



The Trophy-Bearer

Published by St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Southgate, Michigan

September 2018

<http://www.stgeorgesouthgate.org/>

Millions of Words, Oceans of Ink

Rev. Fr. Anthony Cook



Eleven episodes ago, we began our discussion of the nature and person of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. In each of those episodes, we have examined, word by word and phrase by phrase, how the Creed confesses and affirms that Jesus Christ is fully and perfectly God, of one and the same being with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Last time, we affirmed that He not only is eternal God, but that He has a particular agency in the created order, that it is “through Him that all things were made.” The Creed continues from this point by confessing and affirming the main points of the Lord’s Incarnation, His birth, life, death, and Resurrection, so that, taken all together, it absolutely affirms the full and perfect Divinity AND the fully and perfect Humanity of the Son of God.

This Creed of Nicaea was not, however, the last word on the person of Jesus Christ. It is now considered to be sufficient for the Church’s weekly confession of Faith, but the question of how it should be interpreted and understood remained a matter of debate for 500 years after the Council of Nicaea concluded. The Creed’s expression of the Orthodox Christian Rule of Faith rests on the interpretations that were issued throughout that period, so before we move on, we should consider the content and the conclusion of those debates.

Controversy and debate over the Rule of Faith have been the norm throughout the Church’s history. The Church has always confessed that Jesus Christ is fully Divine and fully Human, a confession that reason and common sense consider to be nonsense. God is, by definition, infinite and eternal - Humanity is manifestly the opposite, both finite and temporal. Framed more bluntly, God can’t die, and Humans can’t NOT die. Human reason, therefore, struggles to reconcile the paradox, the apparent contradiction, and so, throughout the centuries, one person after another has stepped up to the plate to give their best shot at either escaping, or resolving, the contradiction. Every time they try, however, we see the Church consider their effort, and then return to the same essential confession of Faith, that He is truly both, perfect God and perfect Human.

This basic pattern has happened countless times in countless circumstances, from the first conversation between a preacher of the Gospel and those who listen to him, to decades-long controversies that consumed half the civilized world and more. It happens every time a human being truly hears the shocking, radical, impossible paradox of the Christian Faith. That is exactly

REGULAR SCHEDULE

Sunday

8:50 am – Orthros (Greek)
10 am – Div. Liturgy (bilingual)

Saturday

5 pm – Great Vespers (English)
Holy Confession by appointment

*Please see included calendar for other meetings
& weekday services, and for any variations to
this regular schedule.*

COMMUNITY UPDATES

Funerals

August 6, 2018

Angeliki (Koula) Kiouisis

40-Day Blessings

August 26, 2018

Emma Lucia Cook
Parents: Fr. Anthony &
Presvytera Elisabeth

Weddings

August 25, 2018

Anthony & Cristina (Smith)
Grech, III

*If you have announcements that you would like
for us to include in the Community Updates
above, please call or email the Church Office.*

SAINT GEORGE

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

16300 Dix-Toledo Highway
Southgate, MI 48195

Office: (734) 283-8820

Fax: (734) 283-8866

Office Hours: 9-5 Mon-Fri

Website: www.stgeorgesouthgate.org

Outside of office hours, parishioners may leave a voicemail for Fr. Anthony or the office. In case of emergency, they may call Fr. Anthony directly on his cell. Please leave a message if Father does not answer, and he will return your call shortly.

Clergy

Fr. Anthony Cook

Presiding Priest

Email: franthonyc@mac.com

Cell: (734) 716-2268

Office Staff

Susan Solo

Administrative Assistant

Email: stgeorgesouthgate@gmail.com

Lisa Campbell

Bookkeeper

Email: stgeorgebkkpr@gmail.com

2018 Parish Council

Nicholas Minton

John Kontos

Michael Liakos

Louis Kircos

Bob Kollias

Chris Kontos

Bill Colovos

John Diamantis

Stavros Dionyssopoulos

Pete Georvassilis

George Kaltsas

Sam Kiouis

George Kotronis

Pete Makarounas

Kim Moody

Christian Tougas

Peter Vougiouklakis

why the Gospel is such a big deal - because it affirms a logical impossibility, and thus reveals the presence and action of the Infinite and Eternal God, the only one not constrained by reason, within the world. To hear and understand what the Church affirms compels us to pay attention. If true, it is the most important thing any of us will ever hear. And so, as we said, the basic pattern, in which the Church confesses that Jesus Christ is God and Man, and the one who hears struggles to resolve the paradox, and suggests possible solutions to the contradiction, in response to which the Church simply affirms the paradox and again confesses Christ, and the one who hears encounters the Lord, and is changed forever – this has happened time and again, and will continue to happen until the Lord returns.

