

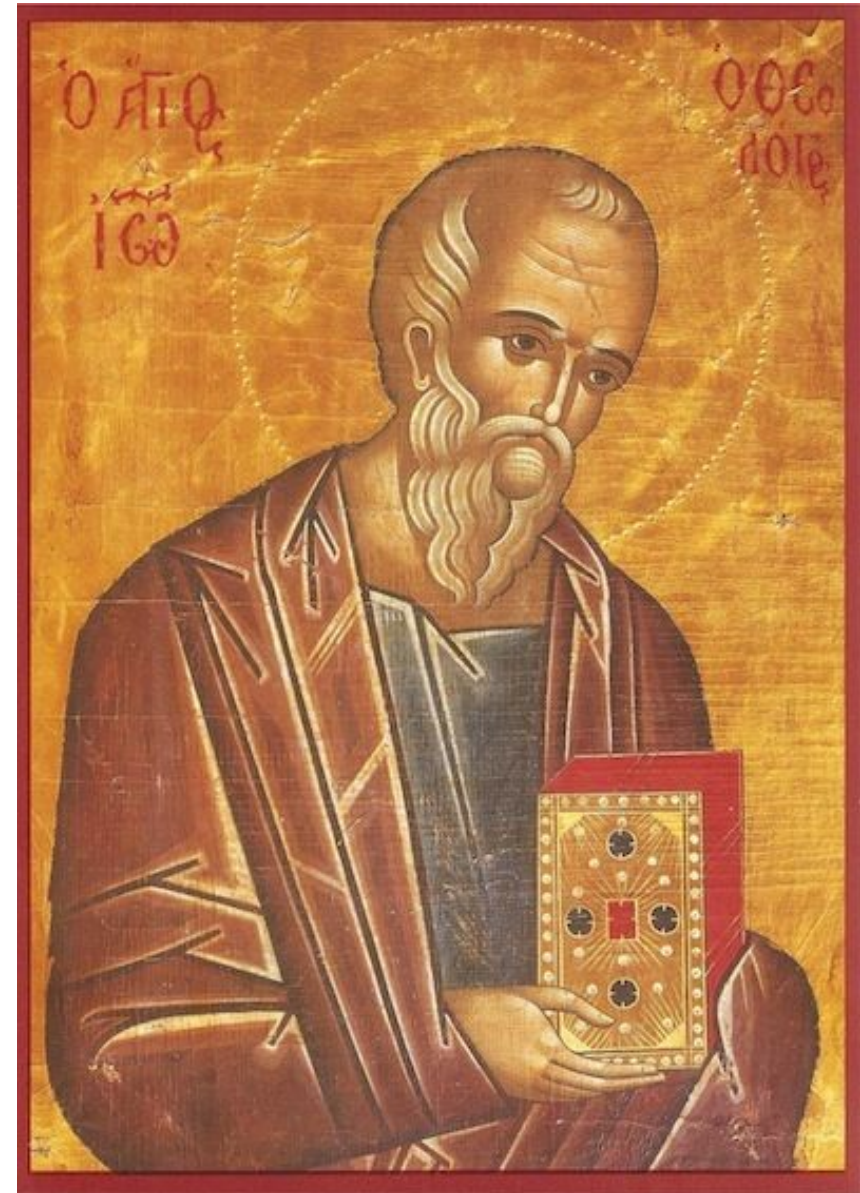
*From the Divine Office for the Repose of the Apostle and Evangelist,
John the Theologian (Sept. 26)*

Ascending to the heights of theology, you learned the unspeakable mysteries of God: that God is always and essentially One, divided into Three Persons, yet undivided in essence in a union without confusion. By glorifying the undivided Trinity, you proclaimed God to us. Pray that we may be saved and enlightened, O John the Theologian. (Vespers)

O John, reclining at the breast of Wisdom Himself, you drew streams of theology and watered the world. With knowledge of the Trinity, you dried up the sea of godlessness. As a pillar of fire and living cloud, guide us toward our heavenly inheritance. (Orthros)



**FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE HOLY CROSS
SEPTEMBER 26, 2021**



ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

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 (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.

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 1) pg. 38

After the stone was sealed by the Jews and the while the soldiers were watching Your spotless body, You rose, O Savior, on the third day, bestowing life to the world. Wherefore, the heavenly powers cried out to You, O Giver of life: “Glory to Your resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Your kingdom! Glory to Your economy, O You who alone are the lover of mankind!”

Troparion of St. John (Tone 2)

Apostle beloved of Christ God, hasten to deliver a people that lacks any other defense: for He accepted that you lay your head on his breast: He will also accept your prayer. Pray Him, then, O Theologian, that He may disperse haughty nations, and beg that He may grant us peace and abundant mercy.

