

From the Divine Office for the Sunday of All Saints

With sacred hymns, let us celebrate the holy ones from all over the earth, as is right: Apostles, martyrs, hierarchs and holy women. For the men and women unite to the heavenly spirits, thanks to Christ, have received immortality in exchange for their sufferings. Like stars, they radiantly enlighten us, and now they intercede for our souls. (Vespers)

Those who have borne witness throughout the world have become citizens of heaven. Having imitated the Passion of Christ, they free us from the passions. United today in the Kingdom, they show how the Church of the first-born bears the sign of the assembly in heaven. They say to Christ, "You are my God. Through the intercession of the one who bore You, protect me, O You who alone are most merciful." (Ikos)



**SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS
MAY 26, 2024**



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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 8)

You descended from on high O compassionate One; and consented to burial for three days that You might free us from suffering. O Lord, our life and our resurrection, glory to You!

Troparion of All Saints (Tone 4)

O Christ God, Your church clothed with the blood of Your martyrs all over the world, as with purple and fine linen, cries out to You: send Your mercy upon Your people, grant peace to Your fold and extend Your great compassion upon our souls.

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 All Saints(Tone 8)

To you, O Lord, Ordainer and Creator of all the world, the universe offers the God-bearing Martyrs as the first-fruits of nature. Wherefore, through their prayers, and through the intercession of the Mother of God, preserve Your Church and the whole world in perfect safety and peace, O You who alone are most merciful.

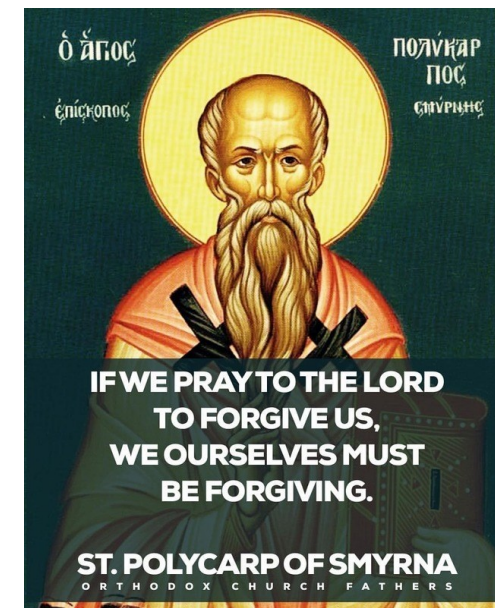
Recently the British government has prohibited Christians from wearing a cross in the workplace. The policy has been challenged in court by two women who were disciplined for wearing a cross at work. A Foreign Office statement defending the policy said, “In neither case is there any suggestion that the wearing of a visible cross or crucifix was a generally recognised form of practising the Christian faith, still less one that is regarded (including by the applicants themselves) as a requirement of the faith.” In response the former Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey commented, “The irony is that when governments and courts dictate to Christians that the cross is a matter of insignificance, it becomes an even more important symbol and expression of our faith.”

Witnessing to Christ – even in the Church – may make one unpopular and oppressed. “And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me” Mt 10:30). The witness to Christ is thus called to not only wear a cross but to **bear the cross** as Christ did.

The saint is one who has heard the Gospel call to put God first in their lives. We may be proud that we go to church, pray, or fast. So did the Pharisee in Christ’s parable. The saint, however, is a person who is ready to put everything else aside to focus on God and His love for us. “*He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me*” (Mt 10:37).

The spiritual son of St Simeon the New Theologian, Nicetas Stethatos, says that there are three kinds of people in the world: “the carnal man, who wants to live for his own pleasure, even if it harms others; the natural man, who wants to please both himself and others, and the spiritual man who wants to please only God, even if it harms himself” (cited in Tito Colliander’s *Way of the Ascetics*, 5). The ascetic in a monastic setting or in the world strives to be that spiritual man: to love nothing or no one more than God.

The final section in this Gospel pastiche is Christ’s promise that those who have left home and family for His sake will receive a hundred times more in this life and eternal life in the age to come (see Mt 19:29). This promise is often interpreted to mean that those who go off to serve Christ will prosper materially, it may be the opposite: that those who place Christ first in their lives will find that He is worth a hundred times more than what the world has to offer and that they will find contentment in what they do have, a place in the kingdom of God.



DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today **Our Friends and Families, Living and Deceased**

+ **Nabil Sakhat (13th)**. Requested by Jean and Nadia Sakhat & Family

Please remember in your prayers: George Arraj, Jr., Peter Abraham, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, 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, 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	\$
Coffee Hr.	\$
Candles	\$
Hall Rental	\$
Donations	\$
Flowers	\$
TOTAL	\$

**God bless you for your generosity!
Just a reminder that we need at
least \$2,000 per week to meet our
financial obligations.**



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.

COOKOUT FUNDRAISER

On June 23 after the Divine Liturgy, we will have a cookout to raise funds for various projects. Among those are replacing the freezer and stove in the Hall kitchen, new ceiling tiles in the Hall, and renovating the rectory kitchen. Tickets are \$20 for adults and children over 12 and \$10 for children under 12. The menu includes: hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken, French fries, macaroni salad, salad, and desserts.

