

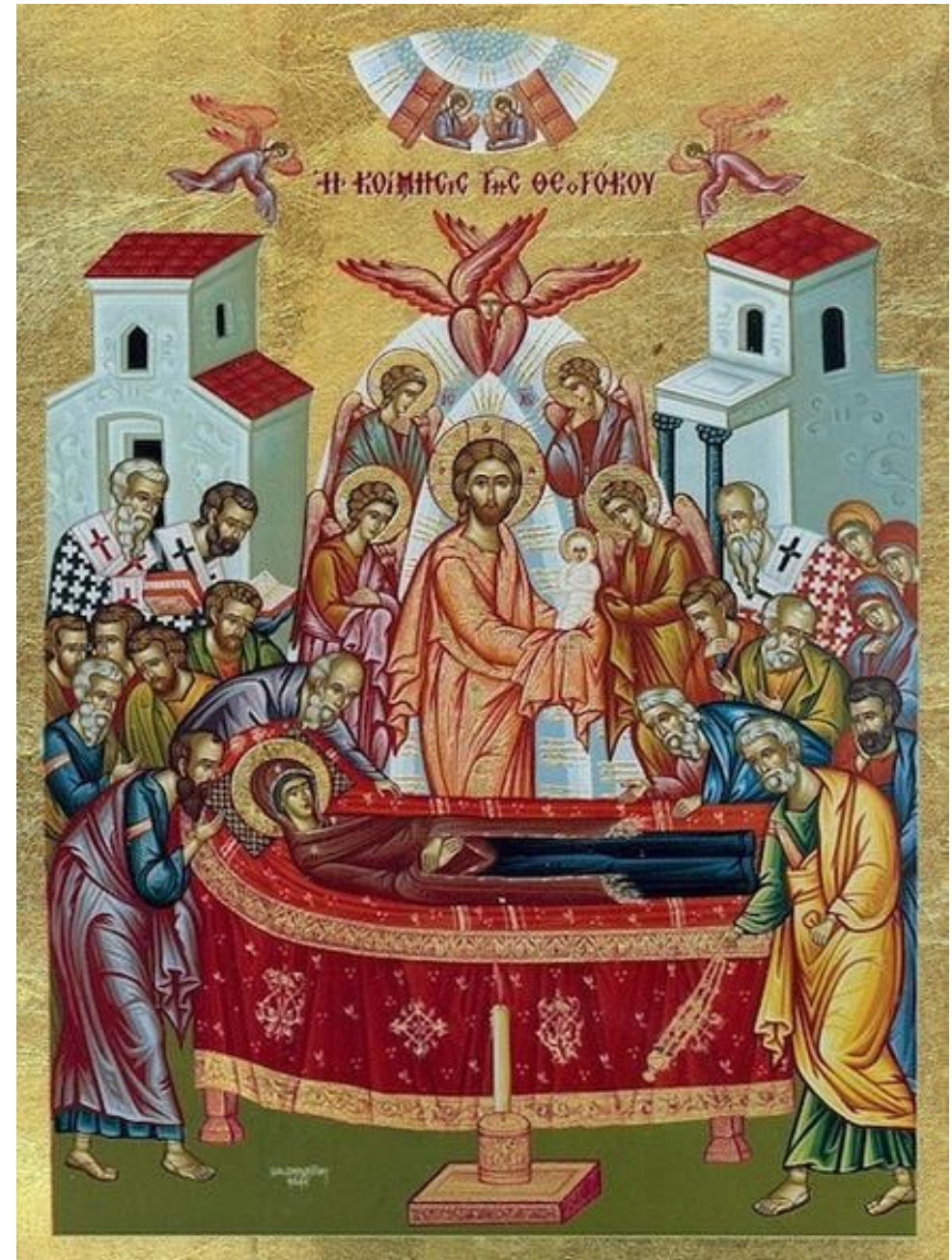
*From the Divine Office for the Feast of the Dormition*

*She who is higher than the heavens and more glorious than the cherubim, she who is held in greater honor than all creation, she who by reason of her surpassing purity became the receiver of the everlasting Essence, today commends her most pure soul into the hands of her Son. With her, all things are filled with joy, and she bestows great mercy upon us. (Vespers)*

*Set a rampart about my mind, O Savior, that I may dare to sing the praises of your most Pure Mother, the rampart of the world. Establish me firmly within the fortress of my words and make me strong with defenses of my thoughts, for You always for You always hear the petitions of those who present them with faith. Grant me a tongue, words and thoughts of which I may never be ashamed: for every gift that enlightens us comes from You, O Enlightener of our souls, who dwelt in her ever-virginal womb and lifted her up to eternal life. (Orthros)*



**FEAST OF THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS  
AUGUST 15, 2021**



**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 (Feast)**

1- Sing joyfully to the Lord, all you land; serve the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful song.

**Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.**

2-Enter his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with praise; give thanks to Him, bless his name.

*Be shafa'ati Walidatil Eelah, ya Mukhallisu, khallisna.*

3-As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the Lord of Hosts, in the city of our God.

**Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.**

### **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!

### **Resurrection Troparion (Tone 3) pg. 39**

Let all in heaven rejoice, and all on earth be glad, for the Lord has exerted power with His arm: By death He has trampled upon Death and has become the firstborn from the dead. He has delivered us from the bosom of Hades and has granted to the world great mercy.

### **Troparion of the Dormition (Tone 1) Twice 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 intercession, save our souls from death.

### **Kontakion of the Dormition (Tone 2)**

Neither death nor the tomb could hold the Mother of God, our watchful Protectress and our unfailing hope. Since she is the Mother of Life. Christ who dwelt in her ever-virginal womb lifted her up to the eternal life.

### **Our Observance of John's Death**

Because John, whom the Lord Himself had called the greatest man born of woman, was killed as a result of Herod's birthday revels, the Byzantine Churches observe today as a strict fast: no parties, no luxury foods, no drink. We see where these things can lead.

A number of popular local customs have arisen to mark this day among various Eastern Christians. In various places people may:

Avoid eating anything on round plates, since Salome asked for John's head "on a platter" (Mk 6:25).

Use bowls instead.

Avoid eating any round fruits or vegetables (they resemble a head).

Avoid eating anything that requires use of knives or anything that cuts.

Avoid eating or drinking anything red (they remind us of blood).

A contemporary way to observe this commemoration might be to fast and pray for those who have died senselessly at the hands of others through terrorism, armed conflicts or senseless violence. Think of them as John's "companions in suffering."

### **John's Witness in Our Liturgy**

Come, you people, let us praise the prophet and martyr, the baptizer of the Savior; for, as an angel in the flesh, he denounced Herod, condemning him for committing most iniquitous fornication. And thanks to iniquitous dancing, his precious head is cut off, that he might announce in Hades the glad tidings of the resurrection from the dead. He prays earnestly to the Lord, that our souls be saved.

Let us celebrate the memory of the severed head of the forerunner, which poured forth blood upon the platter then, but now pours forth healings upon the ends of the earth.

*Liti Stichera*

The beheading of the Forerunner was an act of divine providence: the occasion for him to announce the coming of the Savior to the souls in Hades. Let then Herodias lament and weep, for she has asked for murder, preferring the present life and its pleasures to eternal life and God's law.

*Kondakion*



### DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

**Today** +**Tanios Kahale**. Requested by Antoinette Arraj & Family  
**August 22** +**Tanios Kahale**. Requested by Virginia & Michael Mischitelli and Antonio & Karen Solitro

**This morning's Coffee Hour is hosted by Antoinette Arraj & Lisa Jagielski**  
**Next Sunday's Coffee Hour is hosted by Andy & Jocelyn Aulo**

### Upcoming Liturgical Schedule

**Wed Sep 8, 6PM** - Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God

### Last Week's Collection

|                        |                |
|------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Regular</b>         | <b>\$1,152</b> |
| <b>Candles</b>         | <b>\$ 26</b>   |
| <b>Coffee Hr</b>       | <b>\$ 25</b>   |
| <b>Stole</b>           | <b>\$ 70</b>   |
| <b>Dividends</b>       | <b>\$ 81</b>   |
| <b>2nd Collections</b> | <b>\$ 20</b>   |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>\$1,374</b> |

**Collections tend to drop off in the Summer. Just a reminder that the parish's expenses continue.**

### FINANCIALS

#### July 2021

|                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Income</b>   | <b>\$5,113</b>  |
| <b>Expenses</b> | <b>\$5,855</b>  |
| <b>Net</b>      | <b>(\$ 742)</b> |

We ran a small deficit for July. We are also running a deficit year to date. The three largest expenses total \$16,412. Most of that was for repairs to the boiler (\$11,317). Funds were transferred from the savings account to cover that expense, so things are not really that bad. We are planning to replace the chimney and make changes to the sign in front of the church. We are also planning to update/enhance the interior and exterior of the church. More to come on these items. God bless you for your generosity to your parish!

#### YTD (10.2020-7.2021)

|                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Income</b>   | <b>\$65,526</b>   |
| <b>Expenses</b> | <b>\$74,026</b>   |
| <b>Net</b>      | <b>(\$ 8,500)</b> |

### PARISH PICNIC

We are planning to have a smaller, simpler version of the Parish Picnic on Sunday **September 12 from 12-5pm**. We have begun our planning. There will be food, music, and activities for the children. We need **your** help in order to make it a success. We need all types of help. Take this opportunity to involve yourself once more in the life of the Community. If you want to make a monetary or in kind donation of good and services, please reach out to Fr. Bryan (978) 314-1962 or Sam Francis at (508) 615-8891. Also, please let us know if and how you can help. I'm looking forward to seeing you all!

