

*From the Divine Office for the commemoration of St. Romanos the Melodist (Oct. 1)*

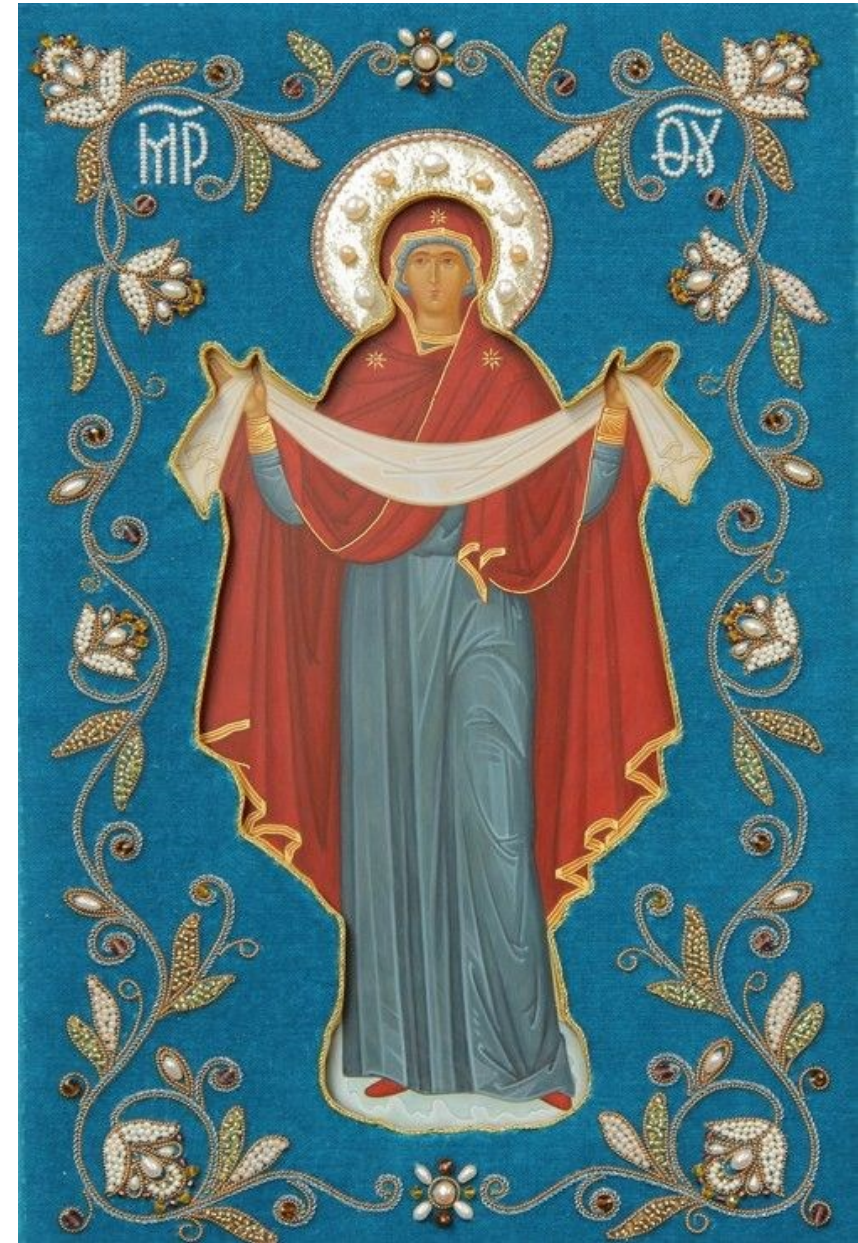
*O venerable father Romanos, you have become a fountain of good and a source of salvation; the composition of your angelic hymns proves the holiness of your life. Pray, then, to Christ our God, to spare those who sing to you from all trials and dangers. (Vespers)*

*We sing hymns to you, O father Romanos, and we praise you as a melodious harp of deepest wisdom from on high, a preacher of things seen in your ascents to God. As a herald of the gifts that surpass our understanding, rouse us to keep watch for God as we cry out to you: "Hail, O Father, chosen by God!" (Kontakion)*

*In divinely-inspired canticles, O blessed and all-wise father Romanos, you set forth the ineffable Economy of Christ our God, and you crowned all the Saints with your hymns. With them, you sing joyfully to the pure Virgin and true Mother of God. Together with her, remember all of us as you stand before the Holy Trinity (Exapostilarion)*



**SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE HOLY CROSS  
OCTOBER 1, 2023**



**PROTECTION OF THE THEOTOKOS  
OCTOBER 1**

**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: [olphworchester.org](http://olphworchester.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 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!”

