

HOLY ICONS - RECALLING CHRIST

To provide a better understanding of Iconography, The Seventh Ecumenical Synod: Concerning the Holy Icons, is here quoted. This article appears in two parts for the benefit of the readers to make available a concise reference for the true value of Icons In the Orthodox Church.

PART I

"...We salute the form of the venerable and life-giving Cross, and the holy relics of the saints, and we receive, salute and embrace the holy and venerable Icons, according to the ancient tradition of the holy Universal Church of God, and of our holy Fathers, who both received them and determined that they should be in all the most holy churches of God, and In every place of His Dominion. To these holy and venerable Icons, as we have said, we give honor and salutation and honorable reverence (*timee proskynesis*) :

*namely, the Icon of the Incarnation of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, of our immaculate Lady and all-holy Godbearer, Theotokos, of whom He was pleased to become Incarnate, that He might save us and deliver us from every impious madness after idols;

*also of the Incorporeal Angels - since they appeared to the righteous in the form of men.

*Also the forms and Icons of the divine and most famed Apostles, of the Prophets, who speak of God, of the prize-bearing Martyrs, and of the other Saints:

in order that by their paintings we may be enabled to rise to the remembrance and memory of the prototype (Christ) and may partake In some measure of sanctification. These things we have been taught to hold, and have been confirmed In holding, by our holy Fathers and their divinely delivered teachings.

PART II

We keep all the ecclesiastical traditions which have been handed down to us, whether written, or unwritten, free from Innovations. One of the traditions which we thus preserve Is that of making representational paintings, which is In accord with the history of preaching of the Gospel, as confirming the real and not merely imaginary Incarnation of God the Word, and as contributing to our good In other ways. For those which illustrate each other also emphasize each other."