

Holy Assumption Orthodox Church
Celebrating 125 years witnessing to the Apostolic Faith

110 EAST MAIN STREET,
Marblehead, OH 43440

Rev. Fr. Peter Tomas, Rector

Rectory: (419) 798-4591

Father Peter's cell: (607) 206-5523

E-mail: info@holyassumptionmarblehead.org

Father Peter's email: frpeteromas@yahoo.com

website: www.holyassumptionmarblehead.org



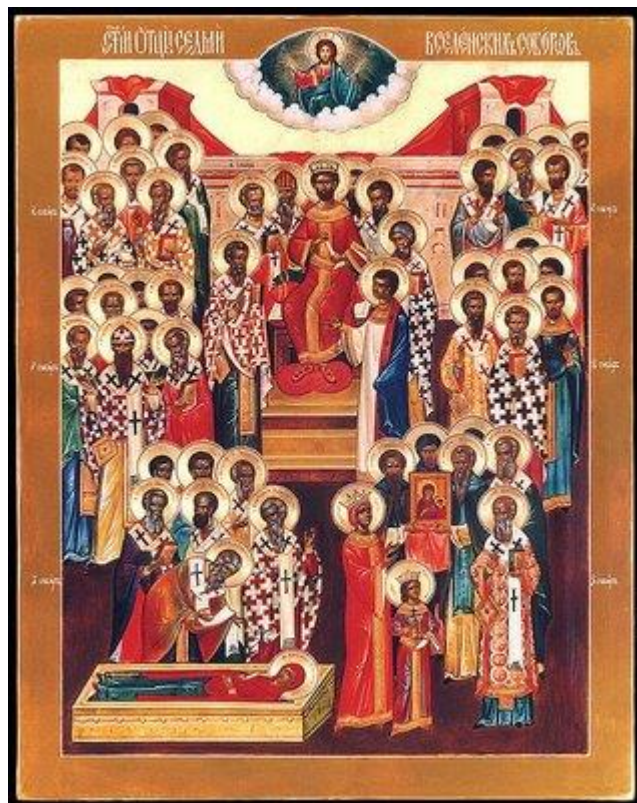
***Holy Assumption Orthodox Church is a parish of the Orthodox Church in America,
Diocese of the Midwest***

JULY 14, 2024

**THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
*FATHERS OF THE SIX ECUMENICAL COUNCILS***

EPISTLE: Rom 5:1-10

Brethren: Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.



Fathers of the Seven Ecumenical Councils

EPISTLE: 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.

GOSPEL: Mt 6:22-33

The Lord said, the lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore, I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore, do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

GOSPEL: Jn 17:1-13

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 with You 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.

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK

MON. July 15	Great Prince Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles; Rom 9:18-33, Mt 11:2-15
TUE. July 16	Hieromartyr Athenogenes; Rom 10:11-11:2, Mt 11:16-20
WED. July 17	Royal Passionbearers, Tsar Nicholas and his family; Rom 11:2-12, Mt 11:20-26
THU. July 18	Martyrs Emilian & Hyacinth; Rom 11:13-24, Mt 11:27-30
FRI. July 19	Ven. Macryna the Younger; Rom 11:25-36, Mt 12:1-8
SAT. July 20	Holy Prophet Elijah; Rom 6:11-17, Mt 8:14-23
SUN. July 21	4th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, <i>Tone 3</i>
9:10 AM	HOURS
9:30 AM	DIVINE LITURGY Followed by Coffee Hour

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



Debby Pinta, P. O. Box 39, Middle Bass, OH 43446; **Tony Monastra**, 2119 Willow Cove Marblehead, OH 43440; **Patti Owens**, 311 Woodbridge Road, Vermilion, OH 44089; **Basil Glovinsky**, 1007 Glendale Drive, Port Clinton, OH 43452; **Subdeacon Roger Pinta**, P.O. Box 39, Middle Bass, OH 43446; **Ed & Irene Vangeloff**, 454 Strouse Lane, Sandusky, OH 44870