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 (Tone 2)

O never failing Protectress of Christians and their ever-present intercessor before the Creator, despise not the petitions of us sinners, but in your goodness extend your help to us who call upon you with confidence. Hasten, O Mother of God, to intercede for us, for you have always protected those who honor you.

What Do We “Need?”

St Paul’s economics are easy to understand in principle, but we find ourselves with a lot of questions when we try to apply his teaching. When does “need” – I must have – become “excess” – I can use or I want? And is it good for me to have everything I want and can afford?

We recognize the negative effects on our body if we eat or drink to excess. But there are even more serious effects on our soul. Our physical cravings can lead to a psychological dependency: the feeling that I can’t live without X, Y or X. Overeating leads to overweight, physical discomfort and illness; overdependence on material things leads to psychological unhappiness and spiritual emptiness.

Philosophers throughout the ancient world recognized this apart from Christianity. Lao-Tzu, the fifth-century bc Chinese author of the *Tao Te Ching* said it this way: “To know you have enough is to be rich.” The first-century Roman philosopher Seneca noted, “*It is not the man who has too little, but the man who craves more, that is poor.*” Another Stoic philosopher, Epictetus, Himself born into slavery, had so freed himself from dependence on the material that he reportedly said in ad 55 that, “*Contentment comes not so much from great wealth as from few wants.*” These pagan philosophers would likely have agreed with the Lord when He said, “*It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man [i.e. one dependent on his material wealth] to enter the kingdom of God.*” (Mk 10:25; Lk 18:25).

Enough vs. Abundance

St. Paul is clear: the purpose of any abundance we may be given is for doing every good work. Do you have more than you need? Don’t look to add to your holdings – you will simply be frustrating God’s purpose for your life. As the Prophet Isaiah warned those who build their life around making more than they need, “*Woe to those who add house to house and field to field... their many houses shall be desolate*” (Is 5:8, 9). Wealth, it must be said, is not wrong. Not using it according to God’s plan turns it – and us – aside from God and His way.

Even this is a principle that non-Christians and non-believers of every kind have espoused. This is evident in the way people have made their own the saying “Live simply, so others may simply live.” Non-Christians have attributed it to Mohandas Gandhi, the Indian nationalist or to Henry David Thoreau, the nineteenth-century American Transcendentalist thinker. Roman Catholics have found it in the writings of Mother Theresa of Calcutta or in the teachings of their first American-born saint, Elizabeth Ann Seton. The idea is clearly easy to accept, but demanding when we try to put it in practice.

One help for those who might try to devote their abundance to the doing of good is the teaching of St John Chrysostom. He reminds us that God’s purpose in commanding almsgiving is not only for the sake of the recipient. It is also, if not primarily, for the donor. The recipient of alms receives physical sustenance but the giver of alms grows in his or her spirit, imitating the Giver of all good gifts.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today **Healing of Archie Opatka**
+**Philip Jordan**. Requested by Frank & Carol Boyda and Ken & Effie Jordan

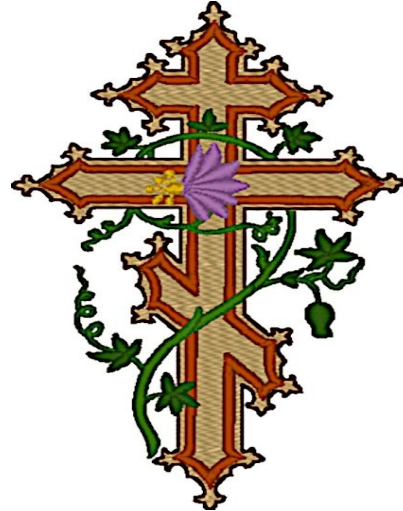
Oct 3 **Healing of Archie Opatka**
+**Peter Solitro (40 day)**. Requested by Antonio & Karen Solitro

This morning's Coffee Hour is hosted by Antoinette Arraj & Lisa Jagielski
Next Sunday's Coffee Hour is hosted by Antonio & Karen Solitro

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$183
Candles	\$ 38
Coffee Hr.	\$ 22
Flowers	\$ 10
TOTAL	\$253

God bless you for your generosity!



There are registration forms for religious education on the table at the rear of the church. Please take one and register your children. Once we know how many children we have, we can put classes together. We will begin having classes once a month and expand from there. Please reach out to me if you have any questions.

Fr. Bryan

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

There are registration forms for religious education on the table in the back of the church. Please take in order to register your child/children. Once we determine how many children we have, we can determine how to organize the classes and how often to have them. I am thinking we start with one Sunday a month and expand from there.

THANK YOU!

We are still finalizing the figures, but it looks like we generated just under **\$12,000** in **gross receipts** from the Picnic! This was due to the incredible generosity and hard work of so many people! Thank-you! Thank-you! Thank-you! We had a nice crowd, all of whom had a good time. It was a wonderful opportunity for people to reconnect after a year and a half! We will have a more detailed report and thank you list in the next week or two.

