

*From the Divine Office for the Feast of SS Peter & Paul (June 29)*

*Let us extol Peter and Paul, the two great lights of the Church: two beacons illuminating the Church with all of God's Doctrine. By their preaching, they have led the Gentiles from ignorance to the knowledge of God. Wherefore, the one was nailed to the cross and made his way to Heaven, where he received the Keys of the Kingdom from Christ Himself, while the other, beheaded by the sword, went up in glory to the Savior. Through their prayers, overcome our invisible enemies, O Christ God, and make firm our Orthodox Faith, for You are the Lover of Mankind! (Vespers)*

*Brethren, let us sing together of the highest apostles, Peter and Paul, who have shed over the whole world the fire of their divine light, like suns. They are truly heralds of the Faith, teachers of doctrine, and trumpets proclaiming God; they are two columns upon which the Church rests, and they have cast down the temples of error. (Orthros)*



**FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

**JUNE 25, 2023**



**JESUS HEALING THE CENTURION'S SERVANT**

**Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church**  
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Worcester, MA 01604  
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Email: [olphmelkite@gmail.com](mailto:olphmelkite@gmail.com)/Website: [olphworcester.org](http://olphworcester.org)  
Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor  
Cell: (774) 502-8547  
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 3) pg. 39**

Let all in heaven rejoice, and all on earth be glad, for the Lord has exerted power with His arm: By death He has trampled upon Death and has become the firstborn from the dead. He has delivered us from the bosom of Hades and has granted 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.

### **Peter and Paul in Rome**

The last chapters of Acts speak of St. Paul's journey to Rome. Arrested in Jerusalem, he was tried by the Roman procurator, Porcius Festus. Paul, claiming his right as a Roman citizen, appealed to be heard by Caesar himself. The procurator acceded, "*You have appealed to Caesar; to Caesar you shall go*" (Acts 25:12).

Acts concludes by saying that, once in Rome St Paul lived under guard "*two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God...*" (Acts 28:30-31). As a Roman citizen, St Paul was ultimately beheaded.

St Peter's connection with Rome is not documented in Scripture, but written evidence from as early as the second century attests that he was thought to have preached there, where he was crucified upside down at his own request, feeling unworthy to die in the same way that Jesus did.

Two great churches were built over their burial places in the fourth century by St Constantine the Great. He erected St Peter's on the Vatican Hill, which was replaced in the sixteenth century by the basilica we see today. Following modern excavations the bones of a man in his 60s was unearthed there and on June 26, 1968 Pope Paul VI announced that the relics of St. Peter had been identified.

Constantine also commissioned St Paul's Outside the Walls which has been enlarged and rebuilt several times in the succeeding centuries. The saint's body lies in a crypt below the altar, except for his head which is enshrined in the pope's cathedral, St John Lateran.

Throughout history the Church of Rome has been considered pre-eminent because of the presence of these two apostles. Tertullian perhaps expressed it best: "What a happy Church that is, on which the apostles poured out their whole doctrine with their blood; where Peter had a passion like that of the Lord, where Paul was crowned with the death of John [the Baptist, by being beheaded]."

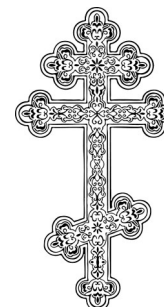
### **The Church Praises the Apostles**

With what garlands of praise shall we crown Peter and Paul, the greatest of the heralds of the Word of God, distinct in their person, but one in spirit – the one the chief of the apostles, the other who labored more than all the rest? Christ God, who is most merciful, fittingly crowned them both with diadems of glory and immortality.

What songs of praise could be worthy of Peter and Paul? They are like two wings on which the knowledge of God spreads out to the far ends of the earth and soars aloft to Heaven, two hands from which the Gospel pours forth grace, two feet on which the doctrine of truth travels about the world, two rivers of wisdom, two arms of the cross through which the merciful Christ casts down the pride of demons!

With what spiritual songs shall we praise Peter and Paul? The voices of the fearful Sword of the Spirit, the illustrious ornament of Rome, the delight of the whole world, the God-inspired tablets of the New Testament, conceived and uttered in Sion by Christ, the all-merciful God!

*Stichera from Vespers for June 29*



**DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS**

**Today** +Nick and Dora Barouk, Requested by Karen & Antonio Solitro and Michael and Virginia Mischitelli

**Today's Coffee Hr. Ginny & Mike Mischitelli and Karen & Antonio Solitro**  
**Next Sunday's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by**

**Last Week's Collection**

<b>Weekly</b>	<b>\$ 867</b>
<b>Candles</b>	<b>\$ 25</b>
<b>Coffee Hr.</b>	<b>\$ 37</b>
<b>Flowers</b>	<b>\$ 20</b>
<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>\$ 5</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 954</b>

**God bless you for your generosity!**



**FINANCIALS**

<u>MAY 2023</u>		<u>YTD (10.2022-5.2023)</u>	
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$6,075</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>\$59,926</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$9,968</b>	<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$70,357</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>(\$3,893)</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>(\$10,431)</b>

**FOOD DONATION BOX**

There is a green box in the narthex for food donations. Once a month, we will deliver whatever we collect to a local charity that helps those with food insecurity. Please buy a couple of extra items when you go the grocery store and put them in the box on your way into the church on Sunday. Thank you in advance for your generosity in helping those who need a little extra assistance!

