



March 19th, 2023

ST. BASIL THE GREAT MELKITE GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH

Address

15 Skyview Drive
Lincoln, Rhode Island 02865

Tel (401) 722-1345

Parish Website

www.stbasilthegreatchurch.com

Facebook

[https://www.facebook.com/
StBasilTheGreatMelkiteGreek
CatholicChurchRI/](https://www.facebook.com/StBasilTheGreatMelkiteGreekCatholicChurchRI/)

YouTube

<https://bit.ly/3gkl2Uk>

Email

office@stbasilthegreatchurch.com

Office hours

Tue-Fri 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Divine Liturgies

Sunday Divine Liturgy
9:00 AM - 11:15 AM

Pastoral Emergencies
and anointing of the sick
(401)722-1345

Holy Mysteries

Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation will
be available before the Divine
Liturgy or by appointment

Baptism

Please arrange with the pastor

Marriage

A notice of at least 6 months should
be given to the pastor, before the
proposed wedding date to arrange
for the required interview and
instructions



Sunday of our father John Climacus Fourth Sunday of Lent

الاحد الرابع من الصوم العظيم -
تذكار ابينا البار يوحنا السلمى

Antiphon Prayer

O Lord, Lover of mankind, You saved the people of Niniva as they repented, fasting and weeping. Have mercy on us, for we fall short of any defense. And since You are compassionate, strengthen in our hearts our faith in your name and steady our footsteps in the way of your Commandments.

For You are good and forbearing, O our God, and to You we render glory, honor and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and always and forever and ever.

Troparion of the Resurrection (8th tone)

You descended from on high O compassionate One; and consented to burial for three days that You might free us from suffering. O Lord, our life and our resurrection, * glory to You.!

Troparion of St. John Climacus, (8th Tone)

Your abundant tears made the wilderness to sprout and bloom, and your deep sighings made your labors fruitful a hundredfold; you became a star shining over the world with miracles. Holy Father John, pray to Christ God that He may save our souls.

Troparion of St Basil The Great

Your voice has sounded all over the earth, that accepted your preaching. You gave a divine explanation of doctrine, and made clear the nature of creatures, and set a rule of life for men. Holy Father, and Kingly Priest, intercede with Christ God to grant us great mercy.

صلاة الأنديفوننة

أُيِّها الربُّ المحبُّ البشر، لقد خلَّصتَ أهلَ نينوى لَمَّا تابوا بالصَّوم والدموع. فأرأفْ بنا نحن العاجزين عن كلِّ جواب. فيما أنك فنون، وطَّد في قلوبنا الإيمان باسمك، وتبَّيت خطواتنا في سبيل وصاياك
لأنَّك إلهٌ صالحٌ وطويلُ الأناة، واليك نرفعُ المجد أئبها الأب والابنُ والروحُ القُدس، الآن وكلَّ أوانٍ وإلى دهرِ الدهرين.

طروبارية القيامة باللحن الثامن

انحدرت من العلاء أئبها التحنن، وقبَلتِ الدفنَ ثلاثةَ أيام، لكي تعتقنا من الآلام، فبنا حياتنا وقيامتنا، يا رب المجد لك.

طروبارية للبار يوحنا السلمى باللحن الثامن

بسيول دموعك أخصب القفرُ العقيم. وبزفرائك العميقة أثمرت أتعابك مئة ضعف. فصرت للمسكونة كوكباً متألئناً بالعجائب يا أبانا البار يوحنا. فاشفع إلى المسيح الإله في خلاص نفوسنا.

طروبارية القديس باسيليوس

لقد ذاعَ منطقتك في كل الأرض. فإنها قد قبَلت كلامك، الذي به بيَّنت العقائدَ بياناً إلهياً، وأوضحت طبيعة الكائنات، ونظمت أخلاق البشر. فبنا أئبها الأب البار ذو الكهنوت الملوكي، إبتهل إلى المسيح الإله في خلاص نفوسنا.





Our church organizations:

MAYA: Organization of Melkite Catholics ages 18 – 26 (and at least 1 year out of high school) under patronage of our bishop, the Most Reverend Nicholas Samra.
<https://melkite.org/maya>

MYO: Provides a common forum for all the young people of St. Basil's Church, and that the Organization initiate, coordinate, and direct religious, social, educational, and humanitarian programs designed to promote the involvement of its membership in the Christian Faith and the Melkite tradition.
www.stbasilthegreatchurch.com/myo.html

NAMW: Promotes and supports vocations to the priesthood and religious life in the United States.
<https://melkite.org/namw>



Kondakion of the Annunciation

Triumphant leader to you belongs our prize of victory! And since you saved us from adversity, we offer you, our thanks. We are your people O mother of God! So, as you have that invincible power, continue to deliver us from danger that we may cry out to you Hail, O Virgin and bride ever pure.

Epistle of the 4th Sunday of Lent, Hebrews 6: 13- 20, Prokimenon (Tone 7) Psalm 28:11, 1

The Lord will give strength to his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.

Stichon: Give to the Lord. You sons of God, give to the Lord glory and praise.

Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews

Brethren, when God made his promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, "I will surely bless you, and will surely multiply you Gn.22: 14)." And so, after patient waiting, Abraham obtained the promise. For men swear by one greater than themselves, and an oath given as a guarantee is the final settlement of all their disagreements. Hence God, meaning to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the firmness of his will interposed an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to deceive, we may have the strongest comfort — we who have sought refuge in holding fast the hope set before us. This hope we have as a sure and firm anchor of the soul, reaching even behind the veil where our forerunner Jesus has entered for us, as he became a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Alleluia (Tone 7), Psalm 91:1,2

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High!

Stichon: To proclaim your kindness at dawn and your faithfulness throughout the night.

Gospel of the 4th Sunday of Lent, Mark 9: 17-31 (Healing of a possessed boy)

At that time one of the crowds came to Jesus and bowed to him saying: "Master, I have brought to you my son, who has a dumb spirit; and whenever it seizes him it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth; and he is wasting away. And I told your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." And he, answering him, said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to me." And they brought him to him; and the spirit, when it saw Jesus, immediately threw the boy in convulsions, and he fell down on the ground and rolled about foaming at the mouth. So he asked his father, "How long is it since this has come upon him?" And he said, "From his infancy. Oftentimes, it has thrown him into the fire and into the waters to destroy him. But if you can do anything have compassion on us and help us." But Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to the man of faith." At once the father of the boy cried out and said with tears, "I do believe; help my unbelief." Now when Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, go out of him and enter him no more." And crying out and violently convulsing him, it went out of him, and he became like one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand, and raised him and he stood up. And when he had come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind can be cast out in no way except by prayer and fasting." And leaving that place, they were passing through Galilee, and he did not wish anyone to know it. For he was teaching his disciples, and saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and having been killed, he will rise again on the third day."

قنداق الختام باللحن الثامن

نَحْنُ عبيدِكَ يا والدة الاله، نكتبُ لك آياتِ الغلبة يا قائدةً قاهره. ونقدم الشكرَ لك وقد أنقذتنا من الشدايد. لكن بما أن لك العزة التي لا تحارب، أعتقينا من اصناف المخاطر لكي نصرخ إليك: إفرحي يا عروسه لا عروس لها.

مقدمة رسالة الاحد الرابع من الصوم

الرَّبُّ يُوْتِي شعبه قوَّة، الرَّبُّ يبارِكُ شعبه بالسلام قَدِّمُوا للرَّبِّ يا أبناء الله، قَدِّمُوا للرَّبِّ أبناء الكباش

الرسالة (عبرانيين 6: 13 – 20)

يا إخوة، ان الله عند وعده لإبراهيم، أذ لم يكن له أن يُقسم بما هو أعظم منه، أقسم بنفسه قائلاً: لأبارككن بركة وأكثرتك تكثيراً. وهكذا إذ تأتى نال الموعد. وإنما الناس يُقسمون بما هو أعظم منهم، وتنقضي كلُّ مُشاجرة بينهم بالقسم للتثبيت. لذلك لما شاء الله أن يزيدَ وَرثةَ الوعدِ بيانا لعدم تحول عزمه، تَوَسَّطَ بِقَسَم، حتى نحصل بأمرين لا يتحولان ولا يُمكن أن يحلف الله فيهما، على تعزية قوية، نحن الذين التجأنا إلى التمسك بالرجاء الموضوع أمامنا. الذي هو لنا كمرساة للنفس أمانةً وراسخة. وهو يُدخِلُ الى داخل الحجاب، حيث دخل يسوع كسابق لأجلنا، صائراً رئيس كهنه إلى الابد على رتبة ملكيصادق.

هللوا

صالح الاعتراف للرب، والترنيم لاسمك أيها العلي ليُخَبِّرَ برحمتك في الغداة، وبعقلك كلَّ ليله.

