



SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

March 24



Did you know the Sunday of Orthodoxy celebrates the restoration of icons and their veneration?

The first Sunday of Great Lent is called the Sunday (or Triumph) of Orthodoxy because it commemorates the “triumph” of true doctrine over heresy regarding the creation and veneration of holy icons. For over 100 years, there was disagreement and war over the issue of depicting Christ and the Saints in a work of art. The iconoclasts (those against icons) falsely accused Christians of idolatry and superstition. The 7th Ecumenical Council in 787 AD officially confirmed the rightness — even the necessity — of honoring holy icons because icons express the theology of the Orthodox Faith. Iconoclasm was finally defeated on the First Sunday of Great Lent in 843.

Iconoclasm is rooted in a dualistic point of view that falsely claims that all matter is corrupt and only “spiritual” things are pleasing to God. It is also an implicit denial of the human nature of Christ.

God alone is to be worshipped, but icons and Saints can be venerated because created objects reflect God, their Creator. Man was “created in the image and likeness of God” (Genesis 1:26) and thus is an icon in the truest sense. God became man while remaining God and thus is an icon of the highest order. In the God-Man, Jesus Christ is the epitome (perfect archetype) of God and man, in Whom the spiritual and the material world are united and blessed.

Icons are not idols — they are “windows into heaven” through which God descends to earth and man’s mind and heart ascend to God.

Send us your questions at: religioused@goarch.org

Follow us    @goarchDRE

Subscribe at: religioused.goarch.org



**GREEK ORTHODOX
ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA**
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION