

From the Divine Office for the commemoration of our Venerable Mother Pelagia (Oct. 8)

O illustrious Pelagia, you have made your body recover the original beauty and dignity. It is no longer by elaborate cosmetics, but by the beauty of your virtues that you shine. You have acquired forever the image and likeness to your Creator, before whom you constantly intercede for the faithful who celebrate your venerable memorial. (Vespers)

All of you who are stained by sin in this life, like the wretch that I am: let us imitate the penance, the tears, the weeping of our venerable mother Pelagia, in order to quickly find forgiveness before God. For it was thus that this blessed woman was cleansed of the sin which had stained her in her life. She received full pardon from God for having shown the path of repentance for us. (Ikos)



**THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE HOLY CROSS
OCTOBER 8, 2023**



JESUS RAISING THE SON OF THE WIDOW OF NAIN

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 (3rd)

1: Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us shout with joy to God our Savior.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia

2: Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving and let us joyfully sing psalms to Him.

Khallisna Ya-Bnallah, Ya Man qama min baynil-amwaat, nahnu muranneemeena Laka.

Haleloueya.

3: For God is a great Lord and a great King over all the earth.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia.

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 2) pg. 38

When You descended to death, O immortal Life, You put Hades to death by the splendor of Your divinity. And when You raised the dead from below the earth, all the heavenly powers cried out to You: “O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You !

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 (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.



“We understand that those persons who were restored to life by the power of Christ are a pledge of the hope prepared for us of a resurrection of the dead: namely, this young man, Lazarus of Bethany, and the daughter of the chief of the synagogue. ...

“For it was by reason of Adam's transgression of the commandment that we, having our faces turned away from God, returned to our dust: for the sentence of God upon human nature was, ‘Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.’ But at the time of the consummation of this world, the face of the earth shall be renewed: for God the Father by the Son in the Spirit will give life to all those who are laid within it.” (Sermon 36 on Luke).

The Near-Death Experience

In 1975 physician and psychologist Raymond Moody authored *Life After Life*, recounting a number of cases where people were pronounced clinically dead after heart attacks, accidents or other traumas. They regained consciousness after a period of time, anywhere from 10 minutes to several hours, and told of being able to see their physicians working on them or viewing their death from outside their bodies. One accident victim only came to when he felt a pathologist begin to autopsy him!

Most spoke of beatific after death experiences such as a feeling of peace and happiness, meeting spiritual beings and/or dead loved ones and seeing a radiant light. Some – upwards of twenty percent in one study – spoke of frightening experiences: extreme fear, panic or anger, demonic creatures or embittered human-like voices that mock or taunt the subjects.

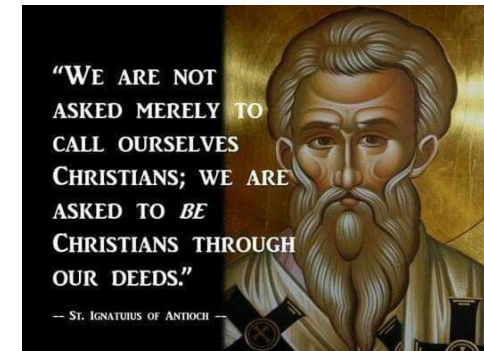
Many of our otherwise skeptical contemporaries have concluded that near-death experiences prove the existence of an afterlife. Some believing Christians have taken these recorded experiences in our own day as confirmation of the Church's faith.

In any case, the Lord did not promise to take away death; rather, He died with us and instead of us. He has transformed death into a bridge for us to cross over to paradise in order to await the great Day of the Lord. This is why St Augustine says, “It is more of a miracle that someone rises to live forever than that he rises to die again.”

NDE's in the Tradition

Today's near-death experiences in some ways reinforce the experience of the saints. St Bede the Venerable (673-735) reported in his *Ecclesiastical History*: “There was a certain householder in that district of the Northumbrians which is called Incuneningum, who led a godly life, with all his house. This man fell sick, and his sickness daily increasing, he was brought to extremity, and died in the beginning of the night; but at dawn he came to life again, and suddenly sat up, whereat all those that sat about the body weeping fled away in great terror; only his wife, who loved him better, though trembling and greatly afraid, remained with him. And he comforting her, said, ‘Fear not, for I am now in very deed risen from the death which held me, and permitted again to live among men; nevertheless, hereafter I must not live as I was wont, but after a very different manner.’”

