

From the Divine Office for the Commemoration of the Holy Prophet Elisha

Hail, wise prophet Elisha! Having purified your heart of all carnal pleasures, you gloriously received the lights of the Spirit which you radiantly communicated to all. You were totally transfigured in light; thus you dwell in the presence of the never-setting Light, and you ceaselessly pray for us who acclaim you. (Vespers)

O blessed Elisha, you lived the life of a prophet of God, wherefore you received an abundance of graces; and now, together with Elijah, you intercede fervently with Christ our God in favor of us all. (Kontakion)



THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

JUNE 14, 2026



SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church

256 Hamilton St.

Worcester, MA 01604

Rectory: (508) 752-4174 Hall: (508) 755-2199

Email: olphmelkite@gmail.com

Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor

Rev. Deacon Elias Bailey

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

Website: olphworchester.org

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. Hale-loueya.

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, 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 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 (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.

Holy Ascetics

When the martyrdom of Christians ceased in the Roman Empire, asceticism became the way believers found to offer their lives to God. By spending their lives in continual prayer and self-denial, ascetics sought to live as if they were dead to the world. The Church came to see them as “angels in the flesh” and make pilgrimages to their cells in order to obtain their blessings.

The veneration which believers had for their local ascetics continued after the ascetic’s death. Their cells and the places where they were buried (if known) became shrines in which these holy men and women would be honored and their intercession sought.

Since hierarchs were often taken from the ranks of the ascetics, it became the practice to honor leading bishops (the “Church Fathers”) as saints. Basil the Great, his companion Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom, were such hierarchs.

Perhaps the first Christians living in the world to be honored as saints were the “equals to the apostles” known for spreading the Gospel, beginning with the witnesses to the Resurrection, Mary Magdalene and her companions. Later, healers and wonder-workers during life or after death would be so honored as well.

Shrines and Relics

In the first millennium, veneration of the saints centered on their tombs or the places in which they lived. People came from elsewhere on pilgrimage to honor them. As the Church spread, people in other areas wanted to venerate these saints “in person” by acquiring their relics or belongings for veneration. When the city of Constantinople was founded in the fourth century, its bishops obtained relics of as many saints as they could. They were frustrated in their attempt to get a relic of the Theotokos (she had been assumed into heaven), and had to content themselves with her garments.

Items belonging to or touched by a saint were the oldest form of relics in the Church, being mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. When St Paul was ministering in Ephesus, the Scriptures relate, “*Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them*” (Acts 19:11, 12). Venerating such items became another way of experiencing God’s power at work in the saints.

Canonizing Saints

As we have seen, recognizing a believer as a saint was initially a local affair. Those who had seen how a martyr or confessor had suffered, or how an ascetic had lived, acclaimed them as sanctified and venerated them in the place where they had lived or died, generally under the supervision of the local bishop. For a saint to be venerated by the wider Church, the blessing of the local synod of bishops with the Metropolitan or Patriarch was required. This procedure is still followed by the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches. Beginning in the eleventh century, the Western Church required papal approval for a saint to be recognized and commended to the faithful for veneration throughout the world.

Let us continuously chant unto our God, for He has richly poured forth grace. As Joel preached beforehand, “I will pour out,” he writes, “from the Spirit upon my sons and daughters.” For this strength guided the champions in word and power and silenced the mouths of those against You, O Most Merciful One.

They were not swayed by vain wealth, for they loved Your Kingdom. They neglected things of this life and kept in memory the incorruptible. They went forth on the road, preferring to die rather than to live, that they might pass on to Your life and be fed with Your good things, O Most Merciful One.

From a Kondakion by St Romanos

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today **Our Friends and Families, living and deceased**
Next Sunday **Our fathers, living and deceased**

The Coffee Hr. this morning is hosted by the Ladies Sodality

The Family Funday/Father's Day celebration takes the place of the Coffee Hr. next Sunday

Please remember in your prayers: Zenon Tencza, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Richard Abraham, Sr., Frank Boyda, Carol Boyda, Bob Lynch, Michael Mooradian, Dennis Desplaines, Thomas Houde, Ken Jordan, Mary Rizk, Michael McNeil, Jeff McNeil, Jeannine McNeil, Neil Gartner, Linda Gartner, Arthur Hill, Houda Daou, Lauren Abraham, Nicholas Haddad, 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. 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	\$ 916
Candles	\$ 31
Coffee Hr.	\$ 57
Donations	\$ 650
Flowers	\$ 65
TOTAL	\$1,719

God bless you for your generosity!

FINANCIALS

<u>May 2026</u>		<u>YTD(10.2025-5.2026)</u>	
Income	\$6,191	Income	\$55,956
Expenses	\$9,774	Expenses	\$58,625
Net	(\$3,583)	Net	(\$2,669)

Welcome to any visitors we have with us this morning! We are happy to have you worship with us.

