

Financials

July

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

YTD(10/2019-7/2020)

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 mostly due to paying assessments and retirement contributions to the Diocese.

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: To date, OLPH has sent approximately \$5,000 to the Diocese toward the relief effort. Many of you have also donated goods to the drive organized by George Abody. May God continue to bless you for everything you are doing to help our suffering brothers and sisters in Beirut!



**FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
SEPTEMBER 6, 2020**



ARCHANGEL MICHAEL

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 (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.

Be shafa'ati Walidatil Eelah, ya Mukhallisu, khallisna.

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.

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 5, pg. 40)

Let us, O faithful, praise and worship the Word, coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our Salvation, for He was pleased to be lifted in the flesh upon the cross, and to endure death, and to raise the dead by His glorious resurrection.

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.

Kondakion of the Nativity of the Theotokos (Tone 2)

Through your holy birth, O Immaculate One, Joachim and Anne were delivered from the shame of childlessness, and Adam and Eve from the corruption of death. Your people, redeemed from the debt of their sins, cry out to you to honor your birth: “the barren one gives birth to the Mother of God the Sustainer of our life!”

Those Who Accept the Invitation

The messengers seek out – not the pillars of society at their farms and businesses –but the insignificant on the highways, representing the Gentiles. According to the Jewish opinion of the day, the Gentiles were inferior in God’s eyes to the Chosen People. Nevertheless, they respond to the king’s invitation while the “important people” did not.

Churchmen are often criticized for catering to the well-to-do: landowners, benefactors, etc. Pope Francis of Rome has repeatedly pushed Catholics to focus their efforts on the poor, without ignoring the leaders of society. In fact, he notes, what generally happens in our world is generally the opposite. “If investments in the banks fail, ‘Oh, it’s a tragedy.’” He said at a Pentecost vigil in Rome; “but if people die of hunger or don’t have food or health, nothing happens. This is our crisis today.” In the language of Matthew 22, Pope Francis might be called “the bishop of the highways.”

The Wedding Garment

In the second part of this parable, the people from the highways have come to the banquet, but one is not wearing the appropriate “wedding garment.” In Jewish tradition, this meant *finery*, one’s best clothing. A Jewish parable tells of a king inviting people to a banquet. Some went home and prepared immediately. Others continued working and arrived still in their work clothes and so were not allowed in. In the Gospel, this theme of readiness is frequently found in Jesus’ teachings, particularly in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Mt 25:1-13).

Many Fathers interpreted “the appropriate garment” to mean a virtuous life. The Gentiles may have replaced the leadership of Israel in the People of God, but if they ignored the Gospel way of life, they too would be excluded. St Gregory the Dialogist saw the garment as woven out of love for God and love for others. “These are great precepts,” he wrote, “sublime precepts, and for many they are hard to fulfill; nevertheless, this is the wedding garment. And whoever sits down at the wedding feast without it, let him watch with fear: for when the King comes in, he shall be cast forth.”

The “Bridegroom Matins” of Holy Week uses this interpretation as the basis for its beloved exapostilarion, “I see Your bridal chamber adorned, O my Savior, but I not possess the right garment that I might enter therein. Brighten the robe of my soul, O Giver of light, and save me.” We must acknowledge our own spiritual emptiness (“I have no garment”) and seek God’s grace (“Brighten the robe of my soul”) to be made worthy of a place at the banquet.



DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today The people of Beirut

+**The People of Beirut who lost their lives in the recent explosion.**

+**Mitchell Bollus, Richard Francis, Naphie Samara.** Requested by Robert Ghiz

Today's flowers were donated by Joe and Lorraine in memory of all our parishioners who passed away in 2020.

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

Tue. 9/8, 6PM - Divine Liturgy for the feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos

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.

The Samuel J. Daige Educational Trust Our Lady of Perpetual Help Scholarship



The Samuel J. Daige Educational Scholarship Trust was funded by the estate of Gloria Daige in memory of her son, Samuel J. Daige. Samuel was highly decorated for his military service in Vietnam receiving the Bronze Star Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, Purple Heart w/One Oak Leaf Cluster and the Vietnam Service Medal.

The Samuel J. Daige scholarship trust provides for an allocation for members of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church (Worcester, MA) who are of Lebanese descent.

