

Sayings From the Fathers

“If [the disease of sin] is natural, then it cannot be cured. Thus it would remain always, no matter how hard you worked to rid yourself of it. If you accept this thought, you will lose heart, and say to yourself: this is how it is. For this is that woeful despair, which, once it has been introduced into people, they have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness (Ephesians 4: 19).

“I shall repeat again: Maintain the conviction that our disorderliness is not natural to us, and do not listen to those who say, ‘It is no use talking about it, because that is just how we are made, and you cannot do anything about it.’ That is not how we are made, and if we undertake to cure ourselves, then we will be able to do something about it.”

+St. Theophan the Recluse

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church

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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM



Second Sunday of the Cross

September 29, 2019

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!

Resurrectional Troparion (Tone 7, Pg. 42)

You destroyed Death by Your cross. You opened paradise to the thief. You changed the weeping of the myrrh-bearers, and commanded Your apostles to proclaim that You, O Christ God, have risen, granting to the world great mercy.

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.

There was an even more powerful reversal to follow. While Peter was proclaiming the Gospel to Cornelius and his household, the Holy Spirit cut him off. *“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And*

those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, ‘Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?’ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord” (Acts 10: 44-48).

The news of this remarkable event spread quickly and when Peter returned to Jerusalem he was confronted by *“those of the circumcision”* (Acts 11: 3) among the brethren. After Peter recounted his experiences in Joppa and Caesarea, Acts continues, *“When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, ‘Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life’”* (v.18).

This “Gentile Pentecost” forced many Jewish believers in Jesus to reevaluate the idea that the Jews alone were God’s people and that Gentiles were by definition unclean.

In Gentile Territory

The next step in the spread of the Gospel is described in Acts 11. *“Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch...”* (v. 19). Antioch was the provincial capital of Syria while Phoenicia (Tyre, Sidon, and Beirut) and Cyprus were important trading centers on the Mediterranean. There were several Jewish colonies in these regions which had been there since at least the second century BC.

We read in Acts that the believers who had fled persecution in Jerusalem brought the Gospel to these Jewish colonies *“preaching the word to no one but the Jews only”* (Acts 11: 19). That soon changed as the visitors in Antioch began teaching *“the Hellenists”* as well, bringing *“a great number”* to the Lord. The term Hellenists often referred to Hellenized Jews but it seems clear that here the term refers to Hellenized natives of the region. Thus the first non-Jewish believers in Jesus were the ancestors of the Melkites – Orthodox and Catholic – of Antioch! And, as we read in this same chapter of Acts, *“the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch”* (Acts 11:26).

While the initial opening to the Gentiles was as a result of Peter’s experience in Caesarea, it was Sts Paul and Barnabas who were the first explicitly sent to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. As missionaries of the Church at Antioch, these apostles visited Cyprus, and southern Asia Minor (Pamphilia and Pisidia) where they met with success as well as opposition (see Acts 13 and 14). After completing a circuit in Asia Minor, the apostles returned to Antioch.

The Council at Jerusalem

Not everyone accepted the apostles’ openness to the Gentiles. *“And certain men came down from Judea [to Antioch] and taught the brethren, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.’ Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question”* (Acts 15:2). Their meeting with the other apostles and elders of the Jerusalem Church is described in Acts 15.

The apostles’ decision recorded in Acts 15 was as follows: *“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well”* (vv 28, 29).

The Church’s connection to Judaism was effectively broken.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +Donald Halal. Requested by his wife, Jeannette

October 6 +Catherine Delnore (40 Day). Requested by her family. Coffee Hour sponsored by the Family. Coffee Hour sponsored by the Family

October 13 +Charles & Lena Nejaimey, Elias Tembenis, Catherine Clymer. Requested by the Nejaimey Family. Coffee Hour sponsored by the Nejaimey Family

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ Last Week's Attendance/Donations: **29/\$615**
- ◆ Thanks to all those who helped with yesterday's Clean-Up Day! We got a good start on some of the projects inside and outside the Church. There is still plenty to do and we are hoping that you can volunteer some of your time and talent on at least one project. We will try to do this at least twice a year. If you weren't able to make it yesterday, there will be plenty of other opportunities.
- ◆ **Help Wanted** - As you all know, our weekly Bingo is a major source of funding 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 will start on Wednesday **October 9 from 7-8PM**. The sessions will 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.

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.

If you or your children have graduated from high school, college, or a post secondary program, please let Fr. Bryan know. He would like to include their names in the bulletin to acknowledge their accomplishments. He would like to do this in September. Notice may be sent to olphmelkite@gmail.com or by calling (978) 314-1962. Better yet, come and see Fr. Bryan after the Divine Liturgy.



Second Sunday after the Holy Cross (16 Pentecost, 2 St Luke)

THE FIRST MAJOR ISSUE confronted by the apostolic Church concerned the Torah, and particularly its law on separation from the Gentiles. Beginning with the call of Abraham, God had set apart a people to serve Him as priests and prophets. This people – named Israel, after Abraham’s grandson – was to be a distinct people, from whom God would select a Messiah, or Savior for the world.

To insure that the people of Israel would always know that God had made a unique covenant with them, they were enjoined to distance themselves from the idolatrous Gentiles around them. They were forbidden to intermarry (see Dt 7:1-3) and interaction in general was discouraged in order to prevent Jews from adopting idolatrous behaviors. When this separation was ignored, the effects were seen as disastrous, as Psalm 106 indicates:

They did not destroy the peoples, concerning whom the LORD had commanded them, but they mingled with the Gentiles and learned their works; they served their idols, which became a snare to them. They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons, and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood.

Thus they were defiled by their own works, And played the harlot by their own deeds” (vv. 34-39).

There were Gentiles who were drawn to Judaism, usually by contact with Jews in Palestine or the diaspora. Some abandoned polytheism and adopted the worship of the One God. Those who in addition adopted the Jewish customs and laws – in particular, circumcision – were considered **proselytes**, Jews by adoption.

There were other Gentiles who believed in the God of Israel and were open to its practices but had not entered fully into the people of Israel. They were often Roman army officers or had positions in the structure of the Roman provincial administration. These were called the “**God-fearing**” – non-Jews who were sympathetic to Judaism but had not fully converted. The Roman centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48) was one of these Gentile sympathizers to Judaism.

When Gentiles Encounter Christ

According to Acts 10, St Peter was in Joppa (modern Jaffa), a Mediterranean port city some 30 miles from Jerusalem, when he had the following experience: “... he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’

“But Peter said, ‘Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.’ And a voice spoke to him again the second time, ‘What God has cleansed you must not call common.’ This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again” (vv 10-16).

Called by the Roman officer to visit him in Caesarea and speak to him of God, Peter replied: “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean” (Acts 10:28). St Peter thus saw his vision of the “great sheet” as a decisive reversal of the division between Jews and Gentiles.

Prokimenon

Reader: The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace.

People: The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace.

Reader: Give to the Lord, you sons of God, give to the Lord glory and praise

People: The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace.

Reader: The Lord will give strength to His people;

People: The Lord will bless His people with peace.

Epistle: 2 Cor 6:1-10

Alleluia Verses

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Your name, O Most High!

Verse: To proclaim Your kindness at dawn and Your faithfulness throughout the night

Gospel: Lk 6:31-36 (**Love Your Enemies**)

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 (Tone 8) - “It is truly meet...

Kinonikon: “Praise the Lord...” (Pg. 32)

After Communion: “We have seen the True Light...”

