

*From the Divine Office for the Protection of the Theotokos (Oct. 1)*

*As you are above all creatures in Heaven and on earth, more glorious than the Cherubim, more noble than any here below, Christ has given you to His people as a firm bulwark and protectress, to shield and save sinners who fly to you. Therefore, O Lady, all-embracing refuge, we solemnly recall your protecting veil and beg Christ to grant us great mercy. (Vespers)*

*Come, O people, and delight in her glorious wonders. Through her, Adam was delivered from corruption, for she is the Ark, made not by Noah-but by God. In the past, Moses could not see God in the burning bush; but now the whole earth knows the Son of God born of her, whom she now entreats on our behalf. We therefore cry out to her: "Hail, O Virgin, our most Radiant Protection!" (Orthros)*



**2ND SUNDAY AFTER THE HOLY CROSS  
SEPTEMBER 29, 2024**



**OUR VENERABLE FATHER ROMANOS THE MELODIST  
OCTOBER 1**

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

**256 Hamilton St.**

**Worcester, MA 01604**

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**Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor**

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**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 (Tone 2) Pg. 16**

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.

John died peacefully at Ephesus – the only one of the Twelve not martyred – and was buried outside the city. The sixth century chronicler Procopius of Caesarea wrote that “On that site the natives had set up a church in early times to the Apostle John... This church, which was small and in a ruined condition because of its great age, the Emperor Justinian tore down to the ground and replaced by a church so large and beautiful, that, to speak briefly, it resembles very closely in all respects, and is a rival to, the shrine which is dedicated to all the Apostles in the imperial city...” (*The Buildings of Justinian*, 5).

**John as Theologian**

When Procopius described the burial place of St John he noted that “this Apostle has been named ‘the Theologian,’ because the nature of God was described by him in a manner beyond the unaided power of man.” John’s emphases on Christ as the eternal Word of God, on the Holy Spirit as the living water energizing the believer and on the Lord as the Bread of life are just a few of the aspects of John which prompted Clement of Alexandria to call it the most spiritual of the Gospels. As Origen would write, “I daresay that the first-fruits of all the Scriptures are the Gospels and the first-fruits of the Gospels is the Gospel handed on by John. No one can grasp its meaning without reclining on Jesus’ breast and receiving Mary from Jesus to become his own mother” (*On John* 1, 4). Writing in the eleventh century Blessed Theophylact of Ochrid summed up the Church’s esteem for John’s Gospel, saying that it is “the beginning of theology.”

Only two other figures would be accorded a similar title in the Byzantine Churches: St Gregory the Theologian in the fourth century and St Symeon the New Theologian in the eleventh. Gregory’s reflections on the Holy Trinity and Symeon’s on the Holy Spirit spoke to the Church as coming from a deep familiarity with the mystery of God which was manifested in their writings.

**Other Johannine Writings**

The author of the Book of Revelation says that he had been exiled to the largely barren island of Patmos “for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus” (Revelation 1:9). The early second century writer, St Justin the Philosopher, was the first to equate the author of Revelation with John the Apostle (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 81.4). John, it came to be said, was exiled from Ephesus along with his

companion Prochorus in the reign of the Emperor Domitian (81-96) and was allowed to return only after Domitian was assassinated. In many editions of the New Testament the book came to be identified as “The Revelation to St John the Theologian” (or, in older English usage, St. John the Divine).

Yet this identification did not pass unchallenged in the East. St Dionysius the Great, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria from 248-265, argued that the style of Revelation is too different from that of the fourth Gospel to have been composed by the same man. Some contemporary scholars agree that it is “doubtful that the book could have been put into its present form by the same person(s) responsible for the fourth gospel” (Introduction, St Joseph Edition, New American Bible).

By and large, however, East and West accepted that Revelation was given to John the Apostle. A monastery dedicated to the ‘beloved disciple’ was founded on Patmos in the late tenth century and it has been a place of pilgrimage ever since.

It is generally recognized that the First Epistle of John emphasized themes from the Gospel and could have been written by the same hand. The same is not true of 2 and 3 John. Around ad 600, St Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, noted that “two epistles bearing his name ... are considered by some to be the work of a certain John the Presbyter,” perhaps another of the Theologian’s disciples in the Church at Ephesus.



## DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today        **Mark Bashour**  
**Jeannine McNeil**  
**Linda Gartner**  
**+Steven McNeil**

**This morning's Coffee Hr. is hosted by David & Kelly Johnson and family**

**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, Jeannine McNeil, Linda Gartner, 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 Ukraine & 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	\$ 1,347
Candles	\$ 33
Coffee Hr.	\$ 78
Flowers	\$ 20
Picnic	\$ 220
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,698</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.**



## BISHOP'S APPEAL

**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

**This year's Bishop's Appeal will officially kick off next weekend (Oct. 5-6. ) The funds raised from the Appeal allow the Diocese to support Deacon and Priest candidates, help struggling parishes and missions and continue to publish our award winning diocesan magazine, Sophia.**

**I urge you to prayerfully consider making a donation to this year's Bishop's Appeal !**

**In Christ,**

**Fr. Bryan**



## DORMITION OF ST. JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN-SEPTEMBER 26

APART FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT texts themselves, there are few historically verifiable references to the lives of the holy apostles. We know most about those whose writings are found in the Scriptures: St Paul, St Peter and St John, whose dormition (peaceful repose) Byzantine Churches remember on September 26.

The Gospels tell us that John and his brother James were the sons of Zebedee, a Galilean fisherman, and disciples of John the Baptist. Along with Peter and Andrew, they were among the first whom Jesus called to follow him and become “*fishers of men*” (Matthew 4:19, Mark 1:17). Their mother, Salome, would become one of the myrrh-bearers, the women who attended to the needs of Christ and His disciples.

James and John would form, along with Peter, the innermost circle of Christ’s followers. It was they who were privileged to witness His transfiguration on Mount Tabor and to pray with Him in Gethsemane before His arrest. In addition John is referred to as “*the disciple whom Jesus loved*” (John 13:23, 19:26, 21:7), the one who leaned on the Lord’s chest at the Supper. He was perhaps the youngest of the twelve and the one for whom the Lord had a special affection. Since Christ’s own half-brother, James the son of Joseph would not be one of His disciples until after the resurrection, it was to John that the Lord entrusted the care of His holy Mother as He hung dying on the cross (see John 19:26).

Finally, we see that John was Peter’s companion in exploring the empty tomb of Christ (John 20:1-10). The Acts of the Apostles tell us that, after Pentecost, John accompanied Peter in his ministry in Jerusalem and the surrounding region. Along with Peter and his brother, James, John is one of the “pillars” of the Jerusalem community whom Paul visits in the holy city ([Galatians 2:9](#)). After that John disappears as a character in the Scriptural narrative and we must turn elsewhere to learn about him.

### John in Asia Minor

St Irenaeus of Lyons, who died in 202, tells us that John wrote his Gospel in Ephesus. His source for this is the hieromartyr St Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna (+156) who was himself a disciple of John in his youth. At some point – perhaps after the death of the Theotokos or that of his brother James – John left Jerusalem and ministered among the Christians in Ephesus, one of the largest cities in the Mediterranean world at the time.

John lived longer than any other of the disciples and people came to believe that he would not die before the Lord’s return in glory. Finally, of course, he did repose; according to St Polycarp, it was during the reign of the Emperor Trajan (98-117). It may be that the last chapter of John’s Gospel was added in light of his passing. There we read that “*Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, ‘Lord, who is the one who betrays You?’ Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, ‘But Lord, what about this man?’ Jesus said to him, ‘If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.’ Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, ‘If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?’*” (John 21:18-23). Then the author of this chapter – perhaps John’s disciple Prochoros, who assisted John in his writing – adds, “*This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true*” (v. 24).

### 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: 2 COR 11:31-33 & 12:1-9

### Alleluia

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

**Verse:** O Lord, save Your king and listen to us on whatever day we call upon You.

### Gospel: LK 6:31-36