الانجيل - الاحد الرابع من الصوم (مرقس 9: 17 – 31)

في ذلك الزمان، دنا إلى يسوع انسانٌ وسجد له قائلاً: يا معلم، قد أتيتك بابني به روحٌ أبكم. وحينما اعتراه يصرعه فيزيد ويصرّف بأسنانه ويببس. وقد قلت لتلاميذك أن يُخرجه فلم يقدرُوا. فأجابه قائلاً: أيها الجيل الغير المؤمن، إلى متى أكون عندكم وحتى متى أحتملكم؟ هلم به إليّ. فأتوا به. فلما رآه للوقت صرعه الروح، فسقط على الارض يتمرغٌ ويزيد. فسال أباه: منذ كم من الزمان أصابه هذا؟ فقال منذ صباه. وكثيراً ما ألقاه في النار وفي المياه لئلهك، لكن إن استطعت شيئاً ففتحنا علينا وأغثنا. فقال له يسوع: إن استطعت أن تؤمن فكل شيءٍ ممكنٌ للمؤمن. فصاح أبو الصبي لساعته بدموع وقال: إني أومن يا رب، فأعن قلّة إيماني. فلما رأى يسوع أن الجمع يتبادرون اليه، انتهر الروح النجس قائلاً له: أيها الروح الأضمر الإيكم، أنا أمرك ان اخرج منه ولا تُعدّ اليه من بعد. فصرخ وخبطه كثيراً وخرج منه، فصار كالميت حتى قال كثيرون إنه قد مات. فأخذ يسوع بيده وأنهضه فقام. ولما دخل البيت سأله تلاميذه على انفراد: لماذا لم نستطيع نحن أن نُخرجه؟ فقال لهم: إن هذا الجنس لا يمكن ان يخرج بشيءٍ إلا بالصلاة والصوم. ولما خرجوا من هناك، اجتازوا في الجليل، ولم يكن يريد أن يدري أحد. وكان يعلم تلاميذه ويقول لهم: إن ابن الانسان سيُسلم إلى أيدي الناس فيقتلونه، وبعد أن يُقتل يقوم في اليوم الثالث.



Today is the beginning of our salvation and the revelation of the mystery that was planned from all eternity. The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin, and Gabriel announces this grace. Let us join him in crying out to the Mother of God: "Hail, O full of grace, the Lord is with you!"

**A Happy and Blessed Feast of the Annunciation
of the Most Holy Mother of God
and Ever-Virgin Mary**



Divine Liturgy Intentions

SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2023: SUNDAY OF OUR FATHER JOHN CLIMACOS.

9:00 a.m. DIVINE LITURGY:

- + **BOSCO FOWLER (40 Day)** by Patrick Bombard & Christine Albatal Bombard.
- + **LATIF KUFFREY (60th Anniv.)** by Alberta Mardo & Family.
- + **RICHARD LONGTIN** by Justin & Danielle Boudjouk.
- + **CHARLES, EVA, & DIANE ROBAT** by the Family.
- + **MICHAEL & SAMIA (KISHFY) RAHEB** by Deacon Edmond & Theresa **(AJMO) RAHEB.**
- + **THEOPHILE & NAIMA (BOJOK) AJMO** by Deacon Edmond & Theresa **(AJMO) RAHEB.**
- + **DR. BISWA PAUL & his son JAY PAUL** by the Family of the late Louis E. Azar.
- + **LILLIAN & JAMES L. SALOME** by their Children & Families.

11:15 DIVINE LITURGY:

- + **MICHAEL GEORGE BOUDJOUK (NJ)** by Mr. Albert & Lina Kishfy.
- + **VIOLETTE (HAGGAR) SAGGAL (Australia)** by Joseph Saggal, Patrick Saggal & Pamela Pacheco.
- + **GLORIA RAWAN RAZOOK** by Samir & Hanaa Boudjouk & Family.
- + **NAJWA YOUNES (Lebanon)** by the Youakim Family.

Both Divine Liturgies will be offered for the Spiritual & Temporal Welfare of the servant of God, **CHIEF BRIAN SULLIVAN**, on the occasion of his retirement after 35 years of committed service with the Lincoln Police Department, effective March 24, 2023.

Prayer for the dead

O God of all spirits and of all flesh, who have destroyed death, overcome the devil, and given life to the world: grant, O Lord to the souls of your servants, who have departed from this life, that they may rest in a place of light, in a place of happiness, in a place of peace, where there is no pain, no grief, no sighing. And since You are gracious God and Lover of mankind, forgive them every sin they have committed by thought, or word, or deed, for there is not a man who lives and does not sin: You alone are without sin, your righteousness is everlasting, and your word is true.

For You are the Resurrection and the Life, and the Repose of your departed servants, O Christ our God, and we render glory to You, together with your Eternal Father and your All-holy, Good and Life-giving Spirit, now and always and forever and ever. Amen.





SACRIFICIAL GIVING: March 12, 2023: Budgets: \$1,797.00; Envelopes: \$1,737.00; Loose: \$60.00; Candles: \$108.00; Stole Offerings: \$390.00; Addit'l Fuel \$20.00; Cemetery: \$280.00; Building Fund: \$95.00.

PLEASE NOTE: Before making any **ENGAGEMENT/BAPTISM/MARRIAGE RECEPTION PLANS**, please contact the Church in advance. We would rather not have you disappointed if you've already made commitments without checking our schedule

GENERAL HOME VISITATIONS, SICK CALLS, HOSPITAL VISITS: Father Ephrem has been fully vaccinated and is now available for these parish services. Just email him at office@stbasilthegreatchurch.com and leave him your message. **PLEASE! NO GRATUITIES!** A cup of coffee or tea is just fine. He looks forward to in-person contact.

2023 ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDARS are available – free for the taking – at both entrances of the church. By following the liturgical cycle of the church year and remembering the Saints each day is an excellent way to attach yourself more closely to the worshipping community that is the church.

THE SACRIFICIAL JOURNEY TO PASCHA

What can we do to attempt the imitation of the lives of those whom our Mother, the Church, holds dear? There are lots of things. For starters, we can take advantage of what the Church offers to us during this season of Great Lent. We can:

- ATTEND PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY ON MONDAYS, 7:00 P.M.**
- ATTEND GREAT COMPLINE ON TUESDAYS, 6:30 P.M.**
- ATTEND THE AKATHIST HYMN ON FRIDAYS @ 6:30 P.M**
- FOLLOW THE PRESCRIBED LENTEN FAST**
- PARTICIPATE IN THE "SHEPHERD'S CARE" PROGRAM**
- RENEW OUR PERSONAL LIFE OF PRAYER**
- MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT AT PERFORMING CHARITABLE ACTS**

RULE OF FASTING IN THE DIOCESE OF NEWTON

So as not to burden anyone's conscience, the Holy Synod of the Melkite Church permits each diocesan Bishop to ease the canonical obligations of fasting, while, at the same time, exhorts all the faithful to fast according to the ancient tradition. The minimal rule that Melkites in the Diocese of Newton must observe: *Fasting* from all food and drink from midnight until noon, must be observed on the first day of Great Lent (Monday, February 20th), and on the last three days of Holy Week (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday). *Abstinence*, at least from meat, must be observed on every Friday of Great Lent. These requirements are the minimum. The faithful are encouraged to do more, such as also abstaining from meat every Wednesday or throughout the whole of Great Lent.

O Jesus, Who has said,
"Ask and you shall
receive, seek and you
shall find, knock and it
shall be opened," through
the intercession of the
Theotokos, Your Most
Holy Mother, I knock, I
seek, I ask that my prayer
be granted.

O Jesus, Who has said,
"All that you ask of the
Father in My Name, He
will grant you," through
the intercession of the
Theotokos Your Most
Holy Mother, I humbly
and urgently ask your
Father in your name that
my prayer will be granted.

O Jesus, Who has said,
"Heaven and earth shall
pass away but My word
shall not pass away,"
through the intercession
of the Theotokos Your
Most Holy Mother, I feel
confident that my prayer
will be granted.





THE GREAT AND HOLY TIME OF LENT

Great Lent involves deepening of our prayer life. This includes private prayer as well as the services mentioned below. An important facet of Lent is Almsgiving. The "Shepherd's Care" mandated in our Melkite parishes and missions throughout the United States is one good way to put the Almsgiving into practice. Various Services will be conducted during the weekdays of Lent, thereby making it convenient for more people.

Behold, the Bridegroom cometh at midnight, and blessed is the servant whom He shall find awake.... Behold, therefore, my soul, beware, lest thou fallest into deep slumber.... But be thou wakeful, crying, Holy, Holy, Holy, art Thou, O God.

-Holy Week

Journey through Lent

This week, services will be held on Monday through Friday:

- Monday, March 20, 7:00 p.m. Presanctified Liturgy
- Tuesday, March 21, 6:30 p.m. Great Compline followed by MISSION
- Wednesday, March 22, 6:30 p.m.. Great Compline followed by MISSION
- Thursday March 23, 6:30 p.m.. Great Compline followed by MISSION
- Friday, March 24, 6: 30 p.m. Akathist Hymn followed by Agape Lenten Dinner

COMPLIMENTARY AGAPE LENTEN DINNER will be served on Friday, March 24th after the Akathist Service. You are once again required to register with your name and number of people attending, on the sign -up sheets at both entrances to the Church, to allow for an accurate order of food to be served.

EASTER FLOWERS: Many parishioners have followed the long-time tradition of donating lilies to the Church for the Easter Season. If you would like to participate in this tradition, please sign your name on the bulletin board located outside the kitchen area. Since we have a larger sanctuary area to cover, we would appreciate your generosity in this regard to enhance the Church at this most blessed season. Please make your \$10 offering to Christine Durnin.

