

**From the feast of the Transfer of the Remains of the Protomartyr Stephen
(Aug. 2)**

Your heart was enlightened by the grace of the Spirit and your face seemed like that of an angel, O Stephen, because of the inner radiance illuminating your body, revealing the splendor of your soul to those who saw you. Because of this, you received a glorious vision when the heavens were miraculously opened for you, O first among martyrs and their pride.— Vespers

Seeing the flowers filling the universe with a fragrant perfume, I admire this wondrous spectacle: that, despite the cold of winter, they flourish even more than in the spring, when all flowers are most abundant. Thus was the martyr of Christ who was the first to flower and became the gate through which have passed all those who fought the good fight, blossoming amid the cold of torments. He showed the unswerving way to all who wished to struggle, the first of a beautiful line, radiant in their heroic deeds. He is the first to have suffered for Christ and received a martyr's reward.— Orthros



**NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
AUGUST 2, 2020**



JESUS WALKING ON THE WATER

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)

I: 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 8, pg. 42)

You descended from on high, O compassionate One, and consented to burial for three days that You might free us from suffering. O Lord, our life and our resurrection, 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 of the Transfiguration (Tone 7)

On the mountain You were transfigured O Christ God, and your disciples saw as much of your glory as they could hold, so that when they would see You crucified they would know that You suffer willingly, and would proclaim to the world that You are verily the splendor of the Father.

For What Do We Pray?

Our liturgical books indicate that this service is prayed “in times of distress and sorrow of soul.” The opening troparion expresses these emotions: “We will never cease, O Mother of God, although unworthy, to proclaim your power. If you no longer intercede for us, who will deliver us from so many misfortunes? Who would ever have preserved us free until now? We shall never leave you, O Lady, for you always save you servants from all tribulations.”

The canon of the Small Paraclisis is sung to a lively melody and expresses confidence in the Theotokos’ care for us, in troparia such as these:

“You who carried within you the Benefactor of all and the Cause of every good favor, let His abundant grace spring forth to all of us. You have the fullness of power, since you’ve given birth to the Lord, the Almighty One.”

“Give me your pure joy, Virgin pure and immaculate, you who gave birth to the cause of happiness, and fill my heart with the gladness of your Son, our God.

The Great Paraclisis adds other notes to our picture of the Virgin as our intercessor:

“I profess you, O Lady, to be truly Theotokos: you who have both banished and triumphed over the might of Death, for as the source of Life, you freed me from Hades’ bonds, raising me to life, though I was fallen down to earth.”

“The turmoils of this life encircle me like bees around a honeycomb, O Virgin. They have seized my heart and now hold it captive, and I am pierced with the stings of afflictions, O Maiden. Yet, O all-holy one, be my defender, my helper and my rescuer.”

One unusual feature of these canons is the following pair of hymns sung after each one, with a metany after each verse:

“Deliver your servants from all dangers, O Mother of God, for to you, after God, we flee for refuge. You are our impregnable fortress, Our intercessor.”

“O Mother of God, worthy of all praise, look down with compassion upon the ills of my afflicted body and heal the infirmities of my soul.”

Finally the celebrant solemnly venerates the icon of the Theotokos as the following glorification (or megalynarion) is sung: “May the lips of all heretics be sealed because they refuse to bow before your all-holy icon, which is fashioned after the blessed *Hodigitria*, depicted by the holy Luke the Apostle.”

This hymn reflects the iconoclastic controversy during which this service was composed. The iconoclasts refused to venerate icons of Christ, His Mother or the saints and for over a century persecuted those who did venerate them.

The *Hodigitria* mentioned here is the image of Christ enthroned on the arm of His Mother who points to Him, showing us the way to the One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. The original of this icon was reputedly painted by St. Luke. The most famous icon in Constantinople, it was lost during the fall of the city to the Turks in 1453.

Another observance associated with this Fast in the Byzantine tradition, is the outdoor procession with the Holy Cross on August 1. Due to its climate, Constantinople was subject to insect-borne diseases at this time of summer. A procession was held each day of the Fast, praying for relief. Water was blessed and sprinkled over the city as well. Today this observance is remembered on the first of this month with a procession and the Lesser

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +Bertha Peters (40 Day). Requested by the Parish.

+**Saddalah al Kateb.** Requested by his family

August 9 +Montaha Abboudy (40 Day). Requested by the family.

August 16+ James Halal, Mitchell Bollus, Richard Francis, Naphie Samara, Bertha Peters. Requested by Marilyn and Zenon Tencza.

August 23 +Richard Francis, James Halal. Requested by Joe and Lorraine Lian.

REMINDER

The Dormition Fast begins August 1. This two week fast prepares us for the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos on August 15. During this time, meat, meat products, dairy, and fish are traditionally not eaten. The exception is the feast of the Transfiguration (Aug. 6) when fish is allowed. Remember that fasting is a tool to help us, not a law unto itself. Keep the fast as best you can. Those with health issues, small children and women who are pregnant or nursing may need to modify the fast. Please contact Fr. Bryan if you have any questions. The schedule of services during the fast is printed below.

