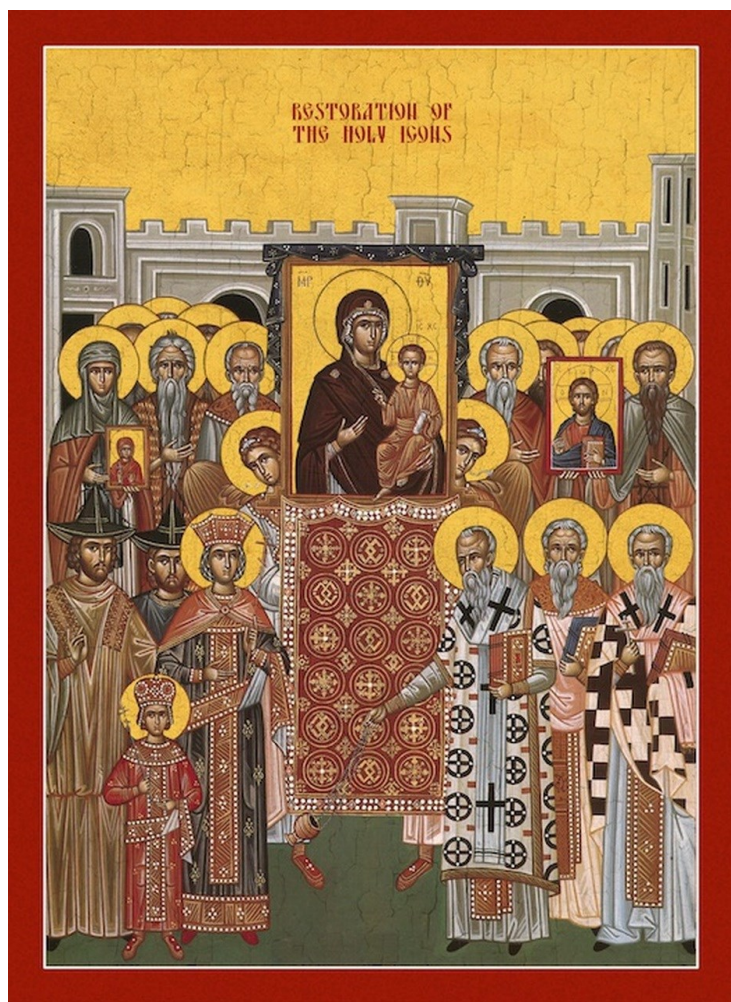


From the Divine Office for the First Sunday of Great Lent

The grace of truth has shone forth and the predictions of old have been clearly fulfilled: for behold, the Church has put on the incarnate likeness of Christ, the new world of icons transcending adornment. As the tabernacle of the Covenant held the presence of God, so do the icons show forth the presence of the One we worship and revere. By venerating them, we never go astray. It is a glory for us to kneel in true worship of the incarnate Christ. O believers, let us then embrace His icon and cry out: "O God, save Your people and bless Your inheritance!" (Vespers)

The mystery of our salvation was once announced by the divinely-inspired prophets, They foretold this illumination for us who have arrived at the last days. By it, we receive knowledge of God, the one God and Lord, glorified in Three Persons; and we serve Him alone. Having one faith and one baptism, we have put on Christ. Wherefore, we confess our salvation in word and deed, and we restore our likeness to God. (Orthros)



**FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT
SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY
FEBUARY 18, 2024**



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
Rev. Deacon Elias Bailey
Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL

Antiphon

1- The Lord is King, in splendor robed; robed is the Lord and girt about with strength.

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

2- Who can tell the mighty deeds of the Lord, or proclaim all his praises?

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

3- Thus let the redeemed of the Lord say, those whom He has redeemed from the hand of the foe.

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 5)

Let us, O faithful, praise and worship the Word, coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our Salvation, for He was pleased to be lifted in the flesh upon the cross, and to endure death, and to raise the dead by His glorious resurrection.