JULY REPOSED



Mary Danchisen (1927) No date provided; Michael Wolf (1929) No date provided; Triantafilos Lefas (1995) No date provided; **2-** John Danchisen (2009); **6-** Anna Mazur (1969); **6-** Joseph Golob Jr (2006); **7-** Mary Martha Glovinsky (1975); **9-** Andrew Holodnak (1971); **10-** Gretta Gresh (2018); **14-** John Gulla (1968); **20-** Mitered Archpriest Sava Chaly (1991) Former Pastor; **21-** Anna Mazurik (1973); **27-** Father Vladimir Meschersky (1937) Former Pastor; **29-** Sally Franklin (2018); **29-** Robert Zgonc (2018); **29-** Charles Hagmaier (2018)

JULY CANDLE SPONSORS



Altar Candles: Barbara Wroblewski, Happy 29th Wedding Anniversary to Fr. Peter & Mat. Michelle (**\$50**); **Chandelier:** Available (**\$50**); **Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** Fr. Peter & Mat. Michelle, For Health & God's Blessings for Walter Wroblewski (**\$25**); **Candles at the Cross:** Laura Kovach, In birthday memory of Susan (**\$20**); **Candles at St. Tikhon Icon:** For Safety and Health of Nicholas, Tikhon, Gleice, Sophie & Chloe (**\$20**)



VIGILS FOR July 7

Basil Glovinsky 2 In loving memory of wife, Jean, Memory Eternal to neice Diane

Laura Kovach 4 For health and/or healing of Betty K., Debby P., David M., Patti O., Jim K., Ruth S., James W., Tony M., Hannah S., Barbara D., Pauline

O., Mark M., Dana M., Bodhi C., Sharon D., John D., Karen D., Kathie J., and Jennifer H.

Birthday blessings and many years to Ed Vangeloff.

Safe travel for Sarah and family.

Sandy Martin 1 Special intentions

Natalie Twarek 8 For the health and recovery of Mary Dziak, For the health and recovery of Betty Kovach, God's peace to Robert Fleenor, For the health and recovery of Carol, Kayla, Bill, Ruth, Pam, Debbie, Ron, Jim, Michelle, Terrie, Theresa, Clayton, Father Emilian, For the health of Matushka Melania, Patrick and Marty, Mike Heffernan and Barbara Heffernan, Health and healing for Father's dad Michal and Matushka's mom Barbara, For the health of Tony, Bev, Ed, Irene, Father David, Pauline, Judy, Tina, Carole, Gary, Sharon, Tina's dad, Earl, Sonya, Margi & Joe, Jackie, MaryAnn & Bob, Bodhi, Stella, Jake, Pat, special intentions



ATTENDANCE

07/06 Vespers, **10** attending (4 guests); **07/07** Divine Liturgy, **42** attending (21 guests)



JULY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

16 – Peter & Stephanie Kowal Anniversary (30); **23** – Fr. Peter Ordination (1995); **27** – Greg & Natalie Twarek Anniversary (50); **30** – Tim & Jennifer Heffernan Anniversary; **30** – Dale & Angela Bricker Anniversary

PRAYER LIST

Parishioners & Family: Jennifer Heffernan / Tom Hileman / Pam / Jim Twarek / Ed Garrity / Patti Owens / Tony Monastra / Barbara Wroblewski / Michal Tomáš / Ruth Sheller / Basil Glovinsky / Dale / Sophie / Jeanne Smith / Carol / David Martin / Fred Soski / Chris Hannon / Subdeacon Roger Pinta / Ed Vangeloff / Irene Vangeloff / Sonja Rose / Ron Royhab / James Bargdill / John Beadle / Carole Conaway / Gary Conaway / Sharon Dietrich / Michael Glovinsky / Shirley Gresh / Joseph Habegger / Elaine Hileman / Betty Kovach / Child Stella Miller / William Pipenur / Earl Rindfleisch / Helen Jean Rofkar / George Royhab / Marianne Royhab / Stephanie Royhab / Kathy Jacob / the child Bodhi Cassell / Clifford / Gleice, Sophie & Chloe / Carol / Debbie & Marco / Nora.

