

*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**



PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT

**Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church**

**256 Hamilton St.**

**Worcester, MA 01604**

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**Email: olphmelkite@gmail.com**

**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 (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 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!”

**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.

**What We Are Meant to Become**

In the mystery of Christ’s transfiguration the Church has caught a glimpse of what those who are in Christ are meant to be: persons who in their humanity can have God dwelling in them, reflecting that presence as light. The Lord Himself tells us that at His second coming “*the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*” (Mt 1:43). The custom of depicting saints and angels with haloes derives from this prophetic statement of Christ.

Becoming “righteous” is our task in this life, in preparation for the glory to come. In both the Old and New Testaments we are frequently instructed how we may become righteous. In the New Testament, however, these instructions are phrased in terms of God dwelling in us. “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*” (Col 1:27) is the One whose presence within us guarantees our righteousness before God. This is the “*mystery hidden from eternity*” (Col 1:26), which the Greek Fathers called theosis, the process of our transformation by the presence of God within us.

This process of theosis begins with our baptism. As we sing so often in our services, “*As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ*” (Gal 3:27). God dwells within us but requires that we “put on Christ” by the way we live. “*We were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*” (Rom 6:4). Our cooperation with God dwelling in us to transform us is called synergy by the Fathers: the life-long task of consciously becoming God like in our thoughts, words and actions in order to radiate the presence of God within us by baptism.

Despite all our best efforts, none of us – not even the saints – can so unwaveringly combat our passions that we realize our potential on our own. And so Christ has given us an outward sign of His love in the mystery of the Eucharist to which we can return again and again. By sharing in this holy mystery we can reinforce our awareness of His saving presence in us and derive the strength we need for our daily ascent to God.

Through the holy mysteries and our striving to live like Christ we can attain a likeness to God and union with Him so far as possible. We who are not holy by nature can become holy, and become partakers of glory.

**Looking to the Last Day**

In the Second Epistle of St Peter we read his eye-witness account of the transfiguration (2 Pt 1:16-18). This is what follows: “*And so we have this sure prophetic word, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts*” (v.19). The transfiguration is thus a prophetic anticipation of Christ’s glorious second coming when the “morning star” (Christ) will fill us with His light.

The transfiguration, then, symbolizes the life to come and thus the goal of every Christian pursuit. As St Gregory the Theologian expressed it in his Third Oration On the Son, the holy transfiguration of Christ initiates us “into the mystery of the future”.

***O Giver of life, You bent down to the pit without falling into it and raised me up who had fallen. You bore my foul-smelling corruption untouched, and made me sweet-smelling with the myrrh of Your divine nature.***

***Canon of the Octoechos, Tone 5***

## DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today      **Our Families & Friends, Living and Deceased**  
              **Stephen McNeil**

Today's Coffee Hr. is hosted by **Anthony & Diana Esper**

Next Sunday's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by

**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	\$ 1,325
Candles	\$ 33
Coffee Hr.	\$ 156
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,514</b>

**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. 8/5 6PM	Divine Liturgy for the feast of the Transfiguration
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](mailto:anthony.m.esper@gmail.com) or sign up at Sign Up Genius through our parish website: [www.olphworchester.org/picnic](http://www.olphworchester.org/picnic) in order to sign up to volunteer.

Our next meeting is Wednesday August 7 at 6:30PM

Thank you in advance for your generosity to your parish!

We are selling trays of Kibbeh. \$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.



## Shining Like the Sun

TOWARDS THE END of Jesus' public ministry He began preparing His disciples for His approaching death and resurrection. In Mt 16 this scene concludes with the following prophecy: *"Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom"* (v. 28). This is immediately followed by a fulfillment of this prophecy: the holy transfiguration of Christ. As St Gregory Palamas says in his homily on this feast, "It is the light of His own forthcoming transfiguration which He terms the Glory of His Father and of His Kingdom."

At Christ's transfiguration "some standing here" – Peter, James and John – witnessed the Lord in the glory of His kingdom, if only for a moment. He was not changed – they were. They were able to see what is always there but which they could not imagine before: that God dwelt in man.

St Gregory Palamas describes it this way: "Christ was transfigured, not by the addition of something He was not, nor by a transformation into something He was not, but by the manifestation to His disciples of what He really was. He opened their eyes so that instead of being blind they could see. While He Himself remained the same, they could now see Him as other than He had appeared to them formerly. For He is *'the true light'* (Jn 1:9), the beauty of divine glory, and He shone forth like the sun."

As St Ephrem the Syrian expressed it, "They saw two suns; one in the sky, as usual, and one unusually; one visible in the firmament and lighting the world, and one, His face, visible to them alone" (Sermon on the Transfiguration, 8). In one sense we can say that Christ was not transfigured; it was the apostles' ability to see Him which was transfigured.

### "What He Really Was"

For a moment Christ was revealed to the disciples as what He really was: God incarnate in our human flesh. "We believe that at the transfiguration He manifested not some other sort of light, but only that which was concealed beneath His fleshly exterior. This Light was the Light of the Divine Nature, and as such, it was Uncreated and Divine" (St Gregory Palamas, Homily on the Transfiguration).

This Light was manifested to the disciples in the radiance of His face and garments: *"His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light"* (Mt 17:2). As Mark describes it, *"His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them"* (Mk 9:3). The immaterial divine nature of the Son of God in manifested in the physical sign of a shining face and garments because this was all that the disciples could absorb. As we sing in the troparion of this feast, Christ was "showing Your disciples as much of Your glory as they could behold."

Over succeeding centuries the Church deepened its understanding of the incarnation, but not without disagreement. It took several hundred years and several Ecumenical Councils for the Church to articulate its faith in Christ as the incarnate Word of God. By the fourth century the Church was calling Christ "Light from Light, true God from true God... of one essence with the Father" but it took several more centuries and councils to grasp the implications of that statement.

As iconography developed it settled on one particular form to represent the divine nature of the light perceived by the disciples. The mandorla is a design made up of overlapping geometrical shapes which surrounds the image of Christ in icons of the transfiguration. The basic mandorla – an Italian word meaning almond – contains three round or oval concentric circles, in shades of blue or gold, representing the Trinity. The innermost circle is of the deepest shade representing the unseen Father. Other geometrical shapes represent the energy of the divine light shining upon the disciples. The mandorla is generally used in icons representing the glorified Christ at His transfiguration and resurrection and when receiving His Mother at her dormition.

## Prokimenon

**Reader:** My strength and my courage is the Lord, and He has been my Savior.

**People:** My strength and my courage is the Lord, and He has been my Savior.

**Reader:** The Lord has chastised me through his teaching, yet He has not delivered me to death.

**People:** My strength and my courage is the Lord, and He has been my Savior.

**Reader:** My strength and my courage is the Lord,

**People:** And He has been my Savior.

## Epistle: 1 Cor. 9:2-12

## Alleluia

The Lord shall hear you on the day of distress; may the name of the God of Jacob defend you.

**Verse:** O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.

## Gospel: Mt. 18:23-35



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## Becoming Byzantine

Becoming Byzantine series is a **FREE** online introduction to Byzantine Catholic Faith, Worship, and Life based upon the teachings of the Christ Our Pascha (COP) Catechism from the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

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