

## *The First Sunday of Great Lent: Orthodoxy Sunday*

*by Very Rev. Fr. Lawrence Farley*

This Sunday commemorates the restoration of the holy icons after the Church's long struggle with the iconoclasts, who banned and burned the icons, relentlessly persecuting those who made them and venerated them. The icons were restored on the first Sunday of Lent in 843, which ever after was dedicated to celebrating this restoration. (The readings for this Sunday, which focus on Christ as the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets, have little to do with this theme, since the lectionary predates this restoration.)

This Sunday is called the Triumph of Orthodoxy because Orthodoxy centers on the Incarnation of the Divine Word, and it is this Incarnation which is proclaimed in the icons. With the Incarnation of God becoming Man in Jesus, the indescribable became capable of description, and the invisible God became visible, as He came to restore our fallen image by uniting it to His own divine beauty. Henceforth the Church would proclaim this saving Incarnation in both words and images