



Sunday of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council (Nicea I, 325)

The last Sunday after Easter honors “the eminent and holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea.” The Council was convoked by Emperor Constantine with the consent of Pope Sylvester at Nicea, at that time the site of the imperial summer palace. The Arian heresy (which denied that Jesus was God and therefore equal to the Father) was causing a great disturbance in the eastern empire; Constantine was eager for a resolution so that peace could be restored. Bishops from both east and west were summoned, the council being held from May 20-August 25, 325. These holy men condemned Arianism and in precise terms declared that Jesus Christ is **consubstantial** with the Father. The Nicene Creed was formulated at this council.

Among these 318 holy men “some were celebrated for their wisdom, others for the austerity of their lives and for their patience, others for their modesty; some were old, some full the freshness of youth...Many shone from apostolic gifts.” “Some of the bishops present had been victims and confessors of the Great Persecution: Paul of Neo Caesarea on the Euphrates had lost the use of both hands from burning with a red-hot iron; Paphnutius and Potamon of Egypt had each had an eye gouged out by the imperial persecutors.” “Others were known for their gifts of prophecy and working miracles, such as James of Nisibis, Spiridion of Cyprus, Nicholas of Myra, Leonitus of Caesarea. Still others were renowned for their learning, as Alexander of Alexandria, Eusthatius of Antioch, Marcarius of Jerusalem, and Marcellus of Ancrya.” The most renowned person in attendance was the deacon St. Athanasius, who would go on to suffer many decades of persecution from the Arians.

(Sources and Quotations: [The Twenty Ecumenical Councils](#), [Our Glorious Popes](#), [Encyclopedia of Catholic History](#), [The Building of Christendom](#))