The first several centuries after the Lord's ministry, however, saw something unique happen. A human society that had never heard the Gospel before, for the simple reason that the Gospel had never been preached before, heard for the first time this radical, impossible Truth – and that society, and the language it spoke, and the way people thought and lived within that society, was changed forever. In 300 years it went from not even noticing the Church, to not caring a fig for what those that worshipped Jesus Christ did, to violently persecuting the Christians, to embracing the Gospel – and when it finally embraced the Gospel, it then tried for 500 years more to resolve the paradox at the heart of the Gospel.

In that final period, those who were trying to resolve the paradox of the Lord's Divinity and Humanity tended to choose to emphasize one or the other. If they emphasized His Humanity, they downplayed, or outright denied, His Divinity. If they emphasized His Divinity, they tended to downplay or deny His Humanity. From the 4th century through the 9th century, the entire society of the newly Christian Roman Empire leaned first one way, then the other. But the Church held fast to the ancient Rule of Faith, embracing the paradox. Each time the society fell off balance, the Church confessed Jesus Christ, the God-Man.

This confession was usually accomplished in a council, a gathering of the bishops of the Church to address the imbalance and uphold the Rule of Faith. Between 325 and 787, there were seven councils in particular which stood out as inflection points in this back and forth engagement with the paradoxes of the Rule of Faith, clearly and consistently holding to the unchanging Faith of the Apostles – these are the Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Orthodox Church. To dig deeply into these councils is to go down a rabbit hole of philosophy, politics, personalities, dates, places, and historical events, and it becomes all too easy to lose the point in the midst of all the details. So – we will not dig deeply, but we will give an overview of the age of the Councils.

The period began with Arius, who emphasized the Humanity of Christ to the point of denying His Divinity. The Church came together at Nicaea in 325 to affirm the ancient Rule of Faith, that the Lord was indeed perfectly and fully God, of one and the same essence with the Father. This was the 1st Ecumenical Council, which we have discussed in detail, especially in Episode 18.

The Arians continued to fight against the decision of Nicaea even after the council ended, and as a result, the 2nd Ecumenical Council met in

Constantinople in 381 to confirm the anti-Arian decisions of the 1st Council. This council also upheld the full and perfect divinity of the Holy Spirit. Its confession of the Rule of Faith, affirming the Nicene language that the Son of God is of one and the same being with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is the Nicene Creed which the Church confesses each Sunday in the Divine Liturgy.

So far, the paradox that had consumed the Church was the apparent contradiction between Divinity and Humanity. The 1st and 2nd Council had ruled out any resolution that involved denying the Lord's Divinity, affirming that the Lord was both God and Human, so the questions turned to the apparent contradiction between "both" and "and". One school of thought, centered in the city of Antioch, tended to emphasize the distinction between the human and divine in Christ, while the other, born in Alexandria, insisted rather on the union of the two. The two schools of thought would spend the next 200 years in conflict with one another.

In 431, the Patriarch of Constantinople, a man named Nestorius, suggested that, although Jesus Christ was both divine and human, He had come to be so by means of a union between the Flesh of Jesus, which was only human, and the Divinity of the Son of God. To convey the emphasis on the distinction between the natures, He refused to call the Virgin Mary "Theotokos," the Birthgiver of God, replacing the term with "Christotokos," the Birthgiver of the Messiah. The 3rd Ecumenical Council, held at Ephesus in 431, upheld the term "Theotokos" and deposed Nestorius - the Alexandrian emphasis on unity won the day.

