

From the Divine Office for the Nativity of the Forerunner (June 24)

Elizabeth conceived the Forerunner of the grace of God, while the Virgin conceived Christ, the Lord of Glory. The mothers embrace and the child leaps for joy. Within the womb, the servant acclaims his Lord. In her surprise, the mother of the Forerunner asks: "And how have I deserved that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" The Lord saves His people from despair. O Treasure of mercy, glory to You! (Vespers)

Let us now praise the Forerunner of the Lord, whom Elizabeth has born today to the priest from an unfruitful womb, but not without seed. For Christ alone has passed through an impassible dwelling-place without seed. A barren woman gave birth to John, yet he was not born without the help of man. And a pure Virgin, whom the Father and the Spirit of God overshadowed, bore Jesus. But he who came from the barren woman was seen to be a prophet of Him who was born of a Virgin without seed, a preacher and forerunner of the Word of God. (Ikos)



FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

JUNE 21, 2026



JESUS HEALING THE CENTURION'S SERVANT

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church

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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (1st)

1: Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth, and sing praise to His Name.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

2: Say to God: How awesome are Your deeds! So great is Your power that Your enemies cringe before You.

Be shafa'ati Walidatil Eelah, ya Mukhallisu, khallisna.

3: Let all the earth worship You and sing praises to You; let it sing praises to Your Name, O Most High!

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

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 3. Pg. 39)

Let all in heaven rejoice and all on earth be glade, for the Lord has exerted power with His arm: by death He has trampled upon Death and has become the firstborn of the dead. He has delivered us from the bosom of Hades and has granted to the world great mercy.

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.

The Feast of the Visitation

This festival has a unique history. We know that it was observed in the early Church, at least in Ain Karim. The pre-Islamic Jerusalem Calendar notes that a festival was kept there yearly on August 28.

The 11th-century Muslim scholar Muhammad al-Biruni (abu-RaiHan) documented the practice of the Syriac Melkite community in northeastern Persia. There May 4 marked the “Feast of Roses, according to the ancient rite as it is celebrated in Khwaarizm. On this day they bring Juri-roses to the churches, the reason for which is this, that on this day Mary presented the first roses to Elizabeth, the mother of John.” He then notes that May 15 “is the Feast of Roses according to the new rite (postponed to this date because roses are still very scarce on the fourth). It is celebrated on the same date in Khorasan, not on the original date.”

Today the Syriac Churches observe May 15 as the feast of Our Lady of the Harvest. They remember the Visitation on the third Sunday of the Announcement, their six week pre-Christmas cycle.

There is no mention of this feast in any Byzantine Church until the nineteenth century. In 1844 the Melkite Patriarch Maximos III decreed that this feast should be kept on the Friday after Pascha. The Greek Church honors a miraculous spring in Constantinople on this date as the Feast of the Theotokos, the Life-Giving Spring. The patriarch, however, was embroiled in a conflict with the Ecumenical Patriarchate at this time. He had recently achieved civil emancipation from the control of the Patriarch of Constantinople. In retaliation the Greeks insisted that this new Catholic community be obliged to wear clerical headgear that was clearly different from that of the Greeks. Maximos reacted by suppressing the Greek feast: “We recognize the desire of many people from our Rum Catholic parishes to honor Our Lady the Mother of God on the aforementioned day with a special service to the point that some of them take part in vainly celebrating this feast to Our Lady. From another perspective, we cannot participate in honoring the consecration of a church for people who have left the communion of the Catholic Church.” In the most recent revision of the liturgical books of the Melkite Greek-Catholic Patriarchate the Feast of the Visitation has been transferred to June 23, the eve of the Birth of St. John the Baptist.

The Feast was added to the calendar of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1883. The Russian representation in Jerusalem consecrated a church in Ain Karim named “The Meeting of the Most Holy Virgin and St. Elizabeth.” Its feast was set for March 30 and extended to the entire Russian Church. In an ironic twist, the typikon transfers this feast, if March 30 occurs during Great Week, to... the Friday of Bright Week.

