

## PSALM 116

*Alleluia.*

1. Praise the Lord, all you nations:  
applaud him, all you people.

2. For his mercy toward us has prevailed:  
and the truth of the Lord endures unto eternity.

This is the shortest psalm, the eighth of Kathisma XVI.  
It is read during all Vespers Services.

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**(Christian Dogma and Defending God's Truth -- Continued from Page 3)**

The Church teaches that there is an Absolute, Almighty, Good, Just, Loving God, Who revealed His truth to His chosen men. That truth has been preserved in Christ's Church, which He Himself established, and that truth does not change. God's answer to the problems of man is love: love of God and one's fellow man. His Church offers that answer to a suffering world, and there are probably very few fair-minded individuals who would deny that if we had love we would not have wars, crime, strife, deception, hatred and all that goes along with these. God proved His love by giving Himself for man, and in man's terms: He allowed His human life to be taken by His own creatures. This is the supreme sacrifice of love. This is why the Church so jealously guards the deposit of faith left by our Lord during His earthly stay. This is why she condemns and will continue to condemn novelties that detract from the Person of Jesus Christ and His mission. The whole structure of the Christian Church is summed up in the precious document left to us by the first two Ecumenical Councils of the Church, which we call the Nicene Creed. This is the only "least common denominator" for the Christian Church. We cannot deny or doubt any one of its truths. The forces of the enemy are at work to destroy the foundation of the Church, for in changing even one of the Church's fundamental principles, we run the risk of denying all of them.

**(Orthodox Christian Research Institute, by Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas, O.C.A)**

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## SAINT SOPHIA GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

Ἁγίας Σοφίας τοῦ Θεοῦ

Washington, D.C.

May 16, 2010

**Sunday of the First Ecumenical Council**

**The Tone for this day is Plagial 2**

**The Morning Gospel of the Orthros is No. 10**

**John 21:1-14**

At that time, Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. <sup>3</sup>Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No."<sup>6</sup>He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Services of the Saturday of the Souls will be conducted on May 22nd

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## **The Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council**

**PROKEIMENON:** Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers.  
For you are just in all you have done. From Song of the children, Daniel 3:26-27

### **The Epistle is from Acts of the Apostles 20:16-18, 28-36**

**IN THOSE DAYS,** Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost. And from Miletos he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. And when they came to him, he said to them: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities, and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.' " And when he had spoken thus, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

### **The Gospel Lesson is from John 17:1-13**

**AT THAT TIME,** Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work which you gave me to do; and now, Father, you glorify me in your own presence with the glory which I had with you before the world was made. "I have manifested your name to the men whom you gave me out of the world; yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you; for I have given them the words which you gave me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you did send me. I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are mine; all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves."

## **Christian Dogma and Defending God's Truth**

**This essay is being repeated on this important day because of the truths it conveys.**

Today we commemorate the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council held in the city of Nicea in the year 325 A.D. At this gathering of bishops the Alexandrian priest Arius and the heresy of Arianism were officially condemned. Arius and his followers falsely taught that our Lord Jesus Christ was created by God and inferior to Him.

Members of this revered Council sought to protect the Orthodox doctrine and experience of Christ as being, "Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made" (Nicene Creed).

It is a matter of record that the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church has always concerned herself with doctrine, articulating and defining as clearly as possible the divinely revealed truths about God and man. Modern religious thought, however, has a dislike for dogma, and frequently accuses the Church of dividing men with her strict adherence to her teachings; for her condemnation of what is wrong, heterodox; and for the willingness of her members to die for the truth. She is condemned for living in the past, and there are those who say that she is not prepared to meet modern crises and to offer men the solution to their problems. Individuals tell us to adjust ourselves to our surroundings, accept the least common denominator of dogma, and change our morality and ethics to fit changing social conditions. The condemnations and criticisms come from an imperfect understanding of human nature, of what man is and of man's relation to His Creator. The assumption is that man lives in a world totally different from the world into which Jesus Christ was born and lived His earthly life. It is said that possibly the Church was the answer for the state of the world in the last days of the pagan Roman Empire, but that now we face a different situation; that spiritual man must have a new, up-to-date, twentieth century solution to his problems.

This represents a very superficial view of man and the problems of life, of man's destiny. Many stress that man is making progress, with the great god of scientific discovery as his guide; that he no longer has need of the Church and the Church's, because man has learned to depend on and have confidence in himself. It takes little investigation, however, to discover that the problems of the individual today are not at all different from the problems of the individual 2000 years ago. Each person ministered unto by our Lord as recorded in the Holy Gospels has his or her parallel in modern society.

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