

## Sermon for the Sunday of Orthodoxy

Today, brothers and sisters, let's greet each other with the joy of this feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy!

Yes, today really is a feast although it's a feast that comes in the midst of our fasting, one that crowns and illumines all the ascetic efforts we have taken on during this past week.

The joyful event we commemorate today, the end of iconoclasm and the restoration of the holy icons in 843, took place on the first Sunday in Lent of that year – I think most of us are familiar with this history.

But the connection between the restoration of the icons and Great Lent goes much deeper, and really touches on the whole purpose of our fast.

St. John the Theologian wrote in his Gospel, No man has ever seen God, but His Son, Christ Jesus, having come in the flesh, He has made Him known unto us (cf. John 1:18). For, as St. Paul teaches, Christ is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). His flesh is a living icon: He is the prototype of the icons of wood and paint that illumine our churches and our homes.

But we can say something more: we also – you and I – are living icons of God. God said: Let us make man in our image and after our likeness (Gen. 1:26). As Fr. Thomas Hopko used to say, we are “images of the image.” For man is made in the image of Christ, the God-Man, and Christ is the image of the Father.

Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied (John 14:8). These were the words of the Apostle Philip on the night of the Last Supper – the same Philip who, as we heard just now, brought Nathanael to the Lord with the invitation, come and see (John 1:46). Christ's response to Philip on that night is something we as Orthodox Christians know to be true: he who has seen Christ has seen the Father. And we have seen – we have seen the icons of paint and wood, we have seen the icons of our neighbor who bears God's image. But having seen, the question is: are we indeed satisfied?

I think most of us believe that there is much that is unsatisfactory about our lives. Evidence of this runs the range from gnawing misgivings or troubled