

From the Divine Office for the Paramony of the Theophany

**When he saw the Lord of glory draw near to him, the Forerunner cried out:
“Behold the One who redeems the world from corruption! Behold the One who
delivers us from affliction! Behold the One who, in His mercy, has come forth up-
on earth from a pure Virgin, granting remission of sins! Instead of servants, He
makes us children of God. Instead of darkness, He gives light to mankind
through the waters of His divine baptism. Come, let us glorify Him together with
the Father and the Holy Spirit.”**

Idiomelon at the Ninth Royal Hour



**SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY
JANUARY 3, 2021**



**PROPHET MALACHI
JANUARY 3**

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church
256 Hamilton St.
Worcester, MA 01604
Rectory: (508) 752-4174 Hall: (508) 755-2199
Email: olphmelkite@gmail.com
Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor
Email: Brymc56@comcast.net Cell: (978) 314-1962
Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (3rd)

1: Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us shout with joy to God our Savior.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia

2: Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving and let us joyfully sing psalms to Him.

Khallisna Ya-Bnallah, Ya Man qama min baynil-amwaat, nahnu muranneemeena Laka. Haleloueya.

3: For God is a great Lord and a great King over all the earth.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia.

Entrance Hymn

Priest: Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ

People: **O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia!**

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 6, pg. 41)

The angelic powers were around Your tomb, and the guards became as dead, and Mary stood at the tomb, seeking Your spotless body; Then You despoiled Hades without being tried by it, and You met the Virgin O Bestower of life. O Lord, who rose from the dead, glory to You!

Troparion of the Preparation (Tone 4)

Make ready Zebulon and prepare Naphtali and you Jordan River, stop your flow and receive with a thrill of joy the Master coming to be baptized. Adam, rejoice with the first Mother, Eve, and hide not as you did of old in paradise: for Christ at the sight of your nakedness has come forth to clothe you with the robe of innocence. Indeed, Christ has come forth to renew the whole creation.

Troparion of the Dormition (Tone 1, Pg 15)

In giving birth, you have preserved your virginity and in falling asleep, you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life, being the Mother of Life. Through your intercessions, save our souls from death.

Kondakion of the Preparation (Tone 3)

Today the Lord Christ has appeared in the Jordan's waters, and He has cried out to John: Fear not of baptizing Me, for by My own will I have indeed come to save Adam, the first created man.

Scripture in the Royal Hours

As a rule, the Scriptures read at the Hours are all taken from the Psalms. In the Royal Hours, however, selections from both the Old and New Testaments are read, in addition to the Psalter. The New Testament selections recount the ministry of John and the baptism of Christ as well as the meaning of baptism in the Church. The Old Testament readings, all taken from the Book of Isaiah the Prophet, provide us with an illustration of how Old Testament prophecies are ultimately fulfilled in Christ. The Prophet Isaiah lived in the eighth century BC and, like other prophets, called on his hearers to repent and to conform their lives to God's way. The following passage, read at the Third Royal Hour, illustrates Isaiah's message: "*Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow*" (Is 1:16-17).

Isaiah warned that, if people did not repent, the nation would suffer at the hands of its enemies (at that time, the Assyrians). If they did repent, however, they would be restored and given new life. We see this in the selection read at the Sixth Royal Hour, "*With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the Lord, call upon His Name; make known His deeds among the nations, proclaim that His Name is exalted. Sing praises to the Lord, for He has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth. Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel*" (Is 12:3-6).

The second half of the book, added some 200 years later, reflects the same themes. At this point in Israel's history their great enemy was Babylon rather than Assyria. The Babylonians would conquer Jerusalem and destroy the temple, dragging the most prominent Jews into exile.

Streams in the Desert

The promise for their restoration dominates the second half of Isaiah. Jerusalem, no longer desolate, will be rebuilt and will water its thirsty people. At the First Royal Hour we read, "*The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the lily. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon... Behold, your God will come.... He will come and save you. ... For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water*" (Is 35:1-7).

