

*From the Divine Office for the Commemoration of Barnabas & Bartholomew (June 11)*

*With hymns of praise, let us venerate the true heralds of the Faith, the bright stars of the Church, Bartholomew and Barnabas, the teachers of believers, the initiates of Christ our Savior. Sowing the word of truth in the hearts of believers, they enabled them to bear a harvest of salvation. They intercede before Christ that our souls be saved. (Vespers)*

*Like clouds, O blessed ones, you poured down rain from Heaven to the very limits of the universe in order to refresh the souls of believers with the grace of God that they might bear fruit. Thus, you uprooted the weeds sown by the impious, O holy apostles. Wherefore, we sing praises in your honor. (Orthros)*



**SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
JUNE 11, 2023**



**JESUS CALLING THE FIRST APOSTLES**

**Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church**  
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Worcester, MA 01604  
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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 1) pg. 38**

After the stone was sealed by the Jews and the while the soldiers were watching Your spotless body, You rose, O Savior, on the third day, bestowing life to the world. Wherefore, the heavenly powers cried out to You, O Giver of life: "Glory to Your resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Your kingdom! Glory to Your economy, O You who alone are the lover of mankind!"

### **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.

### **A Christian Conscience**

Christians are called to form their consciences, their sense of right and wrong, not from secular philosophy but according to the teachings of Holy Tradition. Thus, when Fathers like Ss. Ambrose, Cyril of Jerusalem or John Chrysostom instructed catechumens, they used as examples the Biblical figures who personified the virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice.

St Basil the Great developed a coherent system of Christian ethics in his works *The Judgment of God, Faith and Morals*. He, too, based his teaching on the Scriptures but not simply on isolated passages. The word of God, he insisted, had to be proclaimed all-inclusively so that people could correctly form their consciences. St Basil warned the clergy to be sure to preach the word of God in its fullness; if they omitted some necessary teaching they would be accountable for their hearers' transgressions.

For an Eastern Christian, that fullness is based, not on principles of philosophy, but on the mystery of our salvation in Jesus Christ. It consists ultimately in putting on what St Paul calls "*the mind of Christ*" (1 Cor 2:16) which we discover in the pages of the Gospels. We also understand this mind to be expressed in other elements of Tradition, the voice of the Holy Spirit in the Church. These include all the Scriptures as well as the creeds, the writings of the Church Fathers, the texts of our liturgy, the canons of the councils, the icons, and the witness of the saints.

### **The Mind of Christ Today**

The heart of the authentic Tradition – in contrast to mere custom – is marked by its continuity with the practice of the apostolic Church and by its agreement with the consensus of the Church's experience through the ages. Thus, for example, abortion has been condemned by the historic Churches since the first century. Similarly sexual activity between any except married couples has never been accepted in the Church. The unbroken Tradition is that God's purpose for sexuality is directed at something more than bodily pleasure. In such cases we cannot claim to be discerning the mind of Christ by picking and choosing those teachings of the Tradition which suit us. Rather we are called to embrace the entire authentic Tradition which the Church has received it and passed it on to us.

Other issues seem to fall into much grayer areas where there is no clear or unwavering Tradition. Thus Christians can claim precedents for pacifism and for supporting the government or the armed forces in both Scripture and Tradition. Politics, the economy, the environment and social ethics are contemporary issues on which Christians often take opposing stands. As long as there is no clear teaching on such questions, Christians may take whatever stand is in accord with their conscience.

Some may not feel any guilt at supporting a free-market economy or open borders while others, who find these practices objectively wrong, would be morally guilty if they condoned them. The one person violates his conscience by endorsing such an act; the other person would not be guilty of sin for doing so.

The dilemma of conflicting consciences is a classic theme in Western literature. A recent example is *A Man for All Seasons*, the drama about St Thomas More who resisted King Henry VIII in his drive to separate the Church of England from Rome. When Thomas refused to endorse the king's plan, his friend the Duke of Norfolk advised him, "Oh, just come along and do it." Thomas More responded, "Oh, that's fine for you. Your conscience allows you to do that. And when you die, you go to heaven. And as for me, I go to hell." And Norfolk says, "Well, do it for friendship's sake." And he says, "When I go to hell, Norfolk, will you come with me 'for friendship's sake'?"

### DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

**Today**      **Our Families and Friends**  
+Carol Partridge. Requested by Nick Rahall & family

**June 18**    **All our fathers, living and deceased**

**June 25**    +Nick and Dora Barouk, Requested by Karen & Antonio Solitro and Michael and Virginia Mischitelli

Today's Coffee Hr. is hosted by the parish

Next Sunday's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by the ladies of the parish

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.

### Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$
Candles	\$
Coffee Hr.	\$
Other	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>



**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.**

### MIDDLE EASTERN FESTIVAL

**The final day of St. George Orthodox Cathedral's Middle Eastern Festival is today from noon to six. If you haven't already gone, please plan to attend and support our brothers and sisters!**

### SAVE THE DATE

As you may know, 2023 is the 100th anniversary of the parish. We will mark the occasion on **November 4-5**. We will celebrate 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 **Wednesday June 14 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!**



## Revealed Guidance and Conscience (Romans 2:10-16)

IN HIS EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS St. Paul speaks of a distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Jews, he indicates, have the Law (the Torah), the record of God's revelation to Moses, as their guide, unlike the Gentiles. This does not make them superior or holier in any way, *"For there is no partiality with God"* (Rom 2:11).

In the selection read today St Paul affirms that *"everyone who works what is good"* – the Gentiles as well as Jews – can be just in the sight of God. While Jews lived in the midst of Gentiles throughout the Mediterranean world, strict Jews did not mingle with Gentiles. If a Gentile wished to join them – and some did – they would have to observe the entire Law, starting with circumcision, just as any observant Jew would do. Keeping the Law of Moses was the great – and only – sign that a person was living according to God's will.

Paul's teaching was very different. Observance of the Law of Moses was fine, but people could be pleasing to God by following what their conscience tells them is right for they would be following the heart of the Law (the Ten Commandments) without explicitly knowing it. As the third-century commentator Origen wrote, "The Gentiles need not keep the Sabbaths or the new moons or the sacrifices which are written down in the law. For this law is not what is written on the hearts of the Gentiles. Rather it is that which can be discerned naturally, e.g. that they should not kill or commit adultery, that they should not bear false witness, that they should honor father and mother, etc." (Commentary on Romans 1.228).

Paul here prepares the ground for his most important teaching: that it was acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah which made one a true member of God's People, be he Jew or Gentile. If a person believed in Christ, then it did not matter whether he was circumcised or not or whether he observed all the ritual practices of Judaism.

St Paul goes on to note that there are sinners and righteous people among both Jews and Gentiles. Sinful Jews *"will be judged by the law for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law who will be justified"* (Rom 2:12-13). Gentiles, *"who do not have the Law,"* (v.14) have another standard by which they are judged. Gentiles, who *"by nature do the things in the Law ... who show the work of the law written in their hearts,"* (v.15) are judged by whether their conscience is in accord with the way of God. *"In the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ"* (v. 16) Gentiles will be judged by the witness of their conscience.

The Lord Jesus' parable of the last judgment (Mt 25: 31-46) expresses the same teaching in story form: *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the Gentiles will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats"* (v. 31-32). Some are judged righteous because *"I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me"* (v. 35-36). While commentators usually stress the charitable basis of the judgment, the point of the parable is actually that the righteous Gentiles served Christ without knowing Him: *"Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You?"* (v.37). These righteous Gentiles were simply following their conscience, doing what they felt was right. But when a non-believer's conscience leads them to love God's creation as He does, then *"inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me"* (v.40)

### What Is Conscience?

The idea that there is something within a person which leads them to decide what is right or wrong is found in many ancient cultures. Conscience, as St Paul uses the term, comes from the thought of the Greek and Roman philosophers such as Socrates, Aristotle, Seneca and Philo. It is described as a sense of moral awareness or consciousness that enables a person to judge something to be ethically right or wrong. Those with a well-developed conscience have a keen sense of right and wrong. People with no such beliefs may be amoral, even sociopaths with no principles governing their lives other than their own needs or desires.

Early Christian thinkers like St Clement of Alexandria and St Justin the Philosopher saw the truths in classical philosophy as preparing the Greeks to meet Christ just as the Torah did for the Jews. They saw the best of human thought as leading inevitably to the teachings of the Lord Jesus. This is why in many Byzantine churches frescoes depicting the pagan Greek philosophers were placed on the outer porches. Thus it was natural for St. Paul to use the philosophical term conscience when speaking about Greeks.

### Prokimenon

**Reader:** May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in You.

**People:** May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in You.

**Reader:** Exult, you just, in the Lord; praise from the upright is fitting.

**People:** May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in You.

**Reader:** May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us,

**People:** For we have hoped in You.

### Epistle: Rom. 2:10-16

### Alleluia Verses

O God, You granted me retribution and made peoples subject to me and saved me from my raging enemies.

**Verse:** Therefore, I will proclaim You, O Lord, among the nations, and I will sing praise to Your name.

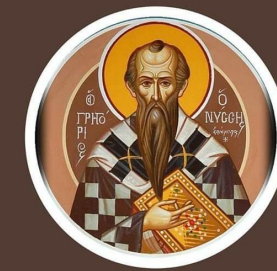
**Gospel: Mt. 4:18-23**

## NEW WEBSITE

**We have a new website: [olphworchester.org](http://olphworchester.org)**

**It is still a work in progress. Take a look and let us know what you think.  
Many thanks to Ryan Dumont for all his hard work developing the site!**

ORTHODOX CHURCH FATHERS



**Christ is the artist, tenderly  
wiping away all the grime of  
sin that disfigures the human  
face and restoring God's  
image to its full beauty.**

**St. Gregory of Nyssa**