Scholarships are intended to support the tuition and tuition-related fees incurred by eligible students who are pursuing an associate, bachelor or graduate degree at an accredited college or university in the United States. One scholarship will be awarded each year to an active member of Our Lady of Perpetual help Church in Worcester, MA.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be considered for this scholarship, you must:

1. Be under 25 years of age.
2. Be accepted and enrolled in an accredited college or university in the United States in an Associate's, Bachelor's or graduate degree program.
3. Be a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help church in Worcester, MA.

Be of Lebanese descent (minimum of 6.25% Lebanese ancestry)

SELECTION PROCESS

The following criteria will be considered in the selection process:

1. Letter of recommendation from church priest or member of church leadership council.
2. Written essay on educational goals and career objectives (100 words maximum) .

Application and required documents should be mailed to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees:

Zachary W. Esper, Jr.

3 Cedar Hill Road

Grafton, MA 01519

If you have any questions or need additional information, please send inquires to OLPH or zesper@hotmail.com or call (508) 930-0945.

Story of a Royal Wedding

THE GOSPEL PARABLE READ at today's Divine Liturgy is actually two stories with two different, if complementary, points. The first concerns those invited to the banquet and those who finally came. The second is the issue of the so-called "wedding garment."

The Gospel of Matthew depicts Christ as encountering increasing opposition the closer He came to the center of the Jewish establishment, Jerusalem. In Mt 21:1-17, Jesus enters the Holy City, ejects the money-changers from the temple and confronts the chief priests. Then we read four vignettes, each criticizing the Jewish leadership in the harshest of terms.

The first such condemnation is the episode of the withered fig tree (Mt 21:18-22). Then, in Mt 21:28-32, we read about the two sons: one who professed obedience to his father, but in words only – a veiled criticism of the Pharisees, who claimed to know the will of God – and the second who actually did the father's will.

In the words of St Hilary of Poitiers, the religious leaders "...put their faith in the Law and despised repentance from sin, glorying instead in the noble prerogative that they had from Abraham (*Homily on Matthew* 21:13).

The second son recalls the sinners who repented at the preaching of John the Baptist: the tax collectors and harlots who enter the kingdom of God before "the righteous," because one can repent of greed and lust, but not for the denial of the need for repentance. Finally, in verses 33-46, we read the parable of the wicked vinedressers, whose infidelity leads the owner of the vineyard to lease it to others. And, as the Gospel reminds us, "*When the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them*" (Mt 21:45).

The Royal Wedding

The story of the wedding banquet is in many ways an echo of the parable of the vinedressers. In each story, an important person reaches out to his people; he is rebuffed and finally turns to others. The vineyard owner in the first parable and the king in the second both represent God. The disdainful tenants and the invited guests signify the people of Israel. The new tenants of the first story and the new guests of the second represent the Gentiles, who would respond in faith.

It may be hard for us to imagine the reaction of the invited guests to the banquet. An invitation to such an occasion would be esteemed, even coveted. "*But,*" as the Gospel says, "*they made light of it and went their way: one to his own farm, another to his business*" (Mt 22:5). It is as if Matthew were describing our own day rather than his. This is the way that Many Christians – our own friends and relatives sadly among them – react to their invitation to the Eucharistic banquet week after week. But how could an invitation to a royal wedding be dismissed so easily?

Couching this parable in terms of a royal wedding is a way of saying that the initiative of God in sending to Israel the prophets who announced the coming Messiah was at least as compelling as an invitation to a kingly gala. One after another, prophets came and were recognized in some way as foretelling what was to come. At last the Forerunner came and proclaimed, "Everything is ready – this is the Lamb of God" but was ignored by many who heard him. Those invited had so lost themselves in the concerns of the everyday world that they treated the king's invitation like junk mail.

Prokimenon

Reader: You, O Lord, will keep us and preserve us always from this generation.

People: You, O Lord, will keep us and preserve us always from this generation.

Verse: Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any holy man, for truthfulness has vanished from among the children of men.

People: You, O Lord, will keep us and preserve us always from this generation.

Reader: You, O Lord, will keep us

People: And preserve us always from this generation.

Epistle: **2 Cor 1: 21-2:4**

Alleluia Verses

Your favor, O Lord, I will sing forever; from generation to generation, my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness.

Verse: For you have said, "My kindness is established forever." In heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.

Gospel: **Matthew 22: 2-14 (*Parable of the Wedding Feast*)**

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.