REFLECTION: Think of life as something God has given us to manage or take care of. Everything comes from God. We may use our talent or ability to achieve material goods, but the talent or ability is a gift from God to begin with. Once you look at life this way, as a steward, it becomes clear that we just give of what we are, as well as what we have. It means cultivating an attitude of generous giving and getting into the habit of thinking of others.

O Jesus, Who has said, "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened," through the intercession of the Theotokos, Your Most Holy Mother, I knock, I seek, I ask that my prayer be granted.

O Jesus, Who has said, "All that you ask of the Father in My Name, He will grant you," through the intercession of the Theotokos Your Most Holy Mother, I humbly and urgently ask your Father in your name that my prayer will be granted.

O Jesus, Who has said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away but My word shall not pass away," through the intercession of the Theotokos Your Most Holy Mother, I feel confident that my prayer will be granted.





Lenten Mission

Explanation of the Divine Liturgy

At. St. Basil The Great Melkite Greek Catholic Church, Lincoln, RI

with Rt. Rev. Philip Raczka

March 21, 22 & 23

at 7:00 p.m.



Rt. Rev. Philip Raczka has been a Melkite Catholic priest for almost 43 years.

He holds a BA in history from St. Anselm College, an MDiv from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Seminary, and a MA and PhD in Liturgical Studies from the University of Notre Dame. He has held numerous pastoral assignments and is currently the rector of the Annunciation Cathedral and Proto-synchellos of the Melkite Eparchy of Newton.

Following Jesus Kids bulletin

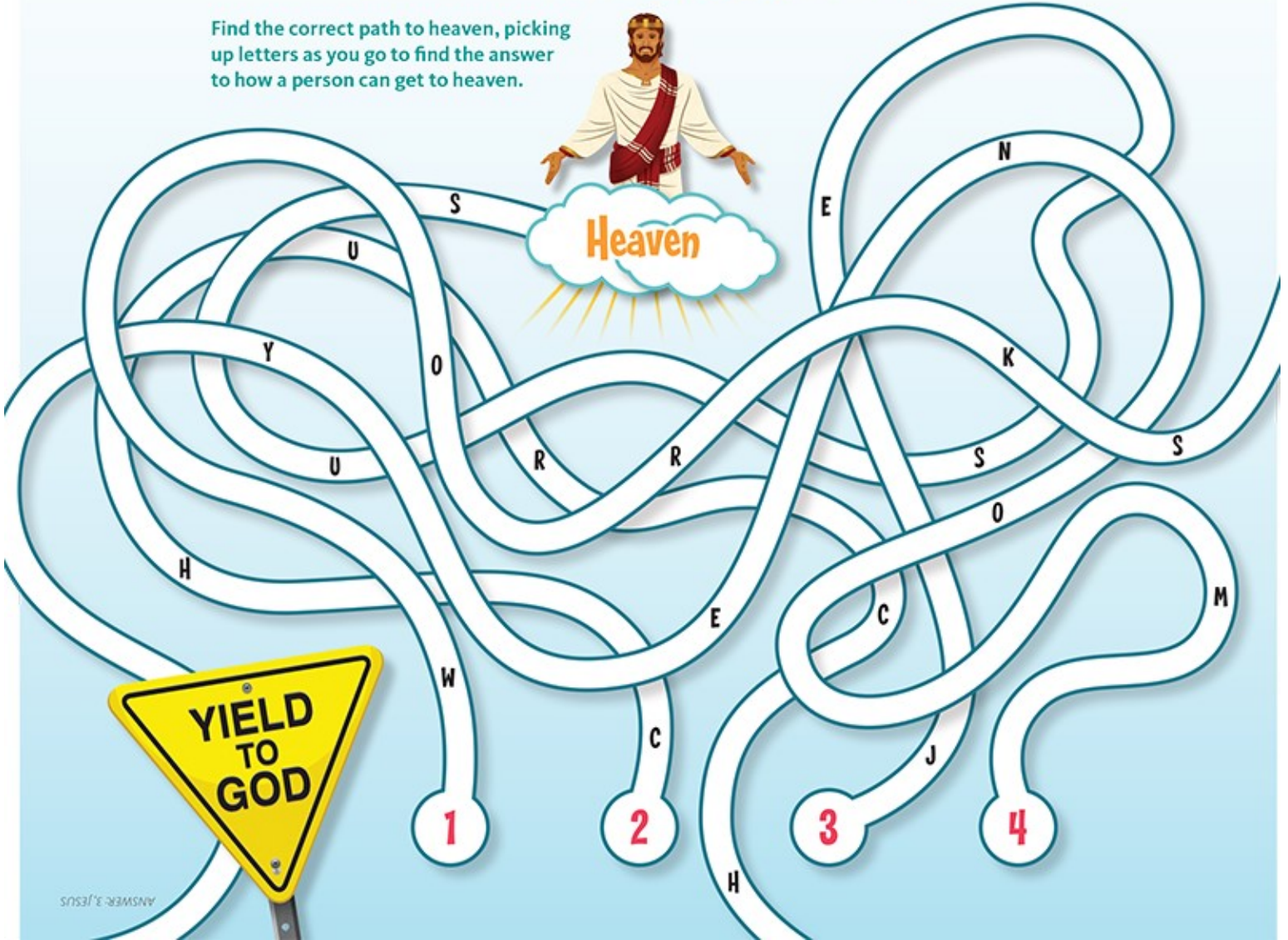


_____ is the only way to get to heaven!

Find the correct path to heaven, picking up letters as you go to find the answer to how a person can get to heaven.











Heaven



OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2023

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

Adapted by Fr Vitalii Stashkevych (BCC) for the Gregorian Calendar

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week JANUARY 29 TH	 <i>TRIDION WEEKS</i> Publican and the Pharisee Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14	Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.
Normal Fast Week FEBRUARY 5 TH	 The Prodigal Son Returns! Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32	Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, "Today I will be humble." Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare FEBRUARY 12 TH FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	 The Last Judgement Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare FEBRUARY 19 TH FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	 Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise! <i>FORGIVENESS SUNDAY</i> Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1 ST Sunday of Lent FEBRUARY 26 TH	 <i>GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS</i> SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1:43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2 ND Sunday of Lent MARCH 5 TH	 ST GREGORY PALAMAS Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3 RD Sunday of Lent MARCH 12 TH	 VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS <i>HALF WAY TO PASCHA!</i> Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!
4 TH Sunday of Lent MARCH 19 TH	 ST JOHN of the LADDER Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9:17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5 TH Sunday of Lent MARCH 26 TH	 ST MARY of EGYPT Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
PALM SUNDAY APRIL 2 ND GREAT WEEK BEGINS	 <i>GREAT AND HOLY WEEK</i> ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 Gospel: John 12:1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY APRIL 7 TH	 GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY <i>JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS</i> CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! APRIL 9 TH NO FASTING!	 <i>BRIGHT WEEK</i> HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!) Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!

سيناء حيث مكث في هذا المنصب لمدة أربع سنوات. ثم اعتزل في الصحراء ورقد في الثمانين من عمره في 30 آذار.

كان القديس المُكْرَم اليوم عالماً عظيماً وعالم تشريح للروح البشرية. رجل صلاة، واعتدال، ومحبة دائمة لله، ورجل بحب إلهي شديد، ومتألق دائماً بنار الحب الإلهي، كما يخبرنا (السنكسار) والذي يورد سير القديسين. لقد كان رجلاً قاد روحه إلى شوارع المسيح، الذي قاده من الجحيم إلى الجنة، من الشيطان إلى الله. ليس من قبيل المصادفة أن كنيسة المقدسة قد عينت هذا اليوم لتكريم القديس يوحنا. ففي مسيرتنا الروحية التي نعبها خلال الصوم الكبير، يعتبر القديس يوحنا السينائي نموذجاً للتوبة والفضيلة لكل منا.

يعود سبب تسمية القديس بهذا الاسم إلى تأليفه كتاباً مهماً يعتبر من روائع تراثنا الكنسي، "السلم" المعروف، وهو كتاب روحي ونسكي. يتكون من ثلاثين سبباً للفضيلة، يتضمن كل منها فضيلة كتبها بنفسه.

يصف القديس يوحنا السلم، أي السلم الذي هو الطريق إلى التآله بأنه صعود مثل الصعود إلى سلم يؤدي إلى الفردوس. كل خطوة فيها فضيلة يجب على المؤمن المجاهد أن ينتصر عليها لتحقيق هدفه. يبدأ هذا الكتاب بالفضائل الأكثر عملية، وهي الفضائل التي يمكن اكتسابها بسهولة والتي لها طابع عملي بشكل أساسي، مثل فضيلة التوبة والطاعة، وينتهي بالفضائل العالية نظرياً مثل التواضع والتميز. يتم تصنيف كل فضيلة من أجل الافتراض المسبق للفضيلة السابقة وهذا شرط للفضيلة التالية.