Other Requests: Amy / Bill Byrnes / Michael Heffernan / Susanne / Barbara Heffernan / Rita Mumea / Charles Schlett / Kathy Debevits / Maxwell Chaney / Sidharth Bijilani – friend of Subdeacon Roger and Debbie Pinta / Anthony / Archpriest Ján Čížmár / Archpriest David Lis / Archpriest Emilian & Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan / Donald Gresh / Mark Ludvik / Robert Piznar / Mark Masica / Valerie Ritzenhaller / William / Rick Rowe / Chris.

Military: Craig Cassell / Jake Ellithorpe / Jordon Fulton / Justin Issler / Tikhon / Nicholas / & All Military



READERS LIST

Sunday Jul 14 – Ron
Sunday Jul 21 – Joe
Sunday Jul 28 – Jake
Sunday Aug 4 – Tim



COFFEE HOUR SPONSOR LIST

July 14 – Bobbie
 July 21 – Tina
 July 28 – Greg
 August 4 – Natalia

Please sign up to host coffee hour after the Sunday Divine Liturgy. Signup sheet is located in the Social Hall.



CHARITY OF THE MONTH

“Respect for Life Ministries” is the charity we donate to for the month of July.



CLEANING SCHEDULE

July 15, Angela
 July 22, Angela
 July 29, Angela
 Aug 5, Angela



SUNDAY OFFERING

Sunday, July 7, 2024

Tithe	\$2,157.00
Donations	\$ 663.00
Candles	\$ 61.00
Vigils	\$ 65.00
Altar Candles	\$ 50.00
Eternal Light and Icon Screen	\$ 25.00
St. Tikhon’s Icon	\$ 20.00
Candles at the Cross	\$ 20.00
Memorial Donation	\$ 100.00
Total:	\$3,161.00

May the Lord reward you for your financial and spiritual support!



MEMORIAL DONATION RECEIVED – THANK YOU!

We wish to express our sincere thanks to **Basil Glovinsky** for his generous donation of **\$100.00** to our church in Memory of †**DIANE TRYON**. *May Our Lord reward the Basil for his care and love and grant to his departed servant †DIANE Eternal Memory! Vichnaya Pamyat!*



SPECIAL PARISH MEETING

Special Parish Meeting will be held on **Sunday, August 4th**, following the Divine Liturgy. We will discuss and ask to approve a major expenditure that are planned for this year. Presence of all voting members in good standing is requested. Please mark your calendars, and plan to attend this important meeting! This is the **third** announcement.



67th ANNUAL HALUPKI FESTIVAL

Festival raffle tickets are available. We are asking each parish household to sell at least 20 raffle tickets at \$5 each. Please ask your friends and family ‘**how many tickets** they would like to purchase,’ not **if** they want any... approach is everything! Thank you in advance for your help!



FEAST OF ST. ELIJAH – BLESSING OF VEHICLES

Next Saturday, July 20th Holy Church celebrates the Feast of Holy and Great Prophet Elijah (Elias) who is known as the patron saint of vehicles. The usual blessing of vehicles will take place after the Great Vespers. *Just as we have our homes blessed each year, everyone is encouraged to have their vehicle blessed!*



SINCERE THANK YOU

We would like to express our sincere Thank You to **Jim and Laura Kovach** for cleaning up a very large tree branch which broke off the tree by the parking lot. Our thanks are extended also to **David Mazurik** for cleaning and cutting down the shrubs and toll grass in front our Church Sign by the road at the entrance to the village. *May the Lord reward all three of you with His special blessings!*



MARKET DAY

Our next Market Day will take place next **Saturday, July 20th** starting with set up at **8:00 AM**. We will have perohi, kielbasa and kraut, halupki, spanakopita, and a large variety of baked goods. Your help is greatly appreciated!

A MID-SUMMER FEAST
 SATURDAY, JULY 20, 2024
 6:00 TO 9:00 PM
 ST. MARY BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH HALL
 506 EAST MAIN STREET
 MARBLEHEAD, OHIO

PLATED, CANDLELIGHT DINNER

Live Entertainment
 J-MARKZ
 Performing '60s and '70s Hits

BYOB
 Silent Auction
 Chef J. Bou-Sliman
 Menu
 Appetizer
 Dinner
 Dessert and Beverages

Special features:
 Garden and herb display of two beverages
 "Garden-to-table" tableside
 Locally grown vegetables over a bed of greens
 Desserts

Coffee and Soft Tea

\$50 PER PERSON
 GROUP SEATING WITH SIX PER TABLE

CALL 419-337-8758 TO RESERVE YOUR SEAT
 RESERVATIONS ACCEPTED THROUGH JULY 15
 NO PAYMENT REQUIRED AT THE DOOR

Proceeds:
 Building Fund for Replacement of Church, Hall and Rectory Roofs

A MID-SUMMER FEAST

Plated Candlelight Dinner, sponsored by **St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church** in Marblehead will take place next Saturday, July 20, 6PM – 9PM at St. Mary's Hall.

Live Entertainment by J-MARKZ performing '60s and '70 Hits

Silent Auction

Chef J. John Bou-Sliman

MENU: **Appetizer**, **Dinner** rolls and butter, garden salad with choice of two dressings, grilled marinated chicken with locally grown vegetables over a bed of grains, **Dessert**, **Coffee and Iced Tea**

Tickets \$50 each. Group seating with six per table, BYOB

Call **(419) 357-3758** to reserve a seat **through July 15**

Fundraiser Building Fund for replacement of church, hall, and rectory roofs.

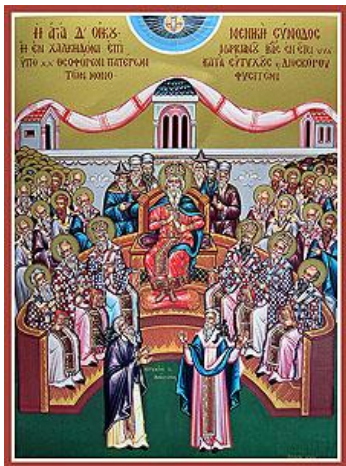
UP-COMING EVENTS IN OUR PARISH – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



July 15th Baking Day 8:00 AM (*Monday*)

July 16th Baking Day 8:00 AM (*Tuesday*)

July 20th Market Day 8:00 AM (*Saturday*)



Fathers of the First Six Councils

Commemorated on July 14

The Commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils.

In the Ninth Article of the Nicaea-Constantinople Symbol of Faith proclaimed by the holy Fathers of the First and Second Ecumenical Councils, we confess our faith in “One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.” By virtue of the catholic nature of the Church, an Ecumenical Council is the Church’s supreme authority, and possesses the competence to resolve major questions of church life. An Ecumenical Council is comprised of arch pastors and pastors of the Church, and representatives of all the local Churches, from every land of the “oikumene” (i.e. from all the whole inhabited world).

The Orthodox Church acknowledges Seven Holy Ecumenical Councils:

The First Ecumenical Council (Nicaea I) (May 29, and also on seventh Sunday after Pascha) was convened in the year 325 against the heresy of Arius, in the city of Nicaea in Bithynia under Saint Constantine the Great, Equal of the Apostles.

The Second Ecumenical Council (Constantinople I) (May 22) was convened in the year 381 against the heresy of Macedonius, by the emperor Theodosius the Great.

The Third Ecumenical Council (Ephesus) (September 9) was convened in the year 431 against the heresy of Nestorius, in the city of Ephesus by the emperor Theodosius the Younger.

The Fourth Ecumenical Council (Chalcedon) (July 16) was convened in the year 451, against the Monophysite heresy, in the city of Chalcedon under the emperor Marcian.

The Fifth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople II) (July 25) “Concerning the Three Chapters,” was convened in the year 553, under the emperor Justinian the Great.

The Sixth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople III) (January 23) met during the years 680-681, to fight the Monothelite heresy, under the emperor Constantine Pogonatos.

The fact that the Seventh Ecumenical Council (Nicaea II) is not commemorated today testifies to the antiquity of today’s celebration. The Seventh Council, commemorated on the Sunday nearest to October 11, was convened at Nicea in the year 787 against the Iconoclast heresy, under the emperor Constantine and his mother Irene.

