

The Sunday of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council John 17:1-13

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word., Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. (KJV)

In the current Gospel reading, the Lord Jesus Christ spoke about eternal life as He was concluding His own earthly existence in a human body. Jesus spoke with love about the men given to Him and who kept the words given to them.

Jesus prayed for His followers and expressed His interest in His followers being fulfilled with joy. This Gospel reading occurs each year on the Sunday following Ascension. The content is enriching regarding Jesus and God the Father.

Believers are enriched with each Gospel reading. The soul yearns for the nourishment found in the Holy Gospel. The human mind is at its best when considering the Gospel.

The believer is united with Jesus Christ in hearing the proclamation of the Gospel. The whole person is affected when listening carefully to the Gospel. The Church is continuing to celebrate the Feast of the Ascension.

Jesus' Ascension into heaven marked the conclusion of His earthly presence. Jesus continues to be ever-present in the Church. Jesus' return at the glorious Second Coming is prayed for with each recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

Each person determines his or her personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in God's Holy Church. Church services enable the believer to grow and mature in Christ and to be constantly nourished.

Believers learn from the Church services and the teachings which accompany and are a part of the services. The Lord Jesus Christ continues to be present and provides for believers through the Church.

Each person decides the extent he or she will seek to grow in Christ. Each person chooses the effort to put forth in following Christ. Practices of personal prayer and fasting of each person are decided individually.

The Church offers teachings on prayer and fasting. Parents and family members set examples for their children and relatives. Clergy encourage individuals to follow Christ. The final decision rests with the person.

Jesus Christ offers eternal life. Eternal life exists only with the Lord Jesus Christ. Life is empty and has no meaning beyond death without Christ. Jesus demonstrated His power over death when He rose from the tomb.

Jesus' followers have the Church to experience Christ and to prepare for His return. The Church is filled with the rich lessons of history through the centuries and the Holy Mysteries of Christ.

Each day is a blessing and a reminder of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. Each moment the glorious Second Coming of Christ moves closer. God's Holy Church prepares believers for the Second Coming.

The Feast of the Ascension is a feast of great joy. Jesus Christ's time on earth in human body is a matter of record in the Church. All that was accomplished by Christ while He was in bodily form is beyond measure.

St. John's Gospel concludes with these words "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."
(Jn.21:25)

Life in the Lord Jesus Christ is very real and at the same time a wonderful mystery that continues to unfold. Jesus Christ reveals Himself each day in ways that are apparent to the believing eye.

The Church provides the Feast of the Ascension as a time of joy and anticipation. Jesus Christ is due unending gratitude for all that is known about Him during the time He took on earthly flesh.

Jesus is due gratitude for His presence prior to His taking on human flesh and following his Ascension. Inquiring minds seeking to know Christ better will find His presence in history back to the world's creation.

Effort is needed to grow in Christ and to live in Christ. God is ever-present. We know from the Acts of the Apostles that God "he be not far from every one of us:" (Acts 17:27)

Today is an opportunity in God's Holy Church to be mindful of Jesus' Ascension and to celebrate all that Jesus is and does. Today and everyday are the times to be grateful for the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Sunday of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council. Apostle Hermes of the Seventy.
Holy Martyr Hermia. May 31/June 13,2021. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.
Father Rodney Torbic