

**EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
JULY 23, 2023**



**FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND**

**Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church**  
256 Hamilton St.  
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 7) pg. 42**

You destroyed Death by Your cross. You opened paradise to the thief. You changed the weeping of the myrrh-bearers, and commanded Your apostles to proclaim that You, O Christ God, have risen, granting 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.

The Messiah would come and restore Israel. The scattered Jews of the world would be drawn back to their homeland and they would all sit down to a great meal of celebration. How could the first Jewish believers in Christ not have thought of this banquet when reflecting on the feeding of the 5000? When Jesus spoke of many “coming from east and west,” He was adding a new note to the concept of this banquet: it would be open to Gentiles and many “sons of the kingdom” would be excluded.

The kingdom of God – and this, the great feast of the kingdom – would feature Jews and Gentiles eating together (an act forbidden in Jewish tradition). And so in Mt 15:30-38 we find Jesus’ miracle repeated, after He heals the Canaanite woman in the area of Tyre and Sidon. But this time it is 4000 Gentiles who were fed. The feeding of these multitudes – Jews and Gentiles – would proclaim to believing Jews that the time of the Messiah had arrived.

**In Our Worship**

Byzantine worship includes several allusions to the feeding of the multitudes. In the Divine Liturgy it is prescribed that five loaves be used to prepare the oblation. The Lamb is cut from one of them; the others are used to provide the particles representing the Theotokos and the saints, and the living and the dead for whom we pray. Once again the Church is fed from five loaves.

Five loaves are also used in the rite of artoklasia (breaking of the bread) celebrated on major feasts. The priest prays, “O Lord Jesus Christ our God, who blessed the five loaves in the wilderness and thus sustained five thousand men, bless these loaves, along with this wheat, wine and oil, and multiply them in this holy city and for Your whole world, and sanctify the faithful who partake of them...” Traditionally in some Churches many other loaves would be provided to feed the needy while the people sing, “Rich men have turned poor and gone hungry, but they that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good thing.” Thus the Messianic banquet and the soup kitchen have something in common: both point to the Lord as the ultimate and unfailing nourisher of all mankind.

**UPCOMING LITURGICAL SCHEDULE**

**Wed 8/2 6PM-Paraclisis**

**Sun 8.6 10AM-Feast of the Transfiguration followed by blessing of grapes**

**Wed 8.9 6PM-Paraclisis**

**Mon 8.14 6PM-Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos**





### DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +Habib & Miriam Rahall, William & Bertha Rahall, JR Rahall. Requested by Nick Rahall and family

Today's Coffee Hr. is hosted by Nick Rahall & family

**Fr. Bryan will bless cars after the Divine Liturgy this morning.**

#### Last Week's Collection

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

Will be in next week's bulletin



On **Friday August 4**, we will cook and serve a meal for Mustard Seed Ministries. We will gather at OLPH at 1pm that day to cook the meal and head to Mustard Seed around 4pm.

If you would like to help cook or serve, please reach out to Fr. Bryan or Susan Arraje. If you can't volunteer this month, monetary donations are also welcome.

Mustard Seed Ministries will also be the recipient of this month's dry food collection.



**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 & FAMILY PICNIC

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.

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

We are also working on our Family Picnic which will be **September 10**. **We need your help to make the Picnic successful!** Please volunteer to help in some capacity. Too much of the work is being done by too few people. If each of us does a little, no one is overwhelmed.

Our next meeting for both events will be **Tuesday July 25 at 6:30PM**.

### 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!

**We have had an issue with some emails being bounced back. Please add [mail@flocknote.com](mailto:mail@flocknote.com) to your contacts. We hope that will solve the problem.**

**Thanks for your cooperation!**

## A Table in the Wilderness (Mt 14:14-22)

THE MIRACULOUS FEEDING OF 5000 with five loaves and two fish is reported in each of the four Gospels. In both the earliest and latest Gospels there is an unusual unanimity in the details they relate: more than most other Gospel narratives, including the resurrection. This reflects the great importance which the first Christians attached to this narrative. In it they saw the Lord Jesus connected to the great movements of God in the past, the present and the future.

