



July 26, 2009

7TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

**Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils;
Synaxis of the Holy Archangel Gabriel**

RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE SIX:

The angelic powers were at Your tomb; and the guards became as dead men; and Mary stood by Your grave, seeking Your most pure Body. You did capture hell, not being tempted by it. You did come to the Virgin, granting life. O Lord who did rise from the dead: Glory to You! *Audio available at:*

http://www.westsrbdio.org/audio/Resurrectional_Troparion_Tone_6.wav

ВАСКРСНИ ТРОПАР - ГЛАС 6:

Анђелске Силе на гробу Твојем, и стражари умрвише се! и стајаше Марија код гроба, тражећи пречисто тело Твоје. Запленио си ад, не претрпевши /штете/ од њега; сусрео си Дјеву, дарујући живот. Васкрсли из мртвих, Господе, слава Теби.

TROPARION TO THE FATHERS OF THE FIRST SIX ECUMENICAL COUNCILS - TONE EIGHT:

O Christ our God, Thou art above all glory, for Thou hast established our holy fathers as radiant stars on earth, and through them Thou hast guided us all to the true faith; Most Merciful One, glory to Thee!

ТРОПАР ОТАЦА ПРВИХ ШЕСТ ВАСЕЉЕНСКИХ САБОРА – ГЛАС ОСМИ:

Препрослављен си Христе Боже наш, који си на земљи као светила Оце наше основао, и њиме ка истинитој вери нас водио; Многомилостиви, слава Ти!

ТРОПАР СВЕТОМ АРХИСТРАТИГУ ГАВРИЛУ - глас 4:

Небесних војски Архистратиже, молимо те свагда ми недостојни, да твојим молитвама оградиш нас кровом крила твоје нематеријалне славе, чувајући нас који притичемо усрдно и вапијемо: од невоља избави нас, као Чиноначалник Вишњих Сила.

RESURRECTIONAL KONTAKION - TONE SIX:

When Christ God, the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, He bestowed resurrection on the human race. He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and God of all. *Audio available at:*

http://www.westsrbdio.org/audio/Resurrectional_Kontakion_Tone_6.wav

ВАСКРСНИ КОНДАК – ГЛАС ШЕСТИ:

Живоначалним дланом умрле си све из мрачне долине васкрсао, дарујући васкрсење људском роду, Христе Боже, будући Спаситељ свих, васкрсење и живот, и Бог свих.

KONTAKION TO THE FATHERS OF THE FIRST SIX ECUMENICAL COUNCILS – TONE EIGHT:

The apostles' preaching and the fathers' teaching have established a single faith in the Church. Since this Church is now clad with the mantle of truth woven by inspired theology, it properly explains and glorifies the great mysteries of faith.

КОНДАК СВЕТОМ АРХИСТРАТИГУ ГАВРИЛУ - глас 2:

Архистратиже Божији, служителу Божанске славе, Ангелима Началниче и људима Наставниче, моли за нас оно што је корисно, и велику милост, као Архистратиг Бестелесних Сила.

HYMN TO THE MOTHER OF GOD - TONE SIX:

Steadfast Protectress of Christians and constant advocate before the Creator, do not despise the cry of us sinners; but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in faith. Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you!

ХИМНА БОГОРОДИЦИ – ГЛАС 6:

Непостидна заштитнице Хришћана, незаменљива пред Творцем Посреднице, не презри гласе мољења нас грешних, него као Блага притекни у помоћ нама који Ти са вером вапијемо: Пожури на молитву и похитај на умољавање, Богородице, свагдашња Заштитнице оних који те поштују.

EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

The Prokeimenon—Psalms 119: 12; 86: 12 in the Fourth Tone:

Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our Fathers and praised and glorified is Thy Name forever.

Romans 15: 1-7

Brethren, we then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.” For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

For the Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils, Hebrews 13: 7-16

Brethren, remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

The Alleluia Verses – Psalm 50: 1, 5

The God of gods, the Lord, has spoken and He has called the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. Gather together unto Him His holy ones who have established His covenant upon sacrifices.

Romans Epistle Commentary

The mature in faith, with whom St. Paul theologically identifies, are here called **strong** and are exhorted to be patient regarding **the scruples of the weak**. He then reminds that Christ is the supreme example of personal sacrifice and not pleasing **Himself**, concluding this passage with a call for Jew and Gentile to be mutually accepting **to the glory of God**.

GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

Matthew 9: 27-35

At that time, two blind men followed Jesus, crying out and saying, “Son of David, have mercy on us!” And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.” Then He touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith let it be to you.” And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, “See that no one knows it.” But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country. As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, “It was never seen like this in Israel!” But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.” Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

For the Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils, John 17: 1-13

At that time, Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had before the world was. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves."