تشير الأسباب الثلاثة الأولى، التي تشكل مقدمة هذا الكتاب، إلى إنكار الذات لدى الإنسان الذي يعيش في الدنيا وتهم الرهبان. الأسباب الأربعة التالية والتي تسلط الضوء على عدد متساوٍ من الفضائل الأساسية، هي الطاعة، والتوبة، وذكر الموت، والحداد المفرح، التي تُقدّم على أنها جذور الشجرة، والتي تقدم للمؤمنين المجاهدين ثمارها. من الخطاب الثامن إلى الخامس والعشرين، تم وصف المشاعر الصعبة التي يجب على كل مسيحي محاربتها والفضائل المقابلة التي يجب أن يستردها. يذكر الخطاب السادس والعشرون عمقاً اهتماماتهم وفضائلهم وأفكارهم وتمييزهم البسيط. الأسباب الأخيرة هي ثمار الكد، وهي الصعود الرمزي إلى قمة سلم الفضائل.

يقول مؤلف الكتاب، لكي تبدأ الحياة في المسيح، يجب على المرء أن يتخلى عن باطل العالم الحاضر. وكلمة "عالم" في الكتاب المقدس ليس لها المعنى الذي ندركه للعالم اليوم. إنه يعني العقل الدنيوي والحياة الدنيوية وليس إخواننا من البشر الذين هم من حولنا. لا يمكن للمرء أن يقترب من الله دون أن يقول لا للخطية وخاصة رغباته الأنانية. لأن هذه الوصايا تجعلنا أسرى في العالم الخاطئ.

فإن الابتعاد عن العالم يعني تغيير عقل المرء الدنيوي،



في الأحد الرابع من الصّوم الأربعينيّ المقدّس، وهو معروف أيضاً بأحد القديس يوحنا السلميّ (نسبة إلى كتاب شهير كتبه بعنوان سلم الفضائل). يأتي هذا الاحتفال بتذكّار هذا القديس العظيم وهو مأخوذ من الترتيب والعادة السائدين في الأديرة المقدّسة، إذ كان يُقرأ فيها كتاب القديس يوحنا السلميّ كقراءة محدّدة للرهبان في فترة الصّوم الأربعينيّ.

يصف القديس يوحنا في كتابه (سلم الفضائل)، وعبر ثلاثين درجة (أو تعليمات)، كيفية ارتقاء الروح نحو الله كصعود سلم الفضائل الإلهية، وهو يُعلم أولئك الذين يسعون إلى الخلاص في كيفية إرساء أساس متين للجهد الروحي. وكيفية تحديد الأهواء ومحاربتها، وسبل تجنّب الفخاخ الشيطانية، وكيفية النهوض من الفضائل الأولية إلى كمال المحبة والتواضع الإلهيين.

تطل كنيسةنا اليوم على وجه القديس يوحنا السينائي المسمى السلمي. ولد في القرن السادس في سوريا. في سن السادسة عشرة أصبح راهباً تحت الاختبار في دير سيناء المقدس. مارس الطاعة والتواضع بالقرب من أبا الشهيد، بعد أن اكتسب سابقاً الحكمة العلمانية.

في سن العشرين، وبعد أربع سنوات من الجهاد المستمر، أصبح راهباً وأطلق عليه اسم يوحنا. ثم نال الدرجتين الأوليين من الكهنوت، شماساً وكاهناً، لخدمة احتياجات الدير حيث مكث في دير سيناء تسعة عشر عاماً متتالية. ثم في سن الخامسة والثلاثين، تقاعد في مكان مهجور في سيناء حيث مارس بهدوء ودرس كتابات الأب. في سن الخامسة والسبعين تولى رئاسة دير

The Ladder of Divine Ascent



off the ladder, which is the reality that we constantly face. In fact, the classic icon of St. John and his ladder clearly depicts the successful ascent of those truly holy and spiritually advanced monks, versus those who have succumb to various passions, causing them to fall into the pit of hell.

The following Sunday, the fifth Sunday of the Fast, we commemorate our Venerable Mother, Mary the Egyptian. This former prostitute who sought tearful reconciliation with Christ and became a desert wanderer in order to live out her repentance, is the example par excellence, of the repentant sinner. Her story is quite moving, and very motivating to anyone who is unrepentant and continues to carry the burden of sin.

The Church, in Her Spirit-filled great wisdom, places the memory of St. Mary of Egypt on the last Sunday of Great Lent, as a spiritual “wake-up” call to us to finish the race and accomplish the goal of sincere repentance. If we have truly made some serious efforts during Great Lent, then we hopefully have reached the point of repentance which will lead us to the holy mystery of confession, prior to the celebration of the Lord’s passion and resurrection. We must remember that repentance and confession are key components of the spiritual life, because without them there is no true spiritual life, but only a meager attempt, at best.

So thus, Great Lent comes to a close during the week after the Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt. Specifically, Lent ends on the following Friday at the reading of the 9th hour, immediately preceding the vespers of St. Lazarus, included in the service of the Presanctified Gifts. Many of our faithful do not realize that the forty day fast ends on this particular Friday, and that Holy Week is separate from Great Lent, standing on its own as a solemn week of strict fasting in commemoration of the last days of our Lord on earth. This is important to know, because the focus of Great Lent and Holy Week are different.

Great Lent is a time for deep, personal reflection. The entire spirit of the forty day fast, is that of an intense spiritual journey that brings us back to God through our spiritual efforts, in order to be properly prepared for Holy Pascha, the greatest of all feasts. In contrast, Holy and Great Week is totally focused on the Lord and His passion and burial, hence the strict fast. In Holy Week, we follow the Lord during His last days, and hear his final teachings and warnings about the Kingdom of Heaven and His second glorious coming to earth for the final judgment. As we all know and have experienced each year, the darkness of Holy Week gradually gives way to the brightness and joy of the Resurrection. This is most profoundly exemplified in the Orthros of Holy Saturday, popularly known as the Epitaphios Lamentation, celebrated on Holy Friday evening.

Beloved in Christ, our Orthodox Church is at its absolute best, so to speak, during Great Lent and especially Holy Week. This is not to say that there is anything inferior about the remainder of the liturgical year, which in reality, is actually a reflection of Holy Pascha, which gives light and life to everything we do in the Church. It is precisely because of the magnitude of the feast of Pascha, that such liturgical beauty experienced through hymnography and ritual is presented to the faithful for their spiritual edification.

May we all take advantage of what remains of Great Lent, and thus, be prepared to enter Holy and Great Week with eager anticipation and love for the Bridegroom Christ. This should be the highlight of the year for each and every Orthodox Christian who truly loves the Church.

An important part of understanding our spiritual lives as an ascent, is the possibility of falling down a few rungs, or even completely off the ladder, which is the reality that we constantly face. In fact, the classic icon of St. John and his ladder clearly depicts the successful ascent of those truly holy and spiritually advanced monks, versus those who have succumb to various passions, causing them to fall into the pit of hell.

As we continue on our Lenten journey, I would like to share a few thoughts and reflections on this holiest period of the liturgical year, as well as Holy and Great Week.

During the remaining period of Great Lent, there are two particular Sundays on which I would like to focus. The first of these Sundays, which is the fourth Sunday of the Fast, is dedicated to the memory of St. John Climacus, or St. John of the Ladder.

St. John is commemorated during Lent because of his great spiritual work called The Ladder of Divine Ascent. Although this work was written specifically for the monastic world, the author being a monk himself, St. John’s “Ladder” is a classic work of Orthodox spirituality that speaks to all members of the Church, in all places and in all times. His book presents us with a spiritual ladder ascending to heaven, with each rung representing a particular vice or passion to be conquered in order to proceed upward. The approach is very straightforward and logical, being that going that next step in our spiritual growth necessitates overcoming the sinful obstacles, which have kept us in the state where we presently find ourselves.

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St. Ephrem Prayer

O Lord and Master of my life,
take from me the spirit of sloth,
despair, lust of power,
and idle talk.

But give rather the spirit of
chastity, humility, patience, and
love to Thy servant.

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me
to see my own transgressions,
and not to judge my brother, for
blessed art Thou, unto
ages of ages. Amen.

When you fast

Jesus said, 'and when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your father who sees in secret will reward you:'

Matthew 6: 16-18 (Gospel of Cheesefare Sunday)



When people think of the word "Lent," the word "fasting" is one of the first things that comes to mind. The cornerstone of Lent is not fasting, but repentance and growing in our faith. Fasting is a tool that is used to assist in spiritual growth. Fasting is also mischaracterized as a form of deprivation, rather than a spiritual discipline. Because fasting is so misunderstood, it is many times done incorrectly.

In the Orthodox world, we use the word "passions" to describe tendencies that each person has that lead us to sin. Each of us has a "passion" for anger, lust, power, greed, ego, etc. We do not get through life without wrestling with each of these, sometimes on a daily basis. The most basic "passion" is hunger. While we can go a day without a lustful thought or an angry thought, we can't go more than a few hours without a hungry thought. So, if we can tame our passion for eating, we can hopefully tame our other passions. If we can discipline ourselves to go without certain kinds of food, we can hopefully discipline ourselves so that we can go without certain kinds of behavior that are spiritually destructive. Thus, fasting is not about giving up something only to get it back. Fasting is about getting control of our passions, maintaining control over them, and ultimately giving control of ourselves to God.

If you've never fasted before, I would not recommend doing a strict fast. Try fasting from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent (and then throughout the year), then next year try fasting Wednesdays and Fridays plus all of the first week of Lent and all of Holy Week. Then work up from that.

