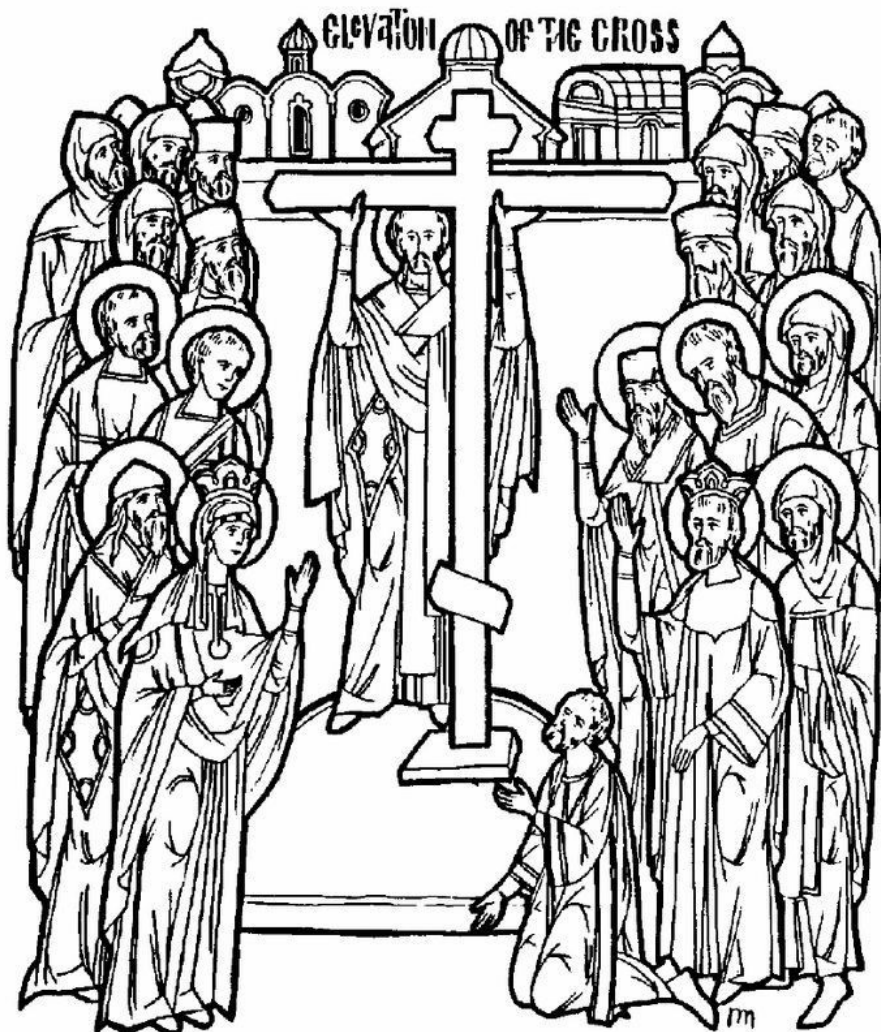


The Cross – Tree of Life

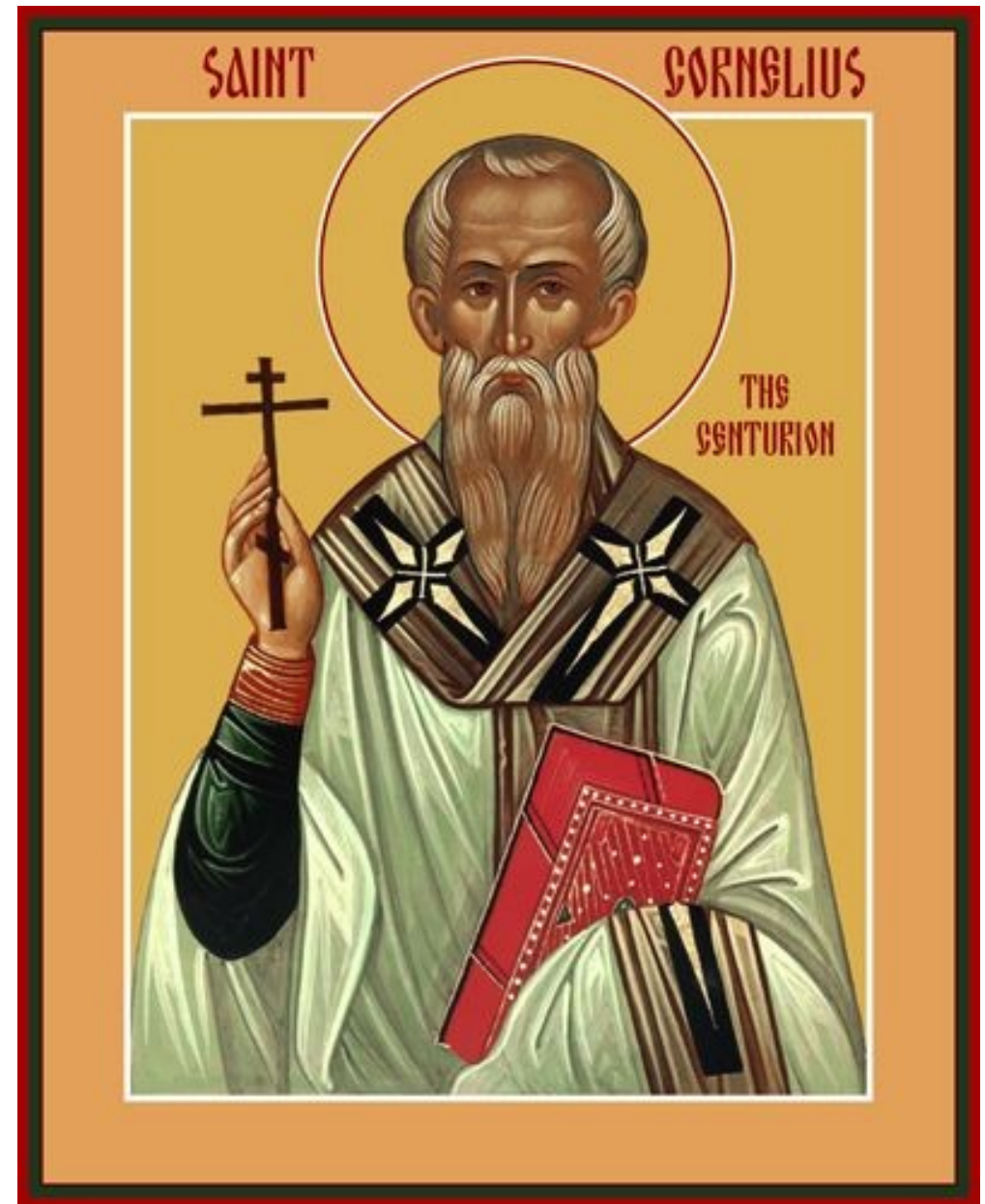
While the clergy and people are venerating the holy cross, the following is sung:

Come, you people, and look on this marvelous wonder! Let us venerate the power of the cross. In Paradise a tree brought forth the fruit of death, but life is the blossom of this tree on which the sinless Lord was nailed. Reaping incorruption from it, all the nations cry: “You, who through the cross has laid Death low and set us free – glory to You!”

The sayings of the prophets foretold the holy wood by which Adam was set free from the ancient curse of death. Today, at the exaltation of the cross, all creation raises its voice, asking of God plenteous mercy. O Master, who alone are boundless in Your compassion, be our atonement and save our souls.



SUNDAY BEFORE THE HOLY CROSS SEPTEMBER 13, 2020



HIEROMARTYR CORNELIUS THE CENTURION
Feast Day - September 13

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, pg. 41)

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 Dormition (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.

Troparion of the Vigil (Tone 2)

We offer You, O Lord, as a means of intercession, the life-giving Cross, a sign of your bounty You have given us in spite of our unworthiness. Save our country and your people who offer You their supplications through your Mother, O You who along are the Lover of Mankind.

Troparion of the Dedication (Tone 4)

As You had shown from on high the splendor of the firmament, so did You show on earth the splendor of the dwelling-place of your holy glory: make it stand firm forever and ever, and accept the supplications which we offer there to You, unceasingly, through your Mother, O You the Life and Resurrection of all!

Kondakion of the Dedication (Tone 4)

You have made of the Church a resplendent heaven, enlightening all the faithful: wherefore we stand in the midst of this holy dwelling-place and we cry out to You: "Make firm this house, O Lord!"

Veneration of the Cross

We know from the journal of the Spanish pilgrim-nun Egeria that the cross was venerated on Holy Friday, despite an unusual risk:

“Then a chair is placed for the bishop in [Golgotha](#) behind the [liturgical] Cross, which is now standing; the bishop duly takes his seat in the chair, and a table covered with a linen cloth is placed before him; the deacons stand round the table, and a silver-gilt casket is brought in which is the holy wood of the Cross. The casket is opened and [the wood] is taken out, and both the wood of the Cross and the [title](#) are placed upon the table. Now, when it has been put upon the table, the bishop, as he sits, holds the extremities of the sacred wood firmly in his hands, while the deacons who stand around guard it.