### The Past: the Exodus from Egypt

As is well known, the Gospel of Matthew was written for Jewish believers who were convinced that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. They also saw many Old Testament events as “types,” pointing to New Testament events which fulfill and surpass the Old in God’s plan for our salvation. The early Church Fathers in the Greek and Latin worlds had the same vision. Thus St. Cyril of Alexandria would write, “All that is written about the blessed Moses we affirm to be an icon and a type of that salvation which comes in Christ” (*Glaphyra [Illumination] on Exodus, 1.3*).

The feeding of the 5000 was one such event, in which Christ’s actions reflect that He is the New Moses and more: the One who worked through Moses on behalf of the children of Israel. Just as the exodus from Egypt begins with Pharaoh oppressing the Israelites, the Gospel story begins with Herod’s murder of John the Baptist. While Pharaoh oppresses the Israelites because they were so numerous, Herod kills John because of his moral stance.

Hearing about John’s death, Jesus goes apart, to “*a deserted place*” (Mt 14:13). Jesus, His disciples and the people who came to Him from the cities were in a “desert” just as Moses, his soldiers, and the crowd were in Sinai. When the Israelites were in the desert with Moses God fed them with manna and quail, which Psalm 78:24 calls “*the bread of heaven*.” While the Galileans were in the wilderness with Jesus, He himself fed them with bread and fish. The feeding of the Israelites in Sinai was connected to their passage through the Red Sea “*on dry ground*” (Ex 14:23 et al.). The feeding of the 5000 is connected to the miracle of Jesus “*walking on the sea*” (Mt 14:25) which follows immediately. While the Israelites walked on the ground exposed by the parting of the sea, Jesus walks on the sea itself.

### The Present: Jesus Nourishes the Church

This event marks the first time in the Gospel that the whole crowd will be invited to eat together with Christ, showing His desire to gather all His followers around a common table with Him. St Hilary of Poitiers noted that the first Church – those who responded to the preaching of Peter – numbered about 5000 men (Acts 4:4). The 5000 fed in the wilderness point to those 5000 who were the first to be nourished by the presence of Christ in His Church.

On that “table” in the wilderness was bread and fish. We recall that, for Christians during the Roman persecutions, the fish was a code-sign for Christ. The letters of the Greek word for fish – ichthys – were an anagram for the profession of faith, “Jesus Christ Son of God, Savior.” The bread – which Jesus “*took...blessed...and broke*” (Mt 14:19) – was an “icon” for the early Christians of the Eucharist in which we receive the Son of God our Savior, the Bread of life.

Thus the feeding of the 5000 points to the Church and its communal meal, the Eucharist.

### The Future: the Messianic Banquet

Earlier in Matthew’s Gospel we see Jesus pointing to the future: “*I say to you that many will come from east and west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven*” (Mt 8:11). He was alluding to the idea of the Messianic Banquet, the great feast that represented for Jews that communion with God, which the coming of the Messiah would bring about. This feast is described in Isaiah 25:6-9 in terms which make us think of the feeding of the 5000: “*And in this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees. And He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken. And it will be said in that day: ‘Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.’”*

## Prokimenon

**Reader:** The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace.

**People:** The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace.

**Reader:** Give to the Lord, you sons of God, give to the Lord glory and praise!

**People:** The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace.

**Reader:** The Lord will give strength to His people;

**People:** The Lord will bless His people with peace.

## Epistle: 1 Cor. 1:10-17

## Alleluia Verses

It is good to give thanks to the Lord; to sing praises to Your name, O Most High!

**Verse:** To proclaim Your kindness at dawn and Your faithfulness throughout the night.

## Gospel: Mt. 14:14-22

**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.

## 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. Our first delivery will be to Mustard Seed Ministries on August 4. 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!