



Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Melkite Catholic Church
— 256 Hamilton St., Worcester —

Middle Eastern Picnic

Sunday, September 13, 2026

12-6pm

• DELICIOUS FOOD • MUSIC • DANCING • FAMILY FUN •








MENU

- ✦ Chicken Shawarma
- ✦ Baked Kibbeh
- ✦ Chicken Kabobs
- ✦ Beef Kabobs
- ✦ Stuffed Grape Leaves
- ✦ Tabbouli
- ✦ Hummus
- ✦ Pastries
- And more ...

For details
visit
olphworchester.org/picnic

ENTERTAINMENT

- 🎵 Live Music
- 💃 Dancing
- 👦 Kids' Activities
- And more ...

RAFFLES




Faith • Community • Tradition • Together

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
AUGUST 23, 2026



FORERUNNER AND BAPTIST JOHN

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church

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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (Feast)

1- Sing joyfully to the Lord, all you land; serve the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful song.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, Save us!

2. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with praise; give thanks to Him, bless his name.

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

3. As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the Lord of Hosts, in the city of our God.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, Save us!

Entrance Hymn

P: Come let us worship and bow down before Christ.

All: 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 of the angel the joyful news of the resurrection, and having rejected the ancestral sentence proudly told the Apostles. Death is despoiled, Christ God is risen bestowing on the world great mercy.

Troparion of the Dormition (Tone 1) (twice)

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 of the Dormition (Tone 2)

Neither death nor the tomb could hold the Mother of God, our watchful Protectress and our unfailing hope. Since she is the Mother of Life. Christ who dwelt in her ever-virginal womb lifted her up to the eternal life.

Those in Hades would “receive the Lord” upon His death as we read in the New Testament: “*Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey...*” (1 Pt 3:18, 19). A number of the apostolic Fathers such as Saints Polycarp of Smyrna, Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus of Lyons, and Clement of Alexandria all taught that Christ had descended into Hades. We find the same teaching in the Syriac Fathers Jacob of Sarouj, Aphrahat the Persian and Ephrem the Syrian as well as the Greek Fathers Athanasius the Great, Basil the Great, Gregory Nazianzen, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus.

Our most common icon of the resurrection depicts Christ emerging from Hades leading out by the hand Adam and Eve (and, by implication, the human race). In many icons John the Forerunner is beside Him, at the head of those who had died before Christ and were now brought to eternal life by Him.

Our Observance of John's Death

Because John, whom the Lord Himself had called the greatest man born of woman, was killed as a result of Herod's birthday revels, the Byzantine Churches observe today as a strict fast: no parties, no luxury foods, no drink. We see where these things can lead.

A number of popular local customs have arisen to mark this day among various Eastern Christians. In various places people may:

Avoid eating anything on round plates, since Salome asked for John's head “on a platter” (Mark 6:25). Use bowls instead.

Avoid eating any round fruits or vegetables (they resemble a head).

Avoid eating anything that requires use of knives or anything that cuts.

Avoid eating or drinking anything red (they remind us of blood).

A contemporary way to observe this commemoration might be to fast and pray for those who have died senselessly at the hands of others through terrorism, armed conflicts or senseless violence. Think of them as John's “companions in suffering.

John's Witness in Our Liturgy

Come, you people, let us praise the prophet and martyr, the baptizer of the Savior; for, as an angel in the flesh, he denounced Herod, condemning him for committing most iniquitous fornication. And thanks to iniquitous dancing, his precious head is cut off, that he might announce in Hades the glad tidings of the resurrection from the dead. He prays earnestly to the Lord, that our souls be saved.

Let us celebrate the memory of the severed head of the forerunner, which poured forth blood upon the platter then, but now pours forth healings upon the ends of the earth.

Liti Stichera

The beheading of the Forerunner was an act of divine providence: the occasion for him to announce the coming of the Savior to the souls in Hades. Let then Herodias lament and weep, for she has asked for murder, preferring the present life and its pleasures to eternal life and God's law.