God bless you for your hard work and generosity to our Parish!

PARISH COUNCIL

As previously stated, 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 three 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.

I will be sending a ballot in the mail in the next couple of weeks. Rather than go through a nomination process followed by an election, we will just have the election. The top three vote getters will be elected to the Council. Should someone not wish to serve, we will go to the person who received the next largest number of votes. We will meet once a quarter and expand that when required.

Please remember that the Parish Council, like all of the councils, is an advisory body. It's purpose is to advise the pastor on elements of church life. It is not a governing body. Problems often arise when that distinction is not understood by all, including the pastor.

Upon further thought as well as dealing with the delta variant of covid-19, I have decided to postpone the planned Memorial Service and luncheon until the pandemic subsides. Please call or email me if you would like to be on the planning committee.

Fr. Bryan

The Giver of All Good Gifts

How many TV channels can you access – 300, 400, more? How many do you actually use? How fast can your car travel – 150 mph? How fast do you actually drive? Does your Smartphone have more apps than you’ll ever use? Manufacturers design their products based on the conviction that people want more than they really need. As humorist Will Rogers said back in the 1920s, “Too many people spend money they haven’t earned, to buy things they don’t want to impress people they don’t like.”

This dynamic, called consumerism, has been known for over 100 years. As more people became financially able to buy more, do more, and travel more “conspicuous consumption” became a way of life for an increasing number of people, particularly in Europe and America. The great symbol of this phenomenon, at least in the U.S. has been “Black Friday,” the day after Thanksgiving, when people descend on stores in a Christmas Shopping frenzy to grab the latest thing before it’s sold out.

Pope Francis has repeatedly denounced a way of life devoted to conspicuous consumption, contrasting it to a Christ-centered way of life. “The encounter with the living Jesus, in the great family that is the Church, fills the heart with joy, because it fills it with true life, a profound goodness that does not pass away or decay.

“But this experience must face the daily vanity, the poison of emptiness that insinuates itself into our society based on profit and having (things), that deludes young people with consumreism,” he said before thousands in St Peter’s Square.

“Young people are particularly sensitive to the emptiness of meaning and values that surrounds them. And they, unfortunately, pay the consequences.”

Critics have accused the pope of introducing socialism or even Marxism into Church teaching. In fact, the anti-consumerism he espouses may be found in the New Testament and even in pre-Christian philosophers.

How God Provides

St Paul sets forth his “Christian economics” in 2 Corinthians 9:8 – “*God is able to make every gift abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work*”. The first plank in his three-fold approach is to recognize that **God is able to provide for us**. We often emphasize our own contribution to life, forgetting that our talents, our abilities, our very existence comes from God. As we read in the Epistle of James – and repeat regularly in the Divine Liturgy – “*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights...*” (Jas 1:17). We are, to be sure, co-creators with Him by virtue of our creation in His image; but there is nothing good wrought by our hand apart from Him.

Secondly, God provides for us in a specific manner. He provides for us *all sufficiency in all things*. In other words, He guarantees that we have **everything we truly need**. Third, He guarantees us **an abundance**, over and above what we need, but for a specific purpose: *for every good work*. We have enough for what we actually require and even more, for the purpose of doing good.

Prokimenon

Reader: Through all the earth, their voice resounds, and to the ends of the world their message.

People: Through all the earth, their voice resounds, and to the ends of the world their message.

Verse: The heavens declare God’s glory and the firmament proclaims the work of His hands.

People: Through all the earth, their voice resounds, and to the ends of the world their message.

Reader: Through all the earth, their voice resounds,

People: And to the ends of the world their message.

Epistle: 1Jn 4:12-19

Alleluia Verses

The heavens shall proclaim Your wonders, O Lord, and Your truth in the assembly of the saints.

Verse: God is glorified in the council of His saints, great and awesome to all those around Him.

Gospel: Jn. 19:25-27;21:24-25

Kinonikon

His voice has gone forth over the whole world, and his words to the limits of the universe.
Alleluia.

St John Chrysostom on Almsgiving

We are given time by our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ for the seeds of almsgiving to fall upon our hearing. Christ has given us the sower to imitate. He sowed his seed on good earth and from it reaped a hundred fold. Hear the message proclaimed by his action.

Behold, the lovers of God, the lovers of honor, and the lovers of the poor are all gathered together as in an arena – God is standing by, receiving the little money given by the lovers of the poor and granting them in exchange the kingdom of heaven. I beg you, let none of us forfeit this grace. Let none of us neglect this great and world-transcending gift for the sake of a little money. I entreat all of you: with diligence let us purchase the kingdom of heaven.

First Homily on Almsgiving