Below is a guide of some levels of fasting:

- Level one -- Fast from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays and during Holy Week
- Level two -- Fast from meat and fish on Wednesdays and Fridays and during Holy Week
- Level three -- Fast from meat the entirety of Lent and Holy Week
- Level four -- Fast from meat and fish the entirety of Lent and Holy Week
- Level five -- Level four and eliminate dairy products during Holy Week
- Level six -- Level four and eliminate dairy products on Wednesday and Fridays and during Holy Week.
- Level seven -- Level four plus eliminate dairy products during all of Lent and Holy Week
- Level eight -- Level seven plus eliminate oil and wine during Holy Week
- Level nine -- The strict fast - no meat, fish, dairy products, wine or oil during the entirety of Great Lent

***Fish is allowed on March 25 (Annunciation) and Palm Sunday; oil and wine are allowed on Saturdays and Sundays, except for Holy Saturday.*

After a few years at one level, challenge yourself to go up a level.

More important, however, than fasting from food, is fasting from the behaviors that are spiritually destructive. We need to fast from things that get us in trouble - perhaps the television, alcohol, inappropriate materials on the computer and in movies, foul language, etc. Fasting also does not mean "looking" deprived, complaining about what you can't eat, or making a show of your fasting. In fact, if you are fasting and you are invited to someone's home for dinner and they serve meat, eat the meat, don't make a big deal out of your fasting. Also, do not pass judgment on others who are not fasting to the degree you are. Saint Paul reminds us in Romans 14:3-4: "Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own Master that he stands or falls." As Christ tells us, our fasting is seen by our "Father who is in secret," and He will reward us for our efforts.

Again, Lent is not a season of deprivation, nor should we "give up" something only to get it back once Lent is over. Lent is about repentance, and making small and permanent changes to bring us closer to the Lord, changes that will last long after Lent is over. This is the purpose of the Lenten journey. Fasting is an aid to help us in this.

The time has come - the start of our spiritual contests, the victory over demons, the full armor of self-control the angels' dignity, the confidence before God. Thereby did Moses become conversant with the Creator, and heard the invisible voice. Lord, through fasting make us worthy to worship Your Passion and Holy Resurrection, as You love humanity. (Doxastikon of Orthros, Cheesefare Sunday, Trans. by Fr. Seraphim Dedes)

Give some thought to your fasting plan for Lent today!

افرحي يا عروسة لا عروس لها

العاصمة يقضون الليل ساهرين، وقوفاً، شاكي السلاح. وعلت من صفوف المؤمنين آيات "نشيد المدائح لوالدة الإله" الذي كان وضعه رومانوس الشاعر الحمصي، وإذا بالشعب كله يردد بعد كل بيت تلك اللازمة الرائعة: "افرحي يا عروسة لا عروس لها"، أو اللازمة الأخرى "هللوا".

إذا لم يكن هذا نشيد حرب، ولم تكن فيه أصلاً أي إشارة لجهاد أو معركة أو حصار. لكن تلك الآيات الملهمة، التي تضمنت أجمل ما ابتكره الشعور المسيحي من مديح للعدراء والدة الإله، كانت في ساعات الخطر تندفع طوعاً على شفاه المؤمنين وتصعد إلى السماء متوسلة خاشعة.

وإذا بصفوف الاعداء تتحرك تحت جناح الظلام. وعبثاً انتقلت ابصار المؤمنين المحاصرين إلى مياه اليوسفور لعلها تبصر في ظلام الليل سفن الملك هرقل تحمل النجدة للعاصمة. وعبثاً نظر البطريرك إلى ما تبقى من الجيوش المسيحية، وقارنها بجيوش الفرس الوثنيين... ولم يبق له من ملجأ إلا السماء...

وإذا بالأعجوبة المرتقبة تتم. فتنظر في السماء سيدة عظيمة جميلة ترفع يدها وتدفع الجيوش البربرية إلى الورا. وإذا بجحافل الفرس تتخاذل وتراجع، وإذا بها تتخبط في الظلام وتتحارب، وإذا بغوغائها يملأ الفضاء.

وما تطلع الشمس حتى تبديد الرؤيا، ويبديد معها الاعداء المحاصرون. فهرع الشعب إلى الكنائس، وملا الساحات والشوارع. وارتفعت اصوات المرمنين تنشد من جديد "نشيد مدائح والدة الإله". ولهذه المناسبة وضع البطريرك لهذا النشيد التقليدي مقدمة جديدة تشير إلى اعجوبة إنقاذ العاصمة، وتعلن العذراء الطاهرة "قائدة لا تغلب" وسلطانة المدينة المالكة، فكان القنداق الشهير: "نحن عبيدك يا والدة الإله...". وقد جاء في أصله اليوناني: "انا مدينتك يا والدة الإله...".

هذا المديح عبارة عن تاريخ حياة السيد المسيح مع الإشارة إلى بعض الحوادث التي راقتها.

القسم الأول: يحتوي على إعلان الملاك لمريم حبلها من الروح القدس وحيرة العذراء من هذا الكلام الغريب. ثم ذهابها إلى نسيبتها اليسانبات وأخيراً تعجب يوسف من هذا الحبل. سمعان الشيخ.

القسم الثاني: يشتمل قصة ولادة المخلص وسجود الرعاة وتقديم المجوس للهدايا ثم عودتهم إلى بلدهم. وهرب مريم ويوسف بالطفل إلى مصر ورجوعهم منها ثم على تسليم الطفل إلى سمعان الشيخ.

القسم الثالث: يصف بصورة شعرية ممتازة تجديد الطبيعة البشرية من جرّاء ولادة المسيح الفادي وينصح الشاعر المؤمنين بأن يرفعوا عقولهم من الأرض إلى السماء، من حيث نزل الإله وصار على الأرض إنساناً مثلنا ليخلص الإنسان.

القسم الرابع: والأخير فكله مديح لائق بالعدراء مريم التي استحققت أن تكون أما لخالق الكل ثم يختتمه الشاعر بالذعاء إليها لتتشفع فينا لدى ابنها كي يبعد عنا كل الضيقات والمصائب.

وهناك كلمة تتردد كثيراً في هذا التسبيح هي كلمة "افرحي" أو "السلام عليك" وهي مأخوذة من قول الملاك جبرائيل ساعة بادر بالتحية المعروفة للسيدة العذراء لوقا ١: ٢٨.

علاقة المديح بالصوم
يسهر المؤمن، كالعداري الحكيمات، في الأيام الأولى من الأسبوع في التوبة والصلاة والصوم، ليوهل ذاته للاتحاد بالعريس الرب يسوع في المناولة، يومي السبت والأحد. لذلك فإن ليلة الجمعة - السبت هي ليلة الزفاف الليتورجي، والزينة لاستقبال الرب.

يقوم المديح ليتورجياً بالدور الذي أدته العذراء في التجسد. فالعدراء هي الصلة بين الله والإنسان في التجسد، هنا المديح بصير أداة الوصل الليتورجية بين أيام الصوم، أيام الحزن البهّي، ويوم الزفاف الإلهي للمؤمن.

نرتل في المدائح للبتول قائلين "افرحي يا مزينة النفوس بزينة العرس"، وهذا ما يحققه المديح. إنه يوشحنا برداء العرس حين ينظر المؤمن في العذراء وحين ينشد مرثماً للعروس الأم، تقوده ترانيم المديح إلى طهارة النفس وتنقله من الحزن البهّي إلى فرح الخدر البتولي.

إننا في المديح نتأمل في محبة، وتواضع، وطهارة العذراء. ونعاين في ترانيمه صورة العروس الحقيقية المدعوية جميعنا إلى الاقتداء بمثلها. في المديح تتم أيضاً شفاعنة العذراء، وما فينا من غير استحقاق تطهره شفاعنة العروس التي لا عروس لها.



المديح هو قصيدة طويلة من القصائد الكنسية. المرجح أن ناظمه هو القديس رومانوس المرمن المدائح مؤلفة من صلاة النوم الصغرى ثم تسع تسبيحات للعدراء ثم المديح. للمديح مقدمة صغيرة تعرف اليوم بالقنداق (ترنيمه مختصرة) وتبدأ "نحن عبيدك يا والدة الإله..." ثم أربع أقسام أو أدوار، كل دور مؤلف من ستة مقطوعات وتسمى أيضاً آيات. المصدر الذي استقى منه الشاعر هذا المديح الرابع هو إنجيل لوقا، حيث الكلام عن بشارة رئيس الملائكة جبرائيل للعدراء مريم (لوقا ١: ٢٦-٥٦).

وأكثستوس كلمة يونانية وقد أطلق هذا الاسم على مدائح العذراء لأن الأكليريوس وجمههور الشعب القسطنطيني ترنموا بها علناً ولأول مرة، في أيام الملك هرقل سنة ٦٢٦، وهم واقفون إجلالاً للسيدة الطاهرة وطلباً لنصرتها وحمائيتها واستعداداً لحما السلاح بأسرع ما يمكن، عند أول إشارة، لصدة هجمات الاعداء المحيطين بالمدينة المالكة، على نحو العبرانيين لدى بنائهم أسوار أورشليم في أيام النبي نحميا. وبما أن لغتنا العربية تفتقر إلى كلمة واحدة تعبر عن اللفظة اليونانية، فقد لجأ مترجمو كتبنا الطقسية إلى هذه العبارة: نشيد لوالدة الإله "لا يجلس فيه".

تضاربت الآراء حول واضع هذا النشيد المريمي الرابع. فالعالم اليوناني بابادوبولوس كيراميفس ١٩٠٤ نسبته إلى البطريرك فوتيوس (القرن التاسع)، وهذا زعم لا يسلم به أحد اليوم. ونسبه آخرون إلى بطريرك القسطنطينية سرجيوس الأول (٦١٠-٦٣٨) وآخرون إلى جورج بيزيدس أمين مخطوطات كنيسة أجيا صوفيا في عهد الملك هرقل (كورسيوس). على أن النقد العلمي الحديث يرجح انتسابه إلى القديس رومانوس الحمصي المنشأ إمام الشعراء والمنشدين الكنسيين. ولد هذا القديس في أواخر القرن الخامس في حمص عاصمة سوريا الوسطى من عائلة يهودية الأصل وكان شماساً انجيلياً، خدم في كنيسة القيامة في بيروت، وانتقل بعد ذلك إلى القسطنطينية في أواخر عهد الملك أنسطاسيوس الأول (٤٩١-٥١٨) على الأرجح. وقد ظهرت له العذراء في الحلم في كنيسة منطفة كيروس المشيدة على اسمها ودفعته إلى نظم الشعر والكتابة. توفي حول سنة ٥٥٦ تاركاً ما يربو على ألف نشيد ديني لم يبق من هذه الأناشيد اليوم سوى مئتين، بعضها معتبر في رتب الفرض الإلهي.

أما قنداق "نحن عبيدك يا والدة الإله" الذي يُرثم به قبل بيوت المديح فقد وضعه البطريرك المسكوني سرجيوس الأول (٦١٠-٦٣٨) عقب إنقاذ القسطنطينية بأعجوبة من يد الفرس والأفاريين، وفيه تلميح صريح إلى تدخل البتول العجيب يوم ٧ آب من سنة ٦٢٦. ونختم صلاة الأكاثستوس بتقبيل أبوقية السيدة العذراء ونشيد "إن جبرائيل" من تأليف القديس العبري يوحنا الدمشقي المتعبد الكبير للبتول الطاهرة.

وضع نشيد الأكاثستوس في الأصل لعيد البشارة بحسب رأي النقاد العصريين. إن محور الكلام فيه عن التجسد الإلهي، سبب امتيازات والدة الإله كلها وسبب مجدها. أما عيد الأكاثستوس (أو عيد تدخل العذراء ونجاة المملكة في عهد هرقل) فلم يحتفل به أصلاً في سبت ثابت أي السبت الخامس من الصوم كما هي الحال اليوم، بل كان لبطريرك القسطنطينية الحرية أن يحتفل به في السبت الرابع أو الخامس من الصوم بحسب التقويم الطقسي القديم يعود إلى القرن التاسع. وعندما أصبح عيد البشارة عيداً ثابتاً في ٢٥ آذار، فصل عنه الاحتفال بعيد الأكاثستوس، وجعل في سبت من أيام الصوم، وهو السبت الخامس في أيامنا الحاضرة "إن رتبة الأكاثستوس أو المدائح عزيزة على قلب المؤمنين التابعين للطقس البيزنطي، فينسابون كثيرين إلى حضور هذه الصلاة التي تذكرهم بسر المحبة العظيم، سر تجسد الكلمة يوم عيد البشارة، وتعلن على مسامعهم الألقاب المجيدة التي خصّ بها الكتاب الكريم الأم السماوية، وكل رموز العهد القديم التي أشارت إليها".


أما ارتباطها بتاريخ الحماية المسيحية، فكانت المملكة البيزنطية المسيحية مهددة من كل جهة، وإذا بالحصارة المسيحية التي كانت تلك المملكة تمتلأها وتحميها، أصبحت معرضة لغزوات الأمم الغربية من فرس وآبار وعرب وغوط وصقالية ومجر. وفي سنة ٦١٤ اجتاح الفرس بلاد المشرق، ودمروا انطاكية ودمشق، واستولوا على اورشليم وقتلوا فيها في يوم واحد أكثر من مئة ألف مسيحي، وهدموا مزاراتها المقدسة، وسبوا رهبانها وكهننتها وأساقفتها وبيتريركها، وانتزعوا عود الصليب المكرّم من على هيكل الجلجلة، وعادوا به إلى بلادهم غانمين. فنار عليهم هرقل ملك الروم وكسرهم، واسترجع الأسرى وعود الصليب. ولكن الفرس ما لبثوا أن عادوا الكزة في سنة ٦٢٦، فهاجموا البلاد المسيحية وبلغوا أسوار القسطنطينية، وشددوا في حصارها، حتى قنط الشعب المسيحي فيها. وبالجهد استطاع الملك هرقل أن يخرج من المدينة ويجتاز صفوف المحاصرين لكي يذهب إلى الأقاليم ويجمع الجيوش ويقودها لفتح الحصار عن العاصمة.

كان في أثناء غيابها قد سلم القيادة والحكم للبطريرك المسكوني سرجيوس، الذي توكل على الله ولم يهمل وسائل الدفاع الحربي. وكانت ليلة السابع من آب سنة ٦٢٦ الموعد الذي حذده الفرس للهجوم على المدينة. فأمر البطريرك، وإذا بالجيوش والشعب كله يجتمع فوق أسوار



LITURGICAL CALENDAR



MARCH	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p>آذار - مارس 2023</p> <p>FEBRUARY 2023</p> <p>S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28</p> <p>APRIL 2023</p> <p>S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30</p>				1 Ⓜ 🐟 St Eudocia 2 Corinthians 6:16 - 7:1 Matthew 5:20-26	2 Ⓜ 🐟 St Theodotos of Cyrene 1 Corinthians 10:5-12 Matthew 5:27-32	3 Ⓜ 🐟 2 nd Akathist المدائح الثانية Romans 12:6-14 Matthew 5:33-41	4 🐟 St Gerasimos Hebrews 3:12-16 Mark 1:35-44
	5 🐟 St Gregory of Palamas Sunday of Holy Relics أحد الذخائر المقدسة Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Mark 2:1-12	6 Ⓜ 🐟 The 42 Martyrs of Amorion Ephesians 4:25-32 Matthew 5:42-48	7 Ⓜ 🐟 Martyrs of Cherson Philippians 2:12-16 Matthew 10:32-38, 19:27-30	8 Ⓜ 🐟 St Theophylactos of Niomedia Ephesians 4:1-7 Matthew 7:1-8	9 Ⓜ 🐟 Forty Martyrs of Sebastea Hebrews 12:1-10 Matthew 20:1-16	10 Ⓜ 🐟 3 rd Akathist المدائح الثالثة Ephesians 5:1-8 Matthew 6:22-33	11 🐟 St Sophronios of Jerusalem Hebrews 10:32-38 Mark 7:31-37
	12 🐟 Veneration of Holy Cross أحد المسجود للصليب الكريم Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Mark 8:34-9:1	13 Ⓜ 🐟 Remains of Nicephoros Philippians 2:5-11 Matthew 13:10-23	14 Ⓜ 🐟 St Benedict 1 Corinthians 1:18-24 Matthew 13:36-43	15 Ⓜ 🐟 St Agapios and his companions Galatians 2:16-20 Luke 7:36-50	16 Ⓜ 🐟 St Sabinos the Egyptian Galatians 5:22-6:2 Matthew 25:14-30	17 Ⓜ 🐟 4 th Akathist المدائح الرابعة 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Matthew 25:1-13	18 🐟 St Cyril of Jerusalem Hebrews 6:9-12 Mark 7:31-37
	19 🐟 Sunday of St John Climacos أحد القديس يوحنا السلمى Hebrews 6:13-20 Mark 9:17-31	20 Ⓜ 🐟 The 796 Martyred at St Sabas Romans 12:1-3 Luke 6:31-36	21 Ⓜ 🐟 St James of Catania Ephesians 4:14-17 Luke 6:24-30	22 Ⓜ 🐟 St Basil of Ancyra Ephesians 4:17-25 Luke 7:36-50	23 Ⓜ 🐟 Thursday of Great Canon خميس القانون الكبير Ephesians 4:25-32 Luke 13:1-9	24 Ⓜ 🐟 5 th Akathist المدائح الخامسة 2 Corinthians 5:10-15 Luke 12:42-48	25 ✠ 🐟 Annunciation عيد البشارة Hebrews 2:11-18 Luke 1:24-38
	26 🐟 Sunday of Mary of Egypt أحد مريم المصرية Hebrews 9:11-14 Mark 10:32-45	27 Ⓜ 🐟 St Matrona of Salonica Colossians 3:12-16 Luke 11:34-41	28 Ⓜ 🐟 Sts Stephen and Hilarion 1 Thessalonians 5:14-23 Mark 8:30-34	29 Ⓜ 🐟 St Cyril and his companions Ephesians 4:7-13 Luke 12:16-21	30 Ⓜ 🐟 St John Climacos Galatians 4:4-7 Luke 18:18-27	31 Ⓜ 🐟 St Hypatios of Gangra Ephesians 2:4-10 Matthew 4:1-11	

Weekly Divine Liturgy Schedule



The Divine Liturgy Schedule

Sunday Divine Liturgy

- **9:00 am**
- **11:15 am**

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available
Tuesday to Friday before or after the Divine Liturgy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Welcome to

St. Basil The Great Melkite Greek Catholic Church

**Check our website
for Church news and updates at**
www.stbasilthegreatchurch.com

On Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/StBasilMelkiteChurchRI/>

YouTube
<https://bit.ly/2VJgvnS>

Contact us for information and ideas
office@stbasilthegreatchurch.com



"GOD LOVES THE CHEERFUL GIVER" 2 COR 9:7

Donations are greatly appreciated especially during this pandemic crisis. Please click on the link below to donate.
Thank you and God bless you and yours.



