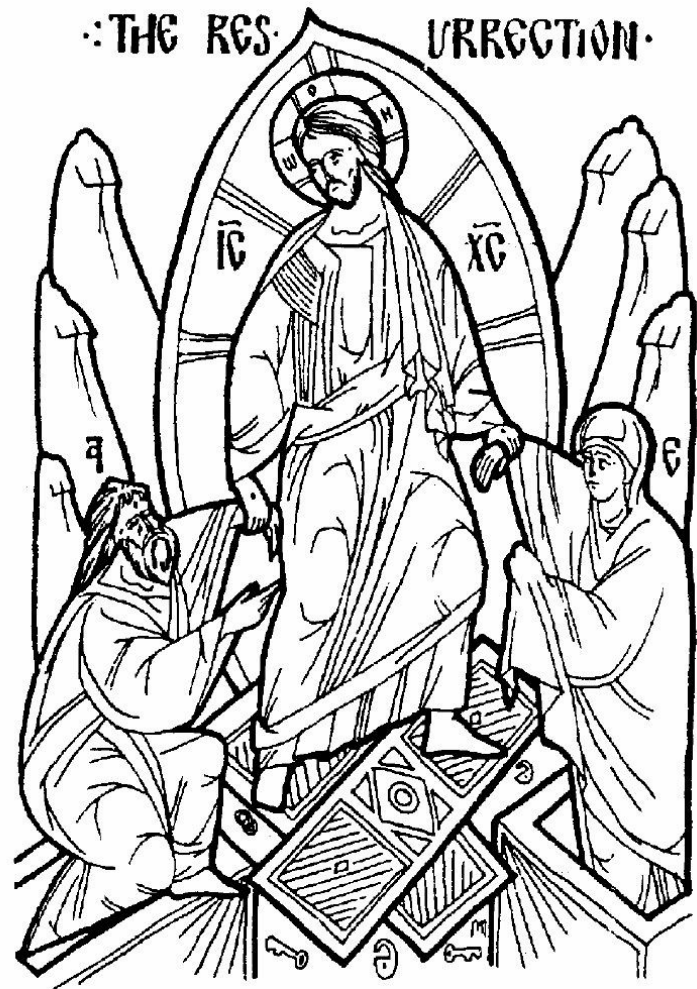


The Lord Said... "... beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles... Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved" (Mt 10:17-22)

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. ... If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. ... They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service" (Jn 15: 18,20; 16:2)



Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church
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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM
October 13, 2019



Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council

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.

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

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, giving 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 the Fathers(Tone 8)

O Christ our God, You are infinitely glorified for You established our fathers as radiant stars on earth. Through them, You led us to the true faith. O Most Merciful One, glory to You!

Patronal Troparion (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.

Kondakion (Tone 2, Pg. 16)

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.



Persecution in the Roman Empire

In the summer of AD 64, fire devastated several sections of the city of Rome. A rumor spread that the Emperor Nero had the fire started so that he could rebuild the city his way. According to the historian Tacitus, Nero tried to diffuse this rumor by accusing the Christians of starting the fire. Tacitus wrote, “To get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called *Chrestians* by the populace” (Tacitus, *The Annals* XV, 44).

The Christians’ “abominations” consisted in refusing to offer sacrifice to the Roman gods or to take part in their feasts. Since religion in the ancient world was tied to nationalism, venerating the Roman gods was considered a sign of loyalty to the state which was thought to be protected by the gods. Refusing to do so marked the Christians as anti-Roman in the eyes of many.

The average Roman believed that refusing to honor the gods resulted in disaster. The Christian apologist Tertullian observed, “They think the Christians the cause of every public disaster, of every affliction with which the people are visited. If the Tiber rises as high as the city walls, if the Nile does not send its waters up over the fields, if the heavens give no rain, if there is an earthquake, if there is famine or pestilence, straightway the cry is, ‘Away with the Christians to the lions!’” (Tertullian, *Apologeticus* 5,1)

During the next 150 years persecution of Christians was sporadic and localized, often involving mob violence. In AD 250 Emperor Decius issued a decree requiring citizens to offer public sacrifice to the gods. Christians could not comply and many prominent believers were put to death in this, the first empire-wide assault on Christians.

