

From the Divine Office for the Nativity of the Prophet and Forerunner John the Baptist

June 24

Let the mountains drop down sweetness and the hills leap like rams; for Elizabeth has brought forth him who is going to dwell among you, the Forerunner of the Lord, who put an end to the muteness of his father by being born. Therefore we cry aloud to him: "O Baptist of Christ, intercede for the salvation of our souls!" (Lete)

Let us now praise the Forerunner of the Lord, whom Elizabeth has born today to the priest from an unfruitful womb, but not without seed. For Christ alone passed through an impassible dwelling-place without seed. A barren woman gave birth to John, yet he was not born without the help of man. And a pure Virgin, whom the Father and the Spirit of God overshadowed, bore Jesus. But he whom came from the barren woman was seen to be a prophet of Him who was born of a Virgin without seed, a preacher and forerunner of the Word of God. (Ikos)



FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

JUNE 23, 2024



VISITATION OF MARY TO ELIZABETH

JUNE 24

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church

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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 4) Pg. 40

The women disciples of the Lord, having learned from the angel the joyful announcement of the resurrection, and having rejected the ancestral sentence, proudly told the apostles: Death is despoiled. Christ God is risen, bestowing to the world great mercy.”

Troparion Of The Visitation (Tone 1)

Rejoice, pure Theotokos, for the Archangel has brought to you glad tidings. You did not boast of the great honors bestowed upon you, but humbly hastened to Zacharia’s house to serve the mother of the Forerunner. With her you glorified God who alone is Almighty and the Lover of mankind.

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 Visitation (Tone 6)

The hosts of angels were amazed at your tenderness, O Theotokos, as they saw you hasten devotedly to Zacharia’s house in Judea to serve the mother of the Baptist, who was with child in her old age. You assisted her for three months profound humility and great love. So, she cried out to you: Hail, O Bride, and Virgin ever pure!

The Feast of the Visitation

This festival has a unique history. We know that it was observed in the early Church, at least in Ain Karim. The pre-Islamic Jerusalem Calendar notes that a festival was kept there yearly on August 28.

The 11th-century Muslim scholar Muhammad al-Biruni (abu-RaiHan) documented the practice of the Syriac Melkite community in northeastern Persia. There May 4 marked the “Feast of Roses, according to the ancient rite as it is celebrated in Khwaarizm. On this day they bring Juri-roses to the churches, the reason for which is this, that on this day Mary presented the first roses to Elizabeth, the mother of John.” He then notes that May 15 “is the Feast of Roses according to the new rite (postponed to this date because roses are still very scarce on the fourth). It is celebrated on the same date in Khorasan, not on the original date.”

Today the Syriac Churches observe May 15 as the feast of Our Lady of the Harvest. They remember the Visitation on the third Sunday of the Announcement, their six week pre-Christmas cycle.

There is no mention of this feast in any Byzantine Church until the nineteenth century. In 1844 the Melkite Patriarch Maximos III decreed that this feast should be kept on the Friday after Pascha. The Greek Church honors a miraculous spring in Constantinople on this date as the Feast of the Theotokos, the Life-Giving Spring. The patriarch, however, was embroiled in a conflict with the Ecumenical Patriarchate at this time. He had recently achieved civil emancipation from the control of the Patriarch of Constantinople. In retaliation the Greeks insisted that this new Catholic community be obliged to wear clerical headgear that was clearly different from that of the Greeks.

Maximos reacted by suppressing the Greek feast: “We recognize the desire of many people from our Rum Catholic parishes to honor Our Lady the Mother of God on the aforementioned day with a special service to the point that some of them take part in vainly celebrating this feast to Our Lady. From another perspective, we cannot participate in honoring the consecration of a church for people who have left the communion of the Catholic Church.” In the most recent revision of the liturgical books of the Melkite Greek-Catholic Patriarchate the Feast of the Visitation has been transferred to June 23, one day before the Feast of St. John the Baptist’s Nativity.

The Feast of the Visitation was added to the calendar of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1883 when the Russian representation in Jerusalem consecrated a church in Ain Karim named “The Meeting of the Most Holy Virgin and St. Elizabeth.” Its feast was set for March 30 and extended to the entire Russian Church. In an ironic twist, the typikon transfers this feast, if March 30 occurs during Great Week, to... the Friday of Bright Week.