SHEPHERD'S CARE Associated Charities Great Lent 2023

"There is no sin that alms cannot cleanse. Charity is a medicine suitable for any wound."

St. John Chrysostom

Almsgiving is an essential pillar of Great Lent. Owing to your love and faithful support, the diocese has been able to help orphans, the hungry, the homeless, addicted, destitute, runaway teens, victims of war, victims of disease and disaster, and so many others through Shepherd's Care Associated Charities.

Shepherd's Care is much more than simply raising funds for charity. It is a guide to assist us in living a holy Lent through understanding and practicing the cornerstones of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. As Great Lent begins please pick up a brochure and a coin box when you come to church. Put it on your dining table or in your icon corner, anywhere you will see it and be inspired to remember the needy. Throughout Lent place your offerings in the box. At the end of Great Lent simply bring the proceeds of your mite box to the church as your offering for Shepherd's Care.

This year, due to the recent tragic earthquake in Turkey and Syria, all proceeds from Shepherd's Care 2023 will be given to alleviate their suffering. If you would like to make a donation to assist those who have lost loved ones, have been injured, or had their property damaged or destroyed, you may mail a donation to the address below. The check may be made out to: "Diocese of Newton" with the memo: "Shepherd's Care Earthquake Relief." Mail to Diocese of Newton Shepherd's Care, 3 VFW Parkway, W. Roxbury, MA 02132. You may also make online donations through your parish's online portal, or at: www.melkite.org/donate. Please specify: "Earthquake relief."

Thank you and God bless you for your generosity on behalf of those less fortunate.

Weekends of March 6 and 20, 2022

Shepherd's Care Associated Charities 2022. To help those in need, the Shepherd's Care Associated Charities of the Eparchy of Newton is sponsoring this 40-day Lenten giving program to provide for the less fortunate. Local parish charities, as well as eparchial charities, international charities, and our seminarians, will benefit from your generous alms-giving during Great Lent. Program brochures and Giving (Mite) Boxes are available in the church. Please be generous with your contributions. Thank you for all you do to help the needy among us. Thank You!

Shepherd's Care Associated Charities

Shepherd's Care began in 1988 at the request of the faithful and clergy who saw a need for a united effort among all Melkite Catholic Parishes in the United States to reach out to people in need. By means of this initiative, our eparchy reaches out in love through financial assistance to people in need here in the United States and abroad. Over the years Shepherd's Care has raised more than \$250,000.

Through your love and faithful support, the diocese has been able to help orphans, the hungry, the homeless, drug addicted, the destitute, runaway teens, victims of war, victims of disease and disasters, and so many more.

Donations are distributed to local parish charities such as soup kitchens, food pantries, homeless shelters, eparchial charities, world charities, and offers tuition assistance to seminarians of the Eparchy.

But Shepherd's Care is much more than raising funds for charitable causes. More importantly, it is a guide to assist us in living a Holy Lent through understanding and practicing the Lenten cornerstones of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.



**Shepherd's Care
Associated Charities
Eparchy of Newton
3 V.F.W. Parkway
West Roxbury, MA 02132-7727**



SHEPHERD'S CARE Associated Charities Great Lent

**"There is no sin that
alms cannot cleanse.
Charity is a medicine
suitable for any wound."**

St. John Chrysostom

The Widow's Mite

Each year during the Great Fast, the Church encourages us with the example of the "widow's mite". We receive a little box — a "mite box" which we take home. This box symbolizes the offerings (alms) we give during Lent, together with our increased prayers, fasting, and abstinence.

"When He looked up, he saw some wealthy people putting their offering into the treasury, and He noticed a poor widow putting in two small coins. He said, "I tell you truly, this poor widow put in more than all the rest; for those others have all made offerings from their surplus wealth. But she, from her poverty, has offered her whole livelihood"



Our Lord, in His infinite wisdom, recognized that the widow's mite was so very valuable. The poor widow gave from her need. She gave to God everything she had.



Lenten Gift Box

Each family, indeed every person, is invited to take home a Lenten gift (mite) box. Put it on your dining table, or in your icon corner, anywhere you will see it and be inspired to remember the needy. Throughout Lent place your offerings in the box. Some people try to put in the amount they save by abstaining from certain foods. Children find it especially fun to use a coin calendar.

At the end of Great Lent bring the proceeds of your mite box to the church as your offering for Shepherd's Care. If you are presenting a check please make it payable to **SHEPHERD'S CARE ASSOCIATED CHARITIES**. You may also

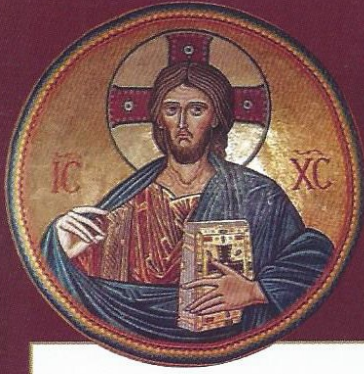
make donations by check directly to the Eparchial Office. Address is on the back. Together our eparchial family can help alleviate the sufferings of God's people.

All proceeds from Shepherd's Care Associated Charities go directly to the charities. The Bishop, together with his advisors, insures that 100% of the money is given to the needy at home and abroad.

Your tax-deductible contributions are greatly appreciated by all who will benefit from them. The Fathers of the Church encourage us to always be humbly grateful and remember those in need. In helping others, we are doing the will of God.

"The bread you do not use is the bread of the hungry. The garment in your wardrobe is the garment of the person who is naked. The money you keep locked away is the money of the poor."

St. Basil the Great



VOCATION PLAN

Christ Calls All to Serve

FEBRUARY 2023

Bishop François forms New Vocation Team

The goal is to create a “Culture of Service & Vocations” within the Melkite Catholic Church

As Bishop François Beyrouti begins his episcopal ministry, he is emphasizing the Lord’s invitation to “serve one another humbly in love” (Gal 5:13). In this spirit, one of his key priorities is to strengthen our focus on vocations throughout the Melkite Catholic Eparchy of Newton.

Thanks be to God, over the past few years, the Melkite Catholic Church in the United States has been blessed with many new vocations to the priesthood and diaconate. Looking toward the future, we can also see that many parishes have aging clergy who have been faithfully serving for so many years. Thus, there is a serious need to ensure uninterrupted pastoral care for our 50 churches and communities and to respond to the needs of our faithful who are asking us to establish new parishes.

Thus Bishop François has convened a new Vocation Team, headed by Fr. John Mefrige and composed of four other priests from each region of the eparchy. The challenge for the team is threefold.

The first task is to re-organize our efforts, both by standardizing the formation of priests and deacons, as well as establishing a clear process for men to discern God’s call.

Secondly, Bishop François’ vision is that new vocations will flow organically from active ministry in local parishes. Put simply, the men who will one day serve as priests and deacons must now be serving generously in other capacities. A campaign is planned to identify these men—both single and married—and invite them to discern a potential role as reader, subdeacon, deacon, or priest.



Finally, the Vocation Team aims to dramatically improve communications about vocations within the eparchy. For example, the Melkite Catholic community in the United States needs to see the joys of married clergy with families, as well as the blessing of men who serve celibately or enter monastic life. We have a number of digital and print projects planned for 2023 and beyond.

In summary, the Vocation Team is preparing to enter a multi-year process of organizing, inviting, and communicating a “pro-vocations” message throughout the eparchy. The overall vision is to build upon the core message that *Christ calls all to serve*—in all sorts of capacities—to make us a true *ecclesia*, a living Church. Every vocation is vital, including marriage and family, nuns, monks, and the clergy who lead our liturgical worship. ☀

INSIDE

Three Key Areas of the New Vocation Plan

1. Organization
2. Invitation
3. Communication



Organization



BEGAN NOVEMBER 2022

Vocation Team Roles

Fr. John Mefrige in San Antonio, Texas, is the director of our new Vocation Team. He is joined by representatives from various regions:

- Fr. Dimitri Saliba - Western Region
- Fr. Elias Dorham - MidAtlantic Region
- Fr. Philip Raczka - New England
- Fr. Bryan McNeil - Deacon Formation

In addition to representing a region of the eparchy, each member will also take on specific roles, including:

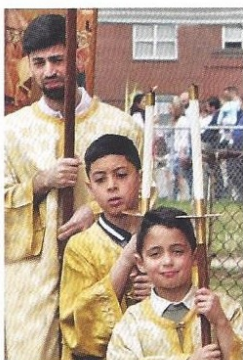
- Vocation promotion and communications
- Interviewing potential candidates
- Handling the application process
- Overseeing the formation of seminarians



SPRING 2023

Clergy & Candidate Databases

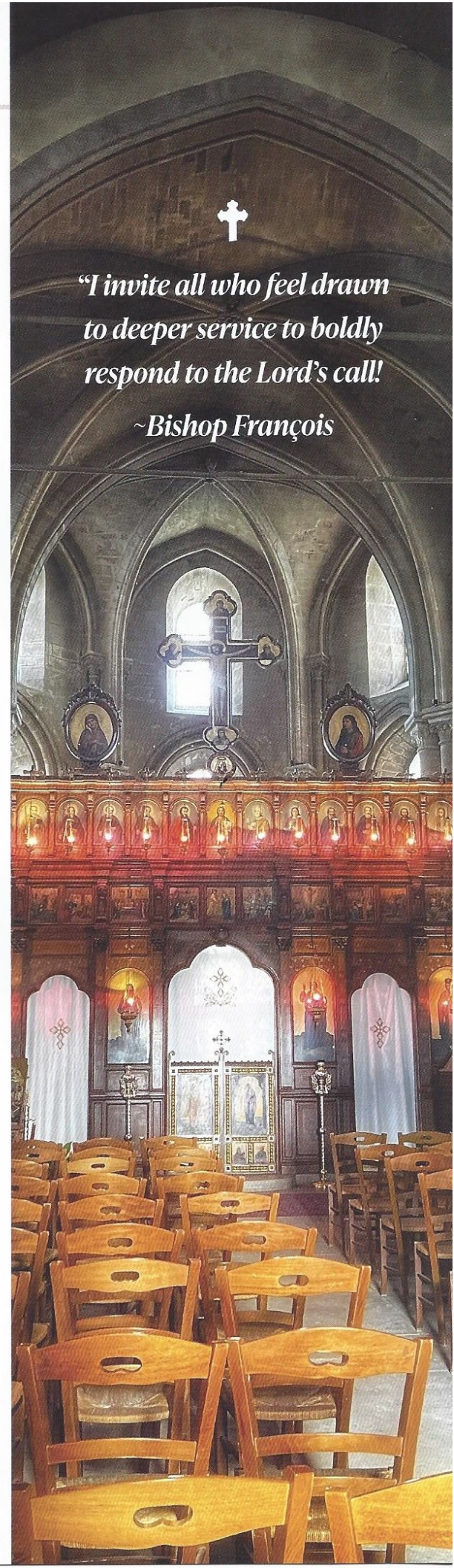
One essential task is to update the biographical information of all our clergy. This will help Bishop François to review the assignments of each deacon and priest and plan for future transitions and retirements. For example, simply knowing the birth dates of all priests allows us to project retirement dates and estimate how many new men we need in formation to serve our growing communities. Similarly, our Vocation Team is streamlining the way we keep track of prospects with a new database of candidates.



2023-2024

Standardizing the Application & Formation Process

We have had a wealth of excellent candidates, but their paths to ordination have been widely varied. Our plan is to standardize the entire process, for both priests and deacons, beginning with a new, more rigorous application process, and continuing with well-defined tracks for both married and celibate seminarians.



“I invite all who feel drawn to deeper service to boldly respond to the Lord’s call!”

~Bishop François

Invitation

Becoming Fishers of Men

A call to deeper service is always a call from Christ himself. Experience shows, however, that the call is most often mediated by parish priests. Over the next three years, the role of priests as “inviters” will be a recurring theme in our regular Clergy meetings and annual Clergy Conference. We will also be sending resources to equip priests to be mentors to men in their parishes. The goal is to encourage priests to be true “fishers of men.”



FALL 2023

Called by Name ✠

Will You Help Identify Future Clergy?

Perhaps the most exciting part of our Vocation Plan is a campaign to identify candidates for readers, subdeacons, deacons, and priests. “Called by Name” will be an eparchy-wide process in which clergy and laity can submit the names of men in our parishes who may

be called to these ministries. Importantly, candidates should be longstanding, faithful members who have demonstrated stability of life and a heart for service. As Jesus told us: “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you” (John 13:14-15).

WINTER 2023-2024

Online Discernment Meetings

Men who are submitted in the Called by Name campaign will be invited to begin the discernment process through a series of online meetings with Bishop François and the Vocation Team. The purpose is to open dialogue and offer guidance for listening to God’s call.

SPRING 2024

Discernment Retreat

Those who have faithfully participated in the online meetings will be invited to an in-person Discernment Retreat. This is an opportunity for talks, personal prayer, and Liturgical Prayer. The goal is that after the retreat, we will have a good sense of the next cohort of men who will advance into formation, either toward diaconate or priesthood.



Communication



SPRING AND FALL, 2023-2024

Vocations Bulletin

In the coming months, keep your eyes open for our Vocations Bulletin! It will be similar in format to this Vocation Plan and will include articles and photos highlighting our new seminarians, readers, subdeacons, deacons, priests, monks, and nuns. We will also focus on their families who nourish them and also highlight couples who are in ministry together. The overall goal is to show that living out one's baptism is the path to holiness—and that responding to God's call begins with faithful service and an open heart.

APRIL AND NOVEMBER, 2023-2024

Bi-annual Vocation Days

Twice a year, in Spring and Fall, the Vocations Team will prepare resources for parishes to place special emphasis on vocations, by preaching as well as in children's catechesis and youth ministry. This will align with the readings and Feast days in our Melkite Catholic liturgical calendar.

New Online Presence for Vocations

We will include robust vocation pages on the Melkite Catholic Eparchy of Newton's website, Melkite.org. This will refresh our online presence, and provide a platform for our Called by Name program and other Vocation resources.

Other Communication Efforts

In Year Two of our Vocation Plan, we would like to re-energize our social media presence, specifically with a series of videos on priests, deacons, and seminarians. We will also work on an e-newsletter with tips and encouragement for young people to live out their baptism and discern their vocations.



All Have a Role to Play

The Vocation Plan is not just the work of the Vocation Team. It requires the enthusiastic support of clergy, educators, and those who work with youth. Above all, it requires families who make their home a true domestic church. All are encouraged to find some role to play. Keep in mind that our Melkite Catholic Eparchy of Newton's Vocation Plan is open to your feedback and creativity. Feel free to be creative in your parish and to share with us your ideas and most importantly begin to develop a culture of ministry that encourages Vocations in your family and parish. It is never too early to reply personally or to keep your eyes open to send us names of those you feel should be encouraged to serve in this way. 🌟

MELKITE CATHOLIC  EPARCHY OF NEWTON

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BYZANTINE KIDS MAGAZINE!

BYZ*KIDS

March 2023
MATRIMONY
AND
HOLY ORDERS



Archpriest Nicolai
and Blessed Matushka
Olga Michael of Alaska



St. Anastasia
the Ascetic



Wedding
Traditions



Sts. Priscilla
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

As of 12/30/2022



St. Basil the Great Melkite Greek Catholic Church

15 Skyview Drive Lincoln, RI 02865

Sharing our Faith
SECURING OUR FUTURE



Campaign Facts:



Campaign Goal: \$1,000,000



Outstanding Goal: \$340,000



Contribution Ranges: \$20 to \$50,100

Parish Community Facts:



Total Registered Families: 415



Active Families: 250



% of Active Families Participation: 51%

"It's not about how much we give, but how much love we put into giving"
-Mother Teresa

Current & Future Projects:



Church Roof Repair: Project completed, estimated cost of \$400,000...final cost \$321,000.



Rectory Roof Repair: Proposals received, estimated cost \$18,000, pending review.



Church Window Repairs: Proposals received, estimated cost \$9,000, pending review.



HVAC & Boiler Replacement: Proposals received, estimated cost \$196,000.



Flooring Upgrades: Proposal received, estimated cost \$50,000 (carpeting for Church, Cultural Center, office & hallway), pending review.



Parking Lot Sealing: Project complete at both Rectory & Church...final cost \$14,000.



Interior Repairs, Expand Storage & Vent Cleaning: Partial proposals received. Vent cleaning estimated cost \$9,000.



Exterior/Masonry /Walkway Repairs: Awaiting proposals.



Security Cameras/Door Upgrades: Camera system complete, final cost \$10,500. Door proposal received, pending review.

Important Highlights

- We are extremely grateful to all of those who have contributed and supported the campaign thus far.
- The finance committee has begun strategy planning on maximizing the return of current financial reserves for future projects. God willing, this will prevent the need for another capital campaign and *allow for a more spiritual focus!*
- As reflected above, donations have varied in amounts, we do not expect everyone to support with the same amount...*However, we do pray that everyone will support this important campaign!*
- This is an open and transparent campaign, if you have any questions, suggestion, or concerns Fr. Ephrem or any of the committee members would be more than happy review/discuss during coffee hour or feel free to call them at the numbers listed below.



For more information contact any of the committee members, [click here](#), or scan this code with your Smartphone Camera!

Jeff Boudjouk: 401-441-2737
Ann Sabbagh: 508-243-1190
Kyle Mardo: 401-578-5369

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