



Commemoration of the Holy Fathers
of the First Ecumenical Council
[Reader Service](#)

Calendar and Announcements

Calendar:

- The following services will be prayed with clergy, servers, and chanters, with limited availability for parishioners to attend:
 - Tuesday 5/26 – Orthros and Liturgy (Leave-Taking of Pascha), 6pm
 - Wednesday 5/27 – Vespers, 6pm
 - Thursday 5/28 – Orthros and Liturgy (Ascension), 9:30am
 - Saturday 5/30 – Vespers, 5pm
 - Sunday 5/31 – Orthros and Liturgy, 9:30am
 - Wednesday 6/3 – Paraklesis, 5:30pm
 - Saturday 6/6 – Vespers, 6pm
- The above services will be livestreamed via St. George's [website](#) and [official Facebook page](#). In addition, links to the texts will be included on the home page of the parish website above the livestream video for those who would like to follow along.
- Dn. Joseph is leading Akathist on Tuesday evenings via Skype. To participate, please email Dn. Joseph at dnjosephclark@gmail.com to receive the link.
- Bible study on the Gospel of John:
 - Please note: Bible study on 5/27 is cancelled due to Vespers in anticipation of Ascension.

Troparion of St. George

O liberator and deliverer of captives, helper of the poor and needy, a healing physician of the sick, a contender for kings, O great among Martyrs, the victory-clad George; intercede with Christ our God for the salvation of our souls.

Announcements:

- If you would like to attend one of the services (Liturgy, Vespers, or Paraklesis) listed above, please sign up via [Sign Up Genius](#), reserving the number of slots for family members attending. (For example, if there are 3 household members attending, reserve 3 slots.) Please remember that those who are elderly, have pre-existing conditions, or currently are not feeling well are asked to remain home. Additionally, those children who are too young to keep a mask on are asked to remain home. If you are scheduled to attend a service, please wear a mask/face covering, bring hand sanitizer, and bring disinfectant wipes (if possible) to help clean and disinfect the church at the end of service.
- Communion will offered by appointment after each service. To set up a time to receive communion, please sign up via the [Sign Up Genius](#). Please reserve only one slot per household unit. Your time will be confirmed via email from the church office. Prior to arriving at the church for communion, please say the [Morning Prayers](#) and the [Prayers of Preparation before Communion](#).
- Confession is also being scheduled by appointment. To set up an appointment, please email the church office and provide a few dates/times you are available. The office will email you to confirm your appointment time.

- If you would like to have a candle lit at the church, please email the church office at office@saintgeorgeupperdarby.org. Candle donations can be made via PayPal.
- Based on Metropolitan JOSEPH'S latest directive (5/6/2020), all non-liturgical events remain **cancelled**.
- The Ministry Team is organizing small group (less than 10 people) Typika services that meet in local parks. If interested in attending, please contact Ed Donahue at Edjdonahue@gmail.com.
- Several members of the ministry team are contacting parishioners to identify any special needs and to ensure our church family is taken care of during this time. If you or someone you know has a particular need during this time, please contact the church office so we can coordinate with the ministry team.

General notes:

- If you are able to still tithe / contribute to the church during this time, please consider giving online [via PayPal on the church's website](#).
- All communication about services and other updates during this time will be sent via parish email from Fr. Joel (or the office) or posted on the [website](#) or [official church Facebook page](#). All questions can be directed to the office (office@saintgeorgeupperdarby.org).

Church History

This week we continue a series on the Essentials of Faith. The hope is that we can all learn and be edified, and come to a "knowledge of the Truth" (1 Tim. 2:4), and to witness to the things of faith that were "delivered to the saints" (Jud. 1:3) in the Church, which is the "pillar and ground of Truth". (1 Tim. 3:15) May God bless the labor. These lessons are taken from Fr. Thomas Hopko's series The Orthodox Faith.

The Rise of the Muscovite State

As the Byzantine Empire was falling to the Ottoman Turks, the seeds of the coming Russian Empire were taking root in Moscow. Saint Dimitry Donskoi was succeeded as Grand Prince of Moscow by three outstanding leaders in the 15th century: Basil I (or Vasili; r. 1389–1425), Basil II (r. 1425–1462), and Ivan III (r. 1462–1505).

