

From the Divine Office for the Synaxis of the Twelve Apostles (June 30)

Blessed are you, O eye-witnesses of the incarnate Word, illustrious Disciples! You are truly stars shining upon the world. As mystic hills, you have poured forth sweetness; divided, like the inexhaustible streams flowing from Paradise, you have refreshed the Churches of the nations with the water of God. (Vespers)

Disciples of the Savior, you went through the whole world, consuming the error of idolatry like dry stubble. Enlightening it with your teachings about God, you saved the nations as you drew them out of the profound ignorance in which they had sunk, in order to lead them to knowledge of the true God. Intercede with Christ that He be favorable to us on the Day of Judgement. (Orthros)



SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

JUNE 30, 2024



APOSTLES PETER & PAUL

JUNE 29

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church

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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (3rd)

1: Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth, and sing praise to His name.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

2: Say to God: How awesome are Your deeds! So great is Your power that Your enemies cringe before You.

Be shafa'ati Walidatil Eelah, ya Mukhallisu, khallisna.

3: Let all the earth worship You and sing praises to You; let it sing praises to Your name, O Most High!

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

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) Pg. 40

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 Apostles (Tone 3)

O Holy Apostles, intercede with the merciful God, that He may grant our souls the forgiveness of sins.

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 (Tone 2)

O never failing Protectress of Christians and their ever-present intercessor before the Creator, despise not the petitions of us sinners, but in your goodness extend your help to us who call upon you with confidence. Hasten, O Mother of God, to intercede for us, for you have always protected those who honor you.

Christians in a pagan world were to observe all the commandments and to conduct themselves honorably among the unbelievers, *“as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice”* (1 Pt 2:16). They were not to assume that Christianity was simply a matter of not worshipping the Roman gods. Those who claimed to be “in Christ” should expect to follow a higher standard of behavior than those who did not know the true God. As the Lord Himself indicated, they were to be in the world but not of the world.

At the same time Christians were not to dismiss non-Christians and their world as unworthy of their respect. Christ had come *“to enlighten and sanctify everyone in the world”* (see Jn 1:9); consequently believers were bound to honorable relationships with all men and to the legitimate structures of civil authority. *“Submit yourself to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake... for this is the will of God”* (1 Pt 2:13, 15). After all, the Lord Himself told Peter to pay the temple tax *“lest we offend them”* (Mt 17:27). At the same time, as Peter knows too well, Christians may still suffer at the hands of their unbelieving neighbors. People often see their way of life threatened when others live in ways contrary to it. In Peter’s day, some saw the Christian’s refusal to honor the Roman gods as disloyalty to the state. Many Romans saw devotion to the gods as an expression of patriotism; those who refused to do so would be suspected of treason.

In that case Peter proposes a twofold course of action. First, believers are to *“Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts”*, praising and blessing God no matter what hardships we might have to endure. Second, Christians should *“always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you”* (1 Pt 3:15). Believers should be able to articulate their faith with both clarity and charity. They should know how to express the teachings of the Gospel and how to do it in a positive way, with respect for those who question them.

Peter’s vision of a suffering Church would be realized quickly enough. But although Christians were hated, persecuted and killed by pagan rulers, they still sought to live as good citizens. St. Justin the Philosopher emphasized this in his defense of his fellow Christians: *“And everywhere we, more readily than all men, endeavor to pay to those appointed by you the taxes both ordinary and extraordinary as we have been taught by Him . . . Whence to God alone we render worship, but in other things we gladly serve you, acknowledging you as kings and rulers of men, and praying that with your kingly power you be found to possess also sound judgment”* (*Apologia 17*).

Witnesses with Peter

St. Peter concludes his letter with an exhortation to the presbyters of the Churches to whom he is writing. He identifies himself as a *“witness of the sufferings of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed”* (1 Pt 5:1). While Peter was an eye-witness to Christ’s death and resurrection, we too are witnesses of these mysteries. Every Sunday at matins (orthros) we become icons of Peter’s experience at Christ’s tomb. We hear the Gospel of the Resurrection and respond with the words *“Now that we have seen the holy Resurrection of Christ...”* We then partake of Christ in the Eucharist, anticipating the glory of the eternal heavenly banquet. We see with the eyes of faith what Peter saw with the eyes of the body: that Christ by His death and resurrection has made us sharers in the glory of His kingdom which will never end

