

5 2nd Street
Herminie, PA 15637
<http://pokrov.iksnazul.com>

Lantor

Joseph Luzanski
E-mail: comments@pokrov.iksnazul.com

Served By

Father Vasyl Yakubych
Василь Якубич
Cell: 412-627-1678
E-mail: yakubichvasill2020@gmail.com

Liturgical Schedule

Divine Liturgy
Sunday: 8:30 am
Holyday: 9:00 am

Confessions

One half hour before
the divine liturgy or
by appointment

I will e-mail a bulletin to anyone who wants to receive a copy

Disputes concerning the Person of Christ did not end with the sixth Council in AD 681, but continued through the eighth and ninth centuries. This time, the controversy focused on icons—pictures of Christ, the Theotokos, the saints, and holy events—and lasted for 120 years, starting in AD 726. Icons were kept and venerated in both churches and private homes. The two groups in the controversy were:

Iconoclasts

also called "icon-smashers," they were suspicious of any art depicting God or humans; they demanded the destruction of icons because they saw icons as idolatry.

Iconodules also called "venerators of icons," they defended the place of icons in the Church.

The controversy, however, was more than a struggle over different views of Christian art. Deeper issues were involved, and it is these the Council addressed:

The character of Christ's human nature
The Christian attitude toward matter
The true meaning of Christian redemption
and the salvation of the entire material universe

The controversy falls into two periods:

From AD 726 when Leo III began his attack

Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost

Sunday of the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council

The Holy Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils are honored by the Church because, based upon the preaching of the Apostles, they have established one faith for the Church. Guided by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and accepted by the Church, the Ecumenical Councils are the highest authority in the Church, infallible.

Propers

Tone 8 (page 263), Troparion of the Council Fathers, Tone 8. Glory, now and ever – Kontakion of the Council Fathers, Tone 6. (pages 263–264)

on icons until AD 780 when Empress Irene ended the attacks.

Again from AD 815 through AD 843 when Empress Theodora stamped out the attacks permanently.

The iconoclasts had support from both inside and outside the Church. Outside the Church, there may have been influence from Jewish and Muslim ideas, and it is important to note that just prior to the iconoclast outbreak Muslim Caliph Yezid ordered the removal of all icons with his territory. Inside the Church there had always existed a "puritan" outlook which saw all images as latent idolatry.

Largely through the work of St. John of Damascus (c. 676–749), who, ironically, was housed in Muslim-controlled lands and therefore outside the reach of the Empire, the iconodules' position won out. He addressed the charges of the iconoclasts thus:

Concerning the charge of idolatry: Icons are not idols but symbols, therefore when an Orthodox venerates an icon, he is not guilty of idolatry. He is not worshipping the symbol, but merely venerating it. Such veneration is not directed toward wood, or paint or stone, but towards the person depicted. Therefore relative honor is shown

to material objects, but worship is due to God alone.

We do not make obeisance to the nature of wood, but we revere and do obeisance to Him who was crucified on the Cross... When the two beams of the Cross are joined together I adore the figure because of Christ who was crucified on the Cross, but if the beams are separated, I throw them away and burn them. —St. John of Damascus

The Decision of the Council Restoration of the Icons

Concerning the teaching of icons

Venerating icons, having them in churches and homes, is what the Church teaches. They are "open books to remind us of God." Those who lack the time or learning to study theology need only to enter a church to see the mysteries of the Christian religion unfolded before them.

Concerning the doctrinal significance of icons

Icons are necessary and essential because they protect the full and proper doctrine of the Incarnation. While God cannot be represented in His eternal nature ("...no man has seen God", John 1:18), He can be depicted simply because He "became human and took flesh." Of Him who took a material body, material images can be made. In so taking a material body, God proved that matter can be redeemed. He deified matter, making it spirit-bearing, and so if flesh can be a medium for the Spirit, so can wood or paint, although in a different fashion.

I do not worship matter, but the Creator of matter, who for my sake became material and deigned to dwell in matter, who through matter effected my salvation... —St. John of Damascus

The seventh and last Ecumenical Council upheld the iconodules' position in AD 787. They proclaimed: Icons... are to be kept in churches and honored with the same relative veneration as is shown to other material symbols, such as the 'precious and life-giving Cross' and the Book of the Gospels. The 'doctrine of icons' is tied to the Orthodox teaching that all of God's creation is to be redeemed and glorified, both spiritual and material.

Sometimes we think that everyone has to approach God in exactly the same way. After all, we are Christians. The Divine Liturgy and other services are set; they don't change and are celebrated in the around the world. Our beliefs were defined through ancient councils. Our spiritual practices have been passed down over the centuries by countless generations. The Holy Spirit has preserved our church in a unity that is unique among Christians. But that unity doesn't mean complete uniformity in the sense that we all must or should do exactly the same thing. We are all distinct, free persons; and it's as such that we will find God's blessing and salvation in our lives.

People are different. We have distinct personalities, occupations, interests, and spiritual strengths and weaknesses. But we can all have faith. When we open the wounds and sorrows of our lives to Christ as best we can, He will hear us. And He will respond in the way that is best for our salvation, for our growth in holiness. No two people have exactly the same journey to the Kingdom. No two people pray, fast, give alms, forgive, and serve in precisely the same way. Jairus and the woman with the flow of blood were very different people who approached Christ differently. But the one constant factor is the mercy of our Lord, which extends to all who call upon Him from their hearts with humble trust.

Although it is difficult to be a Christian, it can never be said that it is complicated. If we look at all the philosophies and religions of the world, Christianity is by far the simplest. Even all four records of the words of Christ its Founder can be written down in less than one hundred pages. And the contents of those pages are very simple.