

St Elizabeth the New-Martyr

The convent and sisterhood in Minsk is named after St Elizabeth Feodorovna. She was the daughter of a German duke who had married the brother of Russian Tsar Alexander III in 1884. In 1905, her husband was assassinated and Elizabeth began re-evaluating her life. On the day of his funeral, she arranged free meals for the poor and homeless of Moscow. She sold her jewelry, furs and other luxuries and used the money to establish a new convent in Moscow, the Monastery of Ss Martha and Mary.

The nuns observed both the traditional ascetical life (Mary) and a ministry of service (Martha). Elisabeth and the other sisters visited the sick, did housework for struggling families and took care of abandoned children, visiting the poorest and most dangerous parts of Moscow. She also established a hospital, with free care for anyone who came to their door, founded a rent-free hostel for female workers and students, a clinic, a school for nurses, a library and a soup kitchen, serving more than 300 meals daily to the poor.

On the day of her tonsure, Elizabeth had said to her fellow nuns: *I am leaving the brilliant world where I have occupied a high position, and now, together with all of you, I am about to ascend into a much greater world, the world of the poor and afflicted.* As an ascetic, Elizabeth slept on a wooden bed without a mattress, often for no more than three hours a night. She would rise at midnight for prayer, and spend the rest of the night at the bedside of a seriously ill patient. She was martyred in 1918 because she was a member of the royal family.



SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

JULY 19, 2020



FATHERS OF THE FIRST SIX ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

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 (3rd)

1: Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us shout with joy to God our Savior.

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

2: Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving and let us joyfully sing psalms to Him.

Khallisna Ya-Bnallah, Ya Man qama min baynil-amwaat, nahnu muranneemeena Laka. Haleloueya.

3: For God is a great Lord and a great King over all the earth.

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

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 6)

The angelic powers were around Your tomb, and the guards became as dead, and Mary stood at the tomb, seeking Your spotless body; Then You despoiled Hades without being tried by it, and You met the Virgin O Bestower of life. O Lord, who rose from the dead, glory to You!

Troparion of the Fathers (Tone 8)

O Christ our God, you are infinitely glorified, for you established our Fathers as radiant stars on earth, and through them you have guided us to the true faith. 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 intercessions, 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.

Offshoots of the Sisterhood

Often monasteries attract volunteers who visit the monastery regularly and offer their services in whatever capacity is needed. In Minsk the opposite occurred. Five years after the sisterhood was organized, several helpers who had been drawn by the dedicated lives of the sisters sought to embrace the *full monastic life*. There are now over 130 monastic sisters in the community.

Other offshoots of the sisterhood include a *youth movement*, which was particularly important in re-viving the Church after the Communist period. Some of the young people helped organize the *several choirs* which sing in the chapels of the convent and rehabilitation centers. The Festival Choir, composed of professional musicians, has issued several recordings in support of the works of the sisterhood.

“Deaconing” in Central Africa

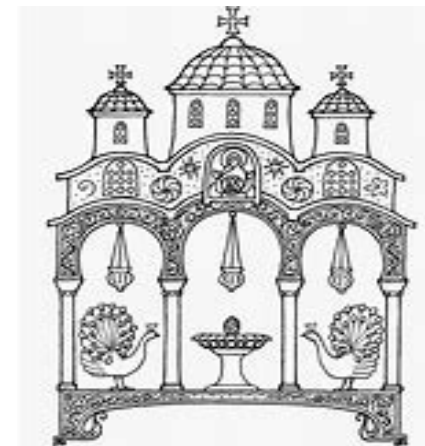
In February, 2016, it was reported that the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria had ordained several women as deacons. In fact he had blessed (not ordained) five women to enter ecclesiastical ministry for service in the Church’s 20 central African dioceses. One other woman, a senior catechist, was blessed as “deaconess of the mission” but not ordained sacramentally.

In Byzantine and Western Churches, the term deacon refers exclusively to a man ordained to the first rank in the mystery of the priesthood. In other Eastern Churches the terminology is different. The “full deacon” or “altar deacon” has the sacramental rank; all other ministries, such as catechists or chanters and even altar servers, may be called deacons.

The word *deacon* comes from a Greek word for servant, and in these Eastern Churches women in the service of the Church, usually as chanters or catechists, are often called deacons. In several Eastern Churches women serving as catechists or chanters are called “deacons;” some wear the orarion.

In the Coptic Orthodox Church, there are deaconesses who live in celibate communities, much like nuns, but their primary focus is service. They are active in conducting religious education and child care, caring for the sick and the needy.

Deaconesses in the Armenian Church are usually found in women’s monasteries – particularly those in “the wilderness.” They are considered true deacons, primarily ordained to provide the Eucharist to the solitaries. Their ministry is not limited to monasteries, however.



DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +Bishop John Adel Elya (1 year anniversary).

Flowers donated by Katherine Thomas & Sons in memory of the deceased members of the Thomas & Nikosey families.

July 26 +William & Bertha Rahall, Habib & Mary Rahall, deceased members of the Rahall & Reeks families. Requested by Nick Rahall and family.

THANK YOU!

Our new Gospel Book arrived from St. Elizabeth's Convent in Minsk this past week. This is the same monastery referenced in today's leaflet (**Giving Their Lives in Service.**) Proceeds from the work done by its various workshops helps St. Elizabeth's support its *diaconia* or service.

The purchase was made possible by donations in memory of several parishioners who passed away this year. It will be on the icon stand after Liturgy so that you can see it up close. Due to the pandemic, please do not touch or kiss the Gospel. A simple metany is fine.

REMINDER

We will celebrate the feast of the Holy Prophet Elijah with the Divine Liturgy tomorrow at 7pm. After the Liturgy, Fr. Bryan will do the traditional blessing of cars.

Feast Day Liturgical Schedule

Mon. 7/20, 7PM - Divine Liturgy for the feast of the Great Prophet Elijah

Wed. 8/5, 7PM - Great Vespers for the feast of the Transfiguration

Thu. 8/6, 7PM - Divine Liturgy for the feast of the Transfiguration and Blessing of Grapes

Mon. 8/10, 7PM - Paraclisis

Fri. 8/14, 7PM - Great Vespers for the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos

Sat. 8/15, 10AM - Divine Liturgy for the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos

If you have family news you would like to share with the parish, please contact Fr. Bryan so that he can put it in the bulletin.

Also, if you need help with anything during this uncertain time, please contact Fr. Bryan so that he can assist or put you in contact with parishioners who have volunteered to help.

- ◆ Please continue to pray for all those infected with Covid-19 as well as those who care for them. Let us also remember those who have lost their lives to the virus. Memory eternal!
- ◆ Please remember in your prayers all the members of our parish who are sick or suffering in any way. Please contact Fr. Bryan with the names of those folks whose names you would like to include in the bulletin so that we can all pray for them.
- ◆ Let us also pray for our country and for our public authorities, that that may be strengthened in every good deed.

FINANCIALS

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$ 1,297
Memorials	\$ 1,280
Total	\$ 2,577

I am very grateful to those of you who have continued to send in your offerings during this time. If you have not done so and are able, please prayerfully consider mailing in your offerings. It takes \$8,000 monthly to operate the parish. At this point, I have not had to access our savings to cover monthly expenses. With your help, we can keep it that way!

God bless your generosity!

Giving Their Lives in Service

THRIVING WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES OFTEN “give birth” to small groups who devote themselves to one type of service or another: choirs, altar guilds, transport providers, food pantry coordinators and the like. Usually these groups are task-oriented: they remain lay parishioners and come together only to perform the service their group has embraced.

Sometimes the needs are so great in a given place or time that the people commit themselves to a consecrated life of service in order to address an emerging need which existing Church structures are not equipped to handle. The Russian Orthodox Sisterhood of St. Elizabeth in Minsk, Belarus is such a community.

At the end of Soviet rule, some Orthodox Christians in Minsk decided to pool their efforts to help rebuild the city’s Cathedral, destroyed under Communism. They began performing menial tasks, such as carting away construction debris. They soon realized the scope of the reconstruction needed: the entire nation, not just one church building, would have to be rebuilt.

A group of these volunteers formed the Sisterhood of St Elizabeth, now numbering over 300 members, who devote themselves to caring for people with special needs in a number of residential centers in the Minsk area. They help the residents develop a lifestyle based on the cycles and the values of the Church’s traditions, rather than on the eclectic ideas of modern throw-away culture. The members of the sisterhood concentrate on supporting the residents by establishing relationships, discussing problems and challenges, and providing spiritual counsel as well. Some members support this work by maintaining church shops throughout the capital, and conducting a world-wide religious goods service which distributes items all over the world.

Not monastics in the traditional Eastern sense, these “sisters of mercy” embrace a way of life based chiefly on service, rather than on prayer and fasting. In this they resemble many religious orders in the Western Church devoted to teaching, nursing and similar pursuits.

Members of the sisterhood offer a holistic lifestyle to people at risk from the brokenness of a post-Communist civilization. “The world teaches us to be egoists: live for your own sake and it doesn’t matter how other people live!” the sisters reason. “That is why the ministry of a sister of mercy who sacrifices her time, her energy, and her heart to serve her neighbors is rewarded a hundredfold. The Lord gives one an experience of love and mercy they will need when they pass from this temporary life to the eternal one.”

Sisterhood members serve in a 180-bed men’s rehabilitation center, and two similar centers for women and children, where people develop agricultural and construction skills and experience basic human interaction, which many lack. As the sisterhood grew, it began first a kindergarten and then a primary school. More recently, it has organized a visiting nurse service to care for the homebound. “Every individual is like a damaged icon that reveals her bright face to the extent that she is purified from sin through repentance,” the sisterhood teaches. “We need to do our best to help people to become pure, to start seeing God’s image within them, and to put effort into fighting their sins and passions. This is not an easy task, so no one can do it on her own, without God’s help and the support of her neighbors. However, if one has hope, faith, and trust in God, coupled with mutual pursuit of Love, everything is possible!”

Prokimenon

Reader: Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, you just; exult, all you upright of heart.

People: Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, you just; exult, all you upright of heart.

Verse: Happy are those whose faults are taken away, and whose sins are covered.

People: Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, you just; exult, all you upright of heart.

Reader: Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, you just;

People: Exult, all you upright of heart.

Epistle: Titus 3: 8-15

Alleluia Verses

May the Lord answer you in the days of distress; may the name of the God of Jacob defend you.

Verse: O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance

Gospel: Mt 5:14-19 – Sunday of the Fathers

Hirmos– It is truly meet...

Kinonikon: Praise the Lord from the heavens...

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

