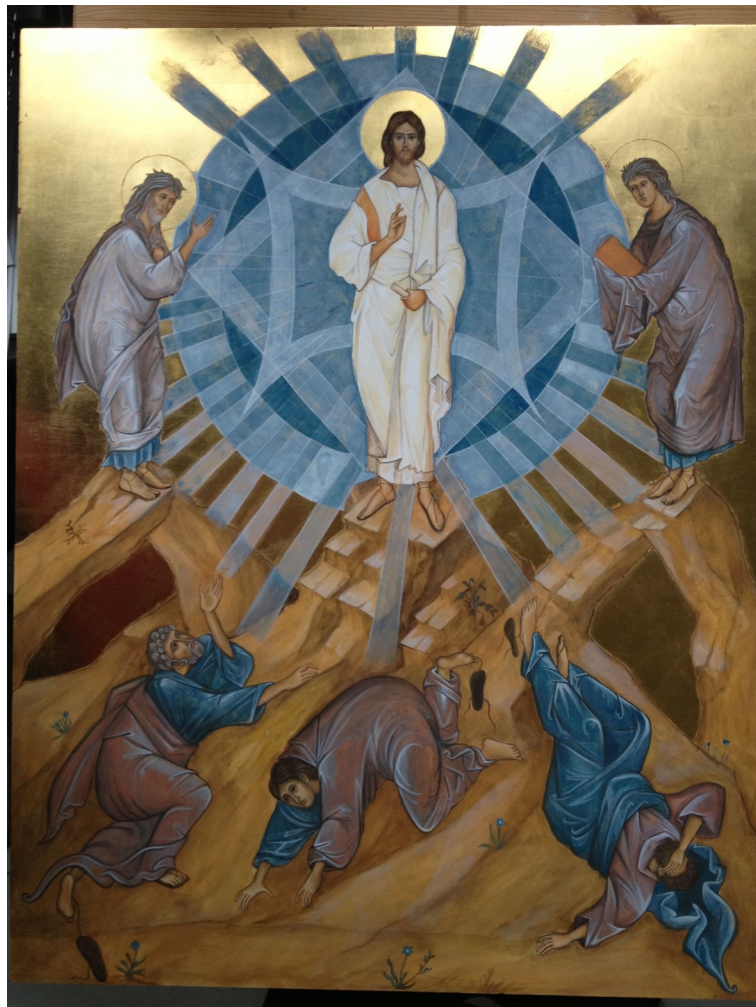


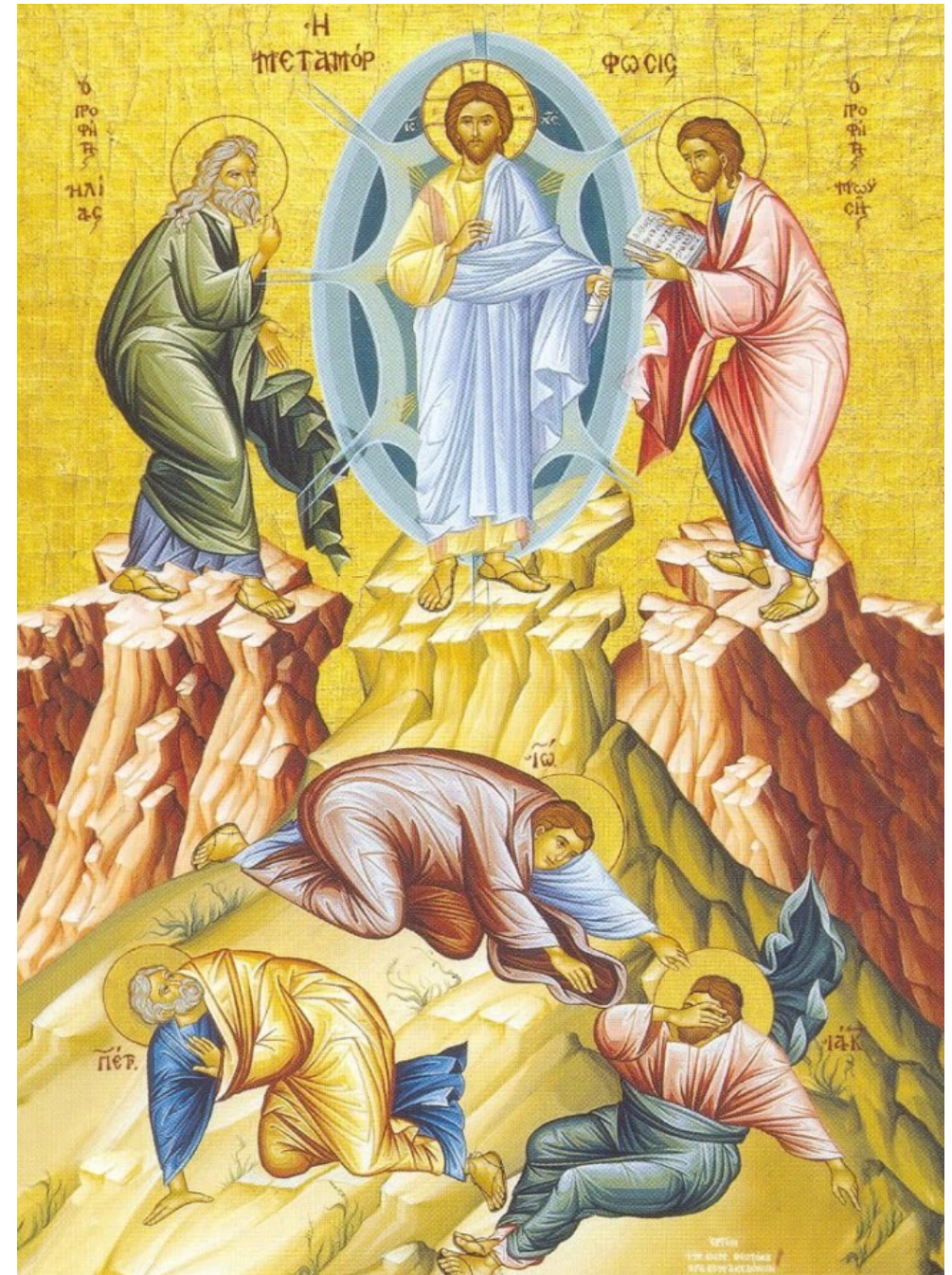
From the Divine Office for the Feast of the Transfiguration

O Christ, without a beginning, when on the Mount of the Transfiguration Your Disciples saw the Light that was Yours and Your unapproachable divinity, they were rapt in amazement and completely changed. They were enrobed in a brilliant cloud, and they heard the Father's voice confirming the mystery of Your Incarnation; for even after coming in the flesh, You remained the only-begotten Son and the Savior of mankind. (Aposticha)

Come, stay awake! If we let laziness chain us to the ground, our spirits will never rise to lofty matters! Let us rise and go up the slope of the divine Mount. Let us hasten to join Peter and the two sons of Zebedee on Tabor, that with them we may see the glory of our God and hear the voice they heard from Heaven; and they proclaimed that this is verily the Splendor of the Father. (Ikos)



**FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION
AUGUST 6, 2023**



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/Website: olphworcester.org
Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor
Cell: (774) 502-8547
Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (Feast)

1. The favors of the Lord I will sing forever; through all the generations my mouth shall proclaim His faithfulness.

O Son of God, who were transfigured on Mount Tabor, save us who sing to You. Alleluia!

2. The heavens declare the glory of God, and firmament declares the handiwork of the Lord.

O Son of God, who were transfigured on Mount Tabor, save us who sing to You. Alleluia!

3. Happy the people who know the joyful shout; in the light of Your countenance they shall walk, O Lord.

O Son of God, who were transfigured on Mount Tabor, save us who sing to You Alleluia!

Entrance Hymn

Priest: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice at Your name

People: O Son of God, who were transfigured on Mount Tabor, save us who sing to You. Alleluia!

Troparion of the Feast (Tone 7) 3X

You were transfigured on the mountain, O Christ God showing Your disciples as much of Your glory as they could hold. Let Your eternal light shine also upon us sinners, through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Giver of light, glory to You.