During the Great Persecution under Diocletian (303-312) Christian worship was forbidden and local governors were empowered to destroy churches and Scriptures and to arrest clergy. The persecutions would not end until AD 311 when Galerius issued his edict of toleration. Before the fourth century was over, the empire would officially become Christian.

Persecution in the Persian Empire

When Christians were being persecuted in the Roman Empire, they found acceptance and toleration in the Persian Empire and the border kingdoms of Armenia and Georgia which lay between the two empires. Christians fleeing from persecution in the Roman provinces of Syria and Palestine crossed the Euphrates and were welcomed in Persian territory. By the third century the Churches in these regions were developing their own structures. Syriac-speaking believers from Edessa and Erbil (in Iraq today) brought Christianity into the Persian Empire, forming what would become known as the Church of the East.

The Roman persecutions ended in the early fourth century but Roman-Persian conflicts continued until the 380s. During this time, Persian rulers began to think of Christians as Roman agents. They now began to kill the Christians whom they had once welcomed. More Christians were martyred in the Persian Empire during the fourth century than had suffered in the Roman Empire under Decius and Diocletian. Before this persecution ended in AD 401, upwards of 190,000 Christians had been martyred.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +**Charles & Lena Nejaimey, Elias Tembenis, Catherine Clymer.** Requested by the Nejaimey Family. Coffee Hour sponsored by the Nejaimey Family
+**Joseph Mirante** who passed away this week

October 20 +Charlotte Ghiz (9yr.). Requested by Robert Ghiz. Coffee Hour sponsored by Robert Ghiz

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ Last Week's Attendance/Donations: **39/\$883**
- ◆ **Help Wanted** - As you all know, our weekly Bingo is a major source of income for the parish. We could use some additional workers! Please consider volunteering some of your time on Tuesday evenings. If you can volunteer, please see Joe Najemy.
- ◆ You should have received a mailing that included a Contact Form. I have only received sixty of the forms to date. If you have not yet returned your form, please do so in person, via regular mail, or email. Having an up to date contact list makes it easier for me to reach out to the Community. It also ensures that the mailings we send get to you. If you did not receive the contact form, please see me and I'll give you one.
- ◆ Have you ever wondered why we do what we do in the Divine Liturgy? Do you want to learn the music better? We will begin a series on the Divine Liturgy. The series started on Wednesday October 9. They run from 7PM to 8PM and have two parts: 1) A presentation on the Liturgy; its different parts and their evolution, and 2) Going through the music we use here at OLPH. Please join us!
- ◆ **Parish Meeting** - We will have a General Parish Meeting in late October or early November. We'll discuss the financial condition of the parish, some of my ideas for the future, and most importantly, your ideas. Be on the lookout for an invitation sometime in the next few weeks.
- ◆ We will have a second collection next Sunday (Oct. 20) for Mission Sunday. Please be generous as the Eparchy receives funds from this collection to help support our mission parishes.
- ◆ Joseph Mirante passed away on October 8. His funeral was held here at OLPH on October 10. Condolences to the family. May his memory be eternal!

Welcome to those who are visiting today. We are happy to have you worship with us. If this is your first time here, please come downstairs to the Hall, introduce yourself, have some refreshments, and get to know the Community. If you have any questions about the Melkite Church and its traditions, please don't hesitate to ask Fr. Bryan.

Weddings — One year notice. Contact Fr. Bryan for Sacramental Preparation.

Baptisms — One month notice. Contact Fr. Bryan for Sacramental Preparation.

Please let Fr. Bryan know about anyone who is sick, in the hospital, or homebound so that he can visit and bring them the Eucharist on a regular basis.

Today we remember the fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council held in the city of Nicaea in 787A.D. This council dealt with the iconoclastic controversy. There were those in the Church (Iconoclasts) who believed that the veneration of icons was a form of idol worship. Others (Iconodules) defended the use of icons. The matter went deeper than differences over an art form. Christ's human nature was really at the heart of the controversy. The Council dealt with this aspect of the faith as well as the Christian attitude toward matter and the true meaning of Christian redemption and the salvation of the entire material universe.

Speaking about icons, St. John of Damascus, their great defender, says,

Icons are not idols but symbols, therefore when an Orthodox venerates an icon, he is not guilty of idolatry. He is not worshipping the symbol, but merely venerating it. Such veneration is not directed toward wood, or paint or stone, but towards the person depicted. Therefore relative honor is shown to material objects, but worship is due to God alone.