The power of Babylon ended just as that of Assyria had centuries before, but the ultimate fulfillment of these prophecies would only come with Christ. We see in Him the Source of eternal life, the One who truly turns the arid wilderness of thirsty hearts into springs of water. This theme would be taken up in the Gospel of John, where we read the words of the Lord Jesus "*If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those who believe in Him would receive*" (Jn 7:37-38).

The frequent mention of water in these passages, then, does not just allude to the Lord's baptism in the Jordan but to the Lord Himself. He is the One who can refresh with the living water of the Holy Spirit all who come to Him. He is the One who is revealed at the Jordan by the Father's voice and the Spirit's hidden presence and who begins to announce the good news of our salvation to the world.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today Those infected with the coronavirus and those who care for them
The people of Beirut
The sick and suffering of the parish
+Those who have lost their lives to the coronavirus
+Those who lost their lives in the Beirut explosion
+The deceased of the parish
Jan 10 +Mary Kloss. Requested by Tom Syseskey



**The Bishop’s Appeal 2020
Building A Better Life On A Solid Foundation
Through Faith & Family**

Thank God for all the blessings you received in 2020 by making a generous thanksgiving gift to your Melkite Catholic Church in America. The annual Bishop’s Appeal officially ends in all the parishes of the Eparchy on 31 December 2020. **However, gifts to the Appeal will continue to be received and credited to your parish until 31 January 2021 for anyone who makes an end-of-year, tax-deductible donation.** Your gift means so much to so many! Thank you for your generosity. May God bless you and all your family in the New Year.

Feast Day Liturgical Schedule

Tuesday Jan 5 , 6PM - Vespers for the Feast of Theophany
Wednesday Jan 6 , 6PM—Divine Liturgy for the Feast of Theophany followed by the Blessing of Water

Financials

| <u>12/2020</u> | <u>YTD (10/2020-12/2020)</u> |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Income \$8,853 | Income \$18,979 |
| Expenses \$5,468 | Expenses \$16,655 |
| Net \$3,385 | Net \$ 2,324 |

We had a positive net income for the month of December due primarily to Christmas donations as well as a \$1,000 donation for the red/gold altar cloths. Thanks to all who made Christmas donations. Next week, we should have a final tally of Christmas donations as well as one for Christmas flowers. I will provide it in next week’s bulletin. Also, thanks again for all who continue to make their regular donations to the church! Every dollar helps us to meet our monthly expenses!

May God bless you for your continued generosity!

Last Week’s Collection

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| Regular | \$ 464 |
| Candles | \$ 51 |
| Christmas Donations | \$ 455 |
| Memorials/Donations | \$1,200 |
| Total | \$2,170 |

Christmas (From Liturgies)

\$940

To date, we have collected a total of **\$3,070** in Christmas offerings. Of that amount, \$2,130 was previously reported in the weekly collection summaries and \$940 was received at the Christmas Divine Liturgies. We also received a generous \$1,000 donation toward the cost of the new red/gold altar cloths. Thank you to all who made donations to the parish this Christmas. They will be used to purchase some of the items we need for the church.

God bless you for your generosity!

Remember the Melkite Church in Your Will: Give a lasting gift for future generations of Melkites and help to ensure that our beautiful Melkite heritage continues to grow and flourish for your children’s children. Simply add the following statement to your last will and testament: ***I hereby bequeath to the Melkite Eparchy of Newton the following sum: \$_____.*** Contact Bishop NICHOLAS personally to inform him of your generous bequest: 3 VFW Parkway, West Roxbury, MA 02132.

Behold the Redeemer of the World

CHRISTMAS EVE AND NEW YEAR'S EVE are holiday milestones in American society. In our tradition January 5, Theophany Eve, is also a special day of preparation and anticipation leading into one of the most important festivals of the Church year.