Kondakion of the Transfiguration (Tone 7)

On the Mountain, You were transfigured, O Christ God; and Your disciples saw as much of Your glory as they could hold, so that when they should see You crucified they would know that You suffered willingly and would proclaim to the world that You are verily the Splendor of the Father.

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!

As iconography developed it settled on one particular form to represent the divine nature of the light perceived by the disciples. The mandorla is a design made up of overlapping geometrical shapes which surrounds the image of Christ in icons of the transfiguration. The basic mandorla – an Italian word meaning almond – contains three round or oval concentric circles, in shades of blue or gold, representing the Trinity. The innermost circle is of the deepest shade representing the unseen Father. Other geometrical shapes represent the energy of the divine light shining upon the disciples. The mandorla is generally used in icons representing the glorified Christ at His transfiguration and resurrection and when receiving His Mother at her dormition.

What We Are Meant to Become

In the mystery of Christ's transfiguration the Church has caught a glimpse of what those who are in Christ are meant to be: persons who in their humanity can have God dwelling in them, reflecting that presence as light. The Lord Himself tells us that at His second coming "*the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*" (Mt 1:43). The custom of depicting saints and angels with haloes derives from this prophetic statement of Christ.

Becoming "righteous" is our task in this life, in preparation for the glory to come. In both the Old and New Testaments we are frequently instructed how we may become righteous. In the New Testament, however, these instructions are phrased in terms of God dwelling in us. "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (Col 1:27) is the One whose presence within us guarantees our righteousness before God. This is the "*mystery hidden from eternity*" (Col 1:26), which the Greek Fathers called theosis, the process of our transformation by the presence of God within us.

This process of theosis begins with our baptism. As we sing so often in our services, "*As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ*" (Gal 3:27). God dwells within us but requires that we "put on Christ" by the way we live. "*We were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*" (Rom 6:4). Our cooperation with God dwelling in us to transform us is called synergy by the Fathers: the life-long task of consciously becoming God-like in our thoughts, words and actions in order to radiate the presence of God within us by baptism.

Despite all our best efforts, none of us – not even the saints – can so unwaveringly combat our passions that we realize our potential on our own. And so Christ has given us an outward sign of His love in the mystery of the Eucharist to which we can return again and again. By sharing in this holy mystery we can reinforce our awareness of His saving presence in us and derive the strength we need for our daily ascent to God.

Through the holy mysteries and our striving to live like Christ we can attain a likeness to God and union with Him so far as possible. We who are not holy by nature can become holy, and become partakers of glory.

Looking to the Last Day

In the Second Epistle of St Peter we read his eye-witness account of the transfiguration (2 Pt 1:16-18). This is what follows: "*And so we have this sure prophetic word, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts*" (v.19). The transfiguration is thus a prophetic anticipation of Christ's glorious second coming when the "morning star" (Christ) will fill us with His light. The transfiguration, then, symbolizes the life to come and thus the goal of every Christian pursuit. As St Gregory the Theologian expressed it in his Third Oration On the Son, the holy transfiguration of Christ initiates us "into the mystery of the future".

O Giver of life, You bent down to the pit without falling into it and raised me up who had fallen. You bore my foul-smelling corruption untouched, and made me sweet-smelling with the myrrh of Your divine nature.

Canon of the Octoechos, Tone 5

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today **Members of the Kahale & Daou Families, living and deceased.** Requested by Houda Daou
HS of the Alkoht family on the occasion of Tony Alkoht's Marriage in Syria.
 Requested by the family

Today's Coffee Hr. is hosted by Houda Daou

Next Sunday's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by the Dumont Family

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$ 1,082
Candles	\$ 30
Coffee Hr.	\$ 34
Stole	\$ 100
Other	\$ 100
TOTAL	\$ 1,348



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

<u>JULY 2023</u>	<u>YTD (11.2022-7.2023)</u>
Income \$5,896.17	Income \$71,507.89
Expenses \$8,396.38	Expenses \$83,717.11
Net (\$2,500.21)	Net (\$12,209.22)

On Friday August 4, we cooked and served dinner at Mustard Seed Ministries. The organization was also the beneficiary of this month's dry food collection.

