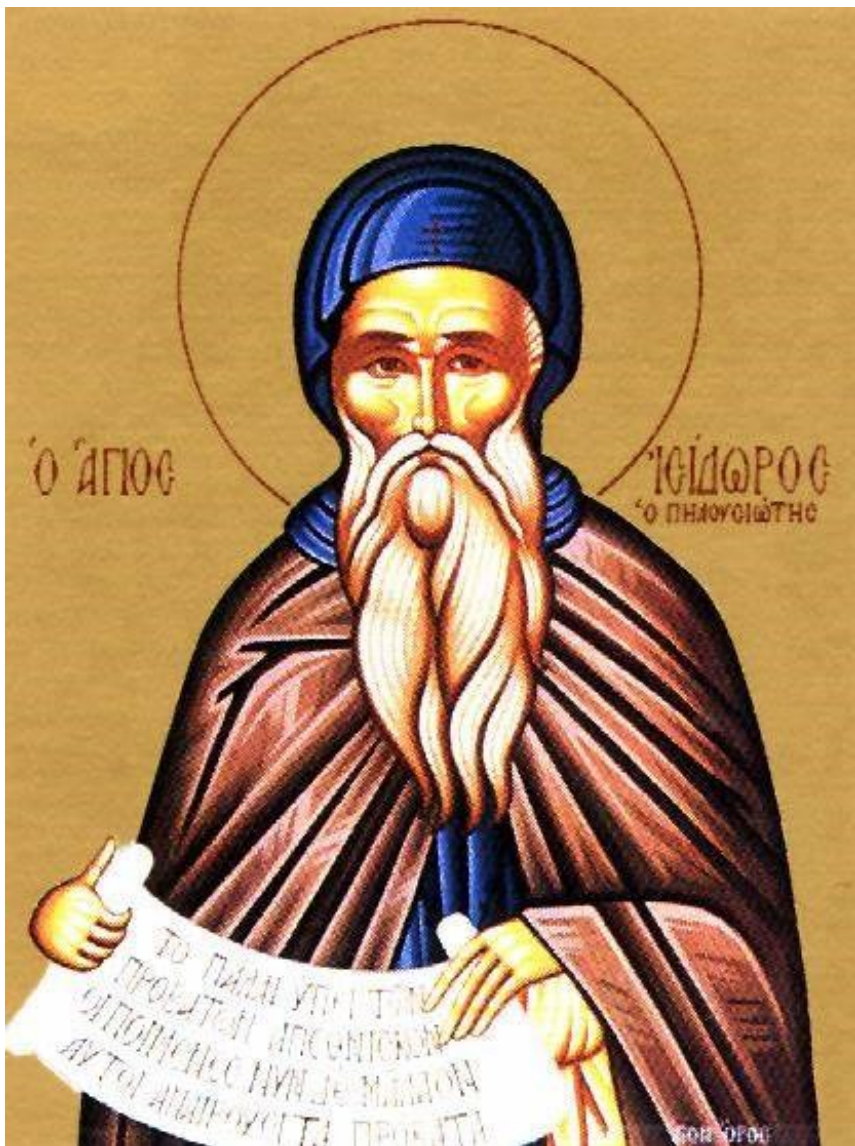


From the Divine Office for our Holy Father Isidore of Pelusium (Feb. 4)

O holy father, by the streams of grace and the rain of your sacred words, you refresh all the faithful in the Lord. Approaching the cup of Wisdom from on high, you drank from it in abundance, as from a well. By your writings, your admonishing and your teachings, you spread your radiant doctrine everywhere, O father Isidore, worthy of our praise. (Vespers)

O glorious Isidore, the Church has found in you another Morning Star that enlightened it with the clarity of your teachings, And it cries out to you, "Joy to you, Isidore, most blessed, whose spiritual intelligence is so high!" (Orthros)



SUNDAY OF MEATFARE
FEBRUARY 4, 2024



THE LAST JUDGEMENT

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church

256 Hamilton St., Worcester, MA 01604

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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

Antiphon (Feast)

1- Gird your sword upon your thigh, O Mighty One!

O Son of God who were carried in the arms of Simeon the Just, save us who sing to You: Alleluia

2- In your splendor and majesty, ride triumphant in the cause of truth and for the sake of justice.

O Son of God who were carried in the arms of Simeon the Just, save us who sing to You: Alleluia

3- Your arrows are sharp; peoples are subject to You; the king's enemies lose heart. A tempered rod is your royal scepter.

O Son of God who were carried in the arms of Simeon the Just, 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 3) pg. 39

Let all in heaven rejoice, and all on earth be glad, for the Lord has exerted power with His arm: By death He has trampled upon Death and has become the firstborn from the dead. He has delivered us from the bosom of Hades and has granted to the world great mercy.

Troparion of the Encounter (Tone 1)

Hail, O Full of grace, Virgin and Mother of God: for from you has arisen the Sun of Justice, Christ our God, enlightening those who stand in darkness. You too, O just Elder Simeon, rejoice, for you carried in your arms the Redeemer of our souls, our Resurrection.

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.