“It is guarded thus because the custom is that the people, both faithful and catechumens, come one by one and, bowing down at the table, kiss the sacred wood and pass through. And because, I know not when, someone is said to have bitten off and stolen a portion of the sacred wood, it is thus guarded by the deacons who stand around, lest anyone approaching should venture to do so again.

“And as all the people pass by one by one, all bowing themselves, they touch the Cross and the title, first with their foreheads and then with their eyes; then they kiss the Cross and pass through, but none lays his hand upon it to touch it. When they have kissed the Cross and have passed through, a deacon stands holding the ring of Solomon and the horn from which the kings were anointed; they kiss the horn also and gaze at the ring.”

Recovery from the Persians

In 602 the Persian Sassanian Shah began a 26-year long war against the Byzantine/ Roman Empire. In 614 Sassanian troops conquered Jerusalem and appointed two prominent Jews as its rulers. After only a few months Christians in the city rebelled, but the uprising was quickly crushed. The Persians retaliated by seizing the holy cross and taking it to their capitol as spoils of war.

In 628 a new Shah made peace with the Byzantines. Palestine was returned to Roman control and on March 21, 630 the Emperor Heraclius marched triumphantly into Jerusalem bearing the precious cross. The Emperor, taking off his shoes and his imperial robes, carried the cross into the Anastasis where it was once again triumphantly exalted. It was then resolved that the Feast of the Cross be celebrated throughout the empire, for which reason it is called the Universal Exaltation.

All the Earth Glorifies the Cross

When St Helena found the crosses at the site of Christ’s tomb she noticed a fragrant plant, then unknown in Rome, which she named basil, the royal plant. In the Middle East the cross is adorned with basil leaves at the ceremony of the exaltation. The basil is then distributed to the worshippers.

In the Slavic Churches the ceremony of the exaltation is generally performed only by the bishop in his cathedral or an abbot in his monastery. During the ceremony the cross is often showered with rose petals which are then dipped in rose water and given to the faithful.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today The people of Beirut

Sept 20 +Elizabeth Harlacher (40 day). Requested by her family.
+William & Bertha Rahall, Habib & Mary Rahall, Rahall & Reeks Families.
Requested by Nick Rahall and family.

Upcoming Feast Day Liturgical Schedule

Mon. 9/14, 6PM - Divine Liturgy for the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Wed. 9/23, 6PM –Divine Liturgy for the feast of Conception of John the Baptist

NOTE: Evening feast day services will be at 6PM effective September 1 unless announced otherwise.

THANK YOU

We received a check in the amount of \$41,550 from the Syrian and Lebanese American Association of Worcester this past week. This represents a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the Association's real estate. Last August, we received a payment of \$2,658.84 bringing the total received to \$44,208.84. The parish is very grateful for these funds. Thank-you from the community of Our Lady of Perpetual Help!

There are a number of things we need for the church. They include: a second icon stand, a second candle box, red & blue altar cloths, new vigil lamps for the iconostasis and walls, new altar server sticharia, 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.

Financials

August

Revenue \$ 7,745
Expenses \$ 9,255
Net (\$ 1,510)

YTD(10/2019-8/2020)

Revenue \$89,738
Expenses \$95,903
Net (\$ 6,165)

We had a small deficit this month which was primarily due to having to have some trees removed from the property. The year to date deficit is primarily due to paying back assessments and retirement contributions to the Diocese. NOTE: I used the wrong headings last week. It should have read as above. The numbers were correct but the headings incorrect. My apologies!

LAST WEEK'S Collection: Regular: \$983 Candles: \$16 Total: \$999

Thanks to everyone who has continued to send in their contributions on a regular basis. 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 for your generosity to your parish!

His Grace, Bishop NICHOLAS, is pleased to announce that, regarding the Collection for Lebanon Relief, initially the Eparchy sent immediately \$10,000 from eparchial funds. Subsequently, an additional \$50,000, collected from the faithful around the US, has been sent, for a total of \$60,000!

Sayinda spoke recently with Metropolitan of Beirut, Archbishop George Bacouni, who is most grateful for the generosity of our people. Archbishop Bacouni wanted to reassure us that all the money he receives goes to meet the direct needs of the people for food, shelter, etc., and that it is what is called "fresh money" in Lebanon, meaning that, once transferred to the Lebanese bank, the bank gives the exact dollar amount that has been given them, instead of the Lebanese pound equivalent, which had been the case before the catastrophe.

NOTE: As of September 9, OLPH has sent \$5,375 to the Diocese toward the relief effort. Many of you have also donated goods to the drive organized by George Aboody. May God continue to bless you for everything you are doing to help our suffering brothers and sisters in Beirut!

2020 BISHOP'S APPEAL

This year's Appeal kicks off in the next few weeks. Each year, Sayidna Nicholas allocates 10% of the funds raised for charitable causes. This year, that 10% will go to aid the Melkites in Lebanon. Be on the lookout for your Appeal letter and be as generous as possible.

We Glory in Your Cross

MANY OF THE FEASTS we celebrate each year have a special rite connected with them. The Great Sanctification of Water on the Theophany, the *hajme* service on Pascha and the veneration of icons on the Sunday of Orthodoxy are perhaps the best-known examples of these festal observances.

There is also a special rite proper to the feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross (September 14) called, appropriately, the Exaltation of the Cross. During the Great Doxology at Orthros the cross, adorned with flowers and herbage is brought in procession to the center of the church where it is placed on a table or analogion. Everyone then makes three prostrations before the cross. After this, the priest raises the cross high and, facing East, intones a petition. The chanters respond by singing *Lord, have mercy* one hundred times as the priest blesses the East with the holy cross. He does the same successively facing North then West then South and then East again as he circles the table. He intones the kondakion of the Holy Cross and blesses the people. The cross is placed on the table and everyone makes three prostrations before it, singing “We bow in worship before Your cross, O Master, and we sing praise to Your holy resurrection.” Then everyone in turn venerates the cross. In some churches this rite of exaltation is performed after the Divine Liturgy.

The Discovery of the Cross

This rite is a reenactment of something that happened spontaneously when the cross was first discovered at the excavation for the Church of the Anastasis during St Helena’s expedition to the Holy Land in AD 326-328. The fourth-century Church historian Socrates Scholasticus described what took place in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

The site of Christ’s death and resurrection had been covered over by a pagan temple during the Roman persecutions of the Church. St Helena had the temple destroyed to uncover the sacred site. Three crosses were discovered buried near the Lord’s tomb. The title placed on the Lord’s cross (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews) was lying with the crosses but it was not clear on which of the three crosses the Lord had been crucified. The Bishop of Jerusalem, Makarios, had each of the crosses placed in turn on a terminally ill woman. When this woman was healed at the touch of the third cross, it was taken as a sign that this was the cross of Christ.

When local Christians heard of this discovery, they all wanted to see the Lord’s cross and to venerate it. Bishop Makarios, took the cross onto a raised platform and lifted it on high, ‘exalting’ it, for all to see. The people fell to their knees, bowing down before the cross and crying out repeatedly: *Kyrie eleison!*

As Theodoret of Cyr (393-457) described it in his *Ecclesiastical History*, Chapter 17, St Helena “... had part of the cross of our Savior conveyed to the palace. The rest was enclosed in a covering of silver, and committed to the care of the bishop of the city, whom she exhorted to preserve it carefully, in order that it might be transmitted uninjured to posterity.”

Prokimenon

Reader: O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance!

People: O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance!

Verse: To You, O Lord, I have called: O my Rock, be not deaf to me!

People: O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance!

Reader: O Lord, save Your people

People: And bless Your inheritance!

Epistle: Gal 6:11-18

Alleluia Verses

I have exalted one chosen out of my people. I have found David my servant, and anointed him with holy chrism.

Verse: For my hand shall support him, and my arm shall make him strong.

Gospel: John 3: 13-17—Sunday before the Exultation of the Holy Cross

Special Petitions for the Ecumenic Prayer (Inserted after the third petition)

- For all your people who have proven positive with the coronavirus, that they may be restored to full health and offer you their praise and thanksgiving, we pray to you, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For all those who have died as a result of the coronavirus that they may be granted rest with the Saints and the mercy of God in the Heavenly Kingdom, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For doctors, nurses, and all in health care, risking their lives to minister to those afflicted with the coronavirus, that they remain safe, and in good health as they serve others, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For all your people in Lebanon who were hurt during the disastrous explosion, that they may be restored to full health, and for those who died that they may be granted rest among the Saints, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For peace throughout the Middle East, especially in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Iraq, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.