

ST BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH
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SUNDAY 6TH AFTER EASTER
Saturday, May 15 & Sunday, May 16, 2021

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**PARISH SERVICES**

**Holy Liturgy:** Monday-Friday 8:30AM  
**Holy Liturgy:** Saturday 4:30PM, Sunday 11:00AM  
**Matins/Orthos:** Sunday 9:00AM

**Holy Confession:** Monday 4-6PM  
**Vespers:** Saturday 3:00PM  
**Holy Rosary:** Sunday 10:30AM

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HEALING PRAYERS NEEDED

Prayers needed for our friends MaryAnn Astour, Nazmie Barahmeh, Jean Benoit, Nadia Casab, Jeanette Farewege, Nancy Gazzal, Daniel Klockowski, Jean Murad, Rose Pawlinga, John Roth, Brian Sagrestano, and Karen Zalatan. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

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**RECENT RECEIPTS**

Weekly Collection May 8/9: \$ 481.00      Memorial Services: \$ 70.00

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† **MEMORIAL MASSES** †

THIS SATURDAY, MAY 15

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Cynthia Buck
† **Julia Nassimos**, By John Anthony Kawam
† **John Gazzal**, By Edward & Carmela Nassimos
† **Kathleen Zelesnikar**, One Year Memorial Anniversary, By Robert Lalli

THIS SUNDAY, MAY 16

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Cynthia Buck
† **John Gazzal**, By David & Pamela Williams
† **Maggy Atallah**, By Gloria Shaheen

NEXT SATURDAY, MAY 22

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Mary Nassimos
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Catherine Goretsky & Holly Ann Madden
† **John Gazzal**, By Edward & Carmela Nassimos
† **Frederick Kopyt**, By Cheryl Kopyt & children
† **Deceased Members of the Reesh & Kopyt Families**, By their family members

NEXT SUNDAY, MAY 23

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By David & Susan Heath
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Catherine Goretsky & Holly Ann Madden
† **John Gazzal**, By George & Penny Kunkel

THE UNITY OF GOD

“Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are” (Jn 17:11). As His earthly life was approaching its end the Lord Jesus offered this prayer for His disciples. The questions it raises have preoccupied the Church for centuries: how are the Father and the Son “one” and how can the followers of Christ be one “as We are”?

The Unity of God: The distinguishing mark of God’s people throughout the Old Testament is expressed in the *Shema*, the invocation which might well be called the Jewish creed: “*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength*” (Deut 6:4-5). This passage is recited daily in the morning and evening services of the synagogue and expresses the monotheism which set Jews apart from other peoples in the ancient world. Many devout Jews hope to be able to recite it with their dying breath.

How conflicted must have been those Jews – including Jesus’ own followers – who heard Him say “*The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me...I and the Father are one*” (Jn 10: 25, 30). The Jewish leadership saw His claims as blasphemy and condemned Him to death for it. The followers of Jesus accepted it, particularly after His resurrection, without being able to express it with clarity.

The question of how the Lord Jesus could be one with the Father was raised again in the fourth century in the context of a dispute between a charismatic Libyan priest, Arius, and his bishop, Alexander of Alexandria. Arius challenged Alexander for teaching that the Son was eternally begotten of the Father, before earthly time began. Arius countered that “if the Father begat the Son, he that was begotten had a beginning of existence: and from this it is evident, that there was a time when the Son was not. It therefore **necessarily follows**, that he [the Son] had his substance from nothing” (quoted in the fifth-century *Ecclesiastical Histories* of Socrates Scholasticus as describing the essence of Arius’ doctrine).

In a local council of his presbyters Alexander deposed Arius and exiled him. Arius, however, had supporters among other bishops and the controversy threatened to disrupt the unity of the Churches in the Roman Empire which had only recently come to look on Christians with favor. This is where the emperor, Constantine the Great, stepped in.

The First Council of Nicaea (325): For almost twenty years Constantine had been consolidating his position of power in the Roman Empire. At the time of Diocletian (284-305) the empire had been divided into four districts, a move which proved disastrous in the long run. Constantine had defeated all rivals and secured complete control of the empire by the year 324. He was not about to see it plagued by divisions among the Churches.

Constantine invited all the bishops of the empire (the “*ecumene*”) to a great council to be held at his summer palace in Nicaea. He provided them and their attendant priests and deacons with travel and lodging at imperial expense with the understanding that this gathering was to help unify the Churches of the empire. Bishops, traditionally numbered at 318, came from as far east as Nisibis, on the border of the Persian Empire, and from as far west as Spain and Gaul (France).

The Council’s chief theological task was to express the Churches’ common faith in the relationship between the Father and the Son. The Fathers referred to the Creeds of the various local Churches which were their rule for instruction and baptisms. The bishops ultimately subscribed to a creed based on the baptismal use of the Churches of Palestine. They inserted the term *homoousias* (one in essence) to describe the relationship of the Father and the Son and appended the following anti-Arian censure: “But those who say: ‘There was a time when He was not;’ and ‘He was not before He was made;’ and ‘He was made out of nothing,’ or ‘He is of another substance’ or ‘essence,’ or ‘The Son of God is created,’ or ‘changeable,’ or ‘alterable’—they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church.”

(May2021Leaflet)