

From the Divine Office for the Commemoration of St. Barbara (Dec. 4)

Let us praise the most honorable Barbara: she thwarted the Enemy's power, and through the might and strength of the Cross, she was made free in her flight to God. (Troparion)

Together let us venerate the memory of Barbara, whose martyrdom was united to that of Christ her Spouse; so that delivered by her prayers from sin, famine, earthquake and destruction, we may live out our lives in peace, and attain to the abode of light in the company of all the saints who were pleasing to the Lord throughout the ages. Then we shall be able to sing with her, "O Savior, You have brought about marvels of love for all Your faithful who confess, 'I adore one God in three divine Persons!'" (Ikos)



**FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER THE HOLY CROSS
DECEMBER 3, 2023**



PROPHET ZEPHANIAH (DEC. 3)

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church
256 Hamilton St.
Worcester, MA 01604
Phone: (508) 752-4174
Email: olphmelkite@gmail.com/Website: olphworcester.org
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 of the Preparation of the Nativity of our Lord (Tone 3)

Today the Virgin is on her way to the cave where she will give birth in a manner beyond understanding to the Word who is, in all eternity. Rejoice, therefore, universe, when you hear it heralded: with the angles and the shepherds, glorify Him who chose to be seen as a new-born Babe, while remaining God in all eternity.

Also on December 4 – St John of Damascus

WHILE ST BARBARA LIVED in the fourth century during the Roman persecutions, John of Damascus lived in the seventh century, after the Arab conquest of Syria.

John was born in Damascus in c. 680, the son of Sergius ibn al-Mansour, a civil servant to the Umayyad caliphate, as was his father before him. Sergius wanted his son to “learn not only the books of the Muslims, but those of the Greeks as well,” according to one ancient source. John was tutored by a Sicilian monk who had been kidnapped by Arabs and brought to Damascus. This monk was also tutor to St Cosmas of Maiuma, John’s foster brother whom his father had taken in after he was orphaned.

In 706 the caliphate increased the Islamizing of Syria. Many Christians in civil service, including John’s father, left the government administration at that time. Some think that this was when John entered the monastery of Mar Saba near Jerusalem. John was certainly a professed monk before the outbreak of iconoclasm in 717, which he opposed. In all John composed three *Apologetic Treatises against those Decrying the Holy Images* which were widely circulated and were cited as authoritative at the Second Council of Nicaea, years after his death.

John also composed a number of apologetic treatises against the Monophysites, Monotheletes, Nestorians and Muslims as well as dogmatic treatises. His *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* was perhaps the first systematic presentation of Christian theology in both East and West.

John of Damascus is perhaps most revered as a poet and hymnographer. He composed a number of canons which are still sung at Orthros (Matins). Some credit the beauty of his poetry with making the canon an important part of the morning service. His Paschal canon, “Today is the day of the resurrection” is most particularly loved. He also composed the canons sung in the Byzantine Churches on the Great Feasts of the Nativity, the Theophany and Pentecost.

John is also credited with composing the principal parts of the Octoechos, the book of eight tones, which contains the weekly services used in Byzantine churches.

John ended his life in his monastery on December 4, 749. The cave he used as a hermitage is kept today as a chapel dedicated to his memory.

From St John of Damascus

“These eight passions should be destroyed as follows: gluttony by self-control; un-chastity by desire for God and longing for the blessings held in store; avarice by compassion for the poor; anger by goodwill and love for all men; worldly dejection by spiritual joy; listlessness by patience, perseverance and offering thanks to God; self-esteem by doing good in secret and by praying constantly with a contrite heart; and pride by not judging or despising anyone in the manner of the boastful Pharisee (cf. Lk 18:11-12), and by considering oneself the least of all men. When the intellect has been freed in this way from the passions we have described and been raised up to God, it will henceforth live the life of blessedness, receiving the pledge of the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Cor 1:22). And when it departs this life, dispassionate and full of true knowledge, it will stand before the light of the Holy Trinity and with the divine angels will shine in glory through all eternity.” *On the Virtues and the Vices*

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +Rose Sabbagh, +George El Khoury, Requested Fr. Bryan & family

Today's Coffee Hr. is hosted by Laurance & Saimon Aulo
Next week's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by Eric Ewanco

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, 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.

Upcoming Liturgical Schedule

Tue, Dec. 5 6PM - Vespers for the Feast of St. Nicholas

Tue. Dec,12,6PM - Vespers

Tue. Dec. 19, 6PM - Anointing Service

Nativity Liturgical Schedule

Sun. 12/24, 10AM - Divine Liturgy, Sunday of the Genealogy & Paramony

Sun. 12/24, 4PM –Vesper/Liturgy of St. Basil for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ

Mon. 12/25, 10AM-Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ

There is no fasting from December 25 until the Paramony of Theophany (Jan. 5)

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$ 735
Coffee Hr.	\$ 65
Candles	\$ 38
Stole	\$ 35
Xmas Flowers	\$ 25
Xmas Offering	\$ 10
Hall Rental	\$ 150
TOTAL	\$1,058

ADULT FOSTER CARE (AFC)

Did you know that if you are caring for someone you could receive monetary benefits from the state? If the person has health standards they can qualify for this service.

