

*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

**THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
AUGUST 18, 2024**



PARABLE OF THE WICKED VINEDRESSERS

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church

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Worcester, MA 01604

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Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor

Rev. Deacon Elias Bailey

Email: fr.bryan.mcneil@melkite.org Cell: (774) 502-8547

Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (Feast)

-Sing joyfully to the Lord, all you land; serve the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful song.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, Save us!

-Enter his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with praise; give thanks to Him, bless his name.
Beshafa'ate Walidatil Eelah, ya Mukhalisu, khalisna.

-As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the Lord of Hosts, in the city of our God.

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 3), Pg. 38

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 Dormition (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 Dormition (Tone 2)

Neither death nor the tomb could hold the Mother of God, our watchful Protectress and our un-failing hope. Since she is the Mother of Life. Christ who dwelt in her ever-virginal womb lifted her up to the eternal life.

Our Hope for Eternal Life

Another dimension is added to this teaching in the First Epistle of St Peter, where God is praised in these words: *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you”* (1 Peter 1:3, 4).

Putting these images together, we can say that our hope for eternal life in the company of the saints is not wishful thinking, but is solidly based on the reality of Christ’s sacrificial death and its acceptance by the Father. It is confirmed by Christ’s resurrection and becomes ours through our sharing in the Divine Liturgy. As forerunner and first fruits, Christ stands at the head of an endless procession, leading those united to Him beyond the veil into the eternal Holy of Holies.

This Is Our Hope

In popular speech *hope* is equated with wishing or feeling that something might be true, or might happen. There is nothing wishful about Christian hope, however. It is based on the witness of the apostles to Christ’s death and resurrection and their understanding that we are meant to share in the eternal life He had purchased for us by His blood. In St Paul’s words, *“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable”* (1 Corinthians 15:19).

Christian hope, then, is a firm confidence in the witness of the apostles affirmed by the Church ever since.

The Fear of Eternity

Strange as it may seem, many people are afraid of endless life. Apeirophobia – the fear of eternity – afflicts more people than we can imagine. The thought of an impersonal existence that goes on forever amounts to torture. It appears to some to resemble life in prison without parole.

As we know from studying Christ’s sacrifice and the Divine Liturgy, there is no earthly time with God, no succession of tomorrows, only an eternal now. In Christ’s words, *“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent”* (John 17:3). The Christian faith depicts eternity as an endless now, knowing the truly existing One, the inexhaustible cup of life. The life we now share is but a shadow of life in and with God; if earthly time went on forever it would be something to fear. But our hope is not that earthly time would stretch out endlessly, but that an eternal now in the presence of Christ would truly transform us in ways we can but imagine. *“... it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is”* (1 John 3:2).

Temple, Cross and Altar

Of old, celebrating the dedication of the Temple, the wise Solomon offered to God sacrifices and holocausts of brute animals. Now that the God of grace and truth has come upon earth, He has completely fulfilled these sacrifices. Offering Himself as a sacrifice for our salvation, the Lover of Mankind has sanctified His Church, making it unshakable forever. He alone is Lord, and is glorified in the assembly of His saints.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today **Mark Bashour**

+**Joseph David Deschenes (1 yr.)** Requested by Joe & Christine Opatka

+**Elizabeth Harlacher (4yr.)** Requested by Nick Rahall

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.

August 4 Collection

Weekly	\$ 1,248
Candles	\$ 38
Coffee Hr.	\$ 22
Stole	\$ 25
TOTAL	\$ 1,333

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

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$ 1,266
Candles	\$ 39
Coffee Hr.	\$ 72
Stole	\$ 25
Other	\$ 103.50
TOTAL	\$ 1,505.50

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.

ANNUAL MIDDLE EASTERN PICNIC

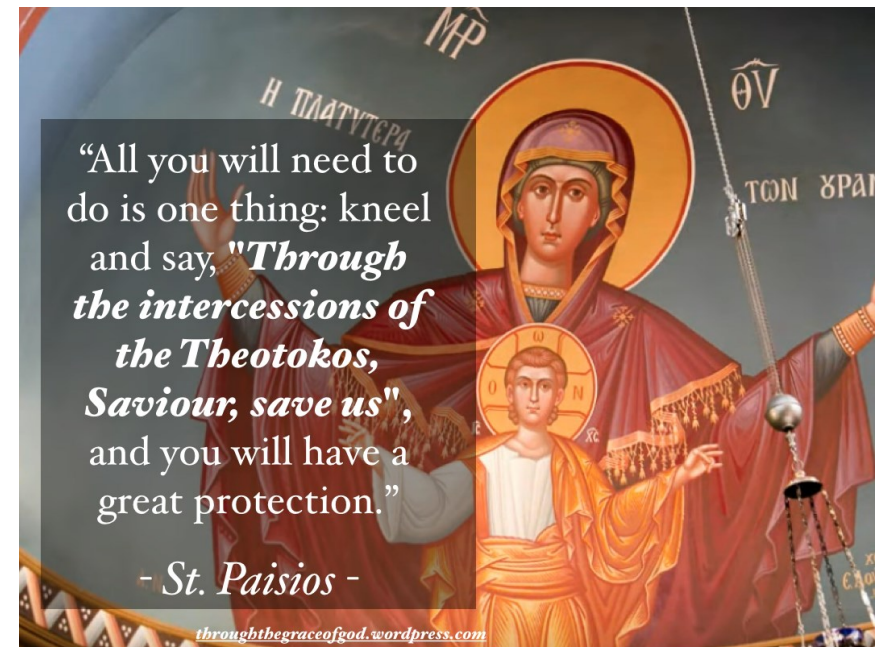
Our annual Middle Eastern Picnic will be Sunday, September 8 from Noon to 6PM. Preparations are in full swing. We need everyone's help to make the picnic a success! *We desperately need volunteers to help with a variety of tasks!!*

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 *David Johnson at (774) 502-1151 (david.caleb.johnson@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 August 20th at 6:30PM.

Thank you in advance for your generosity to your parish!



- St. Paisios -

Christ, Our Eternal Hope

THE NEW TESTAMENT DEPICTS the mystery of Christ in terms of the rituals of sacrifice in the Jerusalem temple. It describes Christ's sacrifice based on the manner in which animals were sacrificed there. First, the animal was killed, usually by the donor, in the outer court of the temple. Similarly, Jesus was crucified outside the holy city of Jerusalem.

The same pattern is found in our Divine Liturgy, illustrating the connection between the temple, the Cross, and our worship. Thus, the Eucharistic bread, which we call the Lamb, is prepared at the Prothesis, originally in another chapel, but at least at a distance from the Holy Table.

In the temple, the slain animal was taken by the Levites to the priests, who placed it on the altar and offered it to God. In contrast, Christ – being both victim and priest – offered Himself to the Father eternally in the heavenly sanctuary. In our Liturgy, the Lamb and the cup are brought to the holy table and offered “in all and for the sake of all.”

Finally, the sacrificial meat was divided: part was portioned out for God (by immolation), and part for the priests. The greater part was returned to the donor to be shared with the poor or in a festive meal. In our Liturgy the sanctified Lamb and the cup are shared first by the priests and then by the people in the mystical supper of the Eucharist.

On Yom Kipper, there was another step. The blood of the animal was taken into the Holy of Holies by the High Priest and sprinkled there. Finally, the High Priest would emerge from the Holy of Holies and bless the people. Christ was placed in the tomb by Joseph and Nicodemus, but emerged from the tomb at His resurrection, sharing with those in the tombs the blessing of eternal life.

The Presence behind the Veil

Describing Christ's sacrifice in terms of the temple ritual, the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of Christ entering “*the Presence behind the veil*” (Hebrews 6:19). This depicts heaven in terms of the Jerusalem temple, where the Holy of Holies – which no one could enter except the High Priest on Yom Kippur – was separated from the rest of the temple by a curtain or veil. We see an allusion to this image at the Great Entrance of our Liturgy, when the priest brings the offered bread and wine behind the iconostasis.

To enter “*the Presence behind the veil*” alludes to Christ's return to the Father, where He eternally offers His sacrifice for us and it is eternally accepted by the Father. Because His sacrifice is offered and accepted beyond human time, it is possible for us to partake of it continually in the Divine Liturgy. The Liturgy, then, is not a “new” sacrifice but the one sacrifice of Christ, eternally offered and accepted.

In this passage, Christ is called “*the forerunner*” (v. 20), meaning the One who goes before, to prepare a place for us. Christ has entered the presence of the Father offering the sacrifice of His blood for us who follow behind Him. The same reality is depicted elsewhere in agricultural terms when Christ is called “*the first-fruits of those who sleep*” (1 Corinthians 15:20).

The Promise of Christ's Return

At His ascension Christ's disciples are told by an angel, “*This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven*” (Acts 1:11). Ever since, the members of the Church have been waiting for the return of Christ: “*To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation*” (Hebrews 9:28).

This promise of a second appearance, or second coming, energized the preaching of the apostles, who placed it at the heart of our faith. As the Nicene Creed professes, we believe that Christ “... shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead and of His Kingdom there shall be no end.” And this faith gives us hope.

Prokimenon

Reader: How great are your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have wrought them all.

People: How great are your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have wrought them all.

Reader: Bless the Lord. O my soul! You are very great indeed, O Lord my God!

People: How great are your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have wrought them all.

Reader: How great are your works, O Lord!

People: In wisdom You have wrought them all.

Epistle: 1 Cor 16:13-24

Alleluia

String your bow, go forth, reign for the sake of truth, meekness and righteousness, and your right hand shall lead You wonderfully.

Verses: You loved righteousness and hated iniquity: therefore God, your God, anointed You with the oil of joy above your companions..

Gospel: Mt. 21:33-42

Hirmos of the Dormition (Tone 1)

All human generations bless you, O Mother of God. The laws of nature were bypassed in you, for your birth-giving left you a virgin and your death became the herald of your life. O you who remained virginal after having given birth, and alive after having died, O Mother of God, deign always to save your inheritance!

Kinonikon: I will take the chalice of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. Alleluia!

