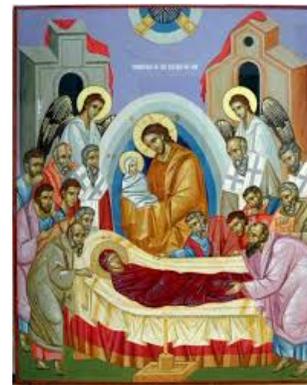




SAINT NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH AUGUST 2019 NEWS

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His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph, Primate and Archbishop

www.Antiochian.org

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Parish Council *Chairman:* Cal McIntyre, *Vice Chairman:* Jason Soloninka

Treasurer: Mark McQuide, *Secretary* Diana Sjoberg

Bill Dodge, Yusuf Hanna, Cheryl Haska

HIS GRACE BISHOP ANTHONY

***will be here the weekend of November 1-3 to help us
celebrate our THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY! Plan ahead!***

THIS MONTH'S NEWS Page 2: schedule of the many goings-on of August

Page 3: Father David's Column

Page 6: August Anniversaries

Page 7: Fr Bill's sermon on the Fourth Ecumenical Council ...(of all things)

REGULAR WORSHIP SCHEDULE

SUNDAYS 8:30 a.m. Matins (Orthros)

9:30 A.M. DIVINE LITURGY Coffee Hour afterwards

Mondays and Wednesdays 8 a.m. Matins (Orthros)

Thursdays 6:30 p.m. Vespers on August 8, 15, 22, 29 before Orthodoxy class

Saturdays 5 p.m. Great Vespers

Confessions after Saturday Vespers, before Sunday Liturgy or by appointment

Many special August services are shown on the next page.

**AUGUST FASTING: August 1-15 is Dormition Fast - meatless at least
Wednesday and Friday meatfast** during the rest of the month.

Thursday August 29 is a Strict Fast for *The Beheading of John the Baptist*

2

After a quiet July, here comes August!

***The Transfiguration
of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ***
when he was seen radiant in glory atop Mount Tabor
Monday August 5
**6:30 p.m. Vespers Divine Liturgy
and Blessing of Grapes**



***The Falling Asleep (Dormition)
of the Theotokos***

when she died and was glorified in heaven

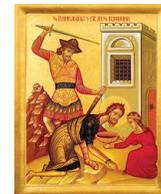
In preparation for the Feast:
Wednesday August 7
7 p.m. Paraklisis Service
(Supplications to the Theotokos)

For the Feast Day:
Wednesday August 14:
6:30 p.m. Vespers Divine Liturgy



***On the Feast and the Sunday after: Anointing with Myrrh from the
Weeping Icon of Our Lady of Cicero***

Feast/Fast for the Beheading of St John the Baptist:
8 a.m. Thursday August 29 - Festival Matins



Introduction to Orthodoxy Class
Thursdays at 7 p.m. August 8 through August 29
preceded by Vespers at 6:30.

This is for any who want to learn more about the Church in a systematic way - those who are just curious, those looking to join, or Orthodox wanting to review.

Our annual Saint Nicholas Church Picnic
Sunday August 25 after Divine Liturgy
at Cedar Pointe Park

Same place as last year on Wauwatosa Road - Directions will be at church.
Feel free to dress casually for church.
Shorts are ok for adults *this Sunday only.*—

Father David's Column

2019 Convention Grand Rapids, Michigan

Our delegates were **Arthur and Marcia Nimmer** who volunteered to attend and be our representatives for the General Assembly. In conversation with Arthur, things went smoothly at the two sessions (Thursday and Friday July 25th & 26th).

Fr. David's report is as follows:

Tuesday July 23rd. There was a general clergy assembly morning after Matins with His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph and the other Hierarchs. Some of the discussion focused on the use of screens/projections in our Churches with multiple languages as is being done in the Coptic Churches. In the Coptic Churches (including here in Milwaukee) Arabic, Coptic and English are projected for the congregations to use, rather than books. Debate ensued as to the appropriateness of this in a liturgical setting. After someone cited an article by a Coptic bishop who said he wished they never started this practice as the congregations became focused upon the computer, rather than the service itself. It was determined that it is more important that the congregations see, hear and through the visuals of the Holy Icons, letting their minds and hearts be engaged rather than focusing upon a screen.

We priests are to be using only the Liturgikon (the authorized book of service for our Archdiocese) at the altar and not electronic devices

Another question arose regarding the role of girls in the Divine Liturgy for the carrying of the "torches" during the Entrances. His Eminence said that girls can carry candles or icons, but not the torches and are not to wear acolyte robes. They may hold the Antidoron, though the preferred practice is to have men hold it.

