

**St Ignatios of Antioch
Melkite Greek Catholic Church
1003 Merry Street
Augusta, Georgia 30904
706 364-6219**



**7th Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday of the Fathers of the
Ecumenical Councils
16 July 2023**

FATHERS OF THE FIRST SIX ECUMENICAL COUNCILS



“Peter Has Spoken through Leo”

ON THREE SUNDAYS EACH YEAR Byzantine Churches commemorate the fathers of the seven great councils of the first millennium. The first ecumenical council (Nicaea I) is remembered on the Sunday after the Feast of the Ascension and the seventh (Nicaea II) on the Sunday nearest to October 11. The first six councils are recalled together on the Sunday following July 13, the feast of the fourth council (Chalcedon).

Many Christian churches in America were founded by a pastor who had a Bible, a microphone and a conviction that God wanted him to preach. So he gathered a few followers (often his own relatives), rented space and scheduled services. Americans see nothing unusual in this – after all freedom of speech and individual initiative are hallmarks of the American way of doing things. Why not in the Church?

The historic Churches (those of the first centuries) saw things differently. Many of these Churches had, in fact, been founded by one of the Apostles or their co-workers. They emphasized that the Church is the Body of Christ, an organic unity of Head and members. Like St Paul, these Churches saw unity as a chief mark of the Church and an important part of their mission *“endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all”* (Eph 4:3-6).

Still, the first centuries saw a number of teachers with competing doctrines arise in the Church. When they were not accepted by the leaders of a local Church, these teachers or their followers formed their own rival groups. In some places these groups became more popular than the historic Church. Arians, for example, were prominent in Constantinople through much of the fourth century and in much of the West through the fifth.

The Importance of Councils

The council – whether a local or regional synod or an ecumenical assembly – reflects a basic understanding of Church in the Christian East. The Church is the “communion in the Holy Spirit,” a community infused with the life-giving presence of the Spirit of God. Councils reflect this image of the Church as a community. The council is a true image of the Church when it is imbued with and dependent on the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Councils function on every level of Church life in the East. In the local Church, the eparchy, the primary council is the presbyterate which shares in the sacramental ministry of the bishop. Community councils involving deacons and the laity administer the temporal concerns of the eparchy and its parishes. Wider synods govern the life of patriarchates or metropolias. With the establishment of Christianity as the dominant faith in the Roman Empire, the ecumenical council was created.

Constantine’s Solution

When Emperor Constantine accepted Christ and recognized the Church as an important structure in his empire, he faced the rivalry between these groups. In his quest for a strong and united Church, he called the first Ecumenical Council as a vehicle for unifying the teaching and practices of the empire. There had been councils before, of course, but always on regional levels. This council involved bishops from the entire empire (the *ecumene*) under Constantine’s rule. All the bishops of the empire were called to participate in this and subsequent councils as successors of the Apostles, entrusted with the teaching ministry by Christ. Together the bishops speak to and for all the local Churches. The agreement of the bishops, ratified by the “Amen” of the faithful, expresses the voice of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Constantine set a precedent which would be repeated several times during the first millennium. These councils are:

1. ***First Council of Nicaea*** (325) – Arians held that Christ was like the Father, but was not of the same essence. They believed Him to be the first of God’s creatures. This council rejected Arianism and, in the Creed which it drafted, proclaimed Him as being “one in essence” with the Father. The council also recognized as first sees Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. It unified the celebration of Pascha and issued other canons regulating Church life.
2. ***First Council of Constantinople*** (381) – Macedonius was one of the rival bishops in Constantinople during the Arian controversy. His followers denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. In response this Council proclaimed the second part of the Creed (“and in the Holy Spirit...”).
3. ***Council of Ephesus*** (431) – The question “How could Jesus be both God and Man?” was

much debated in these centuries. Nestorius taught that Jesus was a man in whom the Logos dwelt and therefore Mary could not be called “Theotokos.” His chief opponent, Cyril of Alexandria, saw that, if Christ were not truly divine, He could not have united that Divinity to our humanity. This council endorsed Cyril’s teaching and forbade the development of any further Creed.

4. ***Council of Chalcedon*** (451) – As Nestorius had lessened the reality of the Incarnation by emphasizing Christ’s humanity, Eutyches, a disciple of Cyril, seemed to be minimizing His humanity. After several rival councils endorsed first one then the other approach, a new emperor, Marcian, summoned this council which endorsed the teaching of Leo, Pope of Rome, finding it compatible with the teaching of Cyril and Ephesus. The Fathers of this Council confessed that Christ was “unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, and inseparably one in two natures.” The Council also added the sees of Constantinople and Jerusalem to the principal sees recognized at Nicaea, constituting the “pentarchy” (Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem).