Kondakion of Meat Fare (Tone 1)

O God, when You shall come down upon earth in your glory, every creature shall tremble before You. A river of fire shall flow before your judgment-seat, the books shall be opened, and all secrets revealed. On that day, O Just Judge, deliver me from eternal fire and make me worthy to stand at your right!

Kontakion of the Presentation of our Lord (Tone 1)

O Christ our God, who through your birth have sanctified the virginal womb, and have blessed the arms of Simon, You have come today to save us. When wars prevail, keep your people in peace, and strengthen our public authorities in every good deed, for You alone are the lover of Mankind.

The life of Christians who take this parable seriously is very different from that of those who are in the thrall of greed. Recently a New Orleans couple was thinking of adopting a disabled newborn. They told a local reporter, that the "reasons against" column was the longer; the "reasons for" were shorter. But it was topped, Royanne said, by the scriptural injunction in Matthew 25: "*Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.*"

Catherine Doherty, the late founder of the Madonna House communities was raised in Russia before the Communist takeover. She describes how this parable was lived in her home:

"My father was in the diplomatic service, so he entertained all the diplomatic corps at our home in Petrograd one evening. Big deal: tea and wonderful trays of cakes, and 250 people. Suddenly the butler opened the door and said, 'Christ at the door, sir.' Well, the French ambassador's wife dropped her cup; she had never heard anything like that. "My father and mother excused themselves from the 250 VIPs and walked into the next room. There they found a wino at the door. My father bowed low to him and opened the door. My mother set the table with the best linen and served him herself with my father's help."

Catherine herself was about nine at the time and recalls asking, "Mommy, can I serve the gentleman?" Her mother replied, No, you were disobedient last week; you can't serve Christ when you are disobedient."

"Now that's my background," Catherine wrote in her autobiography. "That's how we were taught."

Acting in the spirit of this parable need not be so courageous. In his 57th homily on Matthew St John Chrysostom notes that we are not asked for much. "*Mark how easy are His injunctions. He did not say, 'I was in prison, and you set me free; I was sick, and you raised me up again;'* but, '*you visited me, and, 'ye came unto me.*'" Making sandwiches for a homeless shelter or delivering meals to an elderly neighbor are not monumental or heroic actions, but they can number us among the blessed if done in the spirit of Christ.

Almsgiving along with prayer and fasting in a spirit of repentance are the mileposts on our Lenten journey to Pascha. The spirit in which we fulfill them shows us how close we are to living the life of Christ in our world... or how far.

Knowing the commandments of the Lord, let this be our way of life: let us feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome strangers, visit those in prison and the sick. Then the Judge of the earth will say even to us: "Come, you whom My Father has blessed, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you!"

From the Midnight Service

CHEESEFARE POTUCK

Next Sunday, February 11 is Cheesefare Sunday. We will have a potluck brunch in place of the Coffee Hour. At 12:30pm we will celebrate Forgiveness Vespers to kick off Great Lent.

Please bring your favorite meatless dish to share and then celebrate Forgiveness Vespers with your brothers and sisters. Asking for and giving forgiveness to each other is a wonderful way to begin the 40 days of Lent.

Fish, eggs and dairy are allowed for the brunch.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today **People of Ukraine.** Requested by Maria Filewicz
 +**Katherine Thomas ,+Thomas Syseskey.** Requested by Maria Filewicz

Feb 18 +**Alfred Jagielski, Jr. (25yr.)**. Requested by Lisa Jagielski & family

Today's Coffee Hr. is hosted by Maria Filewicz
Our Cheesefare Pot Luck will take the place of the Coffee Hr.

Please remember in your prayers: Lorraine Lian, George Arraj, Jr., Ron Abraham, Peter Abraham, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Archie Opatka, Charlotte Stockhaus, Richard Abraham, Sr., Frank Boyda, Carol Boyda, Bob Lynch, Joe Najemy, Michael Mooradian, Dennis Desplains, 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, 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	\$1,588
Coffee Hr.	\$ 54
Candles	\$ 27
Stole	\$ 500
Memorials	\$ 815
TOTAL	\$2,984



Welcome to any visitors we have with us this morning! We are happy to have you worship with us.

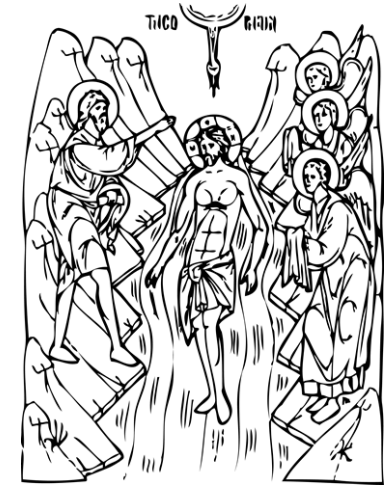
Please join us downstairs in the church hall for the coffee hour so that we can get to know each other better and answer any questions you may have about the parish or the Melkite Church.

HOUSE BLESSINGS

If you would like to have your house blessed, please contact Fr. Bryan to arrange a date and time. It is a blessing to be able to spend time with you outside of Sunday morning.

