



*Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church,
 a young and, God willing, growing community of worshipers.*

*Fr. Nikolay Khalimonov. Priest-in-Charge, 323-851-7898
 Fr. Alexy Karlgut, Dean/Administrator, 607-759-1833*

Please join us for prayer and fellowship.

Upcoming Services:
Saturday, Oct 29, Nov 5
Great Vespers: 5pm

Sunday, Oct 30, Nov 6
Divine Liturgy: 10am

**Coffee and fellowship will
 follow the service**

*The above services are at St.
 Olympia Church
 34 North Main Street
 Norwood, NY, 13668*

Mailing Address
St. Olympia Orthodox Church
PO Box 122 Canton, NY13617

**Holy Wonderworkers and Unmercenarys
 Cosmas and Damian of Mesopotamia
 and their mother Saint Theodota
 November 1**



The Holy Wonderworkers and Unmercenary Physicians Cosmas and Damian and their mother Saint Theodota were natives of Asia Minor (some sources say Mesopotamia). Their pagan father died while they were still quite small children.

Their mother raised them in Christian piety. Through her own example, and by reading holy books to them, Saint Theodota preserved her children in purity of life according to the command of the Lord, and Cosmas and Damian grew up into righteous and virtuous men.

Trained and skilled as physicians, they received from the Holy Spirit the gift of healing people's illnesses of body and soul by the power of prayer. They even treated animals. With fervent love for both God and neighbor, they never took payment for their services. They strictly observed the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Freely have you received, freely give." (Mt. 10:8). The fame of Saints Cosmas and Damian spread throughout all the surrounding region, and people called them unmercenary physicians. ...

Many miracles were worked after the death of the holy unmercenarys. There lived at Thereman, near the church of Cosmas and Damian, a certain man by the name of Malchus. One day he went on a journey, leaving his wife all alone... He prayerfully entrusted her to the heavenly protection of the holy brothers. But the Enemy of the race of mankind ... planned to kill the woman. ... The woman... called upon God with deep faith. Two fierce-some men then appeared, and the devil (fled)... bowing to them deeply she asked, "My rescuers, to whom I shall be grateful to the end of my days, what are your names?" They replied, "We are the servants of Christ, Cosmas and Damian," and became invisible. The woman... told everyone about what had happened to her. Glorifying God, she went up to the icon of the holy brothers and tearfully offered prayers of thanksgiving for her deliverance. And from that time the holy brothers were venerated as protectors of the holiness and inviolability of Christian marriage, and as givers of harmony to conjugal life.

And He was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man . . .

<https://www.oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/doctrine-scripture/the-symbol-of-faith/incarnation>

By Protospesbyter Thomas Hopko

[Third and Final Excerpt]

Emperor Justinian and the 5th Ecumenical Council

In the sixth century, the Byzantine Emperor Justinian wanted to reaffirm the fact that the followers of the council of Chalcedon really believed that Jesus Christ is the incarnate Son and Word of God, one of the Holy Trinity. He wanted to do this primarily to convince those who did not accept the fourth council that its definition did not reintroduce the error of Nestorius. To do this, the Emperor called the council now known as the fifth ecumenical council in Constantinople in 553 which further served to clarify the Orthodox position in regard to the person and action of Christ. The following are some of the key texts of this council:

If anyone understands the expression “one Person only of our Lord Jesus Christ” in this sense, that it is the union of many hypostases [or persons], and if he thus attempts to introduce into the mystery of Christ two hypostases or two persons, and after having introduced two persons speaks of one Person only in the sense of dignity, honor or worship . . . [and] shall calumniate the holy council of Chalcedon, pretending that it used this expression [one hypostasis and person] in this impious sense . . . let him be anathema.

If anyone shall not call in a true acceptance . . . the holy, glorious and ever-virgin Mary, the Theotokos . . . believing that she bare only a simple man and that God the Word was not incarnate of her . . . [and] shall calumniate the holy synod of Chalcedon as though it has asserted the Virgin to be Theotokos according to the impious sense . . . let him be anathema.

If anyone using the expression “in two natures” does not confess that our one Lord Jesus Christ has been revealed in the divinity and in the humanity, so as to designate by that expression a difference of the natures of which an ineffable union is made without confusion, in which neither the nature of the Word was changed into that of the flesh, nor that of the flesh into that of the Word, for each remained what it was by nature, the union being hypostatic [i.e., in the one Person]; but shall take the expression to divide the parties . . . let him be anathema.

If anyone does not confess that our Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified in the flesh is true God and the Lord of Glory and one of the Holy Trinity, let him be anathema.

To further emphasize the point that the Chalcedonian Council was truly orthodox, the Emperor Justinian wrote a doctrinal hymn which is still sung in the Orthodox Church at every divine liturgy. It confesses the Lord Jesus Christ as perfect God and perfect man.