Having won, however, some of the Alexandrians pushed too far, with one, a man named Eutyches, preaching a complete and total union of the Divine and Human in Christ, such that the human nature in Christ was totally overwhelmed and consumed by His Divinity. To consider this, the Church gathered again in 451 for the 4th Ecumenical Council, in the city of Chalcedon. This council rejected Eutyches' preaching, upholding the ancient truth that Christ was and is fully human and fully divine. Their decision sums up the Church's affirmation of the two natures of the Lord:

"And so, following the holy Fathers, we all teach unanimously the confession of one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: that He is perfect in divinity and that He is perfect in humanity – that He is truly God and that He is truly man, of a rational soul and a body – that He is consubstantial with the Father as regards His divinity, and that He is consubstantial with us as regards His humanity, like us in all respects except for sin – that He was begotten before the ages from the Father as regards his divinity, and in the last days that He was begotten for us and for our salvation from Mary, the Virgin Theotokos, as regards his humanity – that He is one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, acknowledged in two natures that undergo no confusion, no change, no division, no separation – since the difference between the natures was at no point abolished because of the union, but rather the property of both natures is preserved and comes together into a single person and a single hypostasis – because of this [we teach that] He is not parted or divided into two persons, but is one and the same only begotten Son, God, Word, Lord Jesus Christ, just as the prophets taught from the beginning about him, and as the Lord Jesus Christ himself instructed us, and as the creed of the Fathers handed it down to us."

This decision has been called a victory for the Antiochene school, as it rejected the teaching of the Alexandrian Eutyches, but it clearly is struggling to bring the two schools together, to affirm both the distinction and the union of Divinity and Humanity in the Lord. The central point is the affirmation that we acknowledge in Jesus Christ two natures, Divine and Human, "without confusion, without change, without division, and without separation." He is one Person, not two - but in His single person we see both Divine and Human natures in their fullness and perfection.

The political and ethnic realities of the fifth century Mediterranean world, however, had become heavily invested in this controversy. The Council of Chalcedon held to the Rule of Faith, embracing the paradox - but it did not succeed in reconciling the two schools of thought. The next 300 years saw continued controversy over the distinction and union of the Dual Natures of Christ. Due to the perceived victory of the Antiochene school at Chalcedon, the Church of Alexandria became estranged from the rest of the Church – so in 553, the 5th Ecumenical Council was convened in Constantinople. There, it re-affirmed the 3rd Council's rejection of the Nestorian heresy, also condemning some other errors associated with the Antiochene school, in the hope that cutting Antioch down a peg or two might help bring reconciliation with Alexandria.

But reconciliation did not come. Over the next century, various writers continued to work toward resolving the tension between the two factions, suggesting that if one focused on the will or the energy of Christ, one could preserve both the distinction between the natures sought by Antioch, and achieve the affirmation of union preferred by Alexandria. These ideas are known as Monenergism and Monothelitism, the Greek words for the idea that Christ had only one energy and one will, the Divine. As an absence of a human energy or will seemed to undermine the fullness and perfection of His humanity, the 6th Ecumenical Council met in 680, once again in Constantinople, to affirm the contrary, that Jesus Christ had not only two natures, but also two energies and two wills, with the human nature, energy, and will entirely subject to and in harmony with the Divine nature, energy, and will.

With the 6th Ecumenical Council, the Church completed the process begun at Nicaea 350 years before. In affirming the Council of Nicaea and the Definition of Chalcedon, this Council completed the fence around the Church's confession that Jesus Christ is of one and the same Being with the Father and the Spirit, and that He is God become Flesh, both Divine and Human in nature, energy, and will. Orthodoxy had triumphed. True doctrine had been preserved. Over nearly four centuries, the Fathers and Councils of the Church had written millions of words, and spilled oceans of ink, to hold fast to the paradoxes of the Rule of Faith, confessing Jesus Christ, both God and Man.

But there was a problem – in the effort to hold fast to the Rule of Faith, they had built a system of theology that could not be fully understood without a mastery of language and philosophy, and a deep understanding of history and politics. In preserving the intellectual integrity of the Faith, they risked making the Faith an intellectual construct. Oceans of ink poured out into millions of words are all well and good, but many words make for complexity, and complexity tends to obscure truth. Then, as now, it can be difficult to see the forest on account of all the trees.

There remained, then, one more great error to be addressed. With such an intellectual Faith, many had lost touch with the immediacy, the tangibility, the active and visible Presence, of the Lord in the world. So next time, we will consider the heresy of Iconoclasm, and the strange and wondrous fact that words are not enough to preach the Gospel.

The above is the twenty-first installment of our new Adult Education Program, updated weekly at <http://theruleoffaith.typepad.com>. Comments/questions are welcome, by email or via a comment on the website.