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +**Yvette Macksoud.** Requested by her sister Jeanette Halal and family
+**Patricia Abraham**
+**Greg Davis.** Requested by Fr. Bryan, Kh. June and family

This morning's Coffee Hr. is hosted by Ryan & Tina Dumont and Family

Next week's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by

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	\$ 766
Candles	\$ 34
Bookstore	\$ 571.10
Cookout	\$ 75
TOTAL	\$ 1,446.10

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

Collection 6.16.2023

Weekly	\$ 649
Coffee Hr.	\$ 31
Candles	\$ 34
Stole	\$ 40
Flowers	\$ 20
TOTAL	\$ 774

**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.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all who helped make our Fundraiser Cookout a success! Between ticket sales and donations we raised \$4,726. These funds will be used to offset the cost of a new stove and freezer for the Hall Kitchen.

We hope to have other such fundraising events in the future.

God bless you for your generosity to the parish!

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!



Peter, the Rock of Faith

MOST OF THE EPISTLES found in the New Testament are attributed to St. Paul. In addition there are three Epistles of St John, one each of Ss. James and Jude, and two of St Peter. Since these are not read at a Sunday Divine Liturgy, we may be less familiar with them. They are all read at weekday Liturgies in the time between the Theophany and the beginning of the Great Fast. In addition portions of 1 Peter are read at Great Vespers on June 29, the feast of Ss. Peter and Paul.

1 Peter is addressed to Christians in “*Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia*” (1 Pt 1:2) which were all Roman provinces in Asia Minor (Turkey today). Many of the Churches there were most likely the result of missionary activity from Antioch, which had been St. Peter’s home in the 40s and 50s. St. Peter, we know, was martyred in Rome during the reign of Emperor Nero (c. 67-68 AD) and 1 Peter was likely written there. The letter concludes with greetings from the Church “who is in Babylon” (1 Pt 5:13), as believers of the day called Rome. They saw themselves as exiles in that pagan society, much as the Jews who were exiled to Babylon in the sixth century BC.

The “Diaspora”

The Christians in Asia Minor, to whom the letter is addressed, are described as “*pilgrims of the diaspora*” (1 Pt 1:2), or “dispersion.” Exiles – from the Jews in Babylon to Greeks or Russians in America – have used this term referring to their status as political refugees, strangers in an alien country. St. Peter is using the term in another sense. All believers in the world are exiles, dispersed in either a pagan society (like the first century Roman Empire), a Hindu or Muslim society (like so many Christians in Asia or Africa today), or a pluralistic secular society such as ours. Like the Israelites of old, who “*confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth*” (Heb 11:13), we too are pilgrims passing through or sojourners (temporary residents) here, but “*our citizenship is in heaven, from which we eagerly await the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ*” (Phil 3: 20).

Our Life in the Church

Much of this epistle is devoted to proposing ways in which we ought to live in this “diaspora.” As Christians we are committed to living by the Gospel, according to the values of God’s Kingdom, the highest of which is love. Christians are to love one another fervently, without hypocrisy (see 1 Pt 1:22). This is certainly something more than “coffee-hour love” – being nice in a social setting. People in any society may face economic hardship from time to time. How should a church respond when a member loses his job, can’t pay the rent, or is threatened with foreclosure? As the Apostle James insists, our response points to the quality of our faith. “*If a brother or sister is naked or destitute of daily food and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead*” (Jas 2:15-17). Faith and love must be made concrete by action.

What About the Unbelievers?

Most of the people in Asia Minor – like many of the people with whom we interact every day – would have been unbelievers. St. Peter sets out these principles for dealing with them. First of all, these Christians – presumably all converts – were no longer to live as unbelievers do, according to the “*aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers*” (1 Pt 1:18). Roman life was organized around festivals in honor of pagan gods and goddesses. Roman culture found no fault with practices such as abortion, infanticide or homosexuality. Jews – and consequently Christians – viewed these things as contrary to God’s plan for His people. There could be no compromise with the dominant culture on such matters. Those who are in Christ are called to be holy, set apart for God.

Prokimenon

Reader: May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in You.

People: May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in You.

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

People: May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in You.

Reader: May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us,

People: For we have hoped in You.

Epistle: 1 Cor. 4:9-16

Alleluia

O God, you granted me retribution and made peoples subject to me and saved me from my raging enemies.

Verse: Therefore, I will proclaim you, O Lord, among the nations, and I will sing praise to Your name.

Gospel: Mt. 9:1-8