~Liti Stichera

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~Kondakion

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +**Peter Solitro (5yr.)** Requested by Karen Solitro
 +**Theodora & Nicholas Barouk, Luigi, Assunta, & Vincent**
 Mischitelli. Requested by Michael & Virginia Mischitelli
Next Sunday **Our Families and Friends, Living and Deceased**

This morning’s Coffee Hr. is hosted by Karen Solitro and Ginny & Mike Mischitelli
Next Sunday’s Coffee Hr. will be hosted by the Dumont Family

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	\$
Candles	\$
Coffee Hr.	\$
Dormition	\$
Stole	\$
Dividends	\$
TOTAL	\$
God bless you for your generosity!	
As a reminder, we need \$2,000 per week to meet our expenses.	



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.

FR. BRYAN AWAY

I WILL BE ON VACATION FROM AUGUST 12 TO AUGUST 29. IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE DURING THAT TIME, PLEASE CALL THE CHURCH AND DN. ELIAS WILL ASSIST YOU.

THERE WILL BE NO ORTHROS ON AUGUST 16, 23 AND 30.

FR. BRYAN



THE FORERUNNER IN HADES (AUGUST 29)

The Gospels depict St John the Baptist as the “forerunner” or herald announcing the imminent coming of God’s saving work in Jesus Christ. In the Gospel of Mark, for example, we read, “*There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit*” (Mark 1:7, 8). The coming of the Messiah was the focus of John’s message about the kingdom of God. “*In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’*” (Matthew 3:1). This “kingdom” is none other than Jesus in whom the will of His Father governed His every action. Thus He is the kingdom personified.

The Story of John’s Struggle

We read the story of John’s final fight “for the sake of truth” in Mark’s Gospel. “*For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife; for he had married her. Because John had said to Herod, ‘It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife’*” (Mark 6:17, 18).

John languished in prison because Herod had a superstitious fear of the prophet. He revered John as a holy man but could not bring himself to follow the Baptist’s teachings.

“*Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. And when Herodias’ daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, ‘Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you.’ He also swore to her, ‘Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom’*” (Mark 6:21-23).

What followed has been frequently retold in literature, music, painting and sculpture. Prompted by her mother, Salome asks for the head of John: “*I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter*” (v. 25). Because of the oath he had sworn in the presence of his guests, Herod agreed and had John beheaded, making possible the prophet’s ministry in Hades.

John’s work as herald of our salvation was not limited to announcing the beginning of Christ’s ministry in Galilee. Our troparion for today’s commemoration mentions that John baptized the Lord Jesus. Then, it continues, “You have fought for the sake of truth and proclaimed to those in Hades that God who appeared in the flesh has taken away the sins of the world and bestowed His great mercy upon us.” John’s ministry continued after death as he announced to the dead in Hades that Christ’s coming was close at hand.

Did John Witness in Hades?

As the Gospels affirm, Jesus was still alive when John was executed. But the New Testament does not teach that John witnessed to Christ in Hades. How and when did this concept enter our tradition?

Origen of Alexandria, foremost commentator on the Scriptures in the third century, explained that John the Baptist had died before Christ, “so that he might descend to the lower regions and announce His coming. For everywhere the witness and forerunner of Jesus is John, being born before and dying shortly before the Son of God, so that not only to those of his generation but likewise to those who lived before Christ should liberation from the death be preached, and that he might everywhere prepare a people trained to receive the Lord” (Origen, *Homily on Luke* 4).

Prokimenon

Reader: How great are your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have wrought them all.

People: How great are your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have wrought them all.

Reader: Bless the Lord, O my soul! You are very great indeed, O Lord my God!

People: How great are your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have wrought them all.

Reader How great are your works, O Lord!

People: In wisdom You have wrought them all.

Epistle: 1 Cor 16:13-24

Alleluia

String your bow, go forth, reign for the sake of truth, meekness and righteousness and your right hand shall lead You wonderfully.

Verse: You loved righteousness and hated iniquity: therefore God, your God, anointed You with the oil of joy above your companions.

Gospel: MT 21:33-42

Hirmos (Tone 1)

All human generations bless you, O Mother of God. The laws of Nature were overcome in you, O Pure Virgin: For your birthgiving left you a virgin and your death became the herald of your life. O you who remained virgin after giving birth, and alive after having died. O Mother of God, deign always to save your inheritance.

Kinonikon

Praise the Lord...

POST-COMMUNION HYMN: We have seen the True Light...