Likewise St Athanasius of the Kiev Caves (+1176) reported retuning to this life after two days in the next world. He refused to discuss what he saw there, saying only, “Even if I were to tell you, you would not believe me or listen to me.” When he was pressed to explain, he would only say “Repent and pray!”



DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today **Our Families & Friends living and deceased**

Oct 22 **+Ruth Welsh (40 day).** Requested by her family

Oct 29 **+James (JR) Rahall (1 yr.).** Requested by Susan Rahall & family

Today's Coffee Hr. is hosted by Issam & Hiam Francis

Next Sunday's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by

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	\$ 895
Coffee Hr.	\$ 43
Candles	\$ 25
Memorials	\$ 175
TOTAL	\$ 1,138



FINANCIALS

9/2023

INCOME \$24,726

EXPENSES \$ 7,758

NET \$26,968

YTD (10/2022-9/2023)

INCOME \$105,269

EXPENSES \$102,899

NET \$ 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 10 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 or go to our website, olphworcester.org. Please be advised that no tickets to the Banquet will not be sold at the door. **Also, we are limiting children to those over 12 years of age.**

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 or by calling Albert Ganem, Jr. at (508) 753-3210.

Signs of the Future Resurrection (Lk 7:11-16)

IF YOU WERE TO WALK DOWN THE STREET of an older Middle Eastern town such as the old city of Jerusalem, do not be surprised if you were to come upon a funeral procession like the one described in St Luke's Gospel. Some people still walk from the home of the departed following the clergy and the bearers carrying the body, perhaps wrapped in a shroud, in an open coffin or on a bier. A Christian funeral procession might stop at the church before continuing on to the cemetery. The body might be placed in the ground simply wrapped in the shroud, particularly in Jewish or Muslim burials.

Christ encounters such a funeral at the Galilean village of Na'in, near Nazareth. *"And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, 'Do not weep.' Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, 'Young man, I say to you: 'arise.' So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother"* (Lk 7:11-15).

Resurrection or Resuscitation?

We commonly think of what Jesus did for this young man as "raising him from the dead." Speaking in this way, it is easy to mistake this event as being the same as Christ's own resurrection. This is clearly not the case.

The Lord Jesus rose to the new and eternal life of victory over death. The ways in which He manifested Himself were clearly different from our normal earthly experience. He entered rooms when the doors were closed, appeared in other forms (to Mary Magdalene and the disciples on the road to Emmaus) and ascended to His Father with the promise of a future return.

We know of no such happenings in the life of the young man of Na'in. He resumed the earthly life he had before. As the Gospel says, the Lord gave the young man back to his mother. Speaking precisely we should say that he was resuscitated or revived, rather than resurrected.

Three Resuscitations

The Gospels contain three reports of resuscitations, each one being slightly different. Both Mark and Luke report the revival of Jairus' daughter. Her father, *"a ruler of the synagogue"* (Lk 8:40) told Jesus that his daughter was dying. By the time they got to the man's house they were told that the girl had died. *"Now all wept and mourned for her; but [Jesus] said, 'Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping.' And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead. But He put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, 'Little girl, arise.' Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given something to eat"* (Lk 8:52-55).

Unlike the girl, who had just died, the young man in Lk 7 had been dead for at least some hours. Customarily in the Middle East people would be buried on the day that they died. The third and even more amazing revival is, of course, that of Lazarus who had died four days before Jesus called him from the tomb (see Jn 11). While each of these people were returned to the same earthly life which they had before, the Fathers saw them as indications of the true resurrection to come. St Cyril of Alexandria, for example, teaches:

"Christ is the Destroyer of death and of corruption: He is the One 'in whom we live and move and are.' He it is who has restored the nature of man to that which it originally was; and has set free our death-fraught flesh from the bonds of death. ...



Prokimenon

Reader: My strength and my courage is the Lord, and He has been my Savior.

People: My strength and my courage is the Lord, and He has been my Savior.

Reader: The Lord has chastised me through His teaching, yet He has not delivered me to death.

People: My strength and my courage is the Lord, and He has been my Savior.

Reader: My strength and my courage is the Lord,

People: And He has been my Savior.

Epistle: 2 Cor. 11:31-33; 12:1-9

Alleluia Verses

The Lord shall hear you on the day of distress; may the name of the God of Jacob defend you.

Verse: O Lord, save Your people, and bless Your inheritance.

Gospel: Lk. 7:11-16, Third 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!