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Theotokos Campus of St. Nicholas Orthodox Parochial School

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Children's Orthodox Parochial School Bulletin

May 20, 2007

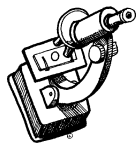
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Today is:

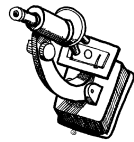
- ✧ *Sixth Sunday after Pascha*
- ✧ *Sunday of the Holy Fathers*
- ✧ *Feast Day of Saint Thalalaios the Martyr and his Companions*





THE GOSPEL

Under the Microscope



Fun and Games



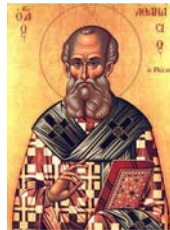
"Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:5)

The Orthodox Church celebrates the commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council on the fifth Sunday after celebrating the Holy Resurrection of our Lord and God Jesus Christ. Wait a minute: what is the meaning of all these long words, and again, what event are we celebrating?

Let us start with the meaning of these terms. **"Council"** is a group of people that gather or come together in a meeting to give advice or make a decision. This Council that we are talking about took place in the year 325 AD.

The term **"Holy Fathers"** refers to the clergy who came together into this meeting. All of them were bishops. Many of those bishops are still very famous even today. And you already know some of their names and their stories!

Among some of those saints who were present at this council were Saint Nicholas, bishop of Myra; Saint Spyridon, bishop of Trimythous; and Saint Athanasius the Great, patriarch of Alexandria. At that time Saint Athanasius was not a bishop yet, he was still a deacon (deacon is the first degree of priesthood). He came with his bishop at the time, Saint Alexander, Pope of Alexandria (pope means the patriarch or archbishop).



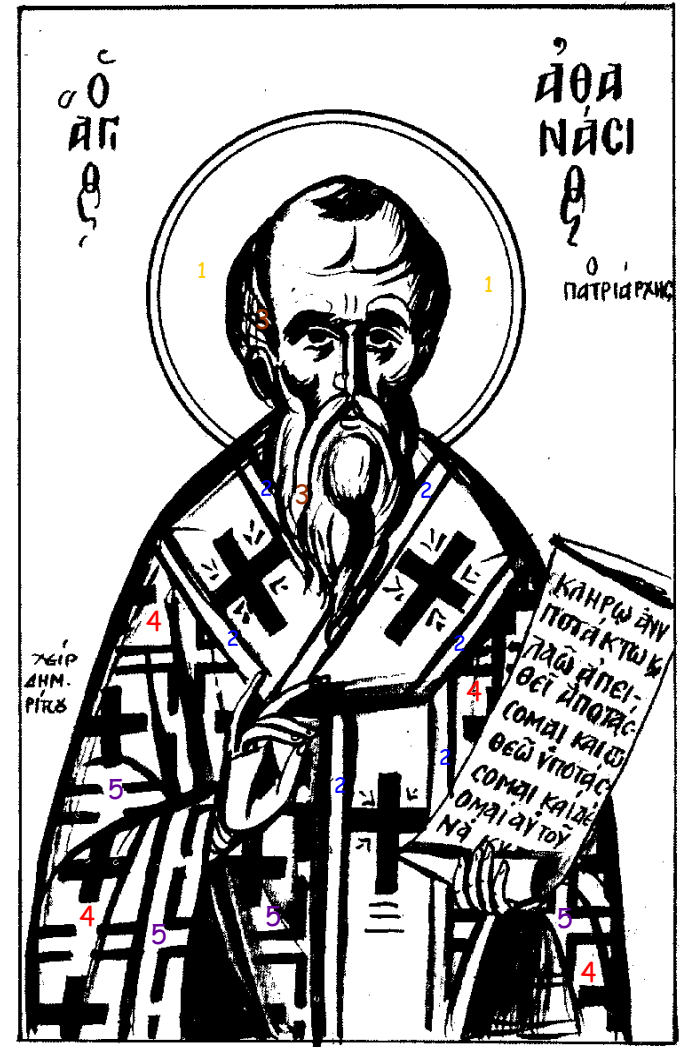
These people made many sacrifices and paid a very high price for being Christians. They had been persecuted, put in jail, or even tortured, along with the faithful from their churches. As clergy, they paid an even bigger price for preaching the message of Christ.

At this Council, their number was 318 bishops. They all traveled to a city called Nicaea in a country known today as Turkey. Be careful, turkey here does not mean the bird "turkey" we have during

Coloring Fun for the Young

Today you have an icon of Saint Athanasius. Saint Athanasius took part in the First Ecumenical Council. Color in the picture by following the numbers:

- 1 = GOLD
- 2 = BLUE
- 3 = BROWN
- 4 = RED
- 5 = PURPLE



Fun and Games

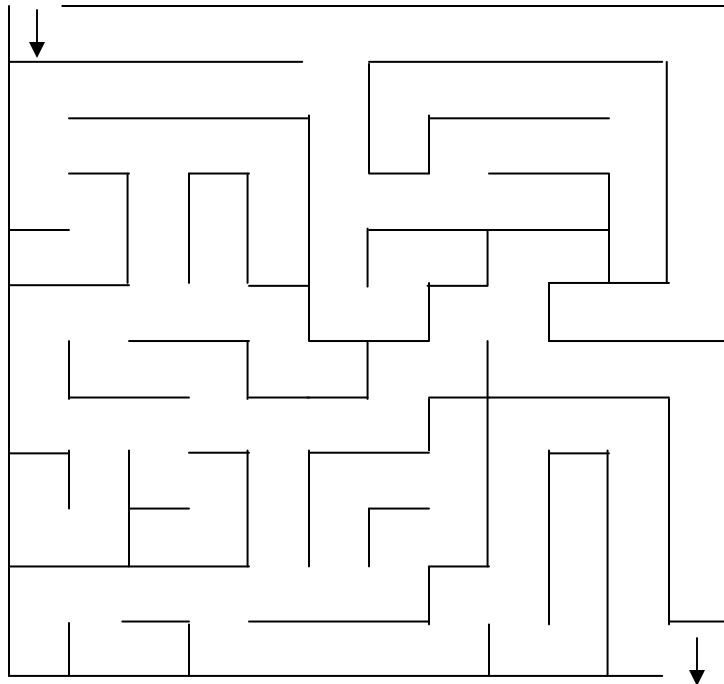


On the Road Again!

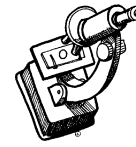
You have to navigate these dangerous roads to get from the old capital of Rome to the new capital of the Empire in Constantinople. Be careful and have a safe trip!!



Rome- start here!

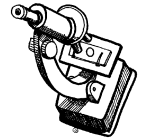


Constantinople- you made it!



THE GOSPEL

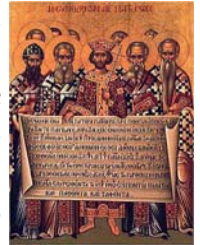
Under the Microscope



Thanksgiving Day!

The term "**Ecumenical**" means universal, or all over the world. This refers to the fact that the bishops who came to this meeting represented almost all of the Christian communities that existed at that time. Most of the towns who had Christian faithful in the known world back then were represented at this meeting through the presence of their bishops.

The word "**First**" refers to the fact that this was first time ever that a gathering like this took place. It was the first meeting of its kind within the Church after its establishment on the day of Pentecost and after the death of the Lord's apostles. It was the first time but it was not the last time; it was followed by many similar meetings in the centuries that followed.



Okay, remind me now why this gathering take place? About the year 319 AD there was a priest named Arius who wrongly taught that Jesus Christ, the Son and Word of God, was not equal to God the Father. Arius could not understand the meaning of many of the sayings of Jesus, such as: "Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:5). This means that Jesus, as the Son and Word of God, always existed just like God the Father, and always had the same glory of God the Father.

At the end of this meeting this Council rejected Arius' teaching and wrote a document that we still use in church today. It is called the "Creed". It starts with "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty...". Isn't it awesome that we still use a statement that saints like Nicholas, Spyridon, Athanasius, and Alexander helped write? Isn't it awesome to know that all those wonderful people are part of our Church and we actually consider them our very own teachers? Isn't it awesome to feel connected with the first Christians through these people?

FOCUS ON A FEAST

Saints Constantine and Helen

They both are favorite saints among Orthodox people. She is famous for finding the true wooden piece of the holy Cross of our Lord. He is famous for being a great and powerful emperor. To this day, many people are named after them. Of course, as you see above, we are talking about Saints Constantine and Helen. But did you know that Saint Constantine was not always a Christian?

Constantine was born in 272 AD. His father was named Constantius Chlorus, and he was the ruler of the western part of the Roman Empire. Constantine's mother, of course, was Helen. In 306 AD, Constantius died, and Constantine became the new ruler.



Six years later, Constantine and his army were marching towards a battle against some of Constantine's enemies. All of a sudden, Constantine looked up and saw that a cross had appeared in the sky, along with the words "By this you shall conquer". That night, he had a dream that the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him and told him about Himself.



The next day, Constantine ordered that a banner be made of the cross with the name of Jesus Christ on it. With his army carrying the banner, Constantine's troops won the battle. But more importantly, Constantine came to know and believe in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Isn't it awesome how God can win to Himself different people? Can you imagine what might have happened to Saint Constantine if he never came to this realization? He might not have ever learned about Jesus or become a Christian at all! But God had a very special plan for Saint Constantine, and his mother Saint Helen, just like He has a special plan for every single one of us like you and me.

DID YOU KNOW?

Facts about the Feast

- ◇ Saint Helen lived to be about eighty years old.
- ◇ Saint Constantine lived to be sixty-five years old. He died on May 21, 337 AD, which was the day of Pentecost that year.
- ◇ Saint Constantine called for the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 AD.
- ◇ Saint Constantine eventually moved the capital of the Empire from Rome to a great new city that he built and named Constantinople. Today this city is called Istanbul, in the country of Turkey.
- ◇ Both these saints built many churches all over the lands of the Empire. Saint Helen built the Church of the Resurrection at the site of our Lord's crucifixion and resurrection, and she also built a church in Bethlehem where our Lord was born in the flesh. Saint Constantine built a church in Constantinople dedicated to the Holy Apostles.

