

# The Gospel's Voice



## Orthodox Parish of the Holy Transfiguration

Number 11, October 2016

### Saint LONGINUS

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of October, memory of the holy martyr LONGINUS the centurion and the two soldiers who suffered martyrdom with him.

A key figure of the Kevin Reynolds' film, *RISEN*, screened this year in theaters, here in Mauritius, Saint Longinus lived during the reign of the Emperor Tiberius (15-34 AD. J-C.). He served in the Roman army as Centurion under the orders of Pilatus, governor of Judea. It is to him and his men that they commanded to execute the Holy Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and keep the tomb lest the disciples come and steal his body and do believe in his resurrection.

Longinus witnessed all the amazing miracles that accompanied the Lord's Passion: the earthquake, the darkening of the sun, the tearing of the veil of the Temple, the rocks were split, tombs that s' opened and the bodies of many saints of old time who resurrected and appeared to all, and much more.

Seeing these signs, the eyes' heart of the centurion opened and he cried with a loud voice: « *Really, he was son of God!* » (Mt 27, 54; Mk 15: 39).



Monastère de Stoudénissa, XIV<sup>e</sup> s.

# The Seventh Oecumenical Council

The 11th of this month, if it's a Sunday, or the first Sunday after we celebrate the memory of the Fathers gathered for the Seventh oecumenical Council at Nicaea against the wicked and ignorant who rejected the worship of holy icons and accused of idolatry the holy Church who venerates them with Faith.

After careful preparation, and having heard many patristic testimonies, the Council Fathers threw anathema to heretics, who for nearly fifty years forbade Christians to venerate the icons of Christ and his saints under the pretext of idolatry. They set an end to the first period of iconoclasm, which was to take effect, however, a few years later, under Leo V the Armenian (813-820), and being definitively settled in 843 by the Empress Theodora and St. Methodius Patriarch. The Holy Fathers anathematized heretics patriarchs Anastasius, Constantine and Nicetas, metropolitans Theodosius of Ephesus, Jean of Nicomedia and Constantine of Nakoleia and all their supporters. They refuted the alleged Oecumenical Council, meeting in the Palace of Hieria at the initiative of Constantine V (754), and proclaimed the eternal memory of the defenders of Orthodoxy: the patriarch St. Germain, St. John Damascene, St. George of Cyprus, and all those who had offered themselves to exile and torture in defense of holy icons. In the definition they proclaimed at the seventh and final session of the Council, the Fathers declared:

We define with any accuracy and with great care, as the figure of the precious and life-giving Cross, the venerable and holy images, whether painted, represented by mosaics or some other suitable material must be placed in the churches of God, the holy utensils and clothes, walls and tables, in houses and along roads; both the image of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, and of our Sovereign Immaculate Mother of God, and of the holy angels and all the saints. The more we contemplate these pictorial representations, the more we shall have to remember their models, to lead us to them and to show them, kissing them, a respectful veneration, but without being a true worship, according to our

faith, which should be convenient only to our one God. As is done for the precious and vivificant Cross, for the Holy Gospels and other sacred objects, we offer incense and candles in their honor, according to the pious custom of the ancients. For the honor rendered to the image goes back to its model, and that worship of a venerated icon goes to the person (hypostasis) represented therein. This is how we keep the teaching of our holy Fathers and the tradition of the Catholic Church (i.e. universal) who received the Gospel message from one end of the world to another.

It was not only the worship of holy icons as the Fathers defended well, but in fact the reality of the Incarnation of the Son of God: "*I represent the unseen God, says St. John Damascene, not in anonymously, but to the extent that it became visible for us by participation in flesh and blood. I do not worship matter but I worship the Creator of matter, which for me has become material, which has assumed life in matter and which, by the material (that is to say, his dead and risen body), operated my salvation.*" By assuming human nature, the Word of God deified it without losing its own characteristics. Therefore, although in his glorified state he is not more accessible to our senses, the human nature of the Lord, however, can be represented. The icon of Christ - whose fidelity is guaranteed by the Church's tradition - becomes real presence of God's human and divine person and its model a channel of grace and sanctification for those who worship with faith.

Second Council of Nicaea was the seventh and last Oecumenical Council recognized by the Orthodox Church. However, this does not mean that other Oecumenical Councils cannot unite in the future, but rather taking the seventh rank, the Synod of Nicaea assumed the symbol of perfection and completion that represents that number in Scripture (e.g. Gen. 2: 1-3). It closed the era of great dogmatic quarrels, which allowed the Church to clarify the definitions in excluding any ambiguity, the limits of the Holy Orthodox Faith. Now any heresy can and will be equated with any error that the Church, gathered in universal Councils, has anathematized from the first (325) to the second Council of Nicaea (787).

*According to the Synaxarion*



*Ménologe de Basile II, Vat. gr. 1613, xv<sup>e</sup> s., P<sup>o</sup> 108.*

## **Divine Liturgy**

*Every Sunday at 9.30 a.m.*

Sunday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October

Sunday the 9<sup>th</sup>

The 16<sup>th</sup>: **Fathers of the 7<sup>th</sup>  
Oecumenical Council.**

**Memory of Saint Martyr  
LONGINUS.**

Sunday the 23<sup>rd</sup>

Sunday the 30<sup>th</sup>

## **The Orthodox Church of the Holy Transfiguration**

Grande-Rivière N-O

Mauritius

(behind Garage BALA)

**Divine Liturgy every Sunday  
at 9.30 a.m.**

Father Athanasios: 57 33 32 53

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