

From the Divine Office for the Commemoration of John the Merciful (Nov. 12)

Noting the purity and uprightness of your spirit, the divine direction of your way of life, O wise father, He who sees in secret placed you on the patriarchal throne, consecrating your perfection with myrrh. O wondrous hierarch John, He entrusted to you the guidance of the flock, which you led to the harbor of the divine will. (Vespers)

Your beauty lies within your soul, O you who are endowed with compassion and sincere charity, O holy John. You were able to see true Mercy herself during the night, as a virgin radiantly adorned with olive branches, who joyously spoke to you and said, "If you wish to make me your companion and friend, I will lead you into the presence of Christ our King!" You obeyed and never lost your desire. But you became a model of mercy by your proverbial charity. (Ikos)



**EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER THE HOLY CROSS
NOVEMBER 12, 2023**



THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church
256 Hamilton St.
Worcester, MA 01604
Phone: (508) 752-4174
Email: olphmelkite@gmail.com/Website: 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 7) pg. 4

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.

Kontakion (Tone 4)

The most pure Temple of our holy Savior, and the most precious and bright bridal chamber, the Virgin, sacred treasury of the glory of God, openly appears today into the temple of the Lord, bringing with her the grace of the most Holy Spirit. Wherefore the angels of God are singing: "This is the heavenly tabernacle!"

When Dioscoros died in 454, his supporters elected a successor who rejected the teaching of Chalcedon, while Proterios and his successors supported the council. From this point, there would be two hierarchies. The majority of the Egyptian Christians followed Dioscoros and his successors; today they are known as the Coptic Orthodox Church. The Chalcedonians, who followed the successors of Proterios, are now known as the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa.

As long as Alexandria was ruled by the Byzantine Empire there was conflict (often violent) between these two groups. John's predecessors had attempted to enforce the Council of Chalcedon using the military and had failed. When John became patriarch there were only seven churches in Alexandria following the doctrine of Chalcedon.

John combated the Monophysites, not with arms but with alms. He was accessible to all and his liberality was for all, even for those who tried to cheat him. Approached by a beggar, John gave him six coins. The beggar then changed his clothes and approached from another street with the same request. When he tried a third time he was recognized, but John ordered that the man be given twelve coins: "Perhaps this is my Christ and He is trying me." As a result his actions were recognized as based on his profound faith. By the end of John's patriarchate his seven churches had become seventy.

The Persian Invasion

For most of the first millennium the rival "superpowers" in the Middle East were the Roman/ Byzantine and the Persian Empires. In the early seventh century the Persians advanced through Syria and by 611 had conquered Syria and parts of Asia Minor.

Many Christians – including a number of bishops and priests - fled from Syria to Egypt. When St John saw that many of these refugees were in need, he built a number of hostels to house them and paid the clergy among them as if they were his own.

When Palestine fell to the Persians a few years later, St John mounted a large program of assistance for the Christians of the Holy Land, and ransomed a large number of captives from the Persians. Leontios notes that the Persians themselves were impressed by his compassion and generosity "for even an enemy respects a man's virtue."

The Persian armies invaded Egypt in 618 and seized Alexandria the next year, aiming to depose the prefect and the patriarch. St John took refuge in Cyprus where he survived an assassination attempt but died in Cyprus in the year 620.

From Leontios' Life of St John "One day when [St John] determined to stop so many people from leaving the church as soon as the Gospel had been read in order to spend their time in idle talk instead of in prayer, what did he do? As soon as the Gospel had been read in the church he slipped away, came out himself and sat down outside with the crowd. Everyone was amazed, but the righteous one said to them, 'Children, the shepherd must be where the sheep are. Come inside and I will join you. If you stay here, I will stay too. I come to this church for your sakes – after all, I could hold the service at home in my chapel if it was for myself.'"

When the Arabs seized control of Egypt in 642, the Greek presence in the country was all but eliminated and in later years the Chalcedonian patriarchs often resided in Constantinople, where they adopted the Byzantine rite. It was the arrival of Greek and Syrian Christians in the early nineteenth century which helped revive Egypt's Chalcedonian (Byzantine) patriarchate. In the twentieth century the Greek Orthodox patriarchate expanded through missionary activity into central and southern Africa. It now has 23 eparchies in countries from Angola to Zimbabwe.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today **For peace in the Middle East**
 +**Irene Santos (40 day)**. Requested by Antoinette Arraj & Family
 +**Helen Grace George**. Requested by Karen & Antonio Solitro and Virginia & Michael Mischitelli

November 19 **For peace in the Middle East**
 + **John Arraje, Souhaila Arraje, Paula Arraje Lewis**. Requested by Susan Arraje

Today's Coffee Hr. is hosted by Antoinette Arraj & Lisa Jagielski
Next week's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by Susan Arraje

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, NicholaS Halal, Elaine Foley, David Ahlin, Elio Kanaan, Tom Sarrouf, Sandra Hanlan, Melissa Kalpakgian, Susan Bailey, those affected by the natural disasters throughout the world, the people of Gaza, and for peace in the Middle East.