Feast Day Liturgical Schedule

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

July 2020

Revenue \$6,855
Expenses \$7,003
Net (\$ 148)

YTD (10.2019-7.2020)

Revenue \$81,993
Expenses \$86,468
Net (\$ 4,655)

As you can see, we had a very small deficit in July. Year to date, we are also running a deficit. Part of this is due to getting caught up with the 2019 balance we owe the Eparchy, which we have done. Given the environment in which we currently find ourselves, our financial situation is not too bad.

Thanks to everyone who has continued to send in their contributions on a regular. As a reminder, it costs approximately \$8,000 monthly to maintain the parish. Your continued generosity has made it possible to pay our operating costs without dipping into savings.

May God continue to bless you!

The Fast of the Theotokos

SUMMER, IN OUR WORLD at least, is traditionally a time for sun and fun: cookouts, the beach, pool parties and the like. Yet in the midst of summer – in the week which has been compared to the highest seat of a Ferris wheel when it pauses in its turning – we are called to fast. The first two weeks of August are observed in the Byzantine Churches as the *Fast of the Theotokos*, in preparation for the feast of her Dormition on August 15.

In the early Church, the Dormition Fast was generally observed in both East and West. Pope St. Leo the Great mentioned it in the mid-fifth century in connection with the seasons of the year: “The Church Fasts are situated in the year in such a way that a special abstinence is prescribed for each time. Thus, for Spring, there is the Spring Fast, the Forty Days {the Great Fast}; for summer there is the Summer Fast... [the Apostles’ Fast]...for Autumn there is the Autumn Fast, in the seventh month [Dormition Fast]; for Winter there is the Winter Fast [Nativity Fast].”

Today the Coptic, Malankara and Syriac Churches, as well as the Byzantine, continue to observe this 14-day fast period. In the Armenian and Maronite traditions, the fast lasts for one week rather than two. In the traditional calendar of the Roman Church, August 14 is observed as a day of fasting in preparation for this feast.

This fast period is one of several aspects of this celebration which has earned it the title of the “summer Pascha,” a feast pointing to the ultimate resurrection of all flesh at the last day. Just as the feast of Christ’s resurrection is paired with the feast of the Annunciation (March 25), the Dormition is paired with the feast of Christ’s Holy Transfiguration (August 6). As Pascha is preceded by the Holy Friday evening observance of the Burial of Christ, the Dormition is marked in many places by a comparable burial service for the Theotokos, when lamentations patterned after the Holy Week hymns are sung. In some places a burial shroud (epitaphios), with the image of the Dormition, is carried in procession as well.

The Paraclisis to the Theotokos

In the Byzantine Churches of the Mediterranean world, the most prominent feature of the Dormition Fast is the celebration of the Paraclisis to the Theotokos, a service invoking the Virgin’s intercession for those we commemorate during the service. It is said that, as the Virgin sensed her approaching death, she prayed continually for her Son’s disciples and for those who would believe their message. And so, as the feast of the Domition draws near, we ask her prayers for our Church and our loved ones with a similar intensity.

The Paraclisis to the Theotokos is patterned in part on Orthros (Matins). There is an opening psalm, troparia, a Gospel reading, and a canon, concluding with an incensing of the whole church and a solemn veneration of the Virgin’s icon. Intercessory litanies for those whom we are commemorating are interspersed throughout the service.

There are actually two canons used, which give their names to the service as a whole. The Small Paraclisis includes the older canon, composed in the ninth century by Theosterictus the Monk. This Paraclisis may be used at any time throughout the year. The Great Paraclisis, which is only sung during the Dormi-

Prokimenon

Reader: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them; let all round about him bring gifts to the awesome Lord!

People: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them; let all round about him bring gifts to the awesome Lord!

Verse: God is renowned in Judah; in Israel, great is his name.

People: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them; let all round about him bring gifts to the awesome Lord!

Reader: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them;

People: Let all round about him bring gifts to the awesome Lord!

Epistle: 1 Cor 3:9-17

Alleluia Verses

Come, let us rejoice in the Lord; let us sing joyfully to God our Savior!

Verse: Let us greet his presence with thanksgiving; let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

Gospel: Mt 14:22-34 – Jesus walks on the water

Our new Gospel Book arrived from St. Elizabeth’s Convent in Minsk recently. Proceeds from the work done by its various workshops helps St. Elizabeth’s support its *diaconia* or service.

The purchase was made possible though donations made in memory of some of our parishioners who passed away this year. Their family members made donations and asked that they be used for things needed in the church.

There are a number of things we still need. They include: a second icon stand, red & blue altar cloths as well as some smaller items. If you would like to donate any of these items in memory of your loved ones, please contact Fr. Bryan.