*Only-begotten Son and Word of God,
Who for our salvation willed to be incarnate of
the holy Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary,
Who without change became man and was crucified,
Who is one of the Holy Trinity, glorified with
the Father and the Holy Spirit,
O Christ our God, trampling down death by death,
Save us!*

The Monothelite Controversy

In the seventh century the question of how to understand, define and confess the person and action of Jesus Christ continued to cause divisions among the believers. Some now said that after the Son of God became man, He had just one activity and will—the theandric activity and will of the Word-made—flesh. These people, called monothelites, insisted that the One Person of Christ, in uniting the natures of God and Man in His One Person, fused together the human and divine will and activity in such a way that they no longer could be distinguished.

The sixth ecumenical council met in Constantinople in 680–681. Following the teachings of St Maximus the Confessor who was imprisoned and tortured for his doctrines, it decreed that just as Christ is really fully divine and fully human, the perfect union of Divinity and Humanity in one Person, so also He must have both a real human activity and will and a real divine activity and will according to each of His natures and that these two wills and activities, like the natures themselves, should not be understood to be fused or mingled together into one so as to lose their proper natural characteristics and properties. This decision was based on the fact that since the Son of God remained fully divine in the incarnation, He must continue to have His proper divine activity and will; and that since He became fully human in the incarnation He must also have a complete and perfect human activity and will; and that the salvation of mankind requires

that the distinction but not the division or separation of each of these respective activities and wills remain in the incarnate Saviour. The following is part of the definition of faith of the sixth council:

... in Him are two natural wills and two natural operations without division, without fusion, without change and without separation according to the teaching of the holy fathers. And these two natural wills are not contrary to one another (God forbid!) ... but His human will follows, and not as resisting and reluctant, but rather as subject to His divine and omnipotent will ... For as His most holy and immaculate animated flesh was not destroyed because it was deified but continued in its own state and nature, so also His human will, although deified, was not suppressed, but was rather preserved ... We glorify two natural operations ... in the same Lord Jesus Christ our true God, that is to say a divine operation [or action] and a human operation

... For we will not admit one natural operation in God and in the creature. ... believing our Lord Jesus Christ to be one of the Trinity, and after the incarnation our true God we say that His two natures shone forth in His one hypostasis [or person] in which He both performed the miracles and endured the sufferings ... Wherefore we confess two wills and two operations concurring most fitly in Him for the salvation of the human race.

Iconoclastic Controversy

In the eighth and ninth centuries the question of the person and nature of Christ continued in the controversy over the veneration of the holy icons in the Church. At this time many were found, including emperors and secular rulers, who claimed that the veneration of icons is wrong because it is the sin of idolatry. They claimed that as God is invisible and has commanded in the Old Testament law that men are not to make “graven images,” so it is wrong to depict and to honor images of Christ and the saints.

The defenders of the veneration of the holy icons, led by Saints John Damascene and Theodore Studion, claimed that the central point of the Christian faith is that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” and that “we have beheld His glory” (Jn 1.14). Referring to the holy scriptures they insisted that belief in the incarnation of the Son of God calls for the veneration of icons since Jesus Christ is a real man with a real human soul and body, and as such can be depicted. They said that those who were against the holy icons reduced the incarnation to a “fantasy” and denied the true humanity of the Son of God in His coming to man. Thus they made reference to the words of Jesus Himself in His dialogue with Philip:

Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father and we shall be satisfied.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (John 14.8–9).

The defenders of the propriety of icon veneration also referred to the apostolic writings of Saint John and Saint Paul:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands concerning the Word of Life the Life was made manifest, and we saw it (1 Jn 1.1–2).

... the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness [in Greek: eikōn] of God (2 Corinthians 4.4).

He is the image [eikōn] of the invisible God, the first born of all creation; for in Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth ... all things were created through Him and for Him ... for in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell ... (Colossians 1.15–20).

In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by a Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. He is the reflection of the glory of God and the express image of His person, upholding the universe by the word of His power ... (Hebrews 1.1–3).

The seventh ecumenical council in Nicea in 787 officially declared that the Christian faith is to be proclaimed “in words and images.” And while making clear the teaching that holy icons may be made; that they are not to be worshipped—for only God Himself is worthy of worship—but are to be venerated and honored; the seventh council also made the following statement about Christ in reference to the veneration of icons:

... we keep unchanged all the ecclesiastical traditions handed down to us, whether in writing or verbally, one of which is the making of pictorial representations, agreeable to the history of the preaching of the Gospel, a tradition useful in many respects, but especially in this, that so the incarnation of the Word of God is shone forth in real and not merely in phantasy, for these have mutual indications and without doubt have also mutual significations.

In later times the doctrines of the real divinity and real humanity of Jesus Christ was witnessed and defended by such saints as Simeon the New Theologian (d. 1022) and Gregory Palamas, the Archbishop of Thessalonika (d. 1359) in their teachings about the real sanctification and deification of man through living communion with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit in the Church. In and through Christ, the Word incarnate, human persons can be filled with the Spirit of God and can be in genuine communion with God the Father, participating in the uncreated being, life and light of the Most Blessed Trinity. If Jesus Christ were not true God and true Man, this would be impossible. But it is not impossible. It is man’s experience of salvation and redemption in the life of the Church of Christ.