The Church venerates the Holy Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils because Christ has established them as “lights upon the earth,” guiding us to the true Faith. “Clad in the garment of truth,” the doctrine of the Fathers, based upon the preaching of the Apostles, has established one faith for the Church. The Ecumenical Councils, are the highest authority in the Church. Such Councils, guided by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and accepted by the Church, are infallible.

The Orthodox Church’s conciliar definitions of dogma have the highest authority, and such definitions always begin with the Apostolic formula: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...” (Acts 15: 28). The Ecumenical Councils were always convened for a specific reason: to combat false opinions and heresies, and to clarify the Orthodox Church’s teaching. But the Holy Spirit has thus seen fit, that the dogmas, the truths of faith, immutable in their content and scope, constantly and consequently are revealed by the conciliar mind of the Church, and are given precision by the holy Fathers within theological concepts and terms in exactly such measure as is needed by the Church itself for its economy of salvation. The Church, in expounding its dogmas, is dealing with the concerns of a given historical moment, “not revealing everything in haste and thoughtlessly, nor indeed, ultimately hiding something” (Saint Gregory the Theologian).

A brief summary of the dogmatic theology of the First Six Ecumenical Councils is formulated and contained in the First Canon of the Council of Trullo (also known as Quinisext), held in the year 692. The 318 Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council are spoken of in this Canon I of Trullo as having: “with unanimity of faith revealed and declared to us the consubstantiality of the three Persons of the Divine nature and, ... instructing the faithful to adore the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with one worship, they cast down and dispelled the false teaching about different degrees of Divinity.”

The 150 Holy Fathers of the Second Ecumenical Council left their mark on the theology of the Church concerning the Holy Spirit, “repudiating the teaching of Macedonius, as one who wished to divide the inseparable Unity, so that there might be no perfect mystery of our hope.”

The 200 God-bearing Fathers of the Third Ecumenical Council expounded the teaching that “Christ, the Incarnate Son of God is One.” They also confessed that “she who bore Him without seed was the spotless Ever-Virgin, glorifying her as truly the Mother of God.

The 630 Holy Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council decreed that “the One Christ, the Son of God... must be glorified in two natures.”

The 165 God-bearing Holy Fathers of the Fifth Ecumenical Council “in synod anathematized and repudiated Theodore of Mopsuestia (the teacher of Nestorius), and Origen, and Didymus, and Evagrius, renovators of the Hellenic teaching about the transmigration of souls and the transmutation of bodies and the impieties they raised against the resurrection of the dead.”

The 170 Holy Fathers of the Sixth Ecumenical Council “taught that we ought to confess two natural volitions, or two wills [trans. note: one divine, and the other human], and two natural operations (energies) in Him Who was incarnate for our salvation, Jesus Christ, our true God.”

In decisive moments of Church history, the holy Ecumenical Councils promulgated their dogmatic definitions, as trustworthy delimitations in the spiritual battle for the purity of Orthodoxy, which will last until such time, as “all shall come into the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God” (Eph. 4: 13). In the struggle with new heresies, the Church does not abandon its former dogmatic concepts nor replace them with some sort of new formulations. The dogmatic formulae of the Holy Ecumenical Councils need never be superseded, they remain always contemporary to the living Tradition of the Church. Therefore, the Church proclaims:

“The faith of all in the Church of God hath been glorified by men, which were luminaries in the world, cleaving to the Word of Life, so that it be observed firmly, and that it dwells unshakably until the end of the ages, conjointly with their God-bestown writings and dogmas. We reject and we anathematize all whom they have rejected and anathematized, as being enemies of Truth. And if anyone does not cleave

to nor admit the aforementioned pious dogmas, and does not teach or preach accordingly, let him be anathema” (Canon I of the Council of Trullo).

In addition to their dogmatic definitions, the Holy Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils exerted great efforts towards the strengthening of church discipline. Local Councils promulgated their disciplinary canons according to the circumstances of the time and place, frequently differing among themselves in various particulars.

The universal unity of the Orthodox Church required unity also in canonical practice, i.e. a conciliar deliberation and affirmation of the most important canonical norms by the Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils. Thus, according to conciliar judgment, the Church has accepted: 20 Canons from the First, 7 Canons from the Second, 8 Canons from the Third, and 30 Canons from the Fourth Ecumenical Synods. The Fifth and the Sixth Councils concerned themselves only with resolving dogmatic questions, and did not leave behind any disciplinary canons.

The need to establish in codified form the customary practices during the years 451-680, and ultimately to compile a canonical codex for the Orthodox Church, occasioned the convening of a special Council, which was wholly devoted to the general application of churchly rules. This was convened in the year 692. The Council “in the Imperial Palace” or “Under the Arches” (in Greek “en trullo”), came to be called the Council in Trullo. It is also called the “Quinisext” [meaning the “fifth and sixth”], because it is considered to have completed the activities of the Fifth and Sixth Councils, or rather that it was simply a direct continuation of the Sixth Ecumenical Council itself, separated by just a few years.

The Council in Trullo, with its 102 Canons (more than of all the Ecumenical Synods combined), had a tremendous significance in the history of the canonical theology of the Orthodox Church. It might be said that the Fathers of this Council produced a complete compilation of the basic codex from the relevant sources for the Orthodox Church’s canons. Listing through in chronological order, and having been accepted by the Church the Canons of the Holy Apostles, and the Canons of the Holy Ecumenical and the Local Councils and of the holy Fathers, the Trullo Council declared: “Let no one be permitted to alter or to annul the aforementioned canons, nor in place of these put forth, or to accept others, made of spurious inscription” (2nd Canon of the Council in Trullo).

Church canons, sanctified by the authority of the first Six Ecumenical Councils (including the rules of the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787, and the Constantinople Councils of 861 and 879, which were added later under the holy Patriarch Photius), form the basis of THE RUDDER, or KORMCHAYA KNIGA (a canon law codex known as “Syntagma” or “Nomokanon” in 14 titles). In its repository of grace is expressed a canonical norm, a connection to every era, and a guide for all the local Orthodox Churches in churchly practice.

New historical conditions can lead to the change of some particular external aspect of the life of the Church. This makes creative canonical activity necessary in the conciliar reasoning of the Church, in order to reconcile the external norms of churchly life with historical circumstances. The details of canonical regulation are not fully developed for the various eras of churchly organization all at once. With every push to either forsake the literal meaning of a canon, or to fulfill and develop it, the Church again and again turns for reasoning and guidance to the eternal legacy of the Holy Ecumenical Councils, to the inexhaustible treasury of dogmatic and canonical truths.



Does the Expression “Eye for an Eye” Call for Vengeance?

by Dmitry Burtsev

The expression “an eye for an eye” comes from the Old Testament and expresses a legal rule aimed at limiting retaliation and replacing it with punishment determined by a court of law based on the principle of equal

retribution. In jurisprudence, this rule is known as “Lex talionis” or retributive justice.

Thousands of years ago, human vengeance knew no bounds. In primitive times, a crime against a member of a clan was avenged by his kin, and it was not only the perpetrator who suffered, but also his relatives. Punishment was often worse than the crime. It triggered the next round of revenge, often causing a petty conflict to escalate into a long bloody feud. These customs were also characteristic of the ancient Jews. To change this, the Lord, acting through the prophet Moses, established a new judicial system based on the principle of equal, symmetrical retribution. For its time it was a significant step forward in understanding what true justice is.

The Origin

We first find the expression “an eye for an eye” in Exodus, the second of the five legislative books of Prophet Moses:

When people who are fighting injure a pregnant woman so that there is a miscarriage and yet no further harm follows, the one responsible shall be fined what the woman’s husband demands, paying as much as the judges determine. If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. (Ex 21:22-25).

This law is repeated in Leviticus, the third book of Moses.

Anyone who kills a human being shall be put to death. Anyone who kills an animal shall make restitution for it, life for life. Anyone who maims another shall suffer the same injury in return: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; the injury inflicted is the injury to be suffered. One who kills an animal shall make restitution for it, but one who kills a human being shall be put to death. (Lev. 24:17-21).

In Deuteronomy, the fifth book of Moses, this legal norm is applied not only to direct perpetrators of harm, but also to false witnesses:

If a malicious witness comes forward to accuse someone of wrongdoing, then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days, and the judges shall make a thorough inquiry. If the witness is a false witness, having testified falsely against another, then you shall do to the false witness just as the false witness had meant to do to the other. So, you shall purge the evil from your midst. The rest shall hear and be afraid, and a crime such as this shall never again be committed among you. Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. (Deut 19:16-21).

Finally, in the New Testament, Jesus Christ affirms the highest moral standard:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you: Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also, and if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, give your coat as well, and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile.” (Mt 5:38-41).

The Meaning

The principle of equal retribution is now regarded as obsolete. Some, like Mahatma Gandhi, argue that if the “eye for an eye” principle were applied, the whole world would go blind. However, as mentioned above, it was a step forward in the moral development of society of its time. St John Chrysostom wrote, “The lawgiver ordained an eye for an eye, not for us to pluck out one another’s eyes, but to keep our hands from causing offence; for the threat that makes one fear punishment restrains one’s will to engage in criminal acts.”

Here is an example from the Old Testament to illustrate what forms blood feuds took before the introduction of the talion law: One day Shechem, son of the ruler of the Canaanite city, raped Dinah, daughter of Jacob. It was a serious crime, which in ancient times was punishable by death. To make amends, Shechem promised to take Dinah as his wife and give her rich gifts. But it did not help. Simeon and Levi, the brothers of Dinah, punished with death not only Shechem and his father, but all the men in their city, plundering their possessions and leading their wives and children into captivity (see Genesis 34). It was such cruelty that the law of “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” was intended to curb.

Examples of following this new principle are also found in the books of the Old Testament. For example, the Jews, having captured King Adoni-Bezek, did not kill him, but cut off his thumbs, treating him as he treated his own vanquished enemies (Judges 1:6-7). On the same principle, the prophet Samuel sentenced King Haggah: “*As your sword has made women childless, so your mother shall be childless among women*” (1 Samuel 15:33). The Bible also tells the story of Susanna, a woman unjustly accused of adultery by wicked elders. When the prophet Daniel found out that they had perjured themselves, they were given the same punishment that Susanna would have faced (Dan 13).

Note that the law of Moses differs from a number of other ancient laws based on the same principle. It establishes the personal liability of the offender and prohibits the punishment of parties not involved in the crime: “*Parents shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their parents; only for their own crimes may persons be put to death*” (Deut. 24:16). In comparison, the law of the ancient Babylonian ruler Hammurabi stated that if a man beat a pregnant woman to death, his daughter should be executed.

In the New Testament, Christ commands us to be more righteous than the scribes and Pharisees. The Old Testament limited revenge and replaced it with judicial punishment, whereas the Gospel calls for uprooting all vengeance and doing good to the offender in spite of his expectations. This does not, however, invalidate the secular courts which have the power to punish offenders (Rom 13:4). Even St. Paul once exercised his right as a Roman citizen by demanding that his case be heard before an imperial court (Acts 25:12).

So, the expression “an eye for an eye” in the Bible does not call for vengeance. It is a judicial principle that suggests an adequate balance between punishment and crime where the penalty should not exceed the gravity of the offence but be proportionate and symmetrical.

Oh, that blessed alleluia of heaven that the angels chant where God dwells! There, the harmony of those who hymn God with words and deeds is perfect! So let us take care to chant the alleluia with perseverance now, so that we will be counted worthy of chanting it with stillness then.

— **Blessed Augustine**

Let the servant of God sing in such a manner that the words of the text rather than the voice of the singer cause delight.

— **St. Jerome**

With fear and reverence, you should stand in church, for our Christ is invisibly present with the holy angels.

— **Elder Ephraim**

It is a great accomplishment to pray without distraction, but it is even greater to chant without distraction.

— **Evagrius the Solitary**