

THE SUNDAY ON OR AFTER THE 13TH DAY OF THE MONTH OF JULY COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY FATHERS OF THE FIRST SIX ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

Be it known that if the sixteenth day of July fall on a Sunday, this service of the Holy Fathers is chanted on that very day; but if the sixteenth fall on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, the service is chanted on the preceding Sunday; and if the sixteenth fall on a Thursday, Friday or Saturday, it is chanted on the following Sunday. We celebrate the memory of the six holy ecumenical councils, and transfer the service of the saint of the day to comply.

AT LITTLE VESPERS

We chant the stichera of the Resurrection and to the Theotokos, as usual.

AT GREAT VESPERS

After the Introductory Psalm, we chant "Blessed is the man....," the entire kathisma.

At "Lord, I have cried....," four stichera of the Resurrection, and six of the Fathers, in Tone VI: Spec. Mel: "The wretched..."—

Before the ages Thou wast begotten of the womb of the Father without mother before the morning star; yet Arius calleth Thee a creature, refusing to glorify Thee as God, with audacity mindlessly confusing Thee, the Creator, with a creature, laying up for himself fuel for the everlasting fire. But the Council in Nicaea proclaimed Thee to be the Son of God, Who art equally enthroned with the Father and the Spirit. *twice*

Wisely did ye mend the robe of Christ which had been rent and torn by the jaws of dogs, O honored fathers, unable to endure the sight of His nakedness, as of old Shem and Japheth could not bear to see their father's nakedness. And ye put to shame the mindlessness of those of like mind with Arius, the namesake of wrath. *twice*

The Macedonians, Nestorians, Eutychians and Dioscorans, the Appollinarians, Sabellians and Severians, savage wolves who came clad in sheep skins, did ye, as true pastors, drive far away from the flock of the Savior, stripping the thrice-wretched ones in particular of their

sheep's clothing. Wherefore, we call you blessed. *twice*

Glory..., in Tone VI: Idiomelon—

Let us praise today the mystic clarions of the Spirit, the God-bearing fathers who in the midst of the Church chanted the harmonious hymn of theology, that the Trinity is one and immutable in essence and divinity; the destroyers of Arius, the champions of the Orthodox, who ever pray to the Lord that our souls find mercy.

Now and ever..., the Dogmatic Theotokion of the tone. Entrance. Prokimenon of the day. And three lessons:

Reading from the First Book of Moses, called Genesis (14:14-20).

And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought back again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him, after his return from the slaughter of Chedorla-omer and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said: Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand.

Reading from the Fifth Book of Moses, called Deuteronomy (1:8-17).

Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to

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give unto them and to their seed after them. And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone: the Lord your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. (The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you!) How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife? Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you. And ye answered me, and said, The thing which thou hast spoken is good for us to do. So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes. And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.

Reading from the Fifth Book of Moses, called Deuteronomy (10:14-21).

Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked. For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: he doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name. He is thy praise, and he is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen.

At the Litia, the sticheron of the temple; and Glory..., in Tone III—

O holy fathers, ye were careful preservers of the Traditions of the apostles, for, having taught in Orthodox manner the consubstantiality of the holy Trinity, in council did ye cast down the blasphemy of Arius; and having denounced both him and Macedonius, who contended against the Spirit, ye did condemn Nestorius, Eutyches and Dioscorus, Sabellius and the mindless Severus. Pray ye that we be delivered from their deception, that our life may be kept undefiled in the Faith, we beseech you.

Now and ever..., in the same tone—

Through the divine Spirit, by the will of the Father, without seed thou didst conceive the Son of God Who hath existed without mother from before the ages, and for our sake thou gavest birth in the flesh unto Him Who cometh forth from thee without father; and thou didst nurture Him on milk as a babe. Wherefore, cease not to pray, that our souls be saved.

The Aposticha from the Octoechos; and Glory..., in Tone IV—

This day let us, the assemblies of the Orthodox, faithfully acting in accordance with piety, celebrate the prayerful memory of the God-bearing fathers who assembled from throughout all the world in the splendid city of Nicaea; for with pious mind they cast down the godless dogma of the dreadful Arius, and in council cast him out of the catholic Church, and in their Symbol of Faith have clearly taught all to confess the Son of God to be consubstantial, equally everlasting, and existent before the ages, setting this forth precisely and piously. Wherefore, following their divine dogmas and believing them with certainty, we worship the Trinity One in essence: the Son and the Holy Spirit together with the Father, in one God-head.