God Bless!

Fr. Bryan

### PARISH COUNCIL

I would like to form a Parish Council this fall. It is an important part of parish life. For a parish of our size, I think seven people will be enough, at least to begin. We will elect five members and I will appoint two. Currently, we have both a Finance & Building committee. Each of these committees will have a representative on the Council.

We will have an election this Fall. If you are interested in serving on the Council or want to nominate someone, please let me know. The election will take place in late September.

We are planning to do a Memorial Service for all the loved ones we lost during the pandemic followed by a luncheon. This will be sometime in October. We would charge a minimal amount for the luncheon, which would be catered. That gives everyone a chance to enjoy the event. If we make a little profit, that's great, but the primary purpose is gather to celebrate those we have lost over the last year and a half. As I have said several times, those of you who have not been to the parish for awhile are missed!

## The Forerunner in Hades

The Gospels depict St John the Baptist as the “forerunner” or herald announcing the immanent coming of God’s saving work in Jesus Christ. In the Gospel of Mark, for example, we read, “*There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit*” (Mk 1:7, 8).

The coming of the Messiah was the focus of John’s message about the kingdom of God. “*In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’*” (Mt 3:1). This “kingdom” is none other than Jesus in whom the will of His Father governed His every action. Thus He is the kingdom personified.

### The Story of John’s Struggle

We read the story of John’s final fight “for the sake of truth” in Mark’s Gospel. “*For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife; for he had married her. Because John had said to Herod, ‘It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife’*” (Mk 6:17, 18).

John languished in prison because Herod had a superstitious fear of the prophet. He revered John as a holy man but could not bring himself to follow the Baptist’s teachings.

“*Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. And when Herodias’ daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, ‘Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you.’ He also swore to her, ‘Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom’*” (Mk 6:21-23).

What followed has been frequently retold in literature, music, painting and sculpture. Prompted by her mother, Salome asks for the head of John: “*I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter*” (v. 25). Because of the oath he had sworn in the presence of his guests, Herod agreed and had John beheaded, making possible the prophet’s ministry in Hades.

John’s work as herald of our salvation was not limited to announcing the beginning of Christ’s ministry in Galilee. Our troparion for today’s commemoration mentions that John baptized the Lord Jesus. Then, it continues, “You have fought for the sake of truth and proclaimed to those in Hades that God who appeared in the flesh has taken away the sins of the world and bestowed His great mercy upon us.” John’s ministry continued after death as he announced to the dead in Hades that Christ’s coming was close at hand.

### Did John Witness in Hades?

As the Gospels affirm, Jesus was still alive when John was executed. But the New Testament does not teach that John witnessed to Christ in Hades. How and when did this concept enter our tradition?

Origen of Alexandria, foremost commentator on the Scriptures in the third century, explained that John the Baptist had died before Christ, “so that he might descend to the lower regions and announce His coming. For everywhere the witness and forerunner of Jesus is John, being born before and dying shortly before the Son of God, so that not only to those of his generation but likewise to those who lived before Christ should liberation from the death be preached, and that he might everywhere prepare a people trained to receive the Lord” (Origen, *Homily on Luke 4*).

### Prokimenon

**Reader:** My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

**People:** My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

**Verses:** Because He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid, for, behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

**People:** My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

**Reader:** My soul magnifies the Lord,

**People:** And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

### Epistle: Phil. 2:5-11

### Alleluia Verses

Arise, O Lord, and go up to Your repose, You and the Ark of Your holiness.

**Verses:** The Lord made a truthful oath to David from which He shall never depart, “Of the fruit of your loins, I will place one upon your throne.”

### Gospel: Lk 10:38-42; 11:27-28

### HIRMOS OF THE DORMITION (Tone 1)

All human generations bless you, O Mother of God. The laws of nature were overcome in you, O Pure Virgin: for your birth-giving left you a virgin and your death became the herald of your life. O you who remained virgin after having given birth, and alive after having died, O Mother of God, deign always to save your inheritance!

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**I would like to start religious education this fall for adults and children. We will use diocesan resources for the children. For the adults, we will discuss different aspects of our Faith. If there is anything you want to know more about, please don’t hesitate to let me know.**

**I believe that our Byzantine music is also part of religious education, so I plan to have regular music sessions so that those who want to become more familiar with our music have that opportunity. We will begin with the music for the Divine Liturgy and then move on to feast day and other music. I hope you will be able to join us!**

**There will be more to come during the summer.**