Like Christmas Eve, Theophany Eve is a *paramony*, a day of continual prayer and fasting, leading up to the celebration of the feast. Part of what makes this a day of continual prayer is the celebration of the *Royal Hours* which replaces the ordinary First, Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours served every day in Byzantine practice. The Divine Liturgy is not served until the end of the fasting day, when it is joined to vespers to begin the feast.

The Royal Hours are served on the Paramony of Christmas, the Paramony of the Theophany and on Great and Holy Friday which we might call the "Paramony of Pascha." In addition, some Greek Churches serve the Royal Hours on the Eve of Pentecost, but without fasting.

Our cycle of daily services has its origin in the experience of the Jews during the Babylonian exile. Since the prescribed round of morning and evening sacrifices could only be conducted in the Jerusalem temple, the exiled Jews developed a cycle of prayers, hymns and Scripture readings to be said throughout the day instead. When the Jews returned to Jerusalem after the exile, these prayers were incorporated into the usage of the temple. Jews today observe three daily services (morning, afternoon and evening) corresponding to the times of the three daily temple sacrifices.

The first Christians continued the custom of praying at these specific times. The Acts of the Apostles records St Peter going apart to pray at the sixth hour (Acts 10:9) and at the ninth hour (Acts 3:1). With the development of monasticism these daily prayers took on the character of formal services. Other services were added in imitation of the Psalmist's witness, "*Seven times a day I praise You, because of Your righteous judgments*" (Ps 119:164).

The hours came to commemorate important events which the Scriptures say took place at those times. Thus our Third Hour recalls the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (see Acts 2). The Byzantine Sixth and Ninth Hours evoke the memory of Christ's crucifixion and death: "*Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice ... and yielded up His spirit*" (Mt 27:45, 50).

What Makes These Hours "Royal"?

While for most of the year the Hours are "cell services" – without choral responses or accompanying ritual, meant to be served by monastics in their cells (or by anyone at work or at home), the Royal Hours are served solemnly in church with hymns, Scripture readings and ceremony. They are generally served without interruption and conclude with the Typika. The name "Royal Hours" comes from the practice of the Great Church in Constantinople. The emperor and his court would attend the Hours on these days, emphasizing their importance in the life of the Church.

Scripture in the Royal Hours

As a rule, the Scriptures read at the Hours are all taken from the Psalms. In the Royal Hours, however, selections from both the Old and New Testaments are read, in addition to the Psalter. The New Testament selections recount the ministry of John and the baptism of Christ as well as the meaning of baptism in the Church. The Old Testament readings, all taken from the Book of Isaiah the Prophet, provide us with an illustration of how Old Testament prophecies are ultimately fulfilled in Christ.

Prokimenon

Reader: O Lord save Your people and bless Your inheritance!

People: O Lord save Your people and bless Your inheritance!

Verse: To You, O Lord, I have called: O my Rock, be not deaf to me!

People: O Lord save Your people and bless Your inheritance!

Reader: O Lord save Your people

People: And bless Your inheritance!

Epistle: 2 Tim. 4:5-8

Alleluia Verses

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High abides in the shadow of the God of heaven.

Verse: He will say to the Lord, "My wall, my refuge, my God in whom I will trust!"

Gospel: Mk. 1:1-8, Sunday Before the Theophany of our Lord

Special Petitions for the Ecumenic Prayer (Inserted after the third petition)

- For all your people who have proven positive with the coronavirus, that they may be restored to full health and offer you their praise and thanksgiving, we pray to you, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For all those who have died as a result of the coronavirus that they may be granted rest with the Saints and the mercy of God in the Heavenly Kingdom, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For doctors, nurses, and all in health care, risking their lives to minister to those afflicted with the coronavirus, that they remain safe, and in good health as they serve others, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For all your people in Lebanon who were hurt during the disastrous explosion, that they may be restored to full health, and for those who died that they may be granted rest among the Saints, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For peace throughout the Middle East, especially in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Iraq, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.