We will continue on a regular basis to serve our brothers and sisters who need some help. God Bless all those who cooked, served and contributed to this important ministry!

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**.

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 August 8 at 6:30PM**.

PARKING LOT

Work on the repaving of the parking lot is well underway. It is really starting to take shape! This project eliminates a safety issue and greatly improves the exterior look of the property. We have the funds to pay for the work but it will greatly deplete our savings.

Please prayerfully consider making a donation to replenish our savings.

As always, God bless you for your generosity!

Shining Like the Sun

TOWARDS THE END of Jesus' public ministry He began preparing His disciples for His approaching death and resurrection. In Mt 16 this scene concludes with the following prophecy: "Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom" (v. 28).

This is immediately followed by a fulfillment of this prophecy: the holy transfiguration of Christ. As St Gregory Palamas says in his homily on this feast, "It is the light of His own forthcoming transfiguration which He terms the Glory of His Father and of His Kingdom." At Christ's transfiguration "some standing here" – Peter, James and John – witnessed the Lord in the glory of His kingdom, if only for a moment. He was not changed – they were. They were able to see what is always there but which they could not imagine before: that God dwelt in man.

St Gregory Palamas describes it this way: "Christ was transfigured, not by the addition of something He was not, nor by a transformation into something He was not, but by the manifestation to His disciples of what He really was. He opened their eyes so that instead of being blind they could see. While He Himself remained the same, they could now see Him as other than He had appeared to them formerly. For He is *'the true light'* (Jn 1:9), the beauty of divine glory, and He shone forth like the sun."

As St Ephrem the Syrian expressed it, "They saw two suns; one in the sky, as usual, and one unusually; one visible in the firmament and lighting the world, and one, His face, visible to them alone" (Sermon on the Transfiguration, 8). In one sense we can say that Christ was not transfigured; it was the apostles' ability to see Him which was transfigured.

“What He Really Was”

For a moment Christ was revealed to the disciples as what He really was: God incarnate in our human flesh. "We believe that at the transfiguration He manifested not some other sort of light, but only that which was concealed beneath His fleshly exterior. This Light was the Light of the Divine Nature, and as such, it was Uncreated and Divine" (St Gregory Palamas, *Homily on the Transfiguration*).

This Light was manifested to the disciples in the radiance of His face and garments: "*His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light*" (Mt 17:2). As Mark describes it, "*His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them*" (Mk 9:3). The immaterial divine nature of the Son of God in manifested in the physical sign of a shining face and garments because this was all that the disciples could absorb. As we sing in the troparion of this feast, Christ was "showing Your disciples as much of Your glory as they could behold."

Over succeeding centuries the Church deepened its understanding of the incarnation, but not without disagreement. It took several hundred years and several Ecumenical Councils for the Church to articulate its faith in Christ as the incarnate Word of God. By the fourth century the Church was calling Christ "Light from Light, true God from true God... of one essence with the Father" but it took several more centuries and councils to grasp the implications of that statement.

The Dormition Fast began Tuesday **August 1** and will run until the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos (**8.15**). During the Fast, we will celebrate the following services:

Wed 8.9 6PM-Paraclisis

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

Please plan to join us!

Prokimenon

Reader: How great are Your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have wrought them all.

People: How great are Your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have wrought them all.

Reader: Bless the Lord, O my soul! You are very great indeed, O Lord, my God!

People: How great are Your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have wrought them all.

Reader: How great are Your works, O Lord!

People: In wisdom You have wrought them all.

Epistle: 2 Pet. 1:10-19

Alleluia Verses

Yours are the heavens and Yours is the earth; the world and its fullness You have founded.

Verses: Blessed is the people whose God is the Lord!

Gospel: Mt. 17:1-9, Transfiguration of our Lord

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: We shall walk forever in the light of the glory of your countenance, O lord.
Alleluia!

After Communion: Troparion of the Transfiguration

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, 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.