

THE ORTHODOX WEEKLY BULETIN VESTAL, CLIFFWOOD, NEW JERSEY

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

A dispute raged for several centuries in the early Christian Church. It bitterly centered around the use of ICONS, resulting in the removal and return of those sacred images. The final victory for the use of them was celebrated on March 11, 843 a.d. in Constantinople. That day, Christians marched through the street, carrying icons back to their churches. This was the first **“TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY”** service, which has since been celebrated on the first Sunday of Lent.

Icon are considered to be **‘WINDOWS TO HEAVEN.’** They help make the church a place different from other buildings, a place where God dwells among men. They are an aid to meditation, raising our thoughts to Christ and His saints. They instruct us in the teachings of the Church. They add the sense of sight to the outreach of the Gospel.

Today is a day of triumph over all heresy and all who deny the teaching of Christ. Today we boldly proclaim that we adhere to the faith of the “Mother of Christendom,” the ancient Church of the East where Christianity had its birth.

Happily, it is also a day when Orthodox of various jurisdictions have been meeting together for joint services, giving public witness of their unity in Christ. Despite the differences of language, culture and tradition, we hold the one supreme thing in common: our ONE faith in Christ.

Let Christ “triumph” over our hearts. Let us rejoice in the victory of virtue over evil. Then, indeed, will there be casue for celebration this day.