

The Sunday of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council

John 17:1-13

These words spoke 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)

God's Holy Church is celebrating the Lord Jesus Christ's Ascension. Believers are mindful of the Lord Jesus Christ being taken up to heaven while at the same time Christ is always being present with believers.

The Lord Jesus Christ's glorious Second Coming is anticipated each day until His return. The time of life until Christ's return and the great and final judgment is to be used for repentance and following the way of Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ is ever-present to nourish and guide believers. The Lord's teachings abound and are proclaimed in the Church. Christ's Precious Body and Blood enable believers to remain united with Him.

Growth in Christ is possible throughout life until the glorious Second Coming. God's Holy Church provides the pathway and the nourishment for the journey to eternal life and the Heavenly Kingdom.

Each moment of time is a precious opportunity to be united with Christ in prayer. Every moment of life merits giving thanks to the Lord God for the blessings of life.

Christ is ever-present and within reach through prayer. With careful use of eyes to see and ears to hear, believers determine the direction life is to take that is pleasing to the Lord God.

The Holy Scriptures, the Divine services and the teachings of the Church define the paths to be taken during earthly life. God protects believers against earthly perils through His teachings and the presence of the Church.

The hunger in the soul yearns for the experience with Christ. Christ satisfies the soul through the Divine Mysteries in the Church. Remaining faithful to Christ from Holy Baptism until departure from this life is the believer's goal.

When a believer falls into sin, repentance is always timely and beneficial. The quicker a person repents, the easier it is to put the sin behind and have the burden lifted from the conscience.

God's Holy Church fosters Christian growth throughout life. Believers faithful to Christ grow with the passage of time. Infants grow into mature adults when they are raised in the Church.

The ideal is for each person to progress to live fully in Christ throughout life. The Church facilitates growth in Christ and keeps the believer united with Christ through the Holy Mysteries.

Parents, family members and God-parents have a part in being sound Christian examples. Adult Christians have a responsibility to be mature examples leading lives of integrity and based in the truth of Christ.

Parents faithful to Christ provide a nurturing atmosphere in the home. Husbands and wives faithful to each other are beneficial examples for their sons and daughters.

Employers faithful to Christ create a working atmosphere that is healthy for employees. Employees working with integrity build an exemplary work record and are very productive.

God's Holy Church leads believers to the Heavenly Kingdom while simultaneously teaching the faithful how to live a God-pleasing earthly life. The Church is very instructive and relevant for learning about daily life.

Jesus Christ's Ascension into heaven captivates the mind and is worthy of continuous thought. Everything known about Christ merits full consideration of the mind.

Life is to be invested in learning about Christ. Increased investment in learning about and experiencing Christ results in life becoming more Christ-like. Joy and peace increase as the believer grows in Christ.

Opening the heart, mind and soul to Christ creates opportunities for life to be enriched by Christ. Sin deters and impedes Christian growth, peace and joy.

Repentance removes the obstacles for peace and joy in Christ. Love abounds when Christ fills the heart, mind and soul. Jesus Christ's Ascension is the time of peace, love and joy in God's Holy Church.

The Sunday of the Fathers of the 1st Council. Venerable Pachomius the Great. Achilles, Bishop of Larissa. May 15/28, 2023. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic