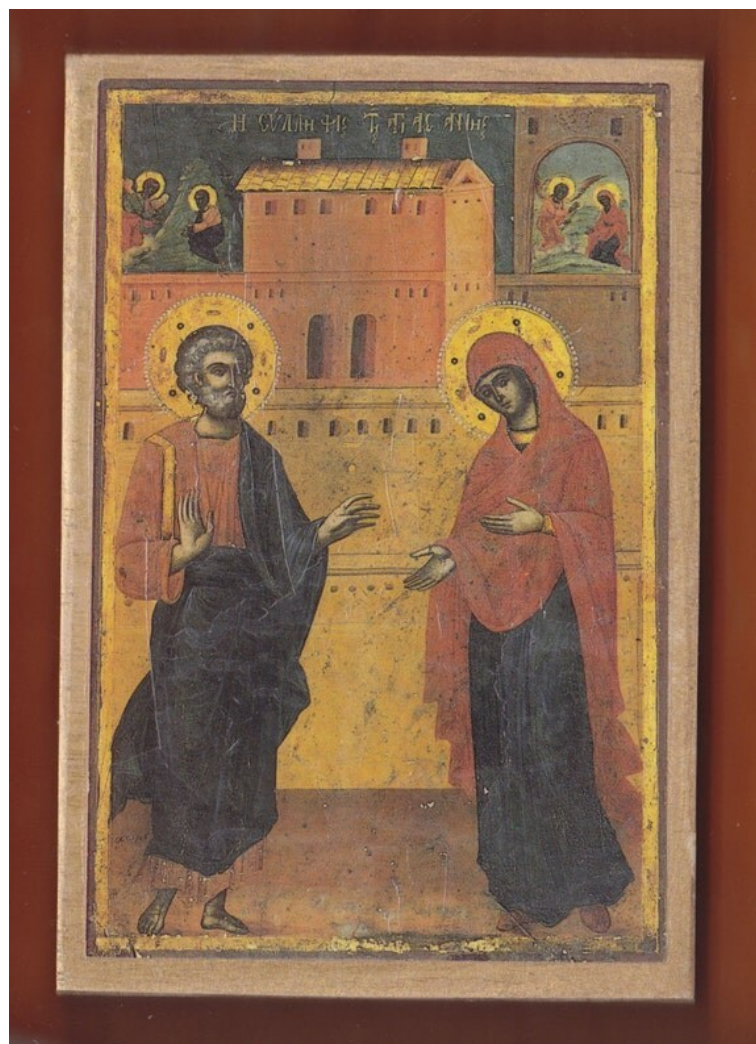


From the Divine Office for the Maternity of St. Ann (Dec. 9)

Behold! The promises of the prophets are realized, for the Holy Mountain is planted in the womb, the Divine Ladder is set up, the great Throne of the King is ready, the place for the passage of the Lord is prepared. The dry bush that fire cannot consume is blossoming and the treasure-house of sanctifying grace is like an abundant flow of blessings that heal the barrenness of Ann, whom we glorify with faith. (Vespers)

Today the whole world celebrates the Conception of Ann provided by God Himself, for Ann has borne the Pure One who will give birth to the Word of God in a manner that is beyond all telling (Kondakion)



**TENTH SUNDAY AFTER THE HOLY CROSS
DECEMBER 8, 2024**



JESUS HEALING THE WOMAN BENT AND BURDENED WOMAN

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church

256 Hamilton St.

Worcester, MA 01604

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Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor

Rev. Deacon Elias Bailey

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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 4) Pg. 40

The women disciples of the Lord, having learned from the angel the joyful announcement of the resurrection, and having rejected the ancestral sentence, proudly told the apostles: "Death is despoiled. Christ God is risen, bestowing to the world great mercy."

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.

Kondakion of the Preparation of the Nativity of our Lord (3rd Tone)

Today the Virgin is on her way to the cave where she will give birth to the Eternal Word of God in an ineffable manner. Rejoice, therefore, O universe, when you hear this news, and glorify with the angels and the shepherds Him who shall appear as a newborn Child, being God from all eternity.

St. John of Damascus

While St Barbara lived in the fourth century during the Roman persecutions, John of Damascus lived in the seventh century, after the Arab conquest of Syria.

John was born in Damascus in c. 680, the son of Sergius ibn al-Mansour, a civil servant to the Umayyad caliphate, as was his father before him. Sergius wanted his son to "learn not only the books of the Muslims, but those of the Greeks as well," according to one ancient source. John was tutored by a Sicilian monk who had been kidnapped by Arabs and brought to Damascus. This monk was also tutor to St Cosmas of Maiuma, John's foster brother whom his father had taken in after he was orphaned.

In 706 the caliphate increased the Islamizing of Syria. Many Christians in civil service, including John's father, left the government administration at that time. Some think that this was when John entered the monastery of Mar Saba near Jerusalem. John was certainly a professed monk before the outbreak of iconoclasm in 717. In all John composed three *Apologetic Treatises against those Decrying the Holy Images* which were widely circulated and were cited as authoritative at the Second Council of Nicaea, years after his death.

John also composed a number of apologetic treatises against the Monophysites, Monotheletes, Nestorians and Muslims as well as dogmatic treatises. His *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* was perhaps the first systematic presentation of Christian theology in both East and West.

John of Damascus is perhaps most revered as a poet and hymnographer. He composed a number of canons which are still sung at Orthros (Matins). Some credit the beauty of his poetry with making the canon an important part of the morning service. His Paschal canon, "Today is the day of the resurrection" is most particularly loved. He also composed the canons sung in the Byzantine Churches on the Great Feasts of the Nativity, the Theophany and Pentecost.

John is also credited with composing the principal parts of the Octoechos, the book of eight tones, which contains the weekly services used in Byzantine churches.

John ended his life in his monastery on December 4, 749. The cave he used as a hermitage is kept today as a chapel dedicated to his memory.

"These eight passions should be destroyed as follows: gluttony by self-control; un-chastity by desire for God and longing for the blessings held in store; avarice by compassion for the poor; anger by goodwill and love for all men; worldly dejection by spiritual joy; listlessness by patience, perseverance and offering thanks to God; self-esteem by doing good in secret and by praying constantly with a contrite heart; and pride by not judging or despising anyone in the manner of the boastful Pharisee (cf. Luke 18:11-12), and by considering oneself the least of all men. When the intellect has been freed in this way from the passions we have described and been raised up to God, it will henceforth live the life of blessedness, receiving the pledge of the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:22). And when it departs this life, dispassionate and full of true knowledge, it will stand before the light of the Holy Trinity and with the divine angels will shine in glory through all eternity." On the Virtues and the Vices



DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +**Robert Aboody (1Yr.)** Requested by his family
+**Paul Valois.** Requested by Susan Arraje

This morning's Coffee Hr. is the St. Nicholas Potluck
Next Sunday's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by Maria Filewicz

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, Thomas Houde, 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, Thomas Houde, Jeanette Halal, those affected by the natural disasters hroughout 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	\$ 1,106
Candles	\$ 39
Coffee Hr.	\$ 39
Xmas Flowers	\$ 90
Xmas Donations	\$ 25
Hall Rental	\$ 100
TOTAL	\$ 1,399

Let us pray for increased generosity to our parish!

Nov. 24 Collection	
Weekly	\$ 721
Candles	\$ 40
Coffee Hr.	\$ 104
TOTAL	\$ 865

Let us pray for increased generosity to our parish!

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

It is sad that in today's Gospel, people forgot that God's plan was to heal, to lift us up from looking only at the earth to looking toward Him and each other, to see reality as it is completely. This is very much of what God does to us in the life of the Church.

The Bishop's Appeal is an instrument for this healing, giving of vision and proper orientation in our lives as Christians. *Our parish has raised \$3,600.14 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.



ST. NICHOLAS POTLUCK
We will have our St. Nicholas potluck this morning after the Divine Liturgy.
Please join us!

