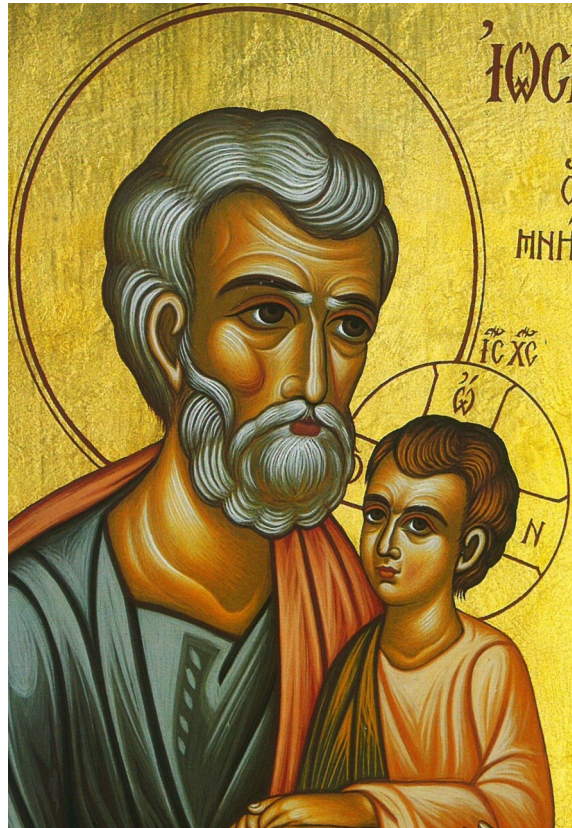


From the Divine Office for the Sunday after the Nativity

When the Lord Jesus was born of the Virgin, the whole creation lit up. Behold: the shepherds keep watch, the Magi adore, angels sing hymns of praise and Herod trembles, for the Savior of our souls has appeared in the flesh. (Vespers)

Today David the holy one is filled with joy. Joseph and James offer their hymns of praise, for the crown of glory of their relationship with Christ fills them with joy. They offer their hymns of praise to the One born on earth in a manner beyond description, and they cry out: "O Merciful One, save those who honor You!" (Kondakion)



**SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST
DECEMBER 29, 2024**



Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church
256 Hamilton St.
Worcester, MA 01604
Rectory: (508) 752-4174
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 (Feast)

1. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord: he will establish himself firmly within his commandments.

O Son of God, Who were born of the Virgin, Save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

2. Powerful on earth shall be his race; the descendants of the righteous ones shall be blessed

O Son of God, Who were born of the Virgin, Save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

3. Glory and wealth shall abide in his house, and his justice shall stand from age to age.

O Son of God, Who were born of the Virgin, Save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

Entrance Hymn

Priest: “From the womb before the morning star I have begotten You. The Lord has sworn and He will not repent: You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

All: O Son of God, Who were born of the Virgin, save us who sing to You Alleluia.”

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 7) Pg. 41

You destroyed Death by Your cross. You opened paradise to the thief. You changed the weeping of the myrrh bearers, and commanded Your apostles to proclaim that You, O Christ God, have risen, granting to the world great mercy.

Troparion of the Nativity of our Lord– Tone 4

Your Nativity, O Christ our God, has shed the light of knowledge upon the world. Through it, those who had been star-worshippers learned through a star to worship You, O Sun of Justice, and to recognize in You the One who rises and who comes from on high. O Lord glory to You!

Troparion of Holy Joseph –Tone 2

O Joseph, proclaim to David, the ancestor of Christ our God, the great miracles you have witnessed: you have seen the Virgin with child, given praise with the shepherds, adored with the wise men, and an angel of the Lord has appeared to you. Intercede with Christ God that He may save our souls.

