

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
AUGUST 11, 2024

*Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Melkite Catholic Church
256 Hamilton St., Worcester*

**Middle Eastern Picnic
September 8, 2024
12-6pm**

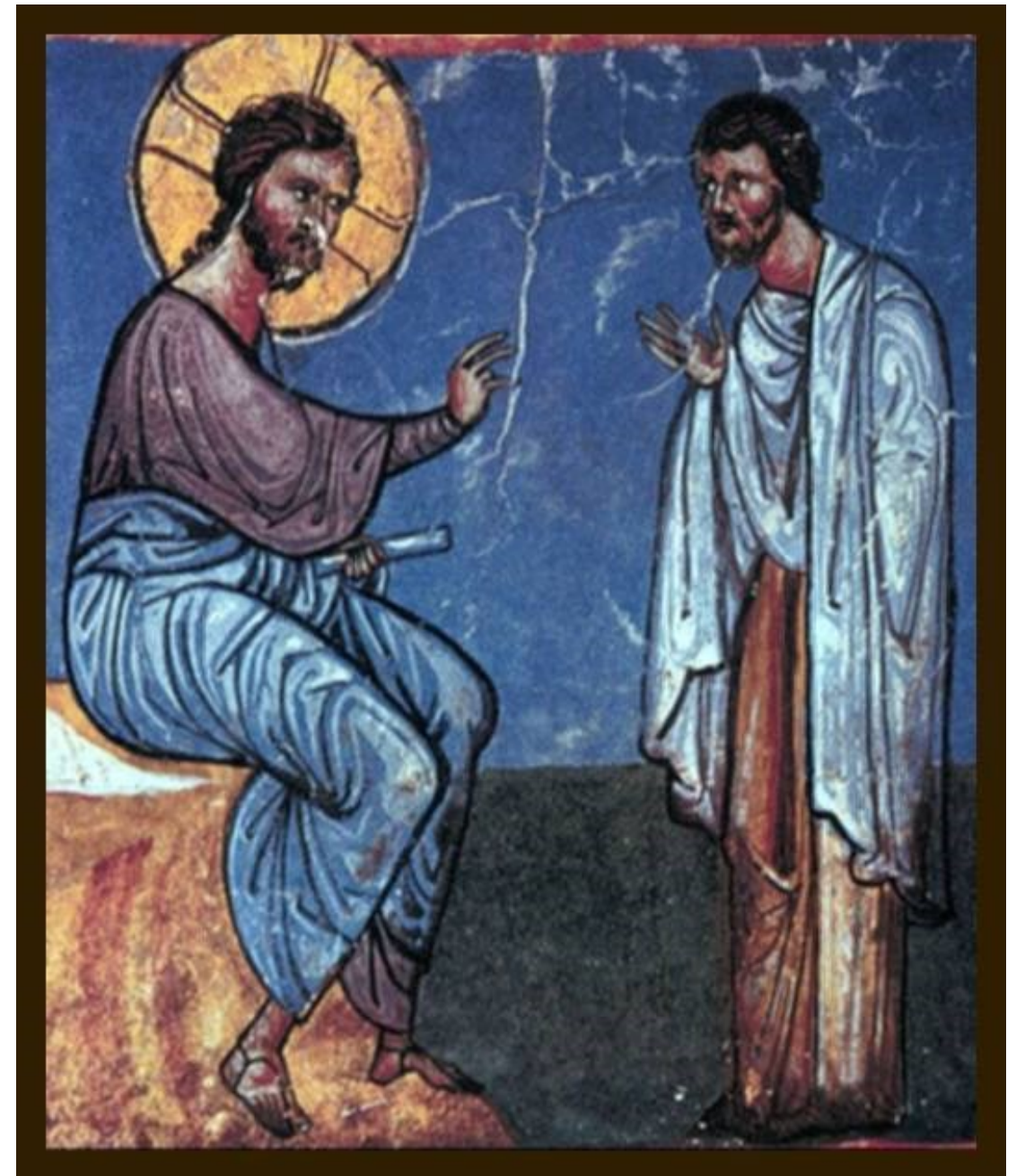


MENU

*Chicken Shawarma
Kibbeh
Chicken Kabobs
Stuffed Grape Leaves
Tabbouli
Hummus
Pastries
And more ...*

ENTERTAINMENT
*Mitch Kaltsunas Band
Dancing
Bouncy House
Kids' Activities
And more ...*

RAFFLES



Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church

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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (Feast)

1. The favors of the Lord I will sing forever; through all the generations my mouth shall proclaim his faithfulness.

O Son of God, who were transfigured on Mount Tabor, save us who sing to You Alleluia!

2. The heavens declare the glory of God, and firmament declares the handiwork of the Lord.

O Son of God, who were transfigured on Mount Tabor, save us who sing to You Alleluia!

3. Happy the people who know the joyful shout; in the light of your countenance they shall walk, O Lord.

O Son of God, who were transfigured on Mount Tabor, save us who sing to You Alleluia!

