

**RESURRECTION HOMILY
OF
ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM**

Let all pious men and all lovers of God rejoice in the splendor of this feast; let the wise servants blissfully enter into the joy of their Lord; let those who have borne the burden of Lent now receive their pay, and those who have toiled since the first hour, let them now receive their due reward; let any who came after the third hour be grateful to join in the feast, and those who may have come after the sixth, let them not be afraid of being too late, for the Lord is gracious and He receives the last even as the first. He gives rest to him who comes on the eleventh hour as well as to him who has toiled since the first: yes, He has pity of the last and He serves the first; He rewards the one and is generous to the other; He repays the deeds and praises the effort. Come, all of you: enter into the joy of your Lord. You the first and you the last, receive alike your reward; you rich and you poor, dance together; you sober and you weaklings, celebrate the day; you who have kept the fast and you who have not, rejoice today. The table is richly laden: enjoy its royal banquet. The calf is a fatted one: let no one go away hungry. All of you enjoy the banquet of faith; all of you receive the riches of His goodness. Let no one grieve over his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed; let no one weep over his sins, for pardon has shone from the grave; let no one fear death, for the death of our Savior has set us free: He has destroyed it by enduring it, He has despoiled Hades by going down into its kingdom, He had angered it by allowing it to taste of His flesh.

When Isaias foresaw all this, he cried out: “O Hades, you have been angered by encountering Him in the nether world.” Hades is angered because it is frustrated, it is angered because it has been mocked, it is angered because it has been destroyed, it is angered because it has been reduced to naught, it is angered because it is now captive. It seized a body, and, lo! It discovered God; it seized earth, and, behold! It encountered heaven; it seized the visible, and was overcome by the invisible. “O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” Christ is risen and you are abolished, Christ is risen and the demons are cast down, Christ is risen and the angels rejoice, Christ is risen and life is freed, Christ is risen and the tomb is emptied of the dead: for Christ, being risen from the dead, has become the Leader and Reviver of those who had fallen asleep. To Him be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen



GREAT AND GLORIOUS PASCHA



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
April 12, 2020

Antiphon (Feast)

1: May God be propitious to us and bless us; may He make His face to shine upon us and have mercy on us.”

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

2: May Your name be known upon the earth; among all the nations Your salvation.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

3: May the peoples praise You, O God; may all the peoples praise You.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

Entrance Hymn

Priest: In the assemblies bless the Lord our God, from the springs of Israel.

People: **O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!**

Troparion (Tone 5) [three times]

Christ is risen from the dead and by His death He has trampled upon Death and given life to those who were in the tombs!

Hypocoi (Tone 4)

Mary and her companions went forth before dawn. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb and heard the Angel say, “Why do you seek Him as a man among the dead, when He is in eternal splendor? Behold, the shroud is laid aside. Hasten and proclaim to the world that the Lord is risen and has put Death to death, for He is the Son of God, the Savior of mankind!”

Kondakion (Tone 2)

Though You went down in the tomb, O Immortal One, You overthrew the power of Hades and rose victorious, O Christ God. You greeted the ointment bearing women saying, “Rejoice!” You gave peace to Your Apostles, and to those who had fallen, resurrection!

In the silence that speaks volumes when the psalm is finished, we see the church floor covered with the “shattered gates and broken chains of Hades.” Then the Gospel of the Resurrection is proclaimed: “*He is not here; for He is risen, as He said*” (Mt 28:6).

“Have You Any Food?”

At the end of the Paschal Liturgy, the priest blesses a special commemorative bread called the Artos. Unlike the bread offered for the Divine Liturgy, this festive bread is baked with herbs and spices, such as cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, allspice, mahleb, fennel, grains of paradise and anise. Depending on local custom, lemon zest, almond extract, honey, olive oil, eggs, or rose water and even red wine may be added to the dough as well. The loaf may be stamped with a cross or an icon of the Resurrection. In many places an actual icon is placed on top of the loaf for the people to venerate at the end of the service.