Troparion of the Holy Icons (Tone 2)

Before your most pure image, we bow in worship, O Good One, begging forgiveness of our sins, O Christ God: because You chose of your own free will to ascend upon the cross in the flesh in order to deliver from the enemy's yoke those You had created. For this reason, we cry out to You in thanksgiving: "You our Savior have filled all things with joy when You came to save the world."

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 Annunciation (Tone 8) Pg. 14-English this week

We your servants ascribe to you, O Mother of God, thank offerings of victory, O Champion Leader, for we have been liberated from terror. But as you have that invincible power do you free us from every kind of danger, so that we may cry out to you: "Hail O Virgin and Bride ever pure!"

What Will It Be Like?

For most of us, our deification, begun sacramentally, blossoms in our spirits when we live with a conscious awareness of God's life in us. Rarely is it manifested in our bodies before the life of the age to come. At the end of this age, however, our bodies will share in our transformation, according to the Scriptures.

With all the drama of apocalyptic literature, 1 Corinthians describes the destiny of our bodies: "*Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory'*" (1 Cor 15:51-54).

St Paul describes this change as the corruptible putting on incorruption. The physical decay of death, is destined to be reversed, as it were, and the body given a share in the eternal life of grace. The biblical authors themselves could not describe concretely how this will happen. St Paul resorted to imagery: "*But someone will say, 'How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?' Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body"* (1 Cor 15:35-38).

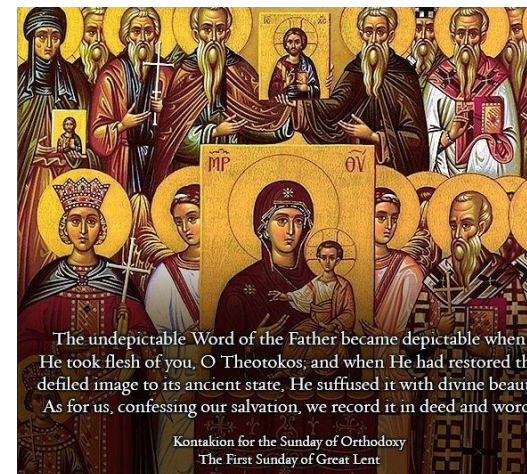
In one of the last books of the New Testament to be written, even imagery is abandoned. In 1 Jn the apostolic author professes his faith despite his ignorance of details: "*Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure"* (1 Jn 3:2, 3). Somehow, the vision of God will penetrate our bodily nature.

The Icon and Our Transfiguration

The Church's faith in the transformation of our mortal bodies by the vision of God is at the heart of our concept of the icon. The bodies of Christ and of the saints are shown as physical, but transfigured. They are of this world, but other-worldly. They may be shown in an earthly setting – a city or a countryside – but even nature is depicted as not of this world. Individual saints are shown on a golden background, representing heavenly glory.

With the rediscovery of classical art in the Renaissance, Western painters moved away from the tradition of iconography, depicting Christ and the saints as naturalistically as possible. In the Eastern Churches, the rules of iconography remain, giving us an image of the transfigured body of the age to come.

By a happy coincidence, it was on the First Sunday of the Great Fast, in the year 843 that iconoclasm was decisively defeated and icons formally restored in Constantinople. As we celebrate this Triumph of Orthodoxy, we cannot fail to see the transfigured bodies in our icons as a reminder that the glory of Christ and the Spirit sacramentally within the believer will one day become physically visible, in the very limbs of the transformed body.



DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +Alfred Jagielski, Jr. (25yr.). Requested by Lisa Jagielski & family

This morning's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by Antoinette Arraj & Lisa Jagielski

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.

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE SECOND WEEK OF GREAT LENT

Mon Feb. 19, 6pm - Great Compline

Wed Feb. 21, 6pm - Presanctified Liturgy

Fri Feb. 23, 6pm– Compline & Akathist

Sun Feb. 25, 10am-Sunday of the relics & St. Gregory Palamas.

Please join us!

Please remember in your prayers: Lorraine Lian, George Arraj, Jr., Peter Abraham, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Archie Opatka, 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, Susan Bailey, Jacqueline Ventriglia, those affected by the natural disasters throughout the world, the people of Gaza, and for peace in the Middle East.

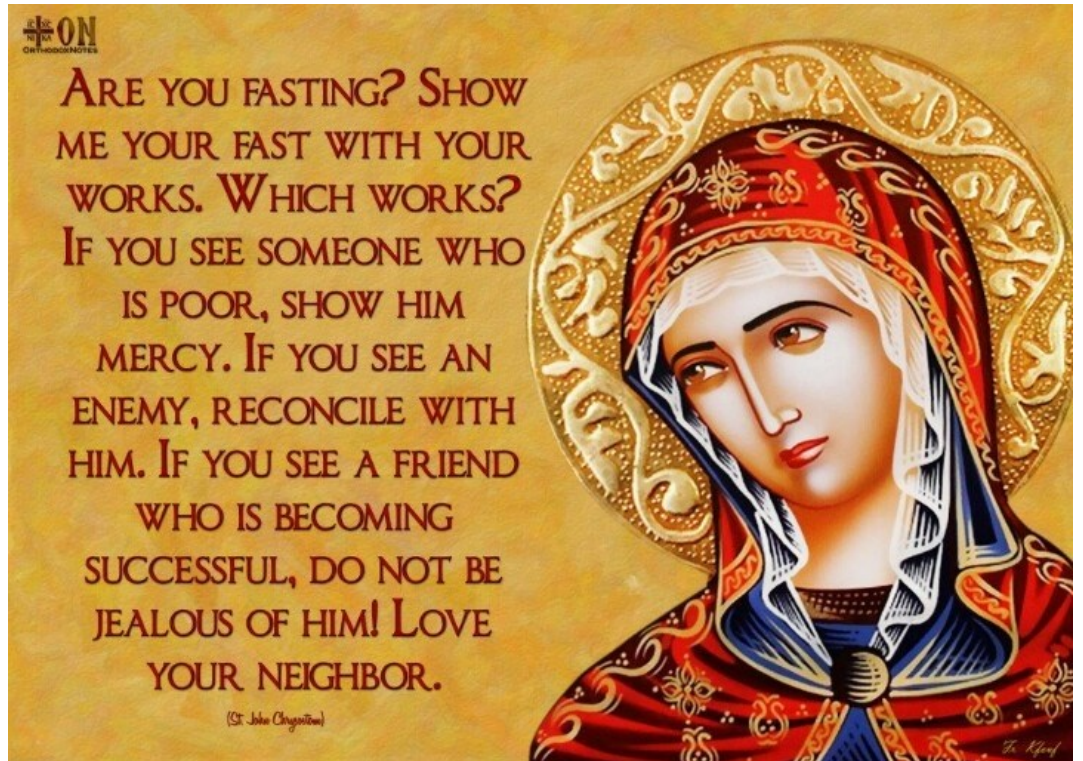
If there are people for whom you would like me to pray, please reach out and give me their names. Part of our vocation as Christians is to pray for each other, especially when someone is sick or suffering in any way.

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$ 826
Coffee Hr.	\$ 47
Candles	\$ 31
Memorials	\$ 420
TOTAL	\$1,324

FINANCIALS

<u>1.2024</u>	<u>YTD(10.2023-1.2024)</u>
Income \$7,328	Income \$51,986
Expenses \$9,448	Expenses \$48,094
Net (\$2,120)	Net \$ 3,892



We Shall See Him as He Is

WE HAVE COMPLETED THE FIRST WEEK of the Great Fast. Hopefully, we have met the goals which have set for ourselves: the degree of fasting and almsgiving appropriate to our station in life, or the participation in the services which our schedule of responsibilities allows. Whether we did or did not do so, we should realize that taking part in such practices is not the ultimate purpose of the fasting season. The final goal of the Great Fast – and of our entire life as Christians – is our ultimate transfiguration in Christ.