Tickets are now on sale. See Nick Rahall or Ryan Dumont. We will also have an option to purchase tickets online through our website.

Please plan to attend and support our continuing effort to spruce up our property!

MELKITE CONVENTION

The 53rd National Melkite Convention will take place **July 4-7, 2024** at the Marriott Boston Quincy Hotel. The convention is sponsored by Our Lady of the Annunciation Cathedral.

Check the sheets in the back of the church for more details. Please make every effort to attend! It is a weekend filled with worship, spirituality, and fellowship!



The Face of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 10:32-38; 19:27-30)

WHAT DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT LOOK LIKE? We know from the Scriptures that the Father cannot be seen but has manifested Himself to us in His Son. *“No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him”* (Jn 1:18). And we know that the Son, incarnate, became visible in His humanity. He looks like one of us. This is why we are able to have icons of Him. As St. John of Damascus wrote in *On the Divine Images*, “It is impossible to make an image of the immeasurable, uncircumscribed, invisible God. ... But it is obvious that when you contemplate God becoming man, then you may depict Him clothed in human form. When the Invisible One becomes visible to flesh, then you may draw His likeness” (1: 7,8). But what about the Holy Spirit? Has He become visible to flesh? Can we see the face of the Holy Spirit?

In a sense we can. The “face” of the Holy Spirit is the face of the saints. The very existence of the saints testifies to the presence of holiness in the Church, for no one can become a saint except by the Holy Spirit. The “face” of the Holy Spirit is not in the monuments which have been erected by Christians over the centuries, impressive as they are. Rather it is in those who have lived the way they did because the Spirit of God dwelt within them.

The priest of the French village of Ars, St Jean Vianney knew the Holy Spirit firsthand, we might say. He wrote, “If the damned were asked: ‘Why are you in Hell?’ they would answer: ‘For having resisted the Holy Spirit.’ And if the saints were asked, ‘Why are you in Heaven?’ they would answer: ‘For having listened to the Holy Spirit.’ When good thoughts come into our minds, it is the Holy Spirit who is visiting us. The Holy Spirit is a power. The Holy Spirit supported St. Simeon on his column; He sustained the martyrs. Without the Holy Spirit, the martyrs would have fallen like the leaves from the trees.” (*Catechesis on the Holy Spirit*).

This intimate connection between the Holy Spirit and the saints is proclaimed in the Byzantine Churches which celebrate the Feast of All Saints in connection with the Feast of Pentecost. On Pentecost we say that the Holy Spirit has come upon the Church. On the next Sunday, we demonstrate the truth of this claim by pointing to the saints.

The Spirit is certainly present in any saint but it is in the totality of all saints that we find the “face” of the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit are many and varied; no one person can encompass them all. The Church describes the particular gifts of the saints by designating categories for us to understand and revere them. There are prophets and apostles, martyrs, hierarchs, ascetics, unmercenaries, fools for Christ and more. There are saints whose names we know and those we do not. There are saints whose lives are documented and others whose name is their only memorial. All together they reveal to us the “face” of the Holy Spirit. It is noteworthy that what the West calls “the communion of saints” is referred to in the East as “the communion of the Holy Spirit.”

In fully appointed Byzantine churches we find ourselves surrounded by icons of the saints. Frescoes of the saints cover the walls, panel icons in shrines or on icon stands are displayed for veneration. These are not distractions from the altar or pulpit but a wordless demonstration that we are one body with the saints in Christ by the operation of the Holy Spirit. The Church is not simply the assembly of those physically present; it is the gathering of all who are in Christ.

The Gospel on the Saints

The Gospel passage read at the Divine Liturgy on the Sunday of All Saints is not a continuous episode. Rather it is an assemblage of three teachings concerning what it means to aspire to holiness. The first step is that we are called to bear witness to Christ in the world. *“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven”* (Mt 10:32). Our faith is not meant to be practiced privately, for our personal consolation. Rather we are to be witnesses to Him before others.

In today’s world “bearing witness” often means “pointing the finger at” some atrocity or injustice. We are called to “point the finger at” Christ, much as John the Baptist did: *“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”* (Jn 1:29). The simplest way to point the figure at the person of Christ is to wear a cross or display an icon in public. Often Evangelical Protestants who do not display icons will erect a plaque in their home or on their door with this verse *“But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD”* (Joshua 24:15).

Prokimenon

Reader: Awesome in his saints is God, the God of Israel.

People: Awesome in his saints is God, the God of Israel.

Reader: In the churches, bless God, the Lord out of Israel’s wellspring.

People: Awesome in his saints is God, the God of Israel.

Reader: Awesome in his saints is God,

People: The God of Israel.

Epistle: Heb. 11:33-40; 12:1-2

Alleluia Verses

The just cried out, and the Lord heard them, and He delivered them from all their trials.

Verse: Many are the trials of the just, but out of them all, the Lord will save them.

Gospel: Mt. 10:32-38; 19:27-30, Sunday of All Saints

Kinonikon

Exult, you just, in the Lord; praise from the upright is fitting. Alleluia.