Please note, as well, that we live stream each Sunday's Orthros & Divine Liturgy on our parish Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/c/franthonyc-stgeorgesouthgate>. A recording of the Sunday Sermons is also posted there.

As we are speaking of our internet offerings, please remember to check the parish website: <http://www.stgeorgesouthgate.org>, for announcements, and for an updated calendar of feastdays, readings, services, and events.

St. George Calendar of Events • SEPTEMBER 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>2 ✠</p> <p>Mammias the Martyr John, Patriarch of Constantin. Epistle: 2 Corinthians 12:1-24; 21:4 Gospel: Matthew 22:2-14</p> <p>Orthros/Liturgy (8:50 & 10 am) Dance Practice (after Church)</p>	<p>3 Labor Day</p> <p>Anthimos of Nicomedia Theodotus and Euthymius Epistle: Galatians 2:11-16 Gospel: Mark 5:24-34</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Babyllas the Hieromartyr Moses the Prophet & Godseer Epistle: Galatians 2:21; 3:1-7 Gospel: Mark 6:1-7</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Zacharias & Elizabeth Urban, Theodore, & Medimos Epistle: Galatians 3:15-22 Gospel: Matthew 24:13-28</p> <p>Philoptochos (7:00 pm)</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Miracle at Colossai Martyr Calodote Epistle: Hebrews 2:2-10 Gospel: Luke 10:16-21</p> <p>Ladies of Lydia (6:00 pm)</p>	<p>7 ◆</p> <p>Forefast Nativity of Theotokos Sozon the Martyr Epistle: Galatians 4:8-21 Gospel: Mark 6:45-53</p> <p>Vespers AT NATIVITY (7:00 pm)</p>	<p>8 ✠ Nativity of the Theotokos</p> <p>Sophronios, Bishop of Iberia Epistle: 1 Corinthians 13:9 Gospel: Matthew 19:3-12</p> <p>Orthros/Liturgy (9 & 10 am) NO Byzantine Chant-Kids NO Great Vespers</p>
<p>9 ✠ Sunday before Holy Cross</p> <p>Ioachim and Anna Epistle: Galatians 6:11-18 Gospel: John 3:13-17</p> <p>Orthros/Liturgy (8:50 & 10 am) Dance Practice (after Church) Organizational Meeting (12 pm)</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Meodora, Metrodora, Nymphodora, Poulcheria the Empress Epistle: Galatians 4:28-31; 5:1-10 Gospel: John 3:16-21</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Theodora of Alexandria Euphrosynos the Cook Epistle: Galatians 5:11-21 Gospel: John 12:19-36</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Autonomos the Hieromartyr Counoutos, Bishop of Iconium Epistle: Galatians 6:2-10 Gospel: John 11:47-54</p> <p>Festival Food Prep (9 am-3 pm)</p>	<p>13 ◆</p> <p>Forefast of Elevation of Cross Epistle: Hebrews 3:1-4 Gospel: John 12:25-36</p> <p>Vespers AT HOLY CROSS IN FARMINGTON HILLS (7:00 pm)</p>	<p>14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross</p> <p>Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:18-24 Gospel: John 19:6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Nikitas the Great Martyr Philotheos the Righteous Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:20-31; 2:1-5 Gospel: John 8:21-30</p> <p>Festival Food Prep (8 am-1 pm) NO Byzantine Chant-Kids NO Great Vespers</p>
<p>16 ✠ Sunday after Holy Cross</p> <p>Euphemia the Great Martyr Epistle: Galatians 2:16-20 Gospel: Mark 8:34-38; 9:1</p> <p>Orthros/Liturgy (8:50 & 10 am) Greek Festival (Noon-7 pm)</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Sophia, Faith, Hope, Love Herakleides & Myron Epistle: Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:1-3 Gospel: Luke 3:19-22</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Enunentos, Bishop of Gortyna Ariadne the Martyr Epistle: Ephesians 2:19-22; 3:1-7 Gospel: Luke 5:23-28; 4:1</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Trophimos, Sabbatios, & Dorymedon