We clergy were asked to please make sure we got our reporting in on time when asked and to please make reservations and purchase of ads for PLC and Convention books on time.



Western Rite: This was an option to attend to learn more about this part of the Antiochian Church. In case one did not know it, these congregations are fully Orthodox, but use the Western form of Liturgy in their churches. This is a valid form of worship as it was in use before the schism between East and West. I have always thought it presents a viable option for those in America who find the Eastern Style of liturgical worship too “odd”- especially with the Episcopal Seminary Nashotah House being so close. You may recall that at times we have had seminarians visit us from time to time. We as Antiochians, do have a Benedictine style monastery in Colorado; there is a video out on the web titled “Ladyminster” and also a website called The Orthodox West.

Wednesday July 24th. For those who participated there was a Bible Study given by a priest from Rhode Island who was incredible! We were discussing the book of Philippians. Afterwards we all joined for Divine Liturgy with the Hierarchs. At the end, His Eminence said to us “Now was this so long? Who thinks that we should shorten the Divine Liturgy?” The actual Liturgy took just over an hour and fifteen minutes with a ten minute homily following. The rest of the day was open for attendance at various meetings. I chose “Choosing the right music for your Church” for my first meeting. While it was really geared for those congregations with large choirs; the discussion came down to this - use music that is appropriate so that your congregation can sing. Which we do at St. Nicholas. There was a class offered on death and dying which was about Fr. Roman Braga, a Romanian priest who spent time in Romanian prisons including 3 years in solitary confinement. Some who are reading this may have had the opportunity to hear and meet him as he was located at the Rives Junction Monastery in Michigan, until his death a few years ago. There are on You Tube, videos of Fr. Braga if you would care to know more. The next session was a dilemma as Mother Gabriela from Rives Junction had a talk as did Kh. Maggie Hock on marriage. I chose Kh. Hock’s talk which I was glad I did. She cited a UN Study called “Marriage: a social justice imperative”. Which dealt with the importance for all nations worldwide that regardless of the culture, marriage was critical to the success of the nation. She also cited, sadly that we as Orthodox here in America fare very little in comparison with the culture at large and its’ attitudes in our approach to marriage with regards to cohabitation, marriage and children. We priests need to be doing more with regards to reminding that sex outside of

marriage, living together and having children not baptized are issues that we must face and not deny. I did purchase some books for the cry room and also the pamphlets for Festival which were greatly discounted at the Convention. Some books for children on confession were also purchased and will be given to the parents of these children so that their parents can also begin to prepare them for this most important sacrament.

Our former parishioners Michael and Maria Jammal send their love and greetings to all. They were integral in the success of the Convention sponsored by St. Nicholas Grand, Rapids, Michigan.

Dormition Fast begins Thursday August 1st and runs until *after* Vespers Divine Liturgy Thursday evening August 14th. This is for me at least is a harder fast to keep with all the fairs, parties and picnics. The good thing is that fresh vegetables are now coming in which makes it easier. If you cannot totally fast, at least be meatless; consider coming to one of the services, or extra prayer during this time. Fasting is not to be a burden but to be done in the spirit of learning self control.

Next week Monday August 5th at 6:30 is the Feast of the **Holy Transfiguration**. While lost mostly in the West these days it is an important feast, for it shows us that Jesus Christ is the God of both the living (He who is Incarnate) and the dead (being with both Moses and Elijah). It also tells us that Jesus is the God of both the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah) and finally that there is life after death with both Moses and Elijah appearing in their human form with Christ. This is why we in the Holy Orthodox Church celebrate this great Feast. We bless grapes as in times past this was one of the first fruits in Greece, but before that the Apostles and others brought the first fruits of the harvest to the temple. There is also a direct connection to the Divine Liturgy with grapes being made into wine which becomes for us the Blood of Christ.

Introduction of Orthodoxy Classes

Classes are open to EVERYONE who wishes to learn more about Orthodoxy or may need a refresher course. Invite someone who you may know and come with them so they feel welcome.

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES *Is anyone missing? Are there errors?*

Birthdays: 2 - Chris Spice; 3 - Arthur Nimmer, Lina Kassees, 4 - Paul Gibes, 5 - Jakob Elchert, Malina Scarpaci, 7 - Therese Kasemodel, 15 - Rosemary Petroll, 16 - Mia Kassees, 20 - Rick Elchert, 22 - Father Bill, 23 - Kathleen Haddad, Peter Panagis, 24 - Natalie Solonika, 28 - Jorgan Jammal, 29 - Benjamin Elchert, Matthew Bergey

