



January 2nd, 2022

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

Tuesday through Friday at 9:00 AM

Sunday

English 9:00 AM
Arabic 11:15 AM

Religious Education

Sunday 10:00 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 Before the Theophany

الاحد الذي قبل عيد الظهور

Troparion of the Resurrection (7th tone)

Through your Cross You destroyed death, You opened Paradise to the thief, and turned into joy the mourning of the ointment bearing women, and You ordered your Apostles to proclaim that You rose, O Christ God, Bestowing great mercy upon the world.

Troparion of the Paramony

After Elias had gone up to heaven, Eliseus threw his mantle in the Jordan River which separated, opening a way, a dry path between two walls of water where he could pass: a true symbol of our baptism by which we pass through this passing life. Christ has been at the Jordan River to sanctify the waters.

Troparion of St Basil :

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.

Kondakion of the Paramony

Today the Lord has been seen in the waters of the Jordan River. He has cried out to John, saying; "Be not dismayed at having to baptize Me, for I have indeed come to save Adam, the first man to have been created."

نشيد القيامة بالحن السابع

لاشيت بصليبك الموت، وفتحت للصي الفردوس، وحولت نوح حاملات الطيب الى فرح، وأمرت رسلك أن يكرزوا مبشرين بأنك قد قممت، أيها المسيح الإله، مانحاً العالم عظيم الرحمة.

النشيد لبارامون العيد بالحن الرابع

ان نهر الاردن قد تراجع يوماً براءه أليشع، بعد أن ارتفع ايليا. وانفلقت المياه الى هنا وهناك، وصار له الرطب طريقاً يابساً. فكان ذلك حقاً رمزاً للمعمودية التي نعبّر بها سبيل العُمر الزائل. المسيح ظهر في الاردن ليقدس المياه.

طروبارية القديس باسيليوس

لقد ذاع منطلقك في كل الأرض. فانها قد قبلت كلامك، الذي به بينت العقائد بياناً إلهياً، وأوضحت طبيعة الكائنات، ونظمت أخلاق البشر. فيا أيها الأب البار ذو الكهنوت الملوكي، إبتهل إلى المسيح الإله في خلاص نفوسنا.

قنداق للتقدمة على الحن الرابع

اليوم وقف الرب في مجاري الأردن، وهتف بيوحنا: لا تخف أن تعمدي. فاني اتيت لأخلص آدم أول من جُبل





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>



Epistle 2 TIM 4:5-8 Sunday before Theophany

Prokimenon (Tone 6)

O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.

Stichon: To you, O Lord, I have called: O my Rock, be not deaf to me!

READING from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy: 4: 5 -8

My son Timothy be watchful in all things, bear with tribulation patiently, work as a preacher of the Good News, fulfill your ministry. As for me, I am already being poured out in sacrifice, and the time of my deliverance is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have completed the course, I have kept the faith. For the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the just Judge, will give to me on that day: yet not to me only, but also to those who love his coming.

Alleluia (Tone 4)

May God have mercy on us and bless us.

Stichon: May he let his face shine upon us and have mercy on us.

Gospel MK 1:1-8,

Gospel: Sunday before Theophany, Mark 1:1-8 (The Preaching of John the Baptist)

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophets, "Behold, I send my messenger before you, who shall prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the desert, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, make straight his paths,'" there came John in the desert, baptizing and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea went out to him, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and all were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. And John was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "One mightier than I is coming after me, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."



مقدمة الرسالة

خلص يا رب شعبك، وبارك ميراثك
 اليك يا رب أصرخ، إلهي لا تنصامم عني

الرسالة (2 تيموثاوس 4: 5-8)

يا ولدي تيموثاوس، تيقظ في كل شيء، احتمل المشقات، اعمل عمل المُبَشِّر، أوف خدمتك. لأنني الآن أراق سكباً، ووقت انحلال قد حضر. قد جاهدت الجهاد الحسن، أتممت سعيي، حفظت الايمان. انما يبقى الكيل البر المحفوظ لي الذي سيجزي بي به في ذلك اليوم الرب الديان العادل، لا أي شيء فقط بل جميع الذين يحبون ظهوره أيضاً.