Epistle: Ephesians 3:8-21 Gospel: Luke 4:1-15</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Eustatios and family Eustatios, Arb. of Thessolonica Epistle: Ephesians 6:10-17 Gospel: Luke 21:1-29</p> <p>Seniors Luncheon (Noon) FOCUS Food Bag Prep (6:00 pm) Parish Council (7:00 pm)</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Apodosis of the Elevation Quadratus the Apostle Epistle: Ephesians 4:17-25 Gospel: Luke 4:22-30</p>	<p>22 ◆</p> <p>Phocas, Bishop of Sinope Phocas the Gardener Epistle: 1 Corinthians 14:20-25 Gospel: Luke 4:31-36</p> <p>Byzantine Chant-Kids (4:30-5:45p) Great Vespers (5:00 pm)</p>
<p>23 ✠</p> <p>Conception of John the Baptist Xanthippe & Polyxene Epistle: Galatians 4:2-27 Gospel: Luke 5:1-11</p> <p>Orthros/Liturgy (8:50 & 10 am) Sunday School Starts Game Night (5:00 pm)</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Thekla the Equal-to-the-Apostles Sitonan of Athos Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 5:12-16</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Euphrosyne of Alexandria Paphnoutos & his 546 Companions Epistle: Ephesians 5:20-25 Gospel: Luke 5:12-16</p> <p>Deaconess (7:00 pm)</p>	<p>26 ☽ Falling Asleep of St. John the Theologian</p> <p>Epistle: 1 John 4:12-19 Gospel: John 19:25-27; 21:24-25</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Kallistratos & his 49 Companions Mark, Aristarchos, & Zenon Epistle: Ephesians 5:33; 6:1-9 Gospel: Luke 6:12-19</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Chariton the Confessor Alkison of Nicopolis Epistle: 2 Corinthians 4:6-15 Gospel: Luke 6:17-23</p>	<p>29 ◆</p> <p>Kyriakos of Palestine Martyr Petronia Epistle: 1 Corinthians 15:39-45 Gospel: Luke 5:17-26</p> <p>Byzantine Chant-Kids (4:30-5:45p) Great Vespers (5:00 pm)</p>
<p>30 ✠ SEPTEMBER</p> <p>Gregory, Bishop of Armenia Mardonios & Stratonikos Epistle: 2 Corinthians 9:5-11 Gospel: Luke 6:31-36</p> <p>Orthros/Liturgy (8:50 & 10 am)</p>	<p>1 OCTOBER</p> <p>Holy Protection of Theotokos Ananias, Apostle of the 70 Epistle: Acts 9:10-19 Gospel: Luke 6:24-30</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Cyprian and Justina Eleutherios and Rousitikos Epistle: 1 Timothy 1:12-17 Gospel: Luke 6:37-45</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Dionysios the Areopagite John the Chozebite Epistle: Acts 17:16-34 Gospel: Luke 6:46-49; 7:1</p> <p>Philoptochos (7:00 pm)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Hierothos, Bishop of Athens Domina and her daughters Epistle: Philippians 1:20-27 Gospel: Luke 7:17-30</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Charitina the Martyr Methodia of Kimolos Epistle: Philippians 1:27-30; 2:1-4 Gospel: Luke 7:31-35</p>	<p>6 ◆</p> <p>Thomas the Apostle Erotis of Cappadocia Epistle: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16 Gospel: John 20:19-31</p> <p>Altar Boys (Noon) Byzantine Chant-Kids (4:30-5:45p) Great Vespers (5:00 pm)</p>

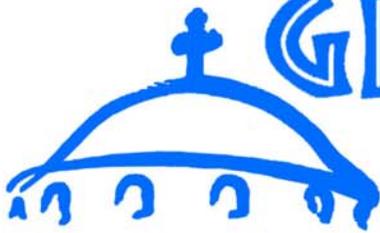
• Shaded days denote a fast day. ✠ denotes a Liturgy ◆ Great Vespers/Compline ❖ Akathistis/Paraklessis ✂ Presanctified Liturgy ☞ fish/wine/oil allowed ☽ wine/oil allowed

The 16th Annual

ST. GEORGE'S



GREEK FESTIVAL



SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 16th,

2018

12-7pm

- Authentic Greek Food right off the grill!
- Kids park with inflatables, face painting & games!
- Live Music and Dance Featuring "Mythos!"
- Cash bar, Greek coffee & fresh Desserts!
- FREE Parking & Admission!
- A large portion of the proceeds to benefit:



FOOD



OPA!



FUN



16300 Dix-Toledo Hwy, Southgate, MI (734) 283-8820

Inside the beautiful Fr. Karamanos Park