Now and ever...: Theotokion, in the same tone—

Mercifully regard the supplications of thy servants, O all-immaculate one, quelling the uprisings of the cruel demons against us, delivering us from every sorrow; for thee alone have we as a steadfast and sure confirmation, and we have acquired thine intercessions; let not us that call upon thee be put to shame, O Mistress. Haste thou to answer the entreaty of them that

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cry out to thee with faith: Rejoice, thou help, joy and protection of all, and salvation of our souls!

At the Blessing of the Loaves, the troparion "Virgin Theotokos, rejoice...", twice; and that of the fathers, once, in Tone VIII—

Most glorious art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast established our fathers upon the earth as beacons, and hast thereby guided us all to the true Faith! O greatly Compassionate One, glory be to Thee!

AT MATINS

At "God is the Lord...", the troparion of the Resurrection, twice; Glory..., the troparion of the fathers; Now and ever...: Theotokion—

O Good One, Who for our sake wast born of the Virgin and, having endured crucifixion, cast down death by death, and as God revealed the resurrection: disdain not that which Thou hast fashioned with Thine own hand. Show forth Thy love for mankind, O Merciful One; accept the Theotokos who gaveth Thee birth and prayeth for us; and save Thy despairing people, O our Savior!

After the kathismata, the sedalens from the Octoechos.

Canon of the Resurrection, with four troparia, including the Irmos; canon of the Theotokos, with two troparia; and two canons of the fathers, with eight troparia.

ODE I

Canon I of the Holy Fathers, the composition of Kyr Germanus II, sacred and ecumenical Patriarch, in Tone VI—

Irmos: When Israel traversed the deep on foot as on dry land, beholding the persecutor Pharaoh drowned, they cried out: Let us chant unto God a song of victory!

With sacred words let the fathers be honored who from Nicaea, as it were from the sky, thundered forth the Word of the living God everywhere, showing forth His enemies slain by their thunder.

With the Holy Spirit hath Christ driven the evil spirit of the Spirit-haters far from His Church, unifying the Church by the activity of the Second Council.

Cyril, the leader of the Council, who clearly

confessed the Virgin Mary to be the pure Mother and Theotokos, dispelled the deception of Nestorius the Christ-hater.

Theotokion: O pure one, thou gavest birth unto Christ, One of the uncreated Trinity, in two natures and volitions, Who for thy sake hath accomplished the uniting of men and angels.

Canon II of the Holy Fathers, in Tone VIII—

Irmos: Once the staff of Moses, working wonders, having struck the sea in the form of the Cross and divided it, drowned the tyrant Pharaoh and his chariots, and saved Israel who fled on foot, chanting a hymn unto God.

The pious council of the fathers, which once assembled against Eutyches, truly preached the Savior in two inseparable natures, manifestly walking and abiding according to the doctrine of the godly father Cyril.

The six hundred and thirty pious men, having cast down the deception of Eutyches and the heresy of Severus, attained unto this hymn: We preach Christ in two natures, walking according to the pronouncement of the blessed Cyril.

Let him that doth not confess Christ, the Word of the Father, to be in two natures and activities, fall under our anathema! For the Fourth Council of the holy fathers unanimously preached thus. Let us all, therefore, call them blessed.

Theotokion: Most glorious things have been spoken of thee amid generations of generations, O Mary Theotokos, who contained God the Word within thy womb, and remained pure. Wherefore, we all honor thee, after God, as our intercessor.

ODE III

Canon I

Irmos: There is none as holy as Thee, O Lord my God, Who hast exalted the horn of Thy faithful, O Good One, and hast established us upon the rock of Thy confession.

The mindless Arius, showing himself to be a servant of a created being, and Macedonius, likewise revealed as abominable, are equally tormented in the fire of Gehenna with the Hellenes.

With the seven sacred councils of the holy fathers didst thou adorn the honored Church, O