Matthew Gospel Commentary

According to the prophecy of Isaiah, the messianic age is signified when "the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped" (35:5; 29:18; 42:7). The use of the title **Son of David** expresses the faith of the **two blind men** that these healings are a sign that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Messiah. Thus, Jesus tells them **their eyes were opened "according to your faith."**

SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

Reflection from *The Prologue* for July 13/July 26 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic

A man adorns simple clothing, but sumptuous clothing adorns a man. Simple clothing calls attention to the man, but sumptuous clothing calls attention to itself. The passion for sumptuous clothing simply drains and withers the soul of man. This is the real reason why the Church has always stood against opulence in dress and recommended simplicity. Among the countless Christian saints, there is not one mentioned whom sumptuous clothing helped to attain sanctity. Many great and wise kings—not only Christians but also heathens—have loved simplicity in dress. Thus, it is said that the Emperor Augustus Octavius, during whose reign the Lord Christ was born, wore only simple clothing, woven for him by his wife, sister or daughter. It is said of King Charles V that he wore such simple clothing that even his most ordinary subjects were better dressed than he was. A man once invited the illustrious Greek general Philopomenes to dinner. Philopomenes had never been to the man's home before, and he arrived a bit early for the

dinner. The host had not yet arrived, but the hostess—not knowing Philopomenes personally and seeing him attired in simple clothing—thought that he was a servant sent in advance to announce the imminent arrival of the general and her husband. Thinking this, she ordered him to chop wood. Philopomenes willingly obeyed and began to chop wood. When the host came and saw his honored guest chopping wood like a servant, he was horrified and asked him: “Who dared to give such a task to Philopomenes?” The general quietly answered: “My clothing.”

The Holy Archangel Gabriel

This great archangel of God is commemorated on March 26/April 8. Today, however, his appearances and miracles throughout the entire history of man’s salvation are celebrated. It is believed that this celebration was first established on the Holy Mountain in the ninth century, during the time of the Emperors Basil and Constantine Porphyrogenitus and Patriarch Nicholas Chrysoverges, and was occasioned by the appearance of the Archangel Gabriel in a cell near Karyes, where the archangel wrote with his finger on a stone tablet the hymn to the Theotokos “It Is Truly Meet.” Because of this event, the cell was called, and is called to this day “It is Truly Meet.” Together with this occurrence, the other appearances of the Archangel Gabriel are also commemorated: the archangel’s appearance to Moses while he was tending the flock of Jethro, when he related to this great one called of God how the world was created and all the rest that Moses later recorded in the Book of Genesis; his appearance to the Prophet Daniel, revealing to him the mystery of future kingdoms and of the coming of the Savior; his appearance to St. Anna and the promise that she would give birth to a daughter, the All-blessed and All-pure Virgin Mary; his repeated appearances to the Holy Virgin while she was living in the Temple in Jerusalem; his appearance to Zachariah the High Priest with the tidings of the birth of John the Forerunner, and the punishment of dumbness upon Zachariah because he did not believe the archangel’s words; his appearance once again to the Holy Virgin, in Nazareth, with the Annunciation of the conception and birth of the Lord Jesus Christ; his appearance to the righteous Joseph; his appearance to the shepherds near Bethlehem; his appearance to the Lord Himself in the Garden of Gethsemane, when he strengthened the Lord, as a man, prior to His passion; his appearance to the myrrh-bearing women, and so on.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mark your calendars for Diocesan Days, September 4-6, 2009

Follow this link for information on the 13th Annual Diocesan Days:

http://www.westsrbdio.org/Diocesan_Days/Diocesan_Days_2009/xhtml/index.html

For **Continual Education in Liturgy and Theology**, we recommend the following article:

http://www.westsrbdio.org/Theology/The_Eucharist_and_the_Kingdom_of_God.doc

Serbian version: http://www.verujem.org/pdf/zizijulas_evharistija.pdf

We will offer the same article here in sections on a weekly basis; today is Part IV and V.

THE EUCHARIST AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

*For the things of the Old Testament are the shadow.
Those of the New are an image. Truth is the state of things to come.*
(Maximus the Confessor)

IV. The gathering “in one place”

One of the basic elements of the coming in the last days is the gathering of the scattered people of God—and by extension of all mankind—“in one place” around the person of the Messiah, in order for the judgment of the world to take place and the Kingdom of God to prevail. In St. Matthew’s Gospel the Kingdom of God is likened to “a net which was thrown into the sea and *gathered* fish of every kind” (Matt. 13:47), while in the description of the Parousia of the Son of Man we read yet more clearly that on that day of the last times “before Him will be *gathered* all the nations” (Matt. 25:32). In John, again, the purpose of Christ’s Passion and, by extension, of the whole work of salvation is considered to be not only the salvation of Israel, “but to *gather into one* the children of God who are scattered abroad” (John 11:52).

