



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

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
AUGUST 30, 2026



CINCTURE OF THE THEOTOKOS

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Sunday Orthros: 9:15AM
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!

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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 5), Pg. 40

Let us, O faithful, praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and Spirit. Born of the Virgin for our salvation, for He was pleased to be lifted in the flesh upon the Cross and to endure death and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

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.

Kontakion (Tone 2)

O never-failing Protress of Christians, and their ever-present Intercessor before the Creator, despise not the petitions of us sinner, but in your goodness extend your help to those who call upon you with confidence. Hasten, O Mother of God, to intercede for us, for you have always protected those who honor you.

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.

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.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today + Fr. Alam Alam

Today's Coffee Hr. is hosted by Antoinette Arraj & Lisa Jagielski

Please remember in your prayers: Zenon Tencza, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Richard Abraham, Sr., Frank Boyda, Carol Boyda, Bob Lynch, Michael Mooradian, Dennis Desplaines, Michael McNeil, Jeff McNeil, Jeannine McNeil, Linda Gartner, Neil 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.	\$
Feast Day	\$
Flowers	\$
Donation	\$
TOTAL	\$

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.

MIDDLE EASTERN PICNIC

Our annual Middle Eastern Picnic is Sunday September 13 from Noon to 6PM. It is not too late to volunteer, if you have not done so already! We really need volunteers for a number of tasks before, during, and after the picnic. We need everyone to step up and volunteer so that the picnic continues to be a success! Please reach out to David Johnson to sign up to volunteer.



THE FORERUNNER IN HADES

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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: 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: 2Cor 1:21-23, 2:1-4

Alleluia

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

Verse: For You have said: “My kindness is established forever.” In heaven You have confirmed Your faithfulness.

Gospel: MT 22:2-14