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Christmas Toy Drive

We are having our toy drive again this year. If you would like to donate a new, unwrapped toy for a child in need, please place it in one of the green bins in the narthex.

We are also collecting hats, coats, and gloves for both children and adults.

If you would like to donate money instead, we will use it to make the above purchases.

The deadline for donating is Sunday December 19.

Thank you in advance for your generosity!

December 4-St. Barbara

EVERYONE WANTS TO CLAIM St Barbara as their own. This is possible because she is not mentioned in any contemporary writings which have come down to us. She is first mentioned in a seventh-century Roman Martyrology, some 350 years after her death. The sources of what has been passed down about her were collected by St Simeon Metaphrastes (“the Translator”) in his tenth-century lives of the saints, the Menologion.

Middle Eastern sources record that Barbara was from Heliopolis in present-day Lebanon. Some sources describe her as a native of Heliopolis in Egypt or of Nicomedia (in Turkey today). All the stories of this martyr say that she was the daughter of a rich pagan named Dioscoros who, after his wife’s death, kept her locked in a tower to keep her from the eyes of strangers.

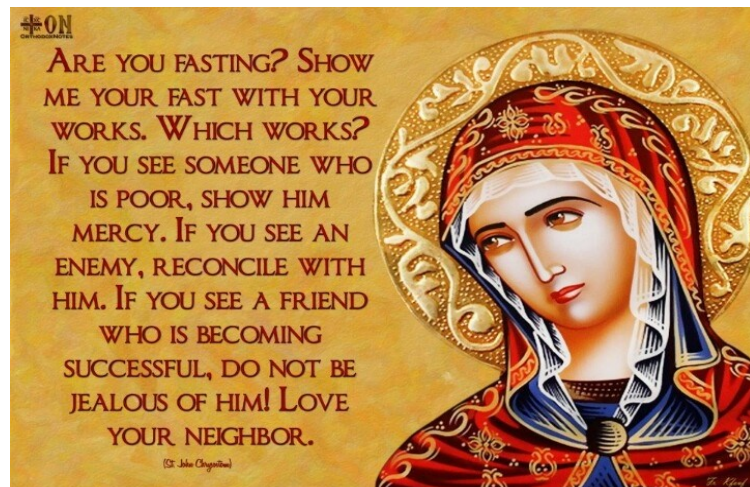
After a certain time Dioscoros relented and allowed his daughter a measure of freedom. She became acquainted with the Gospel through some young Christian women who befriended her and through a priest fleeing persecution in Alexandria who ultimately baptized her.

Dioscoros had commissioned the construction of a bath house on his estate. In his absence Barbara had altered the plans to include a third window, to represent the Trinity. When Dioscoros learned the reason for her actions he flew at her in a rage. She escaped, but was later captured and severely beaten.

The last great persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire was in full swing. When Barbara would not renounce her faith, Dioscoros handed her over to the prefect of the city, Martian, who subjected her to public humiliation and torture. Juliana, a Christian woman in the crowd reproached Martian for his cruelty. In return he condemned Juliana to die with Barbara. Both were beheaded, Barbara (it is said) by her own father. A pious man named Galentain recovered the bodies of Barbara and Juliana, buried their remains and, when the persecutions ended, erected a shrine in their memory.

In the sixth century relics of St Barbara were brought to Constantinople. Six hundred years later a portion of them was brought to Kiev by Barbara, the daughter of the Byzantine emperor, when she married Michael, the Grand Prince of Kiev. Around the same time the Coptic church of St Cyrus in Old Cairo was rebuilt as the Church of St Barbara to house relics of this saint. She is venerated in all the Churches of East and West. Because of the lack of contemporary witnesses to her struggle, the Roman Church removed her name from their universal calendar. She is still venerated in many local Western Churches, particularly in Europe.

In the Middle East her feast is observed by the preparation of sweets, including the “Barbara.” This is the traditional boiled wheat dish made for memorials of a saint or of the deceased. In this case it is sweetened with pomegranate seeds, raisins, anise and sugar. It is frequently brought to homes by children singing a traditional carol about this saint. They are often costumed to recall the disguises St Barbara used to elude her father.



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: Eph. 6:10-17

Alleluia Verses

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

Verses: O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance!

Gospel: Lk. 18:35-43

Nativity Fast

The traditional Nativity Fast began **November 15**. In the Melkite usage, it begins on **December 10**. It is important for our spiritual life that we observe these fast periods in order to reorient ourselves to God; that we focus on Him rather than on our desires.

Whether you observe the Fast from November 15 or December 10, abstain from meat and dairy, from gossip and speaking ill of your neighbor, perform acts of charity, increase your prayer life, focusing on the great mystery of the Incarnation: God becoming one of us in order to restore us to our true nature.

