

**SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY: A DAY OF TRIUMPH**

The importance of the use and veneration of icons by the Orthodox Church is well documented today. There was a time, however, when their use was forbidden. Those who opposed the use of icons were referred to as “*iconoclasts*,” which literally means “*image breakers*.” This controversy raged for over 100 years, and was seemingly settled at the 7<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council, which convened in Nicea in 787 A.D. The Church fathers decreed that the veneration of icons was a long standing tradition of the Church, and that this practice was not, in any way, in conflict with the Second Commandment, which directs us “*not to make unto ourselves any graven images*.”

The 7<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council, however, did not completely settle this issue. The conflict over icons continued until 843 A.D. when a local council, led by Patriarch Methodios of Constantinople, established the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent as a day of celebration of the “*Triumph of Orthodoxy*” and the return of *Holy Icons* to their rightful place in churches everywhere.

The Sunday of Orthodoxy is a celebration of all of the faithful men and women who struggled for the Faith in times of persecution. On this great day, all Orthodox Christians are called upon to remember the example of these holy ones and to renew our own commitment to Christ and His Church. We proudly proclaim today that the rich Orthodox Faith that we possess is truly “*THE FAITH OF THE APOSTLES . . . THE FAITH OF THE FATHERS . . . THE FAITH WHICH HAS ESTABLISHED THE UNIVERS*.”