Entrance Hymn

Priest: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice at Your name. O Son of God, who were transfigured on Mount Tabor...

People: O Son of God, who were transfigured on Mount Tabor, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 2), Pg. 38

When You descended to death, O immortal Life, You put Hades to death by the splendor of your divinity. And when You raised the dead from below the earth, all the heavenly powers cried out to You: "O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!"

Troparion of the Feast (Tone 7)

You were transfigured on the mountain, O Christ God showing your disciples as much of your glory as they could hold. Let your eternal light shine also upon us sinners, through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Giver of Light, glory to You.

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 Transfiguration (Tone 7)

On the Mountain, You were transfigured, O Christ our God; and your disciples saw as much of your glory as they could hold, so that when they should see You crucified, they would know that You suffered willingly and would proclaim to the world that You are verily the Splendor of the Father.

The Resurrection of the Body

The Dormition of the Theotokos points to an aspect of eternal life only briefly sketched out in the Scriptures. There we read that the risen Christ is "*the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep*" (1 Cor 15:20). To call Him "first-fruits" presumed that there is more to the crop, as St Paul elaborates: "Christ the first-fruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming" (v. 23).

Mary's participation in eternal life is unique – she is not awaiting the return of her Son; she now fully shares in the eternal life in body as well as spirit by a special gift of grace. Some may see this belief as unscriptural, contradicting the very words of St Paul. Rather they confirm by a historic moment what would otherwise simply be an allegation. Mary's dormition demonstrates that St Paul's teaching is not mere words. Human beings can share physically in the Resurrection and Mary is there to prove it.

In the words of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Mary's dormition "...is a singular participation in her Son's Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians. [It is significant that this ¶ concludes by paraphrasing our troparion of the Dormition in witness to the meaning of this feast.] In giving birth you kept your virginity; in your Dormition you did not leave the world, O Mother of God, but were joined to the source of Life. You conceived the living God and, by your prayers, will deliver our souls from death." (¶966).

What Mary Left Behind

One tradition repeated in several early texts concerns the sash or girdle of the Theotokos. Thomas was supposedly the last Apostle to arrive and missed venerating her body. According to the seventh-century *Passing of the Blessed Virgin Mary* attributed to Joseph of Arimathea, Thomas saw the most holy body of the blessed Mary going up into heaven, and prayed her to give him a blessing. She heard his prayer, and threw him the sash which she had about her.

Parts of this girdle are venerated to this day, chiefly at the Vatopedi Monastery on Mount Athos and at the Syriac Orthodox "Church of the Girdle" in Homs, Syria. During the eighteenth century when the Melkite Patriarchate of Antioch was being established some iconographers were moved to "Catholicize" the icon of the Dormition. They showed the Theotokos giving St Thomas a rosary instead of her sash, contributing to the popular notion that the Latin rosary was of Apostolic and Eastern origin.

Mary and Ephesus?

We do not know when the site of the Virgin's tomb in Gethsemane, at the foot of Mount Olivet, became a place of Christian devotion. Some say that the first church there had been built by St Helena in the fourth century. There was clearly a church there in the fifth century. It is well documented that the first Patriarch of Jerusalem, St Juvenal, had taken the veil of the Theotokos from this shrine and sent it to the Empress Pulcheria who had asked him for the Virgin's "relics" after the Council of Chalcedon (451). The patriarch replied, "Three days after her repose, the body of the Holy Virgin was raised up to heaven, and the Tomb in the Garden of Gethsemane bears only her Veil." The patriarch then sent this relic to Constantinople where it was enshrined in the church of the Theotokos at Blachernae, a district of Constantinople.

Today some claim that the Theotokos died in Ephesus where St John the Theologian lived for many years because the Lord Jesus had entrusted His mother to him as He was dying on the cross.

In the nineteenth century a house claimed to be that of the Virgin was unearthed near Ephesus, based on a supposed vision of Anne Catherine Emerich. This shrine became popular in the West; however there was never any early tradition connecting Mary's death and burial with the city of Ephesus.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

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

Please remember in your prayers: George Arraj, Jr., Peter Abraham, Mark Bashour, 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, Stephen McNeil, Billy Rahall, Dan Rahall, Lauren Abraham, Nicholas Haddad, Nicholas Halal, Elaine Foley, David Ahlin, Elio Kanaan, 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	\$
Candles	\$
Coffee Hr.	\$
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.

DORMITION FAST

The Dormition Fast began August 1 and ends on the feast of the Dormition (Aug. 15). During that time, we are called to abstain from meat and dairy as well as increase our prayer life.

Please plan to attend the services listed below.

UPCOMING LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Mon. 8/12 6PM Paraclesis

Wed. 8/14 6PM Great Vespers for the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos

Thu. 8/15 6PM Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos

ANNUAL MIDDLE EASTERN PICNIC

Our annual Middle Eastern Picnic will be Sunday, September 8 from Noon to 6PM. Preparations are in full swing. We need everyone's help to make the picnic a success! We especially need volunteers to help on the day of the picnic. PLEASE plan to spend a couple of hours helping out in some capacity. We need volunteers to set up, serve food, and clean up. The proceeds from the picnic provide a much needed boost in our annual revenue.