The (Assyrian) Church of the East did not explicitly accept the Council of Ephesus and the Oriental Orthodox Churches have not recognized the Council of Chalcedon, resulting in schisms between these Churches and the Eastern Orthodox (Byzantine) and Roman Catholic Churches. Twentieth-century Agreed Statements between these Churches succeeded in expressing their teachings in a harmonious way, thereby eliminating the theological bases for their divisions.

5. ***Second Council of Constantinople*** (553) – Many felt that in his “Three Chapters,” Theodore of Mopsuestia had paved the way for Nestorius’ teachings. To assure the opponents of Chalcedon that the Greek and Latin Churches were firmly behind the Council of Ephesus, this Council condemned his and others’ writings as having inspired Nestorius.
6. ***Third Council of Constantinople*** (680-681) – Attempts at reconciling the teachings of Cyril and Leo sought to stress the unity of God and man in Christ had given rise to two new theological trends. Monoenergism taught that Christ had but one energy. Monothelitism taught that He had only one will. This Council condemned both propositions as minimizing the fullness of Christ’s humanity and divinity.
7. ***Second Council of Nicaea*** (787) – This Council justified the veneration of icons, based on the true humanity of Christ. If the Word truly became flesh, the Council Fathers reasoned, He could be painted.

Two different gatherings have been called the ***Fourth Council of Constantinople***. The first (869-870) confirmed the Seventh Council, requiring that the icon of Christ be venerated like the Gospel Book. Since it also deposed St Photios the Great as patriarch of Constantinople, the Greek Churches did not accept it. They gave the title to a second council (879-880) which reinstated Photios (with the pope’s blessing). They affirmed the Creed without the filioque and condemned those who “impose on it their own invented phrases.” Since the decrees of this Council were promulgated as Roman Law by the Emperor after its minutes had been signed by the Five Patriarchs, some Orthodox consider this an Ecumenical Council.

The West continued to call its general synods Ecumenical Councils long after the fall of the Empire. The Orthodox Churches, although they recognize several important “Great and Holy Councils” as normative for the entire Church, do not call them Ecumenical Councils.

The Councils in Our Liturgy

The seven councils of the first millennium which we commemorate liturgically are particularly remembered for their role in clarifying the Church’s teaching on the Trinity and the Incarnation, the basis of all other doctrines, in the face of numerous controversies in the now free Churches of the Roman Empire. The councils sought to render the teachings of these mysteries scattered through the New Testament in the precise terms of Greek philosophy current in the empire. They succeeded in doing so, but were not as successful in expressing these teachings in ways accessible to those Churches outside that culture. Thus the fifth-century Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon contributed to lasting divisions in the Churches of the East.

Besides the three Sundays of the Council Fathers mentioned above, our Church also commemorates each Council individually on the following dates:

January 23 – Constantinople III

May 22 – Constantinople I

May 29 – Nicaea I

July 16 - Chalcedon

July 25 – Constantinople II

September 9 – Ephesus

October 13 – Nicaea II

The Problem of Chalcedon

Like other councils, the Council of Chalcedon dealt with both theological and political issues. The main theological issue was how to express the mystery of Christ’s incarnation in the face of the Monophysitism taught by Eutyches, an influential priest in Constantinople and a disciple of St Cyril of Alexandria. At its second session the Council adopted the concept “two natures in one Person,” employed by Pope St. Leo the Great in a letter to Flavian, the archbishop of Constantinople. When the letter was read to the bishops, they replied, *“This is the faith of the fathers! This is the faith of the Apostles! So we all believe! Thus the Orthodox believe! Anathema to him who does not thus believe! Peter has spoken thus through Leo!”* Leo’s expression has been used in the Greek and Latin Churches ever since. Unfortunately, this term was the opposite of that used by St Cyril of Alexandria a generation earlier, describing the “one nature of the incarnate Word.”

The theological problem was made even more complex by the political, however. The first Council at Nicaea has decreed that the foremost local Churches in the Empire would be Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. At Chalcedon the 500+ bishops present recalled that *“the fathers [at an earlier council in Constantinople] rightly accorded prerogatives to the see of older Rome, since that is an imperial city; and moved by the same purpose the 150 most devout bishops apportioned equal prerogatives to the most holy see of New Rome, reasonably judging that the city which is honored by the imperial power and senate and enjoying privileges equaling older*

imperial Rome, should also be elevated to her level in ecclesiastical affairs and take second place after her.” Thus Constantinople (New Rome) was accorded the second place in the hierarchy previously held by Alexandria.

The Pope of Rome, St Leo the Great, at first objected to this realignment as contrary to the canons of Nicaea I but he later relented and it became law in the empire. The Churches of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and – because it was the site of the Lord’s death and resurrection – Jerusalem would be the foremost local Churches in the empire. This group of five sees would be known as the pentarchy and their ranking is recognized in the Byzantine Churches to this day.