St Ambrose on the Visitation

“Notice the contrast and the choice of words. Elizabeth is the first to hear Mary’s voice, but John is the first to be aware of grace. She hears with the ears of the body, but he leaps for joy at the meaning of the mystery. She is aware of Mary’s presence, but he is aware of the Lord’s: a woman aware of a woman’s presence, the Forerunner aware of the pledge of our salvation. The women speak of the grace they have received while the children are active in secret, unfolding the mystery of love with the help of their mothers, who prophesy by the spirit of their sons. “The child leaps in the womb; the mother is filled with the Holy Spirit, but not before her son. Once the son has been filled with the Holy Spirit, he fills his mother with the same Spirit.”

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today **Our Friends & Families, living and deceased**

Next Sunday **+Yvette Macksoud.** Requested by her sister Jeanette Halal and family

There is no Coffee Hr. this morning due to the Fundraiser Cookout

Next week's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by Ryan & Tina Dumont and 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, Greg Davis, 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	\$
Stole	\$
Flowers	\$
Other	\$
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.

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Sat. June 29, 10AM - Divine Liturgy for the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul

COOKOUT FUNDRAISER

Today after the Divine Liturgy is our cookout to raise funds for various projects around the church. 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.

You can still get your tickets! 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!

Registration and hotel reservations have been extended to **June 24.**

“Blessed Are You Among Women”

TWO OF THE MOST FREQUENTLY used prayers in our tradition are taken from the same Gospel narrative: the visit of the Holy Virgin to her older cousin Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist (Lk 1:39-56). Both the Angelic Salutation (“Hail, O Theotokos...”) and the Canticle of the Theotokos (“My soul magnifies the Lord...”) are taken from this passage. The event which it describes is generally called the Visitation.

According to Luke, the angel Gabriel who told her that she would bear a son also told her that “*Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren*” (Lk 1:36). Mary then travelled the nearly hundred miles from Nazareth to the little town in the hills of Judea where Zachary and Elizabeth lived. According to tradition this town was Ain Karim, which then was five miles from Jerusalem, but is today incorporated in that city’s municipal boundaries.

The Holy Virgin greeted her cousin, “*And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord’*” (Lk 1:41-45).

The Holy Virgin replied with the Canticle which we sing daily at Matins/Orthros: “*My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior*” (vv. 46-47). This canticle is clearly modeled on the Song of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1-10), which that mother prayed when she learned that she would have a son. This led many modern scholars to assume that Luke put these words in Mary’s mouth, using 1 Samuel as his model. They did not realize that people steeped in Scripture as Mary was would naturally weave the sacred text into their speech when they spoke of the things of God.

Mary, the Ark of God

It may be that St Luke had another Old Testament passage in mind when he wrote the story of the visitation. Note the highlighted parallels from the story of David’s visit to the Ark of the Covenant described in 2 Samuel: “*David arose and went ... to bring up from there the ark of God, ... and he said, “How can the ark of the LORD come to me?” ... The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months. ... So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness. Then David danced before the LORD with all his might...*” (2 Sm 6:2-16).

The Holy Virgin is the new Ark of God, bearing within her – not the words of God’s commandments, the tablets of the Law, but the Living Word of God Himself. Before Him the unborn son of Elizabeth leaps in her womb as David danced before the Ark.

St Gregory the Wonderworker (213-c. 270) would develop this image of Mary as the Ark to describe the Virgin as full of grace (“Wrought with gold both within and without”): “Come also, dearly beloved, and chant the melody taught us by the inspired harp of David, saying ‘Arise, O Lord, into Your resting place – You and the Ark of Your holiness.’ For the Holy Virgin is truly an ark, wrought with gold both within and without, that has received the whole treasury of the sanctuary.”



Prokimenon

Reader: Let all on earth worship and sing praise to You, sing praise to Your name.

People: Let all on earth worship and sing praise to You, sing praise to Your name.

Reader: Shout joyfully to God, all you on earth; sing praise to the glory of His name.

People: Let all on earth worship and sing praise to You, sing praise to Your name.

Reader: Let all on earth worship and sing praise to You,

People: Sing praise to Your name.

Epistle: Gal. 4:4-7

Alleluia

The heavens declare God’s glory, and the firmament proclaims the work of His hands.

Verse: Day pours out the word today, and night to night imparts knowledge.

Gospel: Mt. 8:28-34; 9:1

Ladies’ Guild & Parish Council

We are reviving the Ladies’ Guild of the parish. There will be more information coming about this.

We are also going to form a Parish Council. It has been a number of years since we had one. We will have an initial meeting about this on July 9 at 6:30pm.

Please plan to attend especially if you have an interest in serving on the Council!