“Notice the contrast and the choice of words. Elizabeth is the first to hear Mary’s voice, but John is the first to be aware of grace. She hears with the ears of the body, but he leaps for joy at the meaning of the mystery. She is aware of Mary’s presence, but he is aware of the Lord’s: a woman aware of a woman’s presence, the Forerunner aware of the pledge of our salvation. The women speak of the grace they have received while the children are active in secret, unfolding the mystery of love with the help of their mothers, who prophesy by the spirit of their sons.

St. Ambrose on the Visitation

“The child leaps in the womb; the mother is filled with the Holy Spirit, but not before her son. Once the son has been filled with the Holy Spirit, he fills his mother with the same Spirit. John leaps for joy, and the spirit of Mary rejoices in her turn.”



DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today All our Fathers, living and deceased

Next Sunday +Charlotte Stockhaus (40 day) Requested by her family

The Family Funday/Father’s Day celebration takes the place of the Coffee Hr. this morning

Next Sunday’s Coffee Hr. will be hosted by the family of Charlotte Stockhaus

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.

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 Fathers Day Celebration/Family Funday is today after the Divine Liturgy. There will be 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!

Last Week’s Collection

Weekly \$ 877
Candles \$ 20
Coffee Hr. \$ 44
TOTAL \$ 941

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)



FEAST OF THE VISITATION OF THE THEOTOKOS (JUNE 23)

Two of the most frequently used prayers in our tradition are taken from the same Gospel narrative: the visit of the Holy Virgin to her older cousin Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist (cf., [Luke 1:39-56](#)). Both the Angelic Salutation (“Hail, O Theotokos...”) and the Canticle of the Theotokos (“My soul magnifies the Lord...”) are taken from this passage. The event which it describes is generally called the Visitation.

According to Luke, the angel Gabriel who told her that she would bear a son also told her that “*Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren*” (Luke 1:36). Mary then travelled the nearly hundred miles from Nazareth to the little town in the hills of Judea where Zachary and Elizabeth lived. According to tradition this town was Ain Karim, which then was five miles from Jerusalem, but is today incorporated in that city’s municipal boundaries.

The Holy Virgin greeted her cousin, “*And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord’*” (Luke 1:41-45).

The Holy Virgin replied with the Canticle which we sing daily at Matins/Orthros: “*My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior*” (vv. 46-47). This canticle is clearly modeled on the Song of Hannah (cf., [1 Samuel 2:1-10](#)), which that mother prayed when she learned that she would have a son. This led many modern scholars to assume that Luke put these words in Mary’s mouth, using 1 Samuel as his model. They did not realize that people steeped in Scripture as Mary was would naturally weave the sacred text into their speech when they spoke of the things of God.

Mary, the Ark of God

It may be that St Luke had another Old Testament passage in mind when he wrote the story of the visitation. Note the highlighted parallels from the story of David’s visit to the Ark of the Covenant described in 2 Samuel: “*David arose and went ... to bring up from there the ark of God, ... and he said, ‘How can the ark of the Lord come to me?’ ... The ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months. ... So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness. Then David danced before the Lord with all his might ...*” (2 Samuel 6:2-16).

The Holy Virgin is the new Ark of God, bearing within her – not the words of God’s commandments, the tablets of the Law, but the Living Word of God Himself. Before Him the unborn son of Elizabeth leaps in her womb as David danced before the Ark.

St Gregory the Wonderworker (213-c. 270) would develop this image to describe the Virgin as full of grace (“Wrought with gold both within and without”): “Come also, dearly beloved, and chant the melody taught us by the inspired harp of David, saying ‘Arise, O Lord, into Your resting place – You and the Ark of Your holiness.’ For the Holy Virgin is truly an ark, wrought with gold both within and without, that has received the whole treasury of the sanctuary.”

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! .

People: Sing praise to our King, sing praise!

Epistle: Rom 6:18-23

Alleluia

In You, O Lord, I have hoped: let me never be put to shame. In your goodness, save me and deliver me; lend your ear and hasten my deliverance.

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

Gospel: Mt 8:5-13



Happy Father’s Day!

