

**FAMILY PICNIC
SEPTEMBER 12, 2021
NOON TO 5PM**



**FOOD, MUSIC, RAFFLE,
CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES**

**MUSIC BY
MITCHELL KALTSUNAS & ENSEMBLE**

**DJ CHUCK BOROWY
(Donated by Drew Mortgage)**

**OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP MELKITE CATHOLIC
CHURCH**

**256 HAMILTON ST.
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**FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
AUGUST 29, 2021**



**BEHEADING OF THE PROPHET AND FORERUNNER
JOHN THE BAPTIST**

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church
256 Hamilton St.
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Email: olphmelkite@gmail.com
Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor
Email: Brymc56@comcast.net Cell: (978) 314-1962
Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (1st)

1: Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth, and sing praise to His name.

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

2: Say to God: How awesome are Your deeds! So great is Your power that Your enemies cringe before You.

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

3: Let all the earth worship You and sing praises to You; let it sing praises to Your name, O Most High!

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 5) pg. 40

Let us, O faithful, praise and worship the Word, coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our Salvation, for He was pleased to be lifted in the flesh upon the cross, and to endure death, and to raise the dead by His glorious resurrection.

Troparion of the Forerunner (Tone 2)

The memory of the just is mentioned with praise. As for you, O Forerunner, the Lord's witness is enough: indeed, you were greater than the prophets since you were found worthy to baptize in the waters the One they could but announce. 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.

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 intercession, save our souls from death.

Kontakion of the Nativity of the Theotokos (Tone 4)

Through your holy birth, O Immaculate One, Joachim and Anne were delivered from the shame of childlessness, and Adam and Eve from the corruption of death. Your people, redeemed from the debt of their sins, cry out to you to honor your birth: "the barren one gives birth to the Mother of God the Sustainer of our life!"

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*).

Those in Hades would "receive the Lord" upon His death as we read in the New Testament: "*Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey...*" (1 Pt 3:18, 19). A number of the apostolic Fathers such as Saints Polycarp of Smyrna, Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus of Lyons, and Clement of Alexandria all taught that Christ had descended into Hades. We find the same teaching in the Syriac Fathers Jacob of Sarouj, Aphrahat the Persian and Ephrem the Syrian as well as the Greek Fathers Athanasius the Great, Basil the Great, Gregory Nazianzen, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus.

Our most common icon of the resurrection depicts Christ emerging from Hades leading out by the hand Adam and Eve (and, by implication, the human race). In many icons John the Forerunner is beside Him, at the head of those who had died before Christ and were now brought to eternal life by Him.

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 +**John & Jeanette Abraham.** Requested by Ron Abraham
September 5 +**Wadih Kahale.** Requested by Virginia & Michael Mischitelli and Antonio & Karen Solitro
September 12 +**Tonios Kahale, Wadih Kahale.** Requested by Katherine Thomas & Family
September 19 +**Habib & Mariam Rahall, William & Bertha Rahall, Deceased Members of Rahall & Reeks Families.** Requested by Nick Rahall & Family
September 26 +**Philip Jordan.** Requested by Frank & Carol Boyda and Ken & Effie Jordan

This morning's Coffee Hour is hosted by Ron Abraham
Next Sunday's Coffee Hour is hosted by Ryan & Tina Dumont

PARISH PICNIC

We are having a smaller, simpler version of the Parish Picnic on Sunday **September 12 from noon to 5pm.** Please see the flyer on the back page of the bulletin. We need **your** help in order to make it a success. Please try to give an hour helping in some capacity. We need people to setup and breakdown, food runners, food servers, folks to clean the tables and chairs, etc. The tables and chairs will be spaced so as to provide physical distancing. Take this opportunity to get involved again in the life of the Parish. If you want to make a monetary or in kind donation of goods 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!

Upcoming Liturgical Schedule

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

Last Week's Collection

Regular	\$1,098
Candles	\$ 29
Coffee Hr	\$ 15
Stole	\$ 325
Total	\$1,467

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



Shining Like the Sun

The Gospels depict St John the Baptist as the “forerunner” or herald announcing the imminent 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?

Prokimenon

Reader: The just shall rejoice in the Lord and place his hope in Him. All those with an upright heart shall be praised.

People: The just shall rejoice in the Lord and place his hope in Him. All those with an upright heart shall be praised.

Verse: O God, hear my voice when I pray to You; save my life from the dreadful enemy.

People: The just shall rejoice in the Lord and place his hope in Him. All those with an upright heart shall be praised.

Reader: The just shall rejoice in the Lord and place his hope in Him.

People: All those with an upright heart shall be praised.

Epistle: Acts 13:25-33

Alleluia Verses

The just shall bloom like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar of Lebanon.

Verse: Those who are planted in the Lord’s house shall flourish in the courts of our God.

Gospel: Mt. 22:2-14

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!