These rulers were convinced that God had chosen them to lead the Russians in overthrowing the Tatar yoke, and in defending Orthodoxy. They moved cautiously and deliberately to consolidate and expand the power of the Muscovite state. Chiefly through diplomatic negotiations, leading to purchases and annexations, they gradually acquired authority over the neighboring towns and provinces. They, and probably the majority of the people, understood that a strong centralized political state was necessary to unite all the Russians in their resistance to the Tatars, and to protect the land from other enemies to the west.

In 1472 Grand Prince Ivan III married Sophia Paleologa, the niece of Emperor Constantine XI, the last of the Byzantine emperors. Now Ivan was directly connected with the last imperial dynasty of New Rome. He took as his coat of arms the Byzantine two-headed eagle.

In 1479 Ivan succeeded in incorporating the greatly important city-state of Novgorod near the Baltic Sea into the Muscovite state. The unification

Wisdom of the Holy Fathers

It is not he who begins well who is perfect. It is he who ends well who is approved in God's sight.

~ Saint Basil

of the central and northern principalities was given a great boost by this annexation, but it came at a high price. For the Muscovites, suspicious of Novgorod's active trading relations with Western Europe, closed down the city-state's connections with the West. As Nicolas Zernov explains in *The Russians and Their Church*, "The door into Europe was shut, foreign trade came to a standstill, and the spirit of freedom and enterprise so prominently displayed by the people of Novgorod was extinguished."

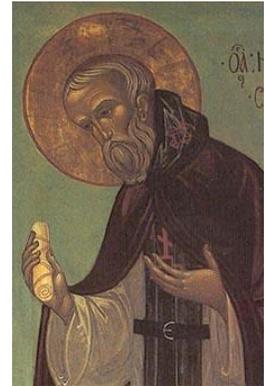
In 1480, the very next year, Ivan felt Russia was strong enough to stop paying the annual tribute money to the Tatars. In 1498, he was crowned by Metropolitan Simon of Moscow as "Tsar [Russian for 'caesar'], Grand Prince and Autocrat of All the Russias." The metropolitan charged him "to care for all souls and for all Orthodox Christendom."

By now, all the elements were essentially in place for the ideology of Moscow as the "Third Rome."

The Rise of the Possessors and the Non-Possessors

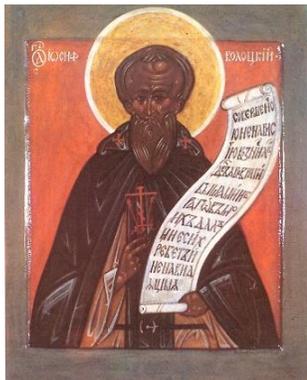
In 15th-century Russia, two quite different approaches to the monastic life, and to the relationship between the Church and the State, gradually took shape. The leaders of the two "parties"—both of whom shared the legacy of Saint Sergius of Radonezh, and both of whom are canonized saints of the Church—were Nil Sorsky (1433–1508) and Joseph of Volotsk (1439–1515).

Saint Nil (Nilus) led the party of the "Non-Possessors." The monastics of this persuasion mostly lived beyond the Volga River, thus they were sometimes called the "Transvolgans." Preferring the semi-eremitic life in small sketes, the Non-Possessors believed that monasteries should not own and rule over large estates. They held that the Church should be free from the direct influence and control of the State, and strongly opposed the right of the State to execute heretics. They defended poverty as the chief virtue, with humility and spiritual freedom pervading the contemplative, silent, and reclusive life of the monks. They were the inheritors of the mystical, hesychastic, and kenotic traditions of Saint Sergius and the anchorites of the Kievan Caves Monastery.



The "Possessors" were led by Saint Joseph. Hence, they were sometimes called the Josephites.

Preferring large cenobitic monasteries, they believed that it was appropriate for monasteries to own large estates, including serfs, as this would provide income for building and maintaining their large establishments, as well as providing income to distribute to the poor. They held that the Church and State should be in close relationship, and that the Church should serve the social and political needs of the emerging Russian nation. They endorsed the right of the State to execute heretics. They emphasized a life of rigorous ascetic discipline and active social service among the people, which would be rooted in the strict observance of liturgical rituals.



In most of these tendencies the Possessors also followed the tradition of Saint Sergius. Both Saint Sergius and Metropolitan Alexis of Moscow had played a prominent role in Russian social and political life of the previous century—as seen especially in the vision and work of St Theodosius of the Kievan Caves Monastery.

Although the spirit of the Non-Possessors was never totally eliminated from the life of the Russian people, it was the way of the Possessors which would dominate Russian ecclesiastical and national development until the early 19th century.