St Paul – who had seen the transfigured glory of the risen Christ appear to him on the road to Damascus – insisted that we will share in this transformation and that this change is already taking place: *“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord”* (2 Cor 3:18). He daringly asserts that we are being transformed to be the mirror image of the risen Christ. Our human nature, he proclaims, is being renewed after the model who is Christ. This is what our later tradition calls theosis (deification), being *“partakers of the divine nature”* (2 Pt 1:4): given a share through Christ in the very life of God.

How Can This Be?

We may try to imitate Christ, to pattern our actions on the way of life which Christ has proposed to us; but the change described in the Scripture demands more than our striving to make it so. It demands an ontological change, something that affects us at the heart of our being and turns the water of our human nature in the wine of God. This transformation is what St Paul calls *“the mystery decreed before the ages for our glory”* (1 Cor 2:7).

The first transformation in this mystery is the incarnation of the Word of God Himself. He assumes our human nature without putting aside His divinity. His glory was concealed – except for the moment of His transfiguration on Mt. Tabor – but He did not cease being the eternal Son of God. His incarnation was complete: *“in all things He had to be made like His brethren”* (Heb 2:17) so that He would transform our entire human nature. St Gregory the Theologian expressed it concisely, **“That which He has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is united to His Godhead is thereby saved.”** In other words, if there is an aspect of our being which the Son did not assume in the incarnation, then that aspect of our humanity would be beyond the reach of Christ’s redeeming work.

The second transformation is ours: we are incorporated into Christ. When we are baptized into Christ we experience an ontological change, we have “put on Christ.” We have been taken into His family and His divine Father by nature is now ours, as we are *“adopted as sons by Jesus Christ in himself, according to the good pleasure of his will”* (Eph 1:5). Body and soul, we have become the dwelling place of *“Christ in you, the hope of glory”* (Col 1:27) and *“the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you”* (1 Cor 6:19).

This ontological change working in our baptism is not abolished when we take off our baptismal garment. Our deification is reaffirmed whenever we partake of the Eucharist. Christ’s body mystically becomes one with ours, confirming our incorporation into Him. Our entire life becomes a matter of “becoming what you are.” We are called to become consciously and actively what we are mystically through our baptism: to strive for a loving awareness – and even perhaps vision – of the indwelling glory of Christ in the Spirit. In words attributed to St Gregory of Sinai, “Become what you already are, find Him who is already yours, listen to Him who never ceases speaking to you, own Him who already owns you.”



Prokimenon

Reader: Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our Fathers, and your name is worthy of praise and glorious forever.

People: Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our Fathers, and your name is worthy of praise and glorious forever.

Reader: For You are just in all You have done to us, and all your works are true and your ways right.

People: Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our Fathers, and your name is worthy of praise and glorious forever.

Reader: Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our Fathers, .

People: And your name is worthy of praise and glorious forever.

Epistle: Heb. 11:24-26; 32-40; 12:1-2

Alleluia Verses

Moses and Aaron were among his priests and Samuel among those who called upon his name.

Verse: They called upon the Lord, and He answered them; from the pillar of cloud, He spoke to them.

Gospel: Jn. 1:43-51, 1st Sunday of Lent

Hirmos (Tone 3)-Arabis this week

In you, O Full of Grace, all creation rejoices, the orders of angels and the human race as well: O Sanctified Temple, Spiritual Paradise, and Glory of Virgins, from whom our God, who exists before all eternity, took flesh and became a little Child! He has taken your womb as His throne, making it more spacious than the heavens. Therefore, O Full of Grace, in you all creation re-