The Artos is carried in procession and venerated at every service during Bright Week. It is consumed only after this week of Paschal celebration is concluded. How can we explain the unique role this bread plays in our liturgy?

When Christ rose from the dead, the first reaction of those who saw Him was disbelief. As St Luke describes it, “...*they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit*” (Lk 24:37). The risen Lord’s response was “*Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have*” (Lk 24:37). Even that was not enough to convince them all. Luke continues: “*But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, ‘Have you any food here?’ So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb and He took it and ate in their presence*” (Lk 24:41-43).

The disciples believed in the reality of the Resurrection when they saw Christ eating. In St John’s Gospel, we see that the disciples were out fishing when “*Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Children, have you any food?’*” (Jn 21:5) Similarly, when the Risen Christ appeared to the disciples traveling to Emmaus, He ate with them and “*He was known to them in the breaking of bread*” (Lk 24:35).

The Artos, then, represents the true, physical nature of the risen Christ, demonstrated when He ate and drank with His disciples, although He had no need of food. Eating what was offered to Him showed that He had not abandoned His humanity when He rose from the dead. As St Ignatius of Antioch wrote in his Epistle to the Smyrneans, 3:3, “After the Resurrection He ate and drank with them as a being of flesh, although spiritually united with the Father.” His body that rose from among the dead is the same one that suffered and died. Now this body shares in the life of glory.”

52nd National Melkite Convention Re-Scheduled

The 52nd National Melkite Convention hosted by St. John Chrysostom Melkite Catholic Church on July 9 - 12, 2020 has been rescheduled for 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic. Go to their website, 2020melkite.org for more information.

If you want me to remember someone at the Divine Liturgy, please send me an email at olphmelkite@gmail.com or call the rectory.

Today we pray for the repose of the soul of Aileen Abraham, who passed away on April 2 and Wayne Kallio, husband of Susan Aboody Kallio, who passed away on March 29. Memory Eternal!

We also remember all of our family and friends living and deceased as well as all those affected by the coronavirus.

Financial Information

March 2020

Revenue \$ 5,656
Expenses \$11,236
Net **\$(5,580)**

Year to Date

Revenue \$49,546
Expenses \$55,168
Net **\$(5,622)**

Please don't forget to support the parish during this pandemic. Our bills have not ceased because of coronavirus. You can mail in your contributions or send them through online banking. I am also looking at ways for you to make online contributions through other means.

Thank you in advance for your generosity!

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 as soon as the coronavirus has passed.

Christ is Risen! Christos Anesti! Al Maseeh Q'aam!

I greet you all in the joy of the Resurrection! In the prayers for today we hear, *Today is the day of the Resurrection! O nations, let us be joyful! For this Passover is the Passover of the Lord, in that Christ made us pass from death to life and from earth to Heaven, we who sing the song of victory!* Through Christ's Resurrection, Death has no more hold on us. Just as the blood of the Passover lamb caused death to "pass over" the Jews in Egypt, the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, makes the death of sin pass over us.

Today is a day for rejoicing. Whether or not kept the Fast is in the past. St. John Chrysostom tells us in his Resurrection Homily that those who have kept the Fast and those who have not, rejoice equally today. The complete text of St. John's homily is printed on the back page of the bulletin. This short homily summarizes what Pascha is all about. I encourage you to read and meditate on it, not just today, but through out the year.

We continue to navigate these uncharted waters of the covid-19 pandemic. Each day seems to bring new challenges. Pascha is a time spent feasting with family and friends. This year, that has been made much harder or maybe impossible. Remember in your prayers those of our parish in nursing homes or other places where we cannot visit them. Call or Face Time them if you are able. Even though we are not physically together, the bonds of blood and baptism are not severed. We will get through this as we have gotten through other hardships!