Call me @ 774-502-8547 or email me @ olphmelkite@gmail.com.

God bless you!



LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE FIRST WEEK OF GREAT LENT

Sun. Feb 11, 12:30pm - Forgiveness Vespers

Mon Feb. 12, 6pm - Great Compline

Wed Feb. 14, 6pm - Presanctified Liturgy

Fri Feb. 16, 6pm- Compline & Akathist

Most weeks, we will celebrate Great Compline on Mondays, Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesdays, and Compline & Akathist on Fridays.

Please join us!

The Son of Man Will Come (Matthew 25:31-46)

“I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE; no one comes to the Father, except through me” (John 14:6). The incarnate Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the only one through whom we have access to God, to live the divine life in this world and in the age to come. Many Christians take this to mean that, unless one is explicitly a believer in Christ, he cannot be saved. What, then, of those who have never heard of Christ? What is to become of them?

The Lord gives us the answer in His parable of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46). Here, we are told, that when the Son of Man comes in his glory “all the nations will be gathered before Him” (v.32). “The nations” here translates the Greek term *ta ethnē*, which in the Scriptures generally refers to the Gentiles, those who are not Jews. Jesus’ hearers would know that those being judged here are the Gentiles, the mass of peoples who were not believers in the God of Israel.

The Lord’s teaching about true believers is recorded in Jn 5:24: *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”* Those who have put on Christ and live in communion with God through Him already share in the divine life. Those who maintain their union with Christ will continue in that life after death.

In Matthew’s parable Jesus is speaking about the judgment of nonbelievers. People are separated, some on the right and others on the left. Those on the right are described as righteous because they fed, clothed or welcomed Christ; those on the left are condemned because they did not. Neither group recognized Him, but those on the right simply did the least what they thought was right. And for this they were proclaimed as *“blessed of my Father”* (v. 34).

In light of this parable the Church’s teaching has been that those who do not know Christ yet follow their conscience in doing good to their fellow-man are blessed. As the Fathers of Vatican II declared, *“For they who without their own fault do not know of the Gospel of Christ and His Church, but yet seek God with sincere heart, and try, under the influence of grace, to carry out His will in practice, known to them through the dictate of conscience, can attain eternal salvation”* (*Lumen gentium* #16).

People who seek to close heaven to nonbelievers often quote the risen Jesus’ words on sending forth the apostles: *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”* (Mark 16:16). Those who hear the gospel preached to them have the opportunity to accept or reject it.

What about those who have rejected a distorted image of God, perhaps gained second hand from a negative experience in the Church? Are they truly rejecting Christ? Today there are many baptized who have lost their faith. Some have even requested that their names be removed from the baptismal register, “the Book of Life” (Byzantine baptismal rite). Are they condemned?

Whatever their fate on the last day, it is not for us to condemn them! We may the reason they lost their faith! The anonymous author of the fifth-century *Incomplete Commentary on Matthew* writes, *“Just as someone who is wearing splendid clothing avoids every filthy object lest it by chance get dirty, so everyone who receives God in his heart and spirit ought to be careful so that he does not contaminate God, knowing that if God has been contaminated among us, He will remain uncontaminated in His own nature”* (Homily 14). The God rejected by many is one “contaminated” because of our actions. If anything we should pray for those who have rejected Christ as well as for those who have never known Him.

The Parable and Us

If feeding the hungry is so important that it saves people who never knew Christ, what can it do for us? Among other things, it can help free us from the grip of materialism so prevalent in our consumer society today. We “must” have the latest, the fastest, the most attractive – otherwise we have somehow failed. If nothing else, feeding others takes us out of ourselves and connects us with others in a very basic way. And, according to the Gospel, it joins us to Christ Himself.

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: 1 Cor. 8:8-13; 9:1-2

Alleluia Verses

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

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

Gospel: Mt. 25:31-46, Sunday of Meat-Fare

Hirmos of the Presentation of the Encounter (Tone 3)

O Mother of God, hope and strength of all Christians, watch over those who place their hope in you, O Most Pure One. Let us, O Faithful, glorify the First-Born, the eternal Word of God, born of the Virgin all-pure; for we have seen beyond the shadow and the letter of the Law a sign of Christ in these words, "Every male opening the womb shall be called Holy to the Lord!"

GREAT LENT

This year, Great Lent begins on February 12. During the Fast, we abstain from meat, fish with a backbone, and dairy. We also eat or drink nothing from midnight to noon, Monday through Friday. This is the ideal. We try to keep the Fast as best we can. There are legitimate reasons for adjusting one’s fasting (i.e. medical issues). The important thing is to fast as best you can.

It is also important to pray more; individually and communally. We will have services on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays during Great Lent. Make an effort to come to at least one service per week. Spend time reading the Scripture. You can also add spiritual reading, such as *Great Lent* by Alexander Schmemman.

We are also called to give alms. The money we save by not eating meat should be given to the poor. The Diocese has its Shepherd’s Care program. For that purpose. You may also have a charity to which you want to donate.

Without prayer and almsgiving, fasting is just a diet. These three aspects of our lives are tools to help us get closer to God.

Blessed Lent!