We do not make obeisance to the nature of wood, but we revere and do obeisance to Him who was crucified on the Cross... When the two beams of the Cross are joined together I adore the figure because of Christ who was crucified on the Cross, but if the beams are separated, I throw them away and burn them.

Although the council upheld the use of icons, the controversy was not finally resolved until 843A.D. Through the Incarnation, humanity is redeemed. Because Christ became one of us, having a material body, material images of him can be made. St. John of Damascus says, "I do not worship matter, but the Creator of matter, who for my sake became material and deigned to dwell in matter, who through matter effected my salvation..."

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and save us!

Fourth Sunday after the Holy Cross - Fathers of the Second Council of Nicaea

AS WE HAVE SEEN, the Lord prophesied the destruction of the Jewish temple and of Jerusalem itself. The Scriptures record other prophecies from the Lord Jesus' teachings. These sayings sometimes speak of His disciples' personal futures. Thus at the Last Supper Jesus foretold His betrayal at the hands of Judas. He also spoke of Peter's imminent denial: "*I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me*" (Lk 22:34). Jesus' most solemn prophecy about what awaits His followers is found in the Beatitudes. In Luke's version, this reads: "*Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets*" (Lk 6:22, 23). In Matthew's version this prophecy is regularly chanted in our divine services.

The First Generation of Christians

St Luke's second volume, the Acts of the Apostles, shows the progressively negative treatment which Christians received for Christ's name. At first, Christ's followers were taken into custody and forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus (see Acts 4:13-17). When threats did not work, the disciples were beaten (see Acts 5:17-30). St Stephen was stoned to death (see Acts 7:57-60), becoming the first recorded to have lost his life for the Gospel. He is honored in the Church as the first, or Protomartyr.

As a result, many believers fled Jerusalem. Their dispersal became an occasion for witnessing to Christ, first to those in the surrounding area (see Acts 8:4-8) and then "*as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch*" (see Acts 11:19ff).

Acts 12 tells how the Apostle James was killed and Peter arrested. The Lord intervened and delivered Peter from prison, which enabled him to escape to the Roman city of Caesarea, away from the jurisdiction of the Jewish leaders.

Over the next 25 years, the Church spread throughout the Roman Empire, beginning in the cities of Asia Minor, chiefly through the activity of St Paul and his companions. Their preaching bore fruit in many places and Churches were established in places like Corinth, Ephesus and Thessalonika. At the same time, they experienced opposition and persecution from local Jewish leaders (see Acts 17:5-9) or devotees of the Roman gods and goddesses (see Acts 19:23ff.) who were intent on eliminating the new movement being spread in Jesus' name. Nevertheless, St Paul taught for two years in Ephesus "*...so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks*" (Acts 19:10).

Since there were many religions tolerated in the Roman Empire, the Roman state did not interfere with the Christians unless public order was threatened. One of those infrequent occasions is recorded in Acts 21. On his return to Jerusalem, Paul was accused of violating the temple. "*... news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. ... when he could not ascertain the truth because of the tumult, he commanded [Paul] to be taken into the barracks*" (Acts 22:32-34). St Paul was ultimately sent to Rome at his own request and was put to death, presumably in AD 68, when the Empire first set its face against those who professed the Gospel of Christ.

Prokimenon

Reader: Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our fathers, and Your name is worthy of praise and glorious forever.

People: Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our fathers, and Your name is worthy of praise and glorious forever.

Verse: For You are just in all You have done to us, and all Your works are true and Your ways right.

People: Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our fathers, and Your name is worthy of praise and glorious forever.

Reader: Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our fathers,

People: And Your name is worthy of praise and glorious forever.

Epistle: Titus 3:8-15

Alleluia Verses

O God, our ears have heard, our fathers have declared to us the deeds You did in their days, in the days of old.

Verse: The just cried out, and the Lord heard them, and He delivered them from all their trials.

Gospel: Luke 8: 5-15 (Parable of the Sower)

Kiss of Peace (Pg. 23)

Priest: Christ is among us!

People: He is and always will be!

Then offer the kiss of peace to the person on your right and left using the greeting above.

Hirmos - "It is truly meet..." (Pg. 26)

Kinonikon: "Praise the Lord..." (Pg. 32)

After Communion: "We have seen the True Light..."