Although we cannot necessarily embrace each other physically, let us say,

Today is the day of the Resurrection! Let us glory in this feast and embrace one another. O brethren, let us say, 'because of the Resurrection we forgive all things to those who hate us.' And let us all sing together: Christ is risen from the dead, and by His death Has trampled upon Death, and given life to those who were in the tombs!

Khourieh June and I wish you all a blessed Pascha!

Fr. Bryan

Images of the Resurrection

FROM ITS BEGINNING on Lazarus Saturday until the cracking of the last red egg of Pascha, our Great Week and Bright Week services immerse us in a wealth of images, both verbal and visual, of the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord. In the midst of this sensory overload, there are some evocative symbols whose voices may not be heard. Yet they bring us to the heart of the Paschal Mystery.

The Newly-Illumined

On Pascha our regular Saturday evening Vespers is combined with the first Divine Liturgy of the Feast. Since the Matins and Divine Liturgy during the night are so popular in our parishes, it became common to serve the Vesper-Liturgy earlier in the day. As a result many people never see this extraordinary service.

The Vesper-Liturgy includes fifteen Old Testament readings instead of the usual three. Since the catechumens are taken out at this point in the service to be baptized, these additional Scripture passages would be read until the baptisms were completed. Then the newly-baptized would be brought into the congregation during the singing of “All of you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, Alleluia.” Their first full participation in the Liturgy would be on this blessed night of their baptism.

Laurel Is for Victory

The Epistle reading at this Liturgy is not followed by the usual Alleluia. Instead Psalm 81/82 is chanted with verse 8 as its refrain: “Arise, O God and judge the earth, and You shall inherit all the nations.”

In the liturgical symbolism of our Church, Holy Saturday recalls the time Christ’s body lay in the tomb while His spirit was among the dead in what the Greeks called Hades. In singing this Psalm, the Church is calling on Christ to rise from the dead and destroy the power of death, freeing people of every race and nation from its control. As we sing in one of the hymns at this service: “Today Hades sighs and cries aloud: ‘My power is destroyed! I received a mortal as if He were merely one of the dead, but I was powerless to hold Him; and, along with Him I shall lose those over whom I ruled, I held the dead from all ages; but behold, He is raising them all!’” In the Greek tradition the priest strews bay laurel leaves and flower petals throughout the church during this Psalm. In the ancient world laurel was a symbol of victory or achievement. Wreaths of laurel were awarded to the victors in athletic games; that practice continues at the Grand Prix races to this day. In our liturgy the laurel leaves represent Christ’s victory over death, the fruit of His death and resurrection.

It is a custom in Cyprus that, while the chanters are singing and the priest is strewing the leaves, people stamp their feet, bang on the pews with sticks, even clang pots and pans as a sign of the “harrowing of hell.” The noise graphically portrays the shaking of the foundations of the earth which preceded the Resurrection (see Mt 28:2) as Christ smashes the locks and gates of Hades and destroys death.

Instead of the Trisagion: All of you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia!

Prokimenon

Reader: This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

People: This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Reader: Sing the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever.

People: This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Reader: This is the day the Lord has made;

People: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Epistle: Acts 1:1-9

Alleluia Verses

You shall arise and have mercy upon Sion: for the time to pity her, the right time, has come.

Verse: The Lord has looked down from Heaven upon all the sons of men.

Gospel: John 1:1-17

Hirmos: The Angel cried out to the one who is full of grace: Hail! O immaculate Virgin! Hail, again! For your Son is risen from the tomb on the third day! Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord has shone upon you. Rejoice and be glad, O Sion; and you, O pure one, O Mother of God, rejoice in the resurrection of your Son!

Kinonikon:

Receive the body, the body of Christ, and drink from the Fountain of immortality. Alleluia!

After Communion:

Christ is risen... (once)

Instead of “Blessed be the name of the Lord”:

Christ is risen...

After final blessing (3x)

Priest: Christ is risen!

People: He is truly risen!

Priest: Glory to His Holy Resurrection on the third day!

People: We adore His Holy Resurrection on the third day!