Please reach out to *Anthony Esper* at (857) 540-3450 or anthony.m.esper@gmail.com or sign up at Sign Up Genius through our parish website: www.olphworchester.org/picnic in order to sign up to volunteer.

Our next meeting is

Thank you in advance for your generosity to your parish!

We have trays of Kibbeh for sale. \$100 for a large tray and \$50 for a small tray. Please contact Joanne Kanaan (508) 868-7254 if you'd like to buy one.

IN BYZANTINE CHURCHES the first Great Feast in the liturgical calendar is the Nativity of the Theotokos (September 8). The feast of her Holy Dormition (August 15), coming at the end of the Church year, brings this cycle to a close. Like a musical masterwork, our annual remembrance of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ begins with an “overture” (the birth of His Mother) and concludes with a “coda” (her entry into the new life which is promised to us).

What Is a “Dormition”?

Our English word echoes the French and Latin words for “sleep.” The corresponding Greek word, koimisis, appears in English as “cemetery,” or “sleeping place.” By calling death a “repose” or a “falling asleep” we are affirming our faith that death is not an ultimate reality. Mary’s is not the only Dormition observed in our Church. The first saints to be commemorated were the martyrs, witnesses to Christ at the risk of their life; their death was considered as a “crowning” to their testimony. Some saints not martyred were remembered on the day of their peaceful death, their dormition. Thus we remember the Dormition of St Anne, mother of the Theotokos (July 25) and of St. John the Theologian, the only apostle not martyred (September 26). The Coptic Church also remembers the Dormition of St Joseph (August 2).

The Tradition of the Virgin’s Repose

Several writings describing the death of the Virgin have come down to us; the earliest still in existence dates from the fifth century. But, according to biblical scholar Lino Cignelli, “All of them are traceable back to a single primitive document, a Judaeo-Christian prototype, clearly written within the mother church of Jerusalem some time during the second century, and, in all probability, composed for liturgical use right at the Tomb of Our Lady.”

The early Tradition generally places Mary’s death in Jerusalem, a few years after the death and resurrection of Christ. According to one early version, “...the apostles carried the couch, and laid down her precious and holy body in Gethsemane in a new tomb. And, behold, a perfume of sweet savor came forth out of the holy sepulcher of our Lady the Mother of God; and for three days the voices of invisible angels were heard glorifying Christ our God, who had been born of her. And when the third day was ended, the voices were no longer heard; and from that time forth all knew that her spotless and precious body had been transferred to paradise.”

Other of these writings speak of all the apostles being summoned and/or transported miraculously to attend the Holy Virgin at her passing. When Mary reposes, they see Christ taking her soul to heaven. When they bury her body as the Lord had instructed, the apostles once more see Christ. In one version Peter appeals to Him: “It had seemed to us Your servants to be right that, just as You, having vanquished death, now reign in glory, You should raise up the body of Your mother and take her with You in joy into heaven.” Christ restores her soul to her body and glorifies both with Him. In all these accounts Mary enters eternal life in the fullness of her spiritual and bodily existence.

Employing elements of these accounts, the Churches of the East and then the West began to celebrate the feast of Mary’s passing, which became widespread before the end of the first millennium AD. The eighth century Father, St John of Damascus, has left us several sermons on the meaning of Mary’s Dormition as well as a canon which we still sing at Orthros on this feast. “What, then, shall we call this mystery of yours? Death? Your blessed soul is naturally parted from your blissful and undefiled body. The body is delivered to the grave, yet it does not remain in death, nor is it the prey of corruption. The body of her, whose virginity remained unspotted in child-birth, was preserved in its incorruption, and was taken to a better, more divine place, where there is no death, only eternal life” (First Homily on the Dormition).

Prokimenon

Reader: Sing praise to our God, sing praise! Sing praise to our King, sing praise!

People: Sing praise to our God, sing praise! Sing praise to our King, sing praise!

Reader: All you peoples, clap your hands! Shout to God with cries of gladness!

People: Sing praise to our God, sing praise! Sing praise to our King, sing praise!

Reader: Sing praise to our God, sing praise!

People: Sing praise to our King, sing praise!

Epistle: 1 Cor. 15:1-11

Alleluia

In You, O Lord, I have hoped: let me never be put to shame. In your justice, save me and deliver me, lend me your ear and hasten my deliverance.

Verse: Be for me a protecting God, a sheltering house to save me.

Gospel: Mt. 19:16-26

Hirmos of the Transfiguration (Tone 4) You gave birth without stain, for it was God incarnate in the flesh who came forth from your womb. He was seen on earth and conversed with men. Wherefore, O Mother of God, we all exalt you.

Kinonikon: Lord, we shall walk in the light of the glory of your Countenance forever. Alleluia!

After Communion: Troparion of the Transfiguration

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