هللوا

ليراف الله بنا ويباركنا

ليضيء بوجهه علينا ويرحمنا

الانجيل (مرقس 1: 8-1)

بدء انجيل يسوع المسيح ابن الله، كما هو مكتوب في الانبياء: هاأنا أرسل ملاكي امام وجهك يهيئ طريقك قدامك. صوت صارخ في البرية: أعدوا طريق الرب، واجعلوا سبله قويمه. كان يوحنا يعمد في البرية ويكرز بمعمودية التوبة لغفران الخطايا. وكان يخرج اليه كل أهل بلاد اليهودية وجميع سكان اورشليم، فيعتمدون منه جميعهم في نهر الاردن معترفين بخطاياهم. وكان لباس يوحنا من وبر الابل، وعلى حقويه منطقة من جلد، وكان طعامه الجراد وعسل البر، وكان يكرز قائلاً: انه يأتي بعدي من هو اقوى مني، وانا لست باهل ان انحني وأحل سير حذائه. انا عمدتكم بالماء، واما هو فسيعمدكم بالروح القدس.



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.



Divine Liturgy Intentions

TODAY, JANUARY 2, 2022: SUNDAY BEFORE THE THEOPHANY. COMMEMORATION OF OUR FATHER AMONG THE SAINTS, SILVESTER, POPE OF ROME.

9:00 a.m. DIVINE LITURGY:

- + **REV. ARCHDEACON GEORGE YANY & ANGELA MAZZONE** by M/M Samir Chouha.
- + **MARY KUFFREY BALDO** by George & Jeanne Harraka.
- + **FREDERICK KOUSSA** by Christine Durnin.
- + **MARGARET SABBAGH** by Margaret Domaney.
- + **LOUIS AGAG** by Stephen & Maryjoan Walsh.
- + **JULIA & FRED KISHFY** by Stephen & Maryjoan Walsh.
- + **ELIAS J. KISHFY** by Stephen & Maryjoan Walsh.
- + **LILLIAN NASSANEY** by Ms. Olga Caswell.
- + **MARY TAHAN** by Delores & Loriann Agag.

11:15 a.m. DIVINE LITURGY:

- + **GEORGETTE A. SAGGAL** by Nabil & Gloria Baalbaki.
- + **JEANNETTE BEATON** by Mrs. Sounia Badro.
- + **JOSEPH WARD (Valencia, Venezuela)** by M/M Albert Kishfy & Family.
- + **VICTORIA PROCHNIAK** by Riad & Souhair Khoury.
- + **LOUIS P. KISHFY** by James & Nicole Procter & Family.
- + **YUSUF & BLANCHE MUSSALLI** by Dr. Nabil & Nancy Toubia.
- + **GEORGEANNA DECKEY** by the Deckey & Mussalli Family.
- + **GEORGE DECKEY** by Gloria Deckey & Family.
- + **YVONNE HAGGAR COLABELLA** by Tony & Myrna Brahimsha.





SACRIFICIAL GIVING: December 26, 2021: Budgets: \$3,029.00: (Envelopes: \$2,969.00, Loose: \$60.00); Stipends: \$225.00 Candles: \$143.75; Addit'l Fuel: \$23.00; Building Fund: \$125.00; Melkite Support: \$307.00; Initial Offerings: \$20.00; Christmas Offerings: \$2,455.00; Donations from New Year's Eve Party Cancellation: \$3,600.00.

Please be advised that the weekly bulletin has not been printed due to the COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions, but presently, information is available online, church Facebook page and on YouTube.

On New Year's Eve, December 31st, there will be a special collection taken up for your **INITIAL OFFERINGS**. Your offering will help us defray the cost of the envelope system which is so vital in our parish support. **MAKE A GOOD BEGINNING.** Often the strength of our first effort indicates the manner in which we maintain our responsibilities.

TODAY, SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 2022, there will be a special collection taken up for your **FUEL OFFERINGS**. Help defray the cost of heating the Church and rectory, as prices are escalating rapidly. We must remember that utilities are more than doubled in our new complex. Your generosity will be greatly appreciated.

NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 2022, there will be a special collection taken up for the **UPKEEP, MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENT OF THE CEMETERY**. Please contribute generously for the peaceful repose of our loved ones who have gone before us to eternal life in the Hope of the Resurrection.

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.

Canon Law prohibits accepting stipends or offerings for Liturgies more than one year in advance (rolling calendar) Canon 953. The time within which Liturgies must be celebrated (1 year) begins the day the intention is received. (Canon 955 #2). Formerly under the jurisdiction of the local Latin Ordinaries before the Exarchate was established under the leadership of the late Bishop Justin Najmy of this Parish, all Melkites have been subject to the latter since its erection in 1966. The Constitution of the Melkite Eparchy which is now a sole Diocese since 1976 still acknowledges this definitive protocol. Our parishes follow local discipline in the various customs e.g. every day clergy attire, stipends (Liturgy Offerings), etc. except in Liturgy and Ritual. Our relationship with the local Latin Dioceses and Latin pastors must be permeated with a spirit of love and friendship and cooperation.

All Liturgy offerings received from Funerals, which exceed more than one year, have had the maximum and minimum celebrations. Surplus ones have been deposited in the Building Fund and placed on the altar and remembered similarly to the customs of spiritual bouquets, perpetual Mass enrollments, & memorial cards, as in chapels, shrines, & monasteries. May the memories of our beloved deceased rest in peace & be eternal. Many thanks for your understanding and undivided attention in regard to these guidelines and restrictions.

Presently effective, the schedule of offerings in parishes is now: Liturgies: \$25.00; Funerals: \$300.00; Weddings: \$300.00; Baptisms: \$100.00.

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
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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
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FATHER DAN UPDATE: Dear loved ones, family and friends: Personally, I have much to be thankful for this past year. Eight months after my cancer operation, there is no sign of a return of sarcoma. The hole left by the removal of the tumor and calf muscle is almost closed. And I am now doing ministry here at our Tewksbury residence and in local parishes. I have been able to accept more responsibilities within the community, including driving my brothers to local appointments and solving computer and loud-speaker problems. I have been giving monthly conferences and have been asked if I could start up again weekly talks as I did before going to White Earth. Until the provincial gives me an assignment, I shall be serving here. I may not know my future, but I do know God is with us. I love you all and keep you present in my prayers morning, and night. And, even if Covid keeps getting in the way of free travel, you are always with me. May your Christmas not only be merry, but blessed, full of Christ Child's graces, and the New Year under the promised protection of our Blessed Mother. - *Father Dan.*

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: All the faithful who have recently changed their address or who are planning to do so, please remember to inform the church office at (401) 722-1345. Please also be sure to update new telephone numbers because **there is a cost that the Church has to absorb which adds up slowly but surely.**

BLESS GOD WITH THE GIFTS WITH WHICH HE HAS BLESSED YOU! Those parishioners, who are not worshipping here each week or do not support their Parish on a regular and consistent basis, are really hurting their Parish physically, spiritually, socially, and financially.

PARISHIONERS who miss Sunday attendance at Liturgy for several weeks are missed and unfortunately hurt themselves and the parish on many levels. Welcome Back to our parishioners who have been away. Your parish hopes that you will remember your responsibilities.

2022 ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDARS are available – free for the taking – at the entrance 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.

Our thoughts and prayers are directed to our elderly and sick parishioners and friends in this joyous season. We ask the Emmanuel to strengthen your faith so that you may accept His will, and may He bring you peace, joy, and health for the coming New Year.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK: We wish to thank all our good parishioners and friends for their beautiful Christmas Cards, wishes, gifts, and offerings to the Church. We also take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the loyal and generous cooperation you have shown us throughout the whole year. May our Divine Savior, the Prince of Peace, bring you all the joys of this holy season, and bless you with health and prosperity in the coming New Year 2022. And may this New Year 2022 be the best you have ever known your joy deeper, your spiritual awareness keener, and your satisfaction more abundant.

Father Ephrem, Father Joe, Deacon Edmond, Deacon Gilbert

A VOCATION VIEW: The angels announced tidings of great joy for all people. How is Jesus born in you this day?

Celebrate the presence of Emmanuel in a special way. If you think God is calling you to be a priest, deacon, religious or monk, call the vocation director of our Diocese, Archimandrite John Azar at (404) 373-9522.

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A SPECIAL THANK YOU to those who voluntarily welcome visitors to our church by inviting them to the Cultural Center and/or sitting with them during Coffee Hour or inviting them to visit again. You are good apostles of & for our church! If God willing, our Parish grows, it will be because of these actions.

May we all remember to be thankful for everything that we have and be always ready to display that gratitude honestly & fairly!

THE BISHOP'S APPEAL: As we travel with the Virgin to Bethlehem where she will give birth to the greatest gift in human history – God's Only- Begotten Son – let us remember our Melkite Church by which Christ comes to us. **Please consider giving an end -of- year, tax-deductible gift to the Melkite Church** in America to support its vital mission. Help produce **SOPHIA** magazine, assist in the spiritual renewal of our parishes, support the vocation, recruitment, and the training of seminarians, assist our missions, and give support to our elderly priests. Please give generously: YOUR MELKITE CHURCH NEEDS YOU!

REMEMBER THE MELKITE CHURCH IN YOUR WILL: Give a lasting gift to help ensure that our Melkite heritage continues to flourish for future generations. Simply add the following statement to your last will and testament: ***I hereby bequeath to the Melkite Eparchy of Newton the following sum: \$_____.*** Contact Bishop Nicholas personally to inform him of your generous bequest: 3 VFW Parkway, West Roxbury, MA 02132.

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A PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR!



Dear God,

Thank you that you make all things new. Thank you for all that you've allowed into our lives this past year, the good along with the hard things, which have reminded us how much we need you and rely on your presence filling us every single day.

We pray for your Spirit to lead us each step of this New Year. We ask that you will guide our decisions and turn our hearts to deeply desire you above all else. We ask that you will open doors needing to be opened and close the ones needing to be shut tight. We ask that you would help us release our grip on the things to which you've said "no," "not yet," or "wait." We ask for help to pursue you first, above every dream and desire you've put within our hearts.

We ask for your wisdom, for your strength and power to be constantly present within us. We pray you would make us strong and courageous for the road ahead. Give us ability beyond what we feel able, let your gifts flow freely through us, so that you would be honored by our lives, and others would be drawn to you.

We pray that you'd keep us far from the snares and traps of temptations. That you would whisper in our ear when we need to run, and whisper in our heart when we need to stand our ground.

We pray for your protection over our families and friends. We ask for your hand to cover us and keep us distanced from the evil intent of the enemy; that you would be a barrier to surround us, that we'd be safe in your hands. We pray that you would give us discernment and insight beyond our years, to understand your will, hear your voice, and know your ways.

We ask that you would keep our footsteps firm, on solid ground, helping us to be consistent and faithful. Give us supernatural endurance to stay the course, not swerving to the right or to the left, or being too easily distracted by other things that would seek to call us away from a close walk with you.

Forgive us for the times we have worked so hard to be self-sufficient, forgetting our need for you, living independent of your spirit. Forgive us for letting fear and worry control our minds, and for allowing pride and selfishness wreak havoc over our lives. Forgive us for not following your ways and for living distant from your presence. We confess our need for you...fresh...new...again. We ask that you make all things new, in our hearts, in our minds, in our lives, for this coming year. We pray for your refreshing over us.

Keep your words of truth planted firm within us, help us to keep focused on what is pure and right, give us the power to be obedient to your word. And when the enemy reminds us where we have been, hissing his lies and attacks our way, we trust that your voice speaks louder and stronger, as you remind us we are safe with you and your purposes and plans will not fail. We ask that you will be our defense and rear guard, keeping our way clear, removing the obstacles, and covering the pitfalls. Lord, lead us on your level ground.

We ask that you would provide for our needs, we ask for your grace and favor. We pray for your blessings to cover us, we pray that you would help us to prosper and make every plan that you have birthed in our heart to succeed. We pray that others would take notice of your goodness and could not help but to say, "These are the ones that the Lord has blessed."

Help us to be known as great givers, help us to be generous and kind, help us to look to the needs of others and not be consumed by only our own. May we be lovers of truth, may the fruits of your spirit be evident in our lives - your love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Shine your light in us, through us, over us. May we make a difference in this world, for your glory and purposes. Set your way before us. May all your plans succeed. We may reflect your peace and hope to a world that so desperately needs your presence and healing.

To you be glory and honor, in this New Year, and forever. In Jesus' name, Amen.

صلاة شكر وتسييح في نهاية السنة



يا رب يسوع المسيح ان سمحت لنا ان ندخل في هذه السنة الجديدة،
نطلب منك يا رب ان تجعلها سنة قداسة ونعمة وفرح وسلام ونمو في حياتنا الشخصية والعائلية والكنسية .
اعطنا يا رب يسوع المسيح تغيير حقيقي، توبة حقيقية، التزام صادق بك وارتباط وثيق بشخصك،
ارفعنا يا رب من كل ضعف، حررنا من كل عبودية، قدسنا من كل خطية،
املاً حياتنا من كل معونة إلهية ونعمة مخلصّة واعطينا الشبع الحقيقي بك يا رب لانك بالحقيقة الخبز الحي،
لا تسمح يا رب بأن نعود الى خربوب الخنازير، بل اعطنا ان نشبع بخبز الحياة ...
لا تسمح يا رب ان نمضي الى كورة بعيدة حتى في داخل القلب
اذ نقفني في داخلنا ميول باطلة ومحبة ناقصة وخطايا محددة ...
اعطنا يا رب في هذه السنة الجديدة عودة بكل القلب بكل الصدق الى شخصك المحب الحاني وقلبك الواسع الكبير .
يا رب ان عاملتنا بعدلك لا نجد امامك نعمة ولن يكون لنا خلاص ،
لكن عاملنا برحمتك يا رب اذ نصرخ اليك في كل مرة ونقول "كرحمتك يا رب وليس كخطايانا".
بارك عملك في الكنيسة يا رب ،اعط معونة خاصة لنا،
اعطنا ان نشعر بك وانت تبارك العمل وتقّدر الكيان وتثمر في الحياة
وتجعل الخدمة مزدهرة تصل الى كل بيت والى كل نفس وكل زوايا الحياة ..
يا ربنا اعطنا ان تثبت فيك وتثبت فينا، اعطنا ان نكرس لك هذه السنة وكل سنوات العمر،
اعطنا يا رب ان نكون لك مقدسين بالتمام وان نكون هيكل لروحك القدوس وروحك يسكن فينا.
لا تعاملنا حسب تقصيراتنا في هذا العام ، لكن عاملنا على عهود نريد ان نقدّمها لك ..
لكن اسندنا حتى نستطيع ان ننقذها لاننا بدونك لا نستطيع ان نعمل شيء ..
بكل بركة باركنا وقدسنا واملائنا من سلامك .
اجعل السنة الجديدة سنة سلام على الكنيسة وسلام على بلادنا وسلام في العالم كله...
انت يا رب ملك