DECEMBER SAINTS

DURING THE FIRST WEEKS of December the Byzantine Churches commemorate several important saints in Christian history:

- The Great Martyr St Barbara (Dec. 4)
- St John of Damascus (Dec. 4)
- St Sabbas the Sanctified (Dec. 5)
- St Nicholas of Myra (Dec. 6)
- St Ambrose of Milan (Dec. 7)
- St Spyridon of Trimythous (Dec. 12)

Their commemorations give a joyful character to these days, part of the generally calculated Nativity Fast.

The Great Martyr St Barbara

Everyone wants to claim St Barbara as their own. This is possible because she is not mentioned in any contemporary writings which have come down to us. She is first mentioned in a seventh-century Roman Martyrology, some 350 years after her death. The sources of what has been passed down about her were collected by St Simeon Metaphrastes (“the Translator”) in his tenth-century lives of the saints, the Menologion.

Middle Eastern sources record that Barbara was from Heliopolis in present-day Lebanon. Some sources describe her as a native of Heliopolis in Egypt or of Nicomedia (in Turkey today). All the stories of this martyr say that she was the daughter of a rich pagan named Dioscoros who, after his wife’s death, kept her locked in a tower to keep her from the eyes of strangers.

After a certain time Dioscoros relented and allowed his daughter a measure of freedom. She became acquainted with the Gospel through some young Christian women who befriended her and through a priest fleeing persecution in Alexandria who ultimately baptized her.

Dioscoros had commissioned the construction of a bath house on his estate. In his absence Barbara had altered the plans to include a third window, to represent the Trinity. When Dioscoros learned the reason for her actions he flew at her in a rage. She escaped, but was later captured and severely beaten.

The last great persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire was in full swing. When Barbara would not renounce her faith, Dioscoros handed her over to the prefect of the city, Martian, who subjected her to public humiliation and torture. Juliana, a Christian woman in the crowd reproached Martian for his cruelty. In return he condemned Juliana to die with Barbara. Both were beheaded, Barbara (it is said) by her own father. A pious man named Galentain recovered the bodies of Barbara and Juliana, buried their remains and, when the persecutions ended, erected a shrine in their memory.

In the sixth century relics of St Barbara were brought to Constantinople. Six hundred years later a portion of them was brought to Kiev by Barbara, the daughter of the Byzantine emperor, when she married Michael, the Grand Prince of Kiev. Around the same time the Coptic church of St Cyrus in Old Cairo was rebuilt as the Church of St Barbara to house relics of this saint. She is venerated in all the Churches of East and West. Because of the lack of contemporary witnesses to her struggle, the Roman Church removed her name from their universal calendar. She is still venerated in local Western Churches, particularly in Europe.

In the Middle East her feast is observed by the preparation of sweets, including the “Barbara.” This is the traditional boiled wheat dish made for memorials of a saint or of the deceased. In this case it is sweetened with pomegranate seeds, raisins, anise and sugar. It is frequently brought to homes by children singing a traditional carol about this saint. They are often costumed to recall the disguises St Barbara used to elude her father.

Prokimenon

Reader: You, O Lord, will keep us and preserve us always from this generation.

People: You, O Lord, will keep us and preserve us always from this generation.

Reader: Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any holy man, for truthfulness has vanished from among the children of men.

People: You, O Lord, will keep us and preserve us always from this generation.

Reader: You, O Lord, will keep us

People: And preserve us always from this generation.

Epistle: Col 3: 12-16

Alleluia

Your favor, O Lord, I will sing forever; from generation to generation my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness

Verses: For you have said, “*My kindness is established forever.*” In heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.

Gospel: Lk 13:10-17

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR CHRISTMAS & THEOPHANY

Tue 12/17 6PM—Anointing Service

Tue 12/24 4PM—Vesper Liturgy (St. Basil) for the Nativity of Christ

Wed 12/25 10AM-Divine Liturgy for the Nativity of Christ

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