Thus not only was Roman theological terminology deemed more precise than Alexandrian, the Byzantine see was given precedence over that of Alexandria. The Alexandrian bishops at first delayed and finally refused to accept the decrees of this council and the Egyptian Church was divided into Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian parts. Those who accepted Chalcedon were called “Melkites” or Royalists; those who did not called themselves “Copts,” i.e. true Egyptians.

The Copts would later be joined by the Armenians and many Syriac-speaking members of the Patriarchate of Antioch. Along with their daughter Churches in Ethiopia and India, the non-Chalcedonians are today known as the “Oriental Orthodox Churches.”

A New Chapter

These divisions were hardened in the thousand years of Islamic rule in the Middle East. Each Christian group – Melkite, Nestorian and non-Chalcedonian – was designated a separate millet (nation), with its own laws, insuring that the Christians remained disunited.

It was only with the end of the Ottoman Empire in World War I that these Churches embarked on a new way of interacting. In 1988 the Coptic Orthodox and the Catholic Churches issued an Agreed Statement on the Incarnation. It said in part, *“We believe that our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, the Incarnate-Logos, is perfect in His Divinity and perfect in His Humanity. He made His Humanity One with His Divinity without Mixture, nor Mingling, nor Confusion. His Divinity was not separated from His humanity even for a moment or twinkling of an eye.”*

This was followed in 1990 by an Agreed Statement between the Oriental Orthodox and the Eastern Orthodox Churches. *“The [Chalcedonian] Orthodox agree that the Oriental Orthodox will continue to maintain their traditional cyrillican terminology of ‘one nature of the incarnate Logos,’ since they acknowledge the double consubstantiality of the Logos which Eutyches denied. The Orthodox also use this terminology. The Oriental Orthodox agree that the Orthodox are justified in their use of the two-natures formula, since they acknowledge that the distinction is ‘in thought alone’.”*

Finally, over 1500 years after Chalcedon, the Latin, Greek and Oriental Churches have come to recognize their common faith in the perfect humanity and divinity of Christ, despite the differing terminology they use to express it.

Sunday Collections

Attendance	Date	Collection
	21 May 2023	
31	28 May 2023	431.00
23	4 June 2023	363.00
24	11 June 2023	715.00
39	18 June 2023	1,502.00
50	25 June 2023	5,002.00
31	2 July 2023	\$429.00
38	9 July 2023	1,547.00

Divine Liturgy Intentions:

For the Living:

Bishop Francois, Fr. John Azar, Fr. James Graham, David Mangelsdorf, Brian Frank, Maria Barklage, Nookid Graham, Ali de la Vega, Dn. Kent & Diana Plowman, A Special Parish Intention, Mandie, Nick Baiad, Charlie & Kathleen Barnette, Richie Damici, Medical Personnel and First Responders

For the Dead:

Kirk Weidman

Announcements

We are live-streaming on our Facebook page at the following days & times:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday – 8:00AM, The Third Hour

Friday – 6:00 PM Weekday Vespers

Saturday – 6:00PM Great Vespers

Sunday – 9:00AM Orthros & 10:00AM Divine Liturgy

WE'VE BEGUN PRAYING the 3rd Hour on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8am. This is a short prayer service from our version of the Liturgy of the Hours. It lasts less than 20 minutes or so. Come join us!

PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES AROUND TOWN – Most Holy Trinity parish will be hosting a Men's Holy Hour every Friday morning from 6-7am. There will also be a coffee hour and reflection time afterwards – Men from all parishes are invited to attend for whatever portion of the time they are available. For the Ladies – St. Joseph's will be hosting a Women's Holy Hour on the first Monday of each month at 7pm.

MELKITE MUSIC 101

There is nothing like Melkite music. For beginners, the task of learning Byzantine chant can be daunting, however. This three-week series will cover some of the basics of Melkite music and give participants the tools to continue learning in their own communities. Each session will last two hours with a ten-minute break in the middle. Participants will be able to practice music, ask questions and learn where to find essential materials and resources.

Each session will run from 6-8pm (**CDT**) on Thursday July 20, 27 and August 3. Abouna Justin will open the Zoom link at 5:30 pm (CDT) so that those who wish to virtually 'attend' Vespers may do so.

July 20...Session 1: Introduction and Definitions, How to learn Melkite Music.
Divine Liturgy Music,
Learning the Eight Tones (part 1: Tones 7, 8, 1 and 2)

July 27...Session 2: Learning the Eight Tones (part 2: Tones 3, 4, 5 and 6), Praying Vespers

August 3...Session 3: Praying Orthros, Feast Day Music

Those interested should email Abouna Justin at protosouth@stgeorgebham.com with "MELKITE MUSIC" in the subject line of the email. He will send out a Zoom link and any further details.