Wedding: 10 - Michael & Sophia Cook, 28 - Eddie & Jean Koury, Tom & Jean DuPree

Namedays: 15 - Mary Alex, Mary Barber, Audrey Elchert, Lauren Haska, Maria Jammal, Mary Kachoyeanos, Mia Kassees, Grace Liacopoulos, Peter Liacopoulos, Mary Beth Newhouse, Malina Scarpaci, Reem Sitowski, Mariela Scarpaci, 26 - Natalia Dodge, 30 - Alexander Pierce

*Here is some wise advice which Nancy Sommer came across.
Thanks, Nancy.*

This notice can now be found in some French churches:

En entrant dans cette église, il est possible que vous entendiez l'appel de Dieu. Par contre, il n'est pas susceptible de vous contacter par téléphone. Merci d'avoir éteint votre téléphone. Si vous souhaitez parler à Dieu, entrez, choisissez un endroit tranquille et parle lui. Si vous souhaitez le voir, envoyez-lui un SMS en conduisant.

Translation:

It is possible that on entering this church, you may hear the Call of God. On the other hand, it is not likely that he will contact you by phone. Thank you for turning off your phone. If you would like to talk to God, come in, choose a quiet place, and talk to him. If you would like to see him, send him a text while driving.



The Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council

1) Jesus Christ: both God and Man 2) Who runs the Church?

Father Bill's Sermon Sunday July 13, 2019

On this Sunday in mid-July we always honor the **Holy Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council** which met in Chalcedon, not far from Constantinople, (modern Istanbul) in AD 451 and is therefore also known as the Council of Chalcedon. The bishops met in the fall of 451, so why it's commemorated in July, I haven't discovered.

The first thing to notice today is the title: We honor the *Holy Fathers* of the Fourth Council. We don't commemorate the Council itself or the doctrines of the Council or the laws promulgated by the Council. We honor the *people* of the Council. Orthodoxy is built on people. A Methodist bishop long ago said it:

"The Protestant church is the church of faith (doctrines). The Catholic Church is the church of laws, (of obedience). The Orthodox Church is the Church of love - (of people)." God knows we Orthodox have our share of doctrines, and our bishops certainly have authority. But it our "personal relationships" - our love of God, our love of each other - those are what hold us together.

So... on this lovely summer day would you'd rather get out of here quick? or do you want to talk theology Really?....You do?.... OK, whatever you say....* I'll try to be succinct.

** This was a ruse of my part. They actually would sooner have got out!*

The first issue: At the time some in the near East seemed to be saying that Christ is no longer human; he's now only divine. The Council reaffirmed that Jesus Christ "is in two natures". From the moment of his Incarnation and unto ages of ages, he is one Person both fully human and



fully divine. He came not only to teach us and die and rise for us. He came also to lift up us human beings and make us like himself. Do we understand



exactly that will mean? No. We don't even understand what it means for us to be fully human now. It's all a mystery. As someone said, the Fathers just put a fence around the Mystery" to protect it. But it means our future is to be "like him", like the Theotokos, "more honorable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the cherubim." That is what the Fourth Ecumenical Council preserved for us.

Left: Christ's bodily Ascension

Some Orthodox Churches did not accept the decision of the Council: the Copts of Egypt, the Ethiopians, the Armenians, some in Syria. The great majority of us accepted it, many in the Near East, and everybody from Asia Minor and west. This led to a schism which has never been healed. *They* are called Oriental Orthodox. We are called Eastern Orthodox. (Both words means the same thing. Go figure.) Today there are about 40 million Oriental Orthodox and about 250 million of us Eastern Orthodox.

Now comes the horrible surprise: It appears it was all a mistake. In the 20th century theologians from both sides met and concluded that the big problem was language. We all know how easy it is even using the same language to completely misunderstand each other. (Husbands and wives, tell me about it...) And when words are translated from one language to another, they never translate precisely.

Well, in this case, it appears that for the most part both sides meant the same thing and misunderstood the other. In any event we all now seem to mean the same thing. We all believe that Christ is forever both God and Man. So why haven't we got back together? Because the Orthodox churches move slowly, s l o w l y. Today laypeople go back and forth and receive the Eucharist together with no problem. Clergy cannot yet concelebrate services together. Our Metropolitan Philip (of blessed memory) said that one of these times two bishops, one from each side, are just going to

celebrate the Divine Liturgy together and let the rest of the Orthodox churches deal with it!

The second issue at the Council was how to order the Church. Who is chief bishop? In the West it was held that the Pope of Rome was head of all, because he was successor to Peter, chief of the Apostles. The East had always seen it differently. We believed chief bishops (Patriarchs, we call them) were chief largely for practical reasons, because they were in the major cities of the Empire.

