take action to undermine a united council, especially since the existential crisis of Middle-Eastern Christianity is one threat arguing for greater unity.

Yet the Antioch grievance seems to be a legitimate complaint: The patriarchate has historically governed Orthodox communities on the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf, including Qatar.

In March 2013, the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem ordained as archbishop of Qatar a priest serving there with permission of the Antioch Patriarchate, without consulting Antioch Patriarch John X — more importantly, without jurisdiction to make the appointment.

The Antioch Church has spent the last three years urging the Patriarchate of Constantinople to rectify the “illegal interference” of the Jerusalem Church.

A Catholic source on the region, AsiaNews.it, considers the conflict to be indicative of complex regional rivalries embedded in international struggles.

But Orthodox lawyer Carl Saba, who serves as communications director for the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops of France, wrote a year ago, “This is not a mere ‘territorial dispute’ between two sister churches, but an issue that touches the very heart of the unity of the entire Orthodox Church, a unity that is based on the one hand on communion of faith and on the other hand on respect by all the Orthodox churches for the canons of the ecumenical councils,” including canonical jurisdiction, a problem festering for several years.

Saba also highlights the key issue of Orthodox relations with its far-flung diaspora, which expects more pastoral care, more evangelization and more engagement than some old-school leaders seem to realize.

### **Catholics Are Heretics?**

For Roman Catholics, most worrisome is a development among some Orthodox communities that could put a huge wedge in more than 50 years of dialogue.

When the churches of Georgia and Serbia renounced the Pan-Orthodox Council last week, they singled out a specific document, accepted in January, as problematic: “the relation of the Orthodox Church towards the rest of the Christian world,” the council agenda item most relevant to the Catholic Church — and one of five documents already accepted in January.

Some Orthodox leaders, including a group in Bulgaria,

don’t think Catholicism should be described as a “church,” because they consider it a heresy.

A wing of the Greek Orthodox Church promulgates this anti-Catholic attitude, too. Outspoken Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Serafim of Piraeus even disapproves of having non-Orthodox observers at all.

### **Top Vatican Advisers Engaged**

Pope Francis is sending two observers to Crete: Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, and the council’s secretary, Bishop Brian Farrell.

Bishop Farrell discussed the council’s complexity with America magazine’s Vatican correspondent last week, explaining that the document on ecumenical relations “sets out a vision that is very conservative; it insists on the point that the Orthodox Church is the only one, true church. It recognizes that relations with the Catholic Church are hugely important and positive, but there is no recognition of the Catholic Church as church in the proper sense.”

“The atmosphere is very difficult, and we have to wait and see if the reality of the ecumenical relations down these years is recognized or not,” observed the Irish bishop.

“Over past decades we have called ourselves ‘sister churches,’ we have cooperated together, and we have made theological agreements and signed them as ‘sister churches.’ But now we have to see whether the tremendously conservative trend that is dominating in some of their churches will prevail,” he told America.

Bishop Farrell was quick to explain the Russian Orthodox Church is not one of the “conservative” churches, to which he alluded: “We don’t have this problem with the Russian Orthodox; they are quite positive about our relationship with them.”

In *La Stampa* last week, Greek Orthodox Metropolitan, Chrysostomos Savatos reassured readers that only a minority among Orthodox leaders consider the Catholic Church inferior: “The Catholic Church has always been considered a Church. What you are referring to is a proposal put forward by some conservatives who do not want to place the Churches on the same level. But I think it is unlikely the proposal will go through. There are many others who do not agree with this amendment.”

Is there a role for the Holy Father in helping smooth some of the diplomatic edges?

He has excellent relations with many of the interlocutors: from Patriarch Kirill and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to Antioch Patriarch John X and the ruling family of Qatar, with whom he met last week.

Invariably, the Holy Father sees his — and our — chief role as praying for the Orthodox Church and the Holy Spirit’s guidance.

*Senior Register correspondent Victor Gaetan is an award-winning international correspondent and a contributor to Foreign Affairs magazine.*



Ten out of fourteen patriarchs at the monastery on Crete.