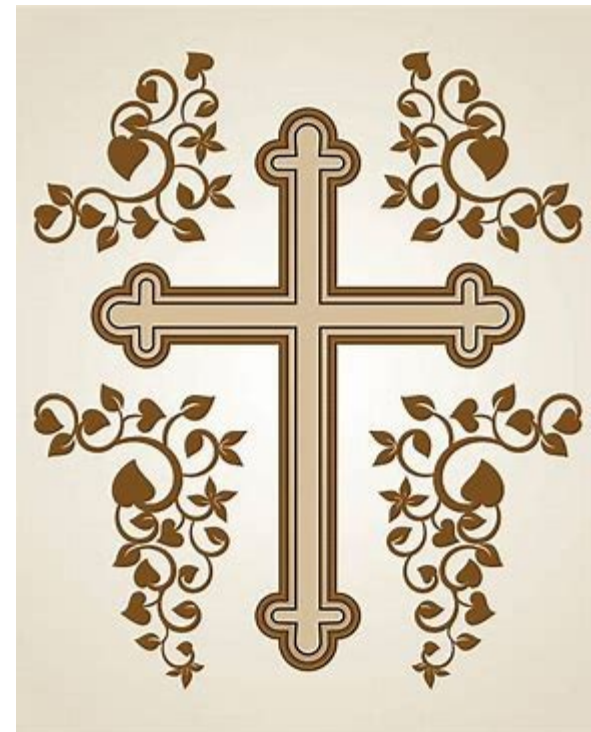
Please join us downstairs in the church hall for the coffee hour so that we can get to know each other better and answer any questions you may have about the parish or the Melkite Church.

FAMILY FUNDAY

The Ladies Sodality Family Funday is next Sunday, June 21 after the Divine Liturgy. It will be a Father's day celebration together with the Family Funday. We will have music, bouncy house, face painting and more! The menu is hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken, potato salad, macaroni salad, watermelon, dessert and drinks.

Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 for children over 12. Children under 12 are free.

Please join us!



THOSE WHO FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

OVER THE YEARS words often change their meaning due to the influence of other languages or new developments in the culture. For centuries the English word “meat” referred to all kinds of solid food. Beginning in the fourteenth century it began to take on the modern meaning of animal flesh used for food. Thus, in the King James translation of the Bible, Ps 103:27 reads “*These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their **meat** in due season.*” In the contemporary revision, the New King James version, this verse is translated, “*These all wait for You that You may give them their **food** in due season.*”

Another word whose meaning has changed over the centuries is the word *saint*. The form of our English word saint comes from the Latin *sanctus*, or holy one but originally did not refer just to the dead. In the Old Testament this word refers to the Jews, God’s chosen people. Thus Psalms 148:14 reads, “*He will raise up a horn for His people, a praise for all His **saints**—for the people of Israel, who are close to Him.*” A person was “a saint” because he or she had a special relationship with God.

In the New Testament the saints are those of every nation who have been joined to Christ in baptism. Thus, when St Paul writes to the Romans he passes on his greetings to “*Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the **saints** who are with them*” (Romans 16:15). As we often sing in our Liturgy, “all of you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” The deepest relationship to God we have is to have put on Christ in this mystery.

Venerating the Martyrs

Our tradition of venerating the saints began in the early Church as Christians gave up their lives rather than deny Christ. The martyrs were the first “dead believers” to be counted as saints in the modern meaning of the term. In many places it became customary to serve the Eucharistic Liturgy on the anniversary of a martyr’s death, often at his or her place of burial.

Writing in c. 400 ad, St Augustine explained this practice as he knew it: “We, the Christian community, assemble to celebrate the memory of the martyrs with ritual solemnity because we want to be inspired to follow their example, share in their merits, and be helped by their prayers. Yet we erect no altars to any of the martyrs, even in the martyrs’ burial chapels themselves.

“No bishop, when celebrating at an altar where these holy bodies rest, has ever said, ‘Peter, we make this offering to you’, or ‘Paul, to you’, or ‘Cyprian, to you’”. No, what is offered is offered always to God, who crowned the martyrs. We offer in the chapels where the bodies of those he crowned rest, so the memories that cling to those places will stir our emotions and encourage us to greater love both for the martyrs whom we can imitate and for God. “But the veneration strictly called ‘worship’, or latria, that is, the special homage belonging only to the divinity, is something we give and teach others to give to God alone.” (*Treatise against Faustus*).

Why did St Augustine have to explain this practice? Perhaps because some of his readers – even among the Christians themselves – were confusing the veneration of the martyrs with the pagan’s worship of their gods and goddesses.

Graffiti on the walls of the Roman catacombs are evidence that early Christians asked the martyrs buried there to pray for them. It was not long before Christians who had suffered punishment but had survived were honored as “confessors” who had confessed their faith by the sufferings they endured. God whose grace enables us to do so...

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: Rom 5:1-10

Alleluia

May the Lord answer you in the days of distress; may the name of the God of Jacob defend you.

Verse: O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance

Gospel: Mt 6:22-33