So the Council, meeting in the East, rearranged things: Rome was no longer capital (Constantine had moved it East) - so Rome and Constantinople were ranked first. Then Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem. That made five chief bishops, five Patriarchs, the Pentarchy we Orthodox like to talk about - which is way out of date now. Today Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem are mere shells of what they were. There are now Patriarchs in Serbia, Bulgaria, Russia, Georgia, Romania and have I missed any? Rome and the West never accepted this decision by the Council. Eventually they claimed that the Pope of Rome has ecclesiastical authority - the power to rule - over all Christians on earth. And for a long time they said if you're not under the Pope you'll probably go to hell. They've eased up on that lately. We in the East have always believed that bishops are chiefly pastors, not rulers.

So this is what I want you to take home with you. The word is **conciliar**. The Council made clear that when the Church does it right we do it all together, not by rule by one bishop but by bishops representing their people meeting in Council. To this day we Orthodox decide things, we function, not by authority from the top down, but by working together and deciding things together.

This was true from the beginning. When there was a big controversy in the early Church, the Apostles gathered in Jerusalem for an Apostolic Council. (Read Acts 15.) The Apostles made a joint decision, and it was James the local Bishop of Jerusalem (not Peter, chief of the apostles) who announced it: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to *us*", *to us*, all together. There was leadership from the Apostles. There was a structure for making decisions. It wasn't by a vote of all Christians. But the decision was **conciliar**.

When I had been Orthodox a few years and had been watching closely, I asked Bishop Basil if I'd figured out the system. It looked to me as if our bishops put out directives about various things, but then the clergy and people aren't expected to just obey. Rather we try it, out of respect for our bishops (whom we certainly do respect and love), and see how it works on a parish level. Sometimes it does and the bishops get their way, and sometimes it doesn't and the bishops accept that. Sort of a dialectic. We work it all out together. Bishop Basil said: Yes, that's how it works. It's **conciliar**.

Right: Convention of Antiochian Archdiocese of North America, 2019



The principle behind this is theological. God's Holy Spirit dwells in all of us., not only in one man, not only in bishops. So all of us together make the decisions. As I say, not willy nilly. There is a structure.

Bishops meet in Council for some things. But then we "out here" either accept it or we don't, and that's how it works. There have been Councils of bishops that thought they were "ecumenical" (for the whole church) and they were not.

This is how parishes work when we do it right. If an Orthodox priest thinks he knows everything and tries to rule by decree and expects people to obey, what happens? People just stare at him. Well, they should. The Orthodox Church is not a top down authoritarian church. No. We have a Parish Council; it's **conciliar**. In our Archdiocese half the Parish Council are elected by the people and the other half appointed by the pastor. And decisions are made by all Council members together. At Saint Nicholas from the beginning, we decided that all major decisions should be made by "consensus", by which we've meant: either all vote *for* it or the others can at least live with it. That's how we preserve harmony. I know a parish which

made a major decision by a margin of one vote, and they've had big trouble ever since. Things need to be **conciliar**, by consensus.

Now some things in the Orthodox Church are definitely not up for decision by council. The Faith was given by Jesus Christ and the Apostles. The Ecumenical Councils just made clear what we've always believed, and they've been accepted by the Church as a whole. And our way of worship has been established for, like, 15 centuries. That has been accepted by the people, and nobody all that time has wanted to mess around with the basics of it. Because these things have already been **conciliar** for thousands of years.

I mean, if our dear and beloved Bishop Anthony decreed, "Now stop saying the Creed" (he won't!!), what would we do? We'd all just ignore him. All of us Orthodox together do not want to give up the Creed. Or if I stood here and denied the Resurrection (I won't!), the bishop certainly has authority top-down to fire me. But before that ever happened it would be handled in another way. You all together would have me out the front door. That's how Orthodoxy works. We're **conciliar**.

Why did the Fathers choose these Scripture readings for this Sunday of the Fourth Council? What was their point? Simple. From the Gospel of Matthew 5:14-19, taking the words of Christ and, well, re-interpreting them a bit: The statements of Apostolic Faith have been decided by the bishops in Council and accepted by the people, so don't argue about them. They have been decided in a **conciliar** way. Accept them.

In the Epistle Titus 3:8-15 Paul says, "Avoid stupid controversies, dissensions and quarrels." Then he says this twice: "Apply yourselves to *good deeds*". Get on with your real business, which is Christian living. The Fathers' point was this: Christianity is a Way of Life, not a theological debating society. And if it has been decided in Council and accepted by the people of the Church, then don't argue; get on with living it. In the Gospel: Christ says the same: "Let your light shine so that the world may see your *good works* [there it is again] and glorify your Father in heaven." That's what it's all about: Good works. Christian living. Doing good. Don't argue about it. **Live it.**

