

St Sophronios of Jerusalem (c. 636 AD)

In honor of the divine mystery that we celebrate today, let us all hasten to meet Christ. Everyone should be eager to join the procession and to carry a light. Our lighted candles are a sign of the divine splendor of the One who comes to expel the dark shadows of evil and to make the whole universe radiant with the brilliance of His eternal light. Our candles also show how bright our souls should be when we go to meet Christ.

The most-pure Virgin Theotokos carried the True Light in her arms and brought Him to those who lay in darkness. We too should carry a light for all to see and reflect the radiance of the True Light as we hasten to meet Him.

The Light has come and has shone upon a world enveloped in shadows; the Dayspring from on high has visited us and given light to those who lived in darkness. This, then, is our feast, and we join in procession with lighted candles to reveal the Light that has shone upon us and the glory that is yet to come to us through Him. So let us hasten all together to meet our God.

Let all of us, my brethren, be enlightened and made radiant by this Light. Let all of us share in its splendor, and be so filled with it that no one remains in the darkness.

- For the feast of the Presentation (Encounter) of the Lord in the Temple



Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church

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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM



The Pharisee & The Publican

**Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican
Presentation of the Lord in the Temple
February 2, 2020**

Antiphon (Feast)

1- Gird your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One!

O Son of God who were carried in the arms of Simeon the Just, save us who sing to You: Alleluia

2- In Your splendor and majesty, ride triumphant in the cause of truth and for the sake of justice.

O Son of God who were carried in the arms of Simeon the Just, save us who sing to You: Alleluia

3- Your arrows are sharp; peoples are subject to You; the king's enemies lose heart. A tempered rod is Your royal scepter.

O Son of God who were carried in the arms of Simeon the Just, save us who sing to You: Alleluia

Entrance Hymn

Priest: The Lord has made His Salvation known; He has revealed His justice to all nations.

People: O Son of God who were carried in the arms of Simeon the Just, 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 Presentation 2X (Tone 1)

Hail, O Full of Grace, Virgin and Mother of God, from you has arisen the Sun of Justice, Christ our God, enlightening those who stand in darkness. You too, O just Elder Simeon, rejoice for you carried in your arms the Redeemer of our souls, who grants us resurrection.

Kondakion of the Pharisee and the Publican (Tone 4)

Let us shun the proud attitude of the boastful Pharisee and learn humility from the Publican's sighs; let us cry out to our Savior: "Have mercy on us, O You who alone are merciful!"

Kondakion of the Presentation of Our Lord to the Temple (Tone 1)

O Christ our God who through Your birth have sanctified the virginal womb, and have blessed the arms of Simeon, You have come today to save us. When wars prevail, keep Your people in peace, and strengthen our public authorities in every good deed, for You alone are the lover of Mankind.

Simeon is then joined by Anna who thanks God that she has seen this moment "*and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem*" (Lk 2:38).

This Encounter celebrated the coming of the One for whom the Jews longed, the Messiah, and recognized that the Gentiles too would be enlightened through Him.

Our Celebration of This Feast

As might be expected, this feast originated in Jerusalem where the event it remembers took place. It likely began in the era of St Constantine the Great who sponsored the development of Jerusalem as a Christian site. Sermons on this Feast by the bishops Methodius of Patara (+ 312), Cyril of Jerusalem (+ 360), Gregory the Theologian (+ 389), Amphilokios of Iconium (+ 394), Gregory of Nyssa (+ 400), and John Chrysostom (+ 407) have come down to us.

Egeria, a Spanish nun who visited the Holy Land in 381-384, described what she saw: "The fortieth day after the Epiphany is undoubtedly celebrated here with the very highest honor, for on that day there is a procession, in which all take part, in the Anastasis, and all things are done in their order with the greatest joy, just as at Easter. All the priests, and after them the bishop, preach, always taking for their subject that part of the Gospel where Joseph and Mary brought the Lord into the Temple on the fortieth day, and Symeon and Anna the prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, saw him, treating of the words which they spoke when they saw the Lord, and of that offering which his parents made. When everything that is customary has been done in order, the sacrament is celebrated, and the dismissal takes place."

The feast soon spread to Antioch and then, to Constantinople and the whole empire. It became particularly important in the capital during the sixth century when a plague threatened the city. After a solemn procession on this feast, the plague ceased.

When this feast was instituted, the birth of Christ and His baptism at the Jordan were observed on the same day, January 6. The Hypapante was kept 40 days later, on February 14. When a separate feast of the Nativity on December 25 became common, the Hypapante was moved accordingly.

Light to the Gentiles

In the Western Church candles are blessed on this feast and a candlelight procession held in honor of the "Light to enlighten the Gentiles." This practice actually began in Jerusalem, as Egeria attests. When the feast was instituted in Constantinople, the procession was introduced there as well. Today some Slavic Churches bless candles on this day, but the procession has disappeared from the Byzantine feast.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today

+Earl & Antoinette Partridge

+William & Bertha Rahall, +Habib & Mariam Rahall. Requested by Nick Rahall & Family. Coffee Hour sponsored by Nick Rahall & Family

+Saeed Bajanian. Requested by his family

February 9

Health & Salvation of Lidia Assali, the Ansari & Abeddy families. Requested by Lidia Assali

February 16

Health & Well-being of Suzan Ansara Abeedy. Requested by the Ansara Family

◆ Last Week's Attendance/Donations: **56/\$1,885**

◆ **February 23 is Cheesefare Sunday**, traditionally the last day we eat dairy products until Pascha. We will have a Pot Luck after the Divine Liturgy. Please bring your favorite meatless, cheesy dish to share. After the meal, we will go to the church and celebrate Forgiveness Vespers to begin Great Lent.