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.

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.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all who worked so hard to make our 100th Anniversary celebration a success! It was important that we marked this important milestone in the life of the parish.

May God continue to bless Our Lady of Perpetual Help and give us everything we need to be a loving Christian presence in greater Worcester for the next 100 years!

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. 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!

We will also be having our Thanksgiving food drive again this year. Our goal is to provide Thanksgiving dinners for those who need our help. We hope to provide as many meals as we can. Please assist us in this important ministry by donating a turkey and/or sides. The deadline for donating is next Sunday, November 19.

God bless you for your generosity!

Upcoming Liturgical Schedule

Tue, Nov. 21 6PM - Divine Liturgy for the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple



Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$ 1,780
Coffee Hr.	\$ 186
Candles	\$ 24
Other	\$ 244.50
TOTAL	\$ 2,234.50

FINANCIALS

	<u>10.2023</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Income	\$14,177	\$14,177
Expenses	\$16,519	\$16,519
Net	(\$ 2,342)	(\$ 2,342)

November 12 – St John the Almsgiver, Patriarch of Alexandria

PATRIARCHS IN BOTH EAST AND WEST regularly take the name of one of their predecessors. As a result, they are generally identified as the second, third or tenth of that name in that see. The Greek Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria, John V, is an exception to that rule. He is known to history as John the Almsgiver and is remembered in Byzantine Churches on November 12.

Born in c. 552, John was the son of the governor of Cyprus, so his upbringing was that of an aristocrat. He married at his father's behest, although his preference was for a celibate life. His friend and biographer, Bishop Leontios of Neopolis in Cyprus, wrote that John and his wife lived in continence until her father demanded that they live as husband and wife. The couple yielded to his demands and proceeded to have what Leontios called "a bountiful crop" of children. After a time, the children and then their mother died, leaving John free to live as a celibate devoted to the service of others.

John's reputation as an extraordinary peacemaker and benefactor of the needy became so widely known over the following decades, that, still a layman, he was chosen – under pressure from Emperor Heraclius – to be Patriarch of Alexandria in 609.

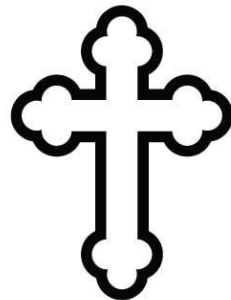
The reason for his extreme generosity was only made known after his death by Leontios. One night when John was 15, he was awakened by a woman "whose face outshone the sun" and identified her as "the first of the daughters of the King." She promised, "I will lead you into the presence of the King, for no one has as free access to Him as I have." John knew that the King was the sole Compassionate Lover of mankind and identified this "first daughter" as Compassion. This experience as a teenager set the course of his life.

As patriarch, John immediately set out to assure daily support to over 7000 poor in his eparchy, whom he called his "helpers." Questioned by his staff, John replied, "Those whom you call poor and beggars, these I proclaim my masters and helpers. For they, and they alone, are really able to help us and bestow upon us the kingdom of heaven."

To discourage the many administrators and employees in his service from taking bribes or being influenced by the rich, John increased all their salaries. At the same time he demanded that they never take a gift from anyone. Leontios notes that "by God's grace their households so prospered from then on, that some of them did not even take their additional pay." He himself refused the many gifts offered by people seeking advancement, citing Proverbs 15:27 (LXX): "*He that is greedy for gain destroys himself, but he who hates taking gifts shall live.*"

Alexandria Under Attack

During John's eleven years as patriarch, his Church was faced with two insurmountable crises: the Monophysite controversy and the Persian invasion of Egypt. The unity of the Patriarchate of Alexandria had been ruptured at the fifth-century Council of Chalcedon. The terminology used by this council in its teaching on the nature of Christ was inconsistent with the language of St Cyril of Alexandria at the Council of Ephesus a few years earlier. The patriarch of Alexandria, Dioscoros I, who rejected the teaching of Chalcedon, was deposed and exiled. The council replaced him as patriarch with one of its adherents, Proterios of Alexandria. Dioscoros' followers in Egypt continued to recognize him, as patriarch.



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: Eph. 2:14-22

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: Lk. 10:25-37, Eighth Sunday After the Holy Cross