Kondakion of the Nativity of Our Lord – (3rd Tone)

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent in Essence; and the earth presents a cave to the Inaccessible. The angels with the shepherds sing His glory, and the Wise Men with the Star travel on their way, for to us is born a New Child, who is God from all eternity

James, the Lord’s Brother

Two of the Twelve, Jesus’ closest followers, were called James. The James whom we remember today was not one of them. He is the James described in the Gospel of Mark as one of Jesus’ brothers (see Mark 6:3). How James is related to the Lord has been a subject of much discussion and controversy among Christians of all ages. Some early sects held that James was Jesus’ actual blood brother, the son of Joseph and Mary. St Jerome, insisting that Mary was ever a virgin, taught that James was Jesus’ cousin, saying that “brother” here meant “relative.” The more common teaching in the East –recorded in the second-century *Proto-evangelium of James* – is that James is the older half-brother of Jesus, Joseph’s son by an earlier marriage. Thus icons often portray a teen-aged James helping Joseph on the flight into Egypt.

The Gospels record that at first Jesus family’ was skeptical when He began His public ministry. They were not among His disciples (see Matthew 12:46-50). There is no reason to think than James’ reaction to Jesus was any different from that of His other relatives. St Paul gives us the first indications that things were to change drastically. He reports that the risen Christ appeared to James (see 1 Corinthians 15:7), making him, like the Twelve and the women, an eye-witness to the resurrection. Presumably James and the rest of his family now accepted Jesus as the Messiah. Acts 1:14 places them among Jesus’ disciples in the upper room after His Ascension. James and Jesus’ other relatives were counted quickly as among the foremost members of the Church (see 1 Corinthians 9:5).

As the oldest of his brothers, James was presumably the head of the family and a logical choice to be the leader of the Jerusalem Church. Peter and the rest of the Twelve were “apostles” – sent forth throughout the world – while James remained at the center of the local community. He figures importantly in the Acts of the Apostles as the head of the local Church, the foremost representative of the native Judean believers. For these reason he has come to be revered as “the first bishop” of Jerusalem.

According to a late second-century memoir cited by the fourth-century historian Eusebius, St James was martyred by a mob in Jerusalem for proclaiming that Jesus was the Messiah: “One of them, a fuller, took the club which he used to beat out the clothes and brought it down on the head of the Righteous one. Such was his martyrdom.”

The Liturgy of St James

Once or twice a year in some Byzantine Churches, the Liturgy of St James is served. A form of the ancient Liturgy of Jerusalem with later additions, it was the rite used in the Church of Antioch throughout much of the first millennium. It eventually was replaced by the rite of Constantinople.

In the Liturgy of St James there are more priestly prayers, more litanies and more Scripture readings (from the Old Testament as well as the New). At the little entrance the Gospel Book is brought out to the bema – the platform outside of the sanctuary from which the Scriptures were read. The clergy do not return to the holy place until after the dismissal of the catechumens.

There are fewer hymns in this Liturgy than in the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom: there are no antiphons or troparia, for example. The kiss of peace is exchanged by everyone, followed by the “Prayer of the Veil” as the gifts are uncovered. The Anaphora follows, culminating in the Epiklesis, which is chanted aloud, and followed by lengthy commemorations of the departed and the whole Church. The faithful receive the Eucharist by intinction: the priest dips a particle of the Holy Bread into the chalice and places it on the recipient’s tongue.

The Syriac form of this Liturgy is still the ordinary rite used in the Syriac Catholic and Orthodox Churches of Antioch and in the Malankara Catholic and Orthodox Churches of India.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +Dan Rahall
Our families & Friends living and deceased

Next Sunday +Dan Rahall. Requested by the Family

This morning's Coffee Hr. is hosted by Sam, Hiam & Mary Francis

Next Sunday's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by

Please remember in your prayers: Mark Bashour, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Charlotte Stockhaus, Richard Abraham, Sr., Frank Boyda, Carol Boyda, Bob Lynch, Joe Najemy, Michael Mooradian, Dennis Desplaines, Thomas Houde, Michael McNeil, Jeff McNeil, Jeannine McNeil, Linda Gartner, Billy Rahall, Lauren Abraham, Nicholas Haddad, Nicholas Halal, Elaine Foley, David Ahlin, Elio Kanaan, Susan Bailey, Jacqueline Ventriglia, Thomas Houde, Jeanette Halal, those affected by the natural disasters throughout the world, the people of Gaza, and for peace in Ukraine & the Middle East. Let us also pray for the repose of the souls of Zakeya Assaf, Genvieve Hatem, Hanna Francis, Saddalh Alkateb.

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	\$1,843
Candles	\$ 45
Coffee Hr.	\$ 38
Xmas Flowers	\$ 125
Xmas Donations	\$ 800
TOTAL	\$ 2,851

Let us pray for increased generosity to our parish!

CHRISTMAS LITURGIES

COLLECTIONS	\$1,403
CANDLES	\$ 57
TOTAL	\$1,460

God Bless you for your generosity!

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 UPDATE

There are many forces in the world today that seek knowingly or unwarily to obliterate the reality of Christ and His Incarnation and Kingdom. Secularism, the "woke" movement and unbridled individualism are only a few. As a Church, we are the Body of Christ in the world, making His good news and salvation known and available to all. The Bishop's Appeal is an important part of our identity and ministry. We should support and participate in it. *Our parish has raised \$4,900.14 and our goal is \$8,000.* Appeal envelopes and reply cards are available in our parish. Thank you for your continued generosity to our parish and to the Diocese of Newton. You may also donate online at: melkite.org/appeal or scan the QR code below:



SUNDAY AFTEDR NATIVITY

IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE devotion to Jesus, Mary and Joseph as “the holy family” became popular. It originated in New France (French territories now in Canada and the U.S.), then spread to Western Europe. It was promoted to give the newly-emerging middle class a model for “Christian family life.”

The Scriptures make a point of teaching that Jesus, Mary and Joseph were *not* a family in the ordinary sense. Matthew, for example makes a point of the way the angel directs Joseph to “*take the young child and his mother into Egypt*” (Matthew 2:13). Commentators have noted that he does not say “take your wife and your son.”

In the Christian East a more Scriptural perspective has been maintained: Jesus is the Son of God incarnate and Mary is the Theotokos, she who gave birth to God by the operation of the Holy Spirit. The “family of God” consists of God and His adopted children. As St Paul writes to the Galatians, “*you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise*” (Galatians 3:26-29).

This Biblical “Holy Family,” then, is not about middle-class family values but about deification, the partaking of all the faithful in the life of God. Because we are united to Christ, we are sharers in His divine nature, what we might call His spiritual DNA.

What About St Joseph?

In the Byzantine Churches St Joseph is commemorated among those closely related to Christ on the Sunday after Christmas along with King David, the ancestor of Christ. The third figure remembered today is James, whom St Paul calls “*the Lord’s brother*” (Galatians 1:19).

In the Gospels, Joseph only appears as a character in the narratives of Christ’s conception and infancy. This has led commentators to assume that Joseph had died before Jesus began His public life. Would His neighbors say of Him: “*Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary...*” (Mark 6:3), if Joseph were still alive?

Otherwise, Joseph is only mentioned in terms of his relationship to Christ. In John’s Gospel, Philip expresses the common perception when he tells Nathaniel, “*We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph*” (John 1:45).

Elsewhere the evangelists are careful to say outright – or at least to infer – that Joseph is not the father of Jesus. In Matthew’s genealogy of Jesus, after listing all His ancestors who begat those who came after them, he is careful to say that Joseph did not beget Jesus. Rather he was described as “*the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ*” (Matthew 1:16).

Luke begins his genealogy of Jesus by saying that He “*...began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph...*” (Luke 3:23). Jesus’ contemporaries thought Him to be Joseph’s son (“*And they said, ‘Is this not Joseph’s son?’*” – Luke 4:22), but the evangelists – and the Church – knew better.

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! Sing praise to our King, sing praise!

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

Epistle: Gal 1:11-19

Alleluia

In you, O Lord, I have hoped: Let me never be put to shame. In your justice, save me and deliver me.

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

Gospel: Mt 2: 13-23

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THEOPHANY

Sun 1/5 10AM –Divine Liturgy for the Paramony of Theophany

Sun 1/5 Noon - Vespers for Theophany

Mon 1/6 6PM - Divine Liturgy for Theophany followed by the Great Blessing of Water