Calling all single Catholics! August 25th-27th, 2023 - Join 400+ singles coming from all parts of the US (and beyond!) at the 22nd National Conference for Single Catholics at St. John's Resort, in Plymouth, MI *OR participate virtually and engage with others via the online socials and small group discussions.* This is your chance to connect with like-minded singles (of all ages). The weekend includes talks by dynamic speakers, music, social events, Mass, adoration, fellowship and more. (If joining us in-person, use the promo code (**PARISH23**) when you register to get \$50 off! *Discount for the first 50 sign ups nationwide to use this code.*) Visit NationalCatholicSingles.com for more information and to register. (Can't find your question answered on the website? Call 512-766-5798.)



Upcoming Calendar

July 23 – Blessing of cars in honor of St. Elijah

Aug 6 – Sunday, Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord

Aug 14 – Monday, Vespers, Feast of the Dormition – 7pm

Aug 15 – Tuesday, Divine Liturgy, Dormition – 7pm

Feast of the Nativity of Mary – Sept. 8th

Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross – Sept. 14

Resurrectional Troparion

(Tone 6)



The an - ge - lic Pow - ers were a-round Your tomb,



and the guards be - came as dead; and Ma - ry



stood at the tomb seek - ing Your spot-less bo - dy;



then You des - poi - led Ha-des with - out be-ing



tried by it, and You met the Vir - gin, O Be-stow-er of



Life. O Lord who rose from the dead, glo - ry to You.

Prokimenon

Reader: Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, you just; exult, all you upright of heart.

All: Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, you just; exult, all you upright of heart.

Reader: Happy are those whose faults are taken away, and whose sins are covered.

All: Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, you just; exult, all you upright of heart.

Reader: Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, you just;

All: Exult, all you upright of heart.

Readings for the Week:

Monday: 1st Cor 9:13,18

Matt 16:1-6

Tuesday: 1st Cor 10:5-12

Matt 16:6-12

Wednesday: 1st Cor 10:12-22

Matt 16:20-24

Thursday: 1st Cor 10:28-11:8

Matt 16:24-28

Friday: 1st Cor 11:8-23

Matt 17:10-17

Saturday: Rom 13:1,11

Matt 12:30-37

Saints of the Week:

July 16: Hieromartyr Athenogenes and his ten disciples
July 17: The Great Woman Martyr, Marina
July 18: Martyr Emilian
July 19: Mother Macrina, sister of St. Basil the Great; Holy Father Dios
July 20: The Prophet Elijah the Thesbite
July 21: Holy Father Simeon, the Fool for Christ, and his companion John
July 22: Mary Magdalene – Equal to the Apostles
July 23: Transfer of the Remains of the Hieromartyr Phocas; the Prophet Ezekiel

Word Search

Q	U	F	L	A	M	P	S	T	A	N	D	D	Q	C	U	L	X	Z
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Accomplished
Amen
Bushel
City
Commandments
Destroy
Earth
Father
Glory
Great

Heaven
Heaven
Hidden
House
Kingdom
Lamp
Lampstand
Law
Letter
Light

Light
Mountain
Prophets
Shine
Stroke
Teaches
Works
World
You

Parish Information:

Rt. Rev. Michael Skrocki, JCD
Pastor

abounamike@aol.com

Knights of Columbus
JFK Council

1st Wednesday of the month, 7pm
Most Holy Trinity

4th Degree Assembly
2nd Wednesday of the month, 7pm
St. Ignatios

Publicans Prayer Group
Postponed until Further Notice

New Parishioners:
Please register with Fr. Michael.

Mystery of Holy Confession
Please contact Fr. Michael to set up a convenient time.

Mystery of Christian Initiation
Expectant parents should notify Fr. Michael prior to the birth of the child. Adult converts should contact Fr. Michael so arrangements may be made for any necessary instruction and sacraments.

Mystery of Holy Crowning
Those planning to marry should notify the Fr. Michael
at least six months prior to the desired Wedding date.

Mystery of Holy Anointing
Please notify Fr. Michael when you or a family member is in need of anointing.

To report sexual abuse by clergy, parish personnel or volunteers of the Eparchy of Newton, please call the **Victim Assistance Coordinator** at 1-800-479-5910.

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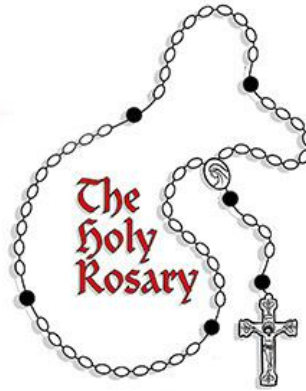
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