

*From the Divine Office for the feast of the Dormition (Aug. 15)*

*She who is higher than the heavens and more glorious than the cherubim, she who is held in greater honor than all creation, she who by reason of her surpassing purity became the receiver of the everlasting Essence, today commends her most pure soul into the hands of her Son. With her, all things are filled with joy, and she bestows great mercy upon us. (Vespers)*

*Set a rampart about my mind, O Savior, that I may dare to sing the praises of Your most pure Mother, the rampart of the world. Establish me firmly within the fortress of my words and make me strong with the defenses of my thoughts, for You always hear the petitions of those who present them with faith. Grant me a tongue, words and thoughts of which I may never be ashamed: for every gift that enlightens us comes from You, O Enlightener of our souls, who dwelt in her ever-virginal womb and lifted her up to eternal life. (Orthros)*



**TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
AUGUST 20, 2023**





**Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church**  
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Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor  
Cell: (774) 502-8547  
Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

### **Antiphon (Dormition)**

1: O God, with your judgement endow the king, and with your justice, the king's son.

**Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us!**

2: Let the mountains yield peace for the people, and the hills justice.

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

3: Sing to the Lord, bless his name, announce his salvation day after day.

**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.

### **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 intercession, save our souls from death.

### **Kontakion of the Dormition (Tone 2)**

Neither death nor the tomb could hold the Mother of God, our watchful Protectress and our un-failing hope. Since she is the Mother of Life. Christ who dwelt in her ever-virginal womb lifted her up to the eternal life.

### **The Fathers on the Power of Mammon**

When St John Chrysostom commented on this Gospel passage he noted that being devoted to the things of this world did not make you free. "The rich man is a slave, being subject to loss, and in the power of every one wishing to do him harm" (Homily 46 on Matthew). Serving mammon is a form of slavery.

In another place Chrysostom said, "If you see someone greedy for many things, you should consider him the poorest of all, even if he has acquired everyone's money. If, on the other hand, you see someone with few needs, you should count him the richest of all, even if he has acquired nothing. Be accustomed to judge poverty and affluence by the disposition of the mind not by the substance of his possessions." Serving mammon is a kind of poverty.

A century before on another continent, St Cyprian of Carthage had said much the same thing. "The property of the wealthy holds them in chains . . . which shackle their courage and choke their faith and hamper their judgment and throttle their souls. They think of themselves as owners, whereas it is they rather who are owned: enslaved as they are to their own property, they are not the masters of their money but its slaves."

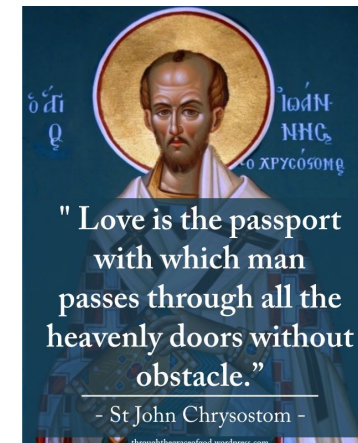
### **Asceticism and the Pursuit of Perfection**

The choice between serving God and mammon is at the heart of Christian asceticism, where making that choice is lived and experienced on a daily basis. It is most intensely observed by monastics but also by Christians living in this world, married or single. A person living an ascetic life tries to distance himself or herself from being tied to the passing pleasures of the world so as to be more open to following Christ and living the life of God.

People often equate life with God to the world to come. It is clear to most people, even in the wider society, that our earthly attachments have no place in heaven. A recent installment in Dan Piraro's widely syndicated cartoon strip, Bizarro! makes this point. Two long-time residents of heaven are observing two younger ones. "Most of the new arrivals seem incapable of conversation," the eldest notes. "They just stare at their hands in despair" trying to text, but there are no electronic devices in heaven!

Yes, there are no cigarettes, no movies, no alcohol, in heaven. To be without them would surely frustrate someone who had made enjoying these things the focus of life. Thus some Christian thinkers have observed that to be in heaven without the object of one's passions would actually be to dwell in hell.

But the differences between this age and the age to come are not really the point. Life with God, transformation into the image of Christ, begins now with baptism. That life is meant to be experienced in ever deeper ways as we mature in the Christian life here as well as in the life of the age to come. The Christian ascetic seeks to avoid anything which can captivate our minds and, at best, distract us from that relationship to God. Following Christ is meant to be the real source of our joy here on earth as well as in the world to come. Serving Christ in worship and ministering to Him in the needy should be our joys, rather than obligations to be gotten through as quickly as possible. The Christian life, to paraphrase St Catherine of Siena, is meant to be "heaven all the way to heaven."



### DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today Those affected by the Maui wildfires  
+Fr. Basil Samra (40 day)  
+Joseph Deschenes  
+Victims of Maui Wildfires

August 27 +Peter Solitro. Requested by Antonio & Karen Solitro and family

Today's Coffee Hr. is hosted by Eli, Sam, Laurance & Narwal

Next Sunday's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by Antonio & Karen Solitro & family

#### Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$ 1,419
Candles	\$ 65
Coffee Hr.	\$ 27
Other	\$ 10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,521</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. 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!

### UPCOMING LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Fri. 9.8 6PM-Divine Liturgy for the Nativity of the Theotokos  
Wed. 9.13 6PM-Great Vespers for the Exaltation of the Holy Cross  
Thu. 9.14 6PM-Divine Liturgy for the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Please plan to join us!

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.

You should have received a letter and form to use if you want to place an ad in the commemorative book. As a reminder, the deadline for submitting ads is **September 1**. You can use the QR code on the right to submit your ad if you prefer.

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 **Wednesday August 30 at 6:30PM**.

Please use the following link or QR code on the left to sign up to volunteer:

[www.olphworchester.org/picnic](http://www.olphworchester.org/picnic)

Picnic Volunteer QR Code



100th Anniversary QR Code



## In What Is Our Joy? (Mt 19:16-26)

THE THREE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS – Matthew, Mark and Luke – all record Christ’s meeting with a rich young man who sought His guidance. The young man (Luke calls him a “ruler”) seeks to know what to do to have eternal life. Christ responds by telling him to keep the commandments. When pressed to be more specific, the Lord begins by listing the Ten Commandments. Then He quotes the Great Commandment from Leviticus, “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*”

The young man says that He has kept all these commandments from his youth and presses the Lord to tell him what more he should do. The Lord Jesus then attempts to lead him from a stage of merely being obedient to God’s commandments to one of being in a relationship of love with God.

Christ tells the young man what must happen “*If you want to be perfect*” (v. 21): he must give his wealth to the poor and follow Jesus as He went from place to place proclaiming the Kingdom of God. The Lord offered this inquirer the chance to join the company of His disciples, to show that he preferred life with Christ to enjoying his possessions. The young man declined.

### What Does It Mean to Be Perfect?

The Lord has held out this goal of “perfection” before, in the Sermon on the Mount. Being “perfect” seems an impossible task if we think it means absolute perfection without any fault or stain. In the Greek of the New Testament (and our Liturgy), however, to be “perfect” or to be “complete” might best be translated “to be all we were meant to be:” living in the light of the Lord, walking in His way. Jesus pushed His hearers to go beyond the commandments to arrive at a more godly way of life.

The Lord then contrasted regard for God with attachment to one’s belongings. They will ever be competing for a person’s devotion. As Christ tells His listeners, “*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*” (Mt 6:21).

The path to perfection as Christ teaches begins with making a choice between following Him and devoting oneself to enjoying the things of the world. As He said so clearly, “*No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon*” (Mt 6:24).

### Do I Serve Mammon?

Most of us do not think that we are “serving mammon.” We may even look down on the obviously greedy or on people driven by addictions. Yes, there are people who “serve” money, drugs or sex. They may be slaves to alcohol or tobacco. We don’t believe that we are controlled like that.

We may not be overly driven to making inordinate amounts of money, but we should consider that dependency on mammon takes many forms. We should become more conscious of how many of this world’s riches we feel that we “need,” that we “can’t do without,” from our morning coffee to the latest smart phone. We don’t physically need these things; it is our ego that requires them. Is this not another form of serving mammon?

To reflect on just how ego is tied to the things of this world we are, consider how difficult it is to fast for any length of time: how much we feel the loss of a favorite food and to what lengths we go to find a pleasing substitute... and how happy we are when the Fast is over.

In addition “mammon” can also include the non-material wealth of this world: power, prestige or social position. How do we feel when another is promoted over us, receives a bigger bonus or a more lucrative assignment. Serving mammon takes many forms and they all interfere in some way with our relationship to God.

## 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: 1 Cor. 15:1-11

## 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. 19:16-26

## Hirmos of the Transfiguration (Tone 4)

You gave birth without stain, for it was God incarnate in the flesh who came forth from your womb. He was seen on earth and conversed with men. Wherefore, O Mother of God, we all exalt you.

**Kinonikon:** I will take the chalice of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. Alleluia!

**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, Dennis Desplaines, Michael McNeil, Jeff McNeil, Wyatt William Rahall, Billy Rahall, Dan Rahall, Lauren Abraham, Nicholas Haddad, Elaine Foley, David Ahlin, Elio Kanaan, Tom Sarrouf, all those affected by the wildfires in Maui, 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.