### **Troparion of the Protection (Tone 1)**

We praise your great protection, O Virgin, which you spread forth like a radiant, transcendent cloud. Invisibly you guard your people from every foe’s attack. Since you are to us a shelter and a sure defense, we cry to you with our whole heart: Glory to your great deeds, O Lady! Glory to your divine shelter! Glory to your care and providence, O most pure Virgin!

### **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.

### **Kontakion of the Protection (Tone 8)**

Let us faithful hasten now to the Theotokos; let us venerate her sacred veil as we sing fitting hymns of praise: for she shelters all her faithful and preserves them from danger, so that they may cry out to her: Hail, O Virgin, our most radiant Protection!”

### **The Vision of St Andrew**

The memory of these events, as well as the presence of the Virgin’s robe, made the Blachernae church the most popular shrine to the Theotokos in the imperial capital. It would become even more renowned with the events of October 1, 911.

It was a Sunday and the all-night vigil was being served in the church at Blachernae. Among those present was St Andrew, a Fool-for-Christ, a Slav who had been captured during a military incursion and sold as a slave. His master saw to it that Andrew learned to read and the young man became attached to the Church and its worship. He was inspired to adopt the asceticism of feigned insanity, being a “fool-for Christ.” He would pretend madness during the day, but pray all night.

During the vigil, sometime after 3 AM, we are told in the Synaxarion that St Andrew “lifted up his eyes towards the heavens and beheld our most Holy Lady Theotokos coming through the air, resplendent with heavenly light and surrounded by an assembly of the Saints. Saint John the Baptist and the holy Apostle John the Theologian accompanied the Queen of Heaven. On bended knees, the Most Holy Virgin tearfully prayed for Christians for a long time. Then, coming near the ambo, she continued her prayer.

“After completing her prayer, she took her veil and spread it over the people praying in the church, protecting them from enemies both visible and invisible. The Most Holy Lady Theotokos was resplendent with heavenly glory, and the protecting veil in her hands glowed more than the rays of the sun.”

Saint Andrew gazed trembling at the miraculous vision and he asked his disciple, the blessed Epiphanius standing beside him, “Do you see, brother, the Holy Theotokos, praying for all the world?” “I do see, holy Father Epiphanius replied, “and am in awe.”

For a long time, they observed the Protecting Veil spread over the people and shining with flashes of glory. As long as the Most Holy Theotokos was there, the Protecting Veil was also visible, but with her departure it also became invisible. After taking it with her, she left behind the grace of her visitation.”

The icon of this feast shows this appearance of the Theotokos to St Andrew. Some icons, particularly those displayed for veneration on this feast, have a lower tier or an inset depicting St Romanos the Melodist chanting at the ambo. October 1 is also the feast day of this saint.

This vision is celebrated in most Byzantine Churches on October 1. In the Church of Greece, however, the feast of the Protection of the Theotokos has been transferred to October 28 to coincide with the Greek national holiday, “Ohi” Day, marking the start of Greek resistance to the German and Italian occupation during World War II.

### **The Church at Blachernae**

The Church of the Theotokos was severely damaged by fire in 1070 but was rebuilt and restored by two successive emperors. Finally, the entire church complex, along with the surrounding quarter, was completely destroyed on February 29, 1434 when some children accidentally started a fire on the church roof.

A few years before the fire, a portion of the robe had been sent to Russia. When the feast of the robe (July 2) was celebrated during the Tatar siege of Moscow in 1451 the Tatars were unaccountably seized with confusion and fled in disarray. Again, the Virgin’s protection was credited with the deliverance of a Christian city.

By the 17th century a portion of the robe was being venerated at the Dormition Monastery in Khobi, Georgia. To this day, this relic is carried in procession around that city for veneration on July 2.



## DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today Our Families and Friends, living and deceased

Today's Coffee Hr. is hosted by Anthony & Diana Esper

**Please remember in your prayers:** Lorraine Lian, George Arraj, Jr., Ron Abraham, Peter Abraham, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Archie Opatka, Katherine Thomas, Charlotte Stockhaus, 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, Sandra Hanlan, Melissa Kalpakgian, Susan Bailey, those affected by the natural disasters throughout the world, 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	\$ 1,536
Coffee Hr.	\$ 51
Candles	\$ 30
Flowers	\$ 10
Diocesan	\$ 20
Picnic	\$ 520
Memorials	\$ 215
Donations	\$ 350
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 2,732</b>



### FINANCIALS

<u>9/2023</u>	<u>YTD (10/2022-9/2023)</u>
<b>INCOME</b> \$24,726	<b>INCOME</b> \$105,269
<b>EXPENSES</b> \$ 7,758	<b>EXPENSES</b> \$102,899
<b>NET</b> \$26,968	<b>NET</b> \$ 2,371

**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*. Our next planning meeting will be **Tuesday October 3 at 6:30pm**. Invitations and ticket order forms are in the mail. You may also use the QR Code below to reserve your place at the Banquet. Please be advised that tickets to the Banquet will not be sold at the door.