It is not incidental, therefore, that the Eucharist as image of the Kingdom is very early described as a “gathering” (σύναξις) or gathering “in one place.” In the sixth chapter of St. John’s Gospel, in a passage which is clearly talking about the Eucharist, after the multitude has eaten its fill Jesus commands the fragments left over to be “gathered up,” which is considered a Sign that He is “He who is to come” (John 6:12-14). We also know that the Eucharist is described as a gathering “in one place” in St. Paul (1 Cor. 11:20-23). The *Didache* gives us the most explicit description of the Eucharist as an image of the eschatological gathering of the scattered children of God, the Church: “Even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and was gathered together and became one, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy Kingdom.”¹

Indeed what has become of this strong eschatological sense of the eucharistic gathering over the course of time? In Ignatius it clearly still survives,⁸ and, as we have seen, in Maximus in the seventh century the Eucharist is consistently called “synaxis” and considered an image of “the state of things to come.” But little by

¹ *Didache* 9:4.

little, the sense of the gathering of “the whole Church” in one place (1 Cor. 14:23, Rom. 16:23) recedes, as does the eschatological character of the gathering. In the West, things reached the utter limit with the introduction and spread of the private mass, which the priest can celebrate on his own. But in the Orthodox Church too, even if celebration of the Liturgy is not permitted without the presence of laity, it often happens that the laity are absent or “symbolically” present in insignificant numbers. As it is now celebrated, our Eucharist is now anything but an image of the eschatological gathering “in one place.” Indeed, with the proliferation of eucharistic gatherings in parishes, chapels, monasteries, etc., and with the bishop absent as head of the gathering of the “whole Church” because the dioceses are geographically too large, the term “gathering” has lost its meaning. We should be talking now about the dispersal of the faithful, rather than their gathering “in one place.”

V. Passage through the ascetic and baptismal experience

The coming of the Kingdom of God has no meaning unless the people of God have first passed through the “catharsis” of trials, sorrows and death. The Messiah Himself has to pass through these things in order to bring the Kingdom, and the people of God must do the same. A passage in Luke (22:28) is significant: those who pass through the “trials” of Jesus are the ones to be given the privilege of eating and drinking at His table in His Kingdom. The entrance into the Kingdom is through the “narrow gate” and “strait way” of “endurance,” which in the first centuries meant in practice endurance of persecutions (the Epistle to the Hebrews lays particular emphasis on this), and later on meant the period of penitence and fasting which had to precede Baptism. (Great Lent, with its strict fast and its prohibition of the celebration of the Eucharist except on Saturdays and Sundays, is an indicative vestige of this, since baptism was initially performed on Easter day). In liturgical action, this was all expressed in Baptism, which already in the New Testament is linked with sacrifice and martyrdom (Mark 10:39, Luke 12:50), as also with death (Rom. 6:4, Col. 2:12), exactly as happened to Christ. The Areopagitic writings, the Cappadocians and Maximus all speak of a stage of “those being purified,” which is identified liturgically with the catechumens who are preparing for “illumination” (i.e., baptism), who enter into the rank of those “made perfect” upon receiving chrismation and the Eucharist. (These ranks clearly refer to the sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation, and the Eucharist and not to monks, at least in St. Maximus.)²

² *Scholia . . .*, PG 4:168-9.

Thus the eucharistic gathering, as an image of the last times, certainly should involve only the baptized. In this sense, we are talking about a closed community which comes together “the doors being shut” (John 20:19; cf. the exclamation “The doors! The doors!”). The eucharistic gathering can never be a means and instrument of mission, because in the last times, which it represents, there will be no mission; anyway, mission presupposes dispersal, not a gathering “in one place.” Consequently, it is contrary to the nature of the Eucharist as image of the Kingdom to broadcast it over television or radio whether for pastoral reasons or for the purpose of mission (a way of broadcasting and advertising the “richness” and “beauty” of our worship). In the Eucharist, one participates either “gathered in one place,” or not at all. Participation at a distance has no meaning. As for those who are sick or unable to come to the gathering, the Church’s very ancient practice is to bring them the fruit of the gathering (Holy Communion, antidoron, etc.), and not the gathering itself, either aurally or visually.

To be continued...