**Welcome to any visitors we have with us this morning! We are happy to have you worship with us.**

**Please join us downstairs in the church hall for the coffee hour so that we can get to know each other better and answer any questions you may have about the parish or the Melkite Church.**

**100th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

Our 100th Anniversary will be celebrated on **November 4-5**. We will have Great Vespers followed by a banquet on November 4. On November 5, we will celebrate a hierarchal Divine Liturgy followed by lunch in the parish hall. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. More information will be forthcoming. Please contact Fr. Bryan if you would like to help with the planning and preparation for the occasion. Our next planning meeting will be **Tuesday June 27 at 6:30pm**.

**We are looking for donations to offset some of the costs for the anniversary celebration. If you can donate, please let us know.**

**Thanks in advance for your generosity!**

**NEW COMMUNICATION TOOL**

You may have recently received emails that look a little different. We are now communicating with the parish via a program called Flocknote. It is used by all the parishes in the Eparchy. It allows us to send emails and texts with the click of a button. If you are not getting these emails and texts, please reach out to Fr. Bryan and provide your email address and cell phone number so that you don't miss out!

**Thanks for your cooperation!**





## June 29 – Feast of the Prime Apostles, Peter and Paul When Icons Argue

THE FAST OF THE APOSTLES which follows the feast of Pentecost concludes with two special commemorations: on June 29 we remember the glorious leaders of the apostles, Peter and Paul; on the next day we observe a synaxis (assembly) for all Twelve. The feast of Saints Peter and Paul is particularly observed as the throne-feast of two apostolic patriarchates: Antioch (where both apostles ministered earlier in the lives) and Rome (where both were martyred and buried).

### Peter and Paul in Antioch

The Acts of the Apostles devotes its first part to the ministry of St Peter in the Holy Land. The second part concentrates on the ministry of St. Paul in Asia Minor and Europe. In the middle we find reports of the first controversy among the Christians: whether Gentile converts must observe the Law of Moses as well as believing in Christ.

The original Christian community in Jerusalem, led by James, the Lord's Brother, was composed of believing Jews. They objected to Peter receiving Gentiles into the Church. Peter defended his actions because the Gentile believers had received the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Jerusalem believers responded in awe, *"Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life"* (Acts 10:18).

The controversy erupted again, however, when St Paul was sent by the Church of Antioch to preach Christ in Cyprus and Asia Minor. Although he first taught in the Jewish synagogues, he soon gained a greater following among the Gentiles. When Paul returned to Antioch and reported what he had done, news spread to Jerusalem. Jewish believers in Christ from Jerusalem told Paul's Gentile converts that they also had to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses.

St Peter was drawn into the controversy when he came to Antioch, as St Paul describes in Gal 2: *"...I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision"* (Gal 2:11-12).

Ultimately the dispute was taken to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. There Peter defended Paul, saying *"Why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"* (Acts 15:10) A popular icon shows the reconciled apostles embracing. Finally James issued his ruling as head of the local Church: Gentile converts to Christ need only abstain from *"things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled and from sexual immorality"* (Acts 15:29).

Here the apostles retained the practice recorded in the story of Noah where God says, *"Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you green plants, I now give you everything. But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it"* (Gen 9:4). Since strangled animals do not shed blood they too were forbidden.

The ban on consuming blood was frequently repeated during the first centuries for a reason not found in Acts. Fourth-century Christians in Asia Minor found themselves in conflict with the Manichean sect which prohibited the eating of meat. The Christians countered at the Synod of Gangra (AD 340) by defending the eating of meat, as long as the prohibition of blood was observed. The decree of this synod was confirmed by the Council of Chalcedon in 451. We continue to observe this ban on fast days. We do not eat meat or fish, which have red blood, but may eat shellfish which do not.

St Peter is traditionally said to have remained in Antioch for seven years while St Paul continued on his missionary journeys. Peter's family is said to have remained there and, as far back as the first century AD, people in Antioch were claiming descent from the chief apostle. Certain Semaan families of modern-day Syria and Lebanon continue to make this claim.

### Prokimenon

**Reader:** Sing praise to our God, sing praise! Sing praise to our King, sing praise!

**People:** Sing praise to our God, sing praise! Sing praise to our King, sing praise!

**Reader:** All you peoples, clap your hands! Shout to God with cries of gladness!

**People:** Sing praise to our God, sing praise! Sing praise to our King, sing praise!

**Reader:** Sing praise to our God, sing praise!

**People:** Sing praise to our King, sing praise! .

### Epistle: Rom 6:18-23

### Alleluia Verses

In You, O Lord, I have hoped: let me never be put to shame. In Your justice, save me and deliver me, lend me Your ear and hasten my deliverance.

**Verse:** Be for me a protecting God, a sheltering house to save me.

### Gospel: Mt 8:5-13

### Upcoming Liturgical Schedule

**Wed June 28, 6PM - Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Apostles Peter & Paul**

**Please remember in your prayers:** Lorraine Lian, George Arraj, Jr., Ron Abraham, Peter Abraham, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Archie Opatka, Anthony Poti, Katherine Thomas, Charlotte Stockhaus, Ruth Welsh, Richard Abraham, Sr., Frank Boyda, Carol Boyda, Bob Lynch, Joe Najemy, Michael Mooradian, Michael McNeil, Jeff McNeil, Wyatt William Rahall, Lauren Abraham, Nicholas Haddad, Elaine Foley, David Ahlin, Elio Kanaan, all those affected by the earthquakes in Syria and Turkey, and the people of Ukraine.

If there are people for whom you would like me to pray, please reach out and give me their names. Part of our vocation as Christians is to pray for each other, especially when someone is sick or suffering in any way.