QR Code



### Venerini Academy Fall Open House

Venerini Academy, a Pre-K through Grade 8 private Catholic School located at 27 Edward St. Worcester, MA will be having an Open House on Thursday October 12 from 5:30-7:30pm. During our Open House, you will be able to explore the academic, social and spiritual opportunities we offer. You will have an opportunity to speak with teachers, students and families of Venerini Academy. It is never too early to start thinking about next school year. Please pre-register for our Open House by going to the school website, [VeneriniAcademy.com](http://VeneriniAcademy.com) or by calling Albert Ganem, Jr. at (508) 753-3210.

## October 1 – Holy Protection of the Theotokos

IN 1917 THE JOHN RYLANDS UNIVERSITY LIBRARY in Manchester, England acquired a third-century papyrus fragment of great historic interest. It contained the earliest known copy of a hymn to the Theotokos. The verse, still used in the liturgies of all the historic Churches, reads as follows: “Beneath your protection, we take refuge, O Theotokos. Do not despise our petitions in time of trouble, but rescue us from dangers, only pure, only blessed one.”

This hymn shows that, from as early as the 200s, Christians have looked on the Holy Virgin as their protectress. Our liturgical year includes feasts celebrating the city of Constantinople’s reliance on the Theotokos to protect them. Today’s feast is the most iconic of these commemorations.

### The Panagia of Blachernae

In the mid-fifth century, the emperors thought to enhance the city’s role as the Christian capital by collecting many relics from near and far. The patriarch of Jerusalem sent the holy mantle and robe of the Theotokos to the capital. A great church was built at Blachernae on the shore of the Bosphorus in honor of the holy Virgin with an adjoining shrine, the Hagia Soros (Holy Mausoleum) in which the mantle and robe, as well as relics of other saints, were enshrined.

The church at Blachernae became known for the numerous healings and other miracles associated with the church’s principal icon of the Theotokos, the Panagia of Blachernae. This icon was frequently taken in procession around the city asking for the protection of the Virgin. Such a procession was held in 626 when the Avars, from the northern Caucasus, were besieging the city. Their fleet was sunk and, seeing this as divine intervention, the Avars fled. The Christians of Constantinople saw this as a sign of the Virgin’s protection. The kondakion of the Akathist, which we know as *We your servants* (originally, *I your city*) was composed to celebrate this victory.

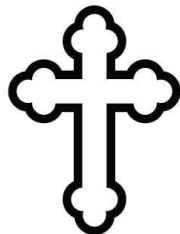
During the latter years of the first millennium Constantinople suffered a series of assaults from hostile powers. When Persians besieged Constantinople in 677 and Muslim Arabs did the same in 717, people turned to the Virgin for protection. Both invasions were repulsed and the Virgin was praised for her protection.

Orthodox Christians sought the Virgin’s protection over the Church during the era of iconoclasm. Every Friday an all-night vigil was celebrated before the Panagia of Blachernae. When all sacred images were finally removed from the church, the icon disappeared. It was reputedly found hidden behind a wall during renovations in 1038.

### The Slavic Invasion of 860

In the 830s the Viking-Slavic peoples of Kievan Rus’ begin migrating south. When the Rus’ began raiding settlements on the Black Sea it was inevitable that their forces would come to the gates of Constantinople.

In 860 a fleet of over 200 ships from Rus’ entered the harbor of Constantinople where they made a show of force before the city. On June 18, the inhabitants gathered with the emperor and the patriarch, St Photios the Great, in an all-night vigil at the Church of the Mother of God at Blachernae, near the shore. Imploring her to protect the city, St Photios took the robe in procession to the harbor, dipped it into the sea and then took it through the streets to Hagia Sophia. By June 25 the Rus’ began to withdraw from the harbor and entered into a treaty with the empire which led to the eventual Christianization of Rus’ in the next century. St Photios attributed the city’s deliverance to the “never-failing protectress of Christians” On July 2 the robe was returned to Blachernae in celebration, an event still commemorated in our Church every July 2.



### Prokimenon

**Reader:** My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

**People:** My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

**Reader:** Because He had regarded the lowliness of his handmaid, for behold all generations shall call me blessed.

**People:** My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

**Reader:** My soul magnifies the Lord

**People:** And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

### Epistle: Heb. 9:1-7

### Alleluia Verses

Listen, daughter, and behold and lend your ear, and forget your people and your father’s house.

**Verse:** The rich among the people shall seek your favor.

### Gospel: Lk. 6:31-36 , Second Sunday After the Holy Cross

#### 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 was 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!

#### FOOD ITEMS FOR SALE

We still have large trays of frozen kibbeh for sale. Each tray has 14 servings. Cost: \$100 per tray.

We also have three assorted pastry tray from the famous Shatilla Bakery in Dearborn, MI. Cost: \$35 per tray.

Get one before they are sold out!