◆ **LENTEN SERVICE SCHEDULE** - Our basic schedule for Lenten services will be:

Mondays - Great Compline, Wednesdays—Presanctified Liturgy, Fridays - Akathist

Services are at 7PM. Specific schedule to follow.

PARISH MEETING

We will have a Parish Meeting on **Sunday February 16** after the Divine Liturgy and Coffee Hour. I will present some of my ideas for the future of the parish. **I also want to hear from you!** I'll present the state of our finances as well as some of the major projects we need complete over the next few years. We need everyone to contribute their time, talent, and treasure in order for us to grow the community. Please make every effort to attend.

-Fr. Bryan

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.



THE BISHOP'S APPEAL: The annual Bishop's Appeal is a vital means of support for our Melkite Church in the U.S. Your gifts to the Bishop's Appeal provide funding for many important works of our Eparchy, such as: the formation of our seminarians for the Priesthood and Diaconate; providing for our elderly priests; producing **SOPHIA** magazine; teaching the Faith to our children and young adults; establishing/supporting new missions and outreaches. Our Father and Shepherd, Bishop Nicholas asks every Melkite household in the U.S. to give **at least \$100-\$200 each year** to support our Eparchy in America.

Those who give a gift of \$1000 or more will be automatically enrolled in the Order of Saint Nicholas, the charitable society of our Eparchy.

Our goal is 100% participation for our parish. Please send your gift today. May God bless your generosity.

Come to Expel the Darkness

EASTERN CHRISTIANS LOVE TO THINK in terms of forty days. The Great Fast and its echo, the forty days between the feasts of the Transfiguration and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the churching of an infant forty days after birth and the memorial service forty-days after death are the most obvious examples. This pattern is ultimately drawn from the Scriptures where significant events are regularly placed in this time frame. In the Old Testament, the great flood lasted for 40 days and 40 nights (Gen 7). Moses was on Mount Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights when he received the Ten Commandments (Ex 24). In Deuteronomy 9 we read that Moses interceded on Israel's behalf for 40 days and 40 nights. The Israelite spies took 40 days to spy out Canaan (Num 13). Goliath taunted Saul's army for 40 days before David arrived to slay him (1 Sam 17). When Elijah fled from Jezebel, he traveled 40 days and 40 nights to Mt. Horeb (1 Kings 19). It was after a 40-day fast that the Tempter came to test Jesus (Mt 4: 1-11).

There is another 40-day period mentioned in the New Testament, and also observed in the life of our Church: the 40 days between Christ's nativity and the day when His parents brought Him to the temple, "to do for Him according to the custom of the Law" (Lk 2:27). While there the Lord encountered the elderly Simeon and Anna, who recognized God's decisive presence in this Child. Through them Christ encounters for the first time those who were awaiting the Messiah's coming. We celebrate this event on February 2 (the 40th day after Christmas) as the Hypapante, or Encounter, of the Messiah with His people, personified by Simeon and Anna.

What Did the Law Prescribe?

Jewish custom at the birth of a child was that **a mother must be purified** after 40 days. "*She must not touch anything sacred or go to the sanctuary until the days of her purification are over*" (Lev 12:4).

In Jewish law any participation in the intimate experiences of life and death, including the spilling of blood – the carrier of life – makes a person ritually unclean, that is, incapable of performing ceremonial act such as temple worship. Ceremonial uncleanness is not a question of moral impurity but a recognition that the worship of God transcends the earth and its ways. Someone touched by childbirth or death required purification in specified ways.

There was an additional prescription according to the Torah: **the redemption of the firstborn son**. "*Every firstborn of man among your sons, you shall redeem*" (Ex 13:13). The first of everything (crops, animals, etc.) was to be offered to God in sacrifice: an acknowledgement that everything comes from Him and is His. Children could be "redeemed" by offering a gift to the temple in exchange for the child. Orthodox Jews still observe this rite today, exchanging five silver shekels (or their equivalent in local currency) for the child.

The encounter with Simeon and Anna takes us beyond the practices of the Torah to the mystery of God's saving plan. As St. Luke tells it, "*it had been revealed to him [Simeon] by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ*" (Lk 2:26). He takes the Christ child in his arms and prays what we call the Cantic of Simeon: "*Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples: a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel*" (Lk 2:29-32). We repeat this cantic at the end of every day (vespers) and on completing the Divine Liturgy as well as when any child is presented in church 40 days after its birth.

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.

Reader: 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: Hebrews 7: 7-17

Alleluia Verses

Now You shall dismiss your servant, O Lord, according to Your word in peace; because my eyes have seen Your salvation.

Verse: A light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people, Israel.

Gospel: Luke 18: 10-14 – Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican

Hirmos of the Feast

O Mother of God, hope of all Christians, watch over those who have placed their hope in you. Let us, O faithful, glorify the First-born, the Eternal Word of God, born of a Virgin all-pure, for we have seen, beyond the shadow and letter of the Law, a sign of Christ in the words: "Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord."

Kinonikon

I will take the chalice of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. Alleluia!

After Communion - Troparion of the Presentation



HOUSE BLESSINGS

I am still available to do house blessings. It has been a joy for me to get to know some of you better as I blessed our homes and broke bread with you. Please call the Rectory or email me (Brymc56@comcast.net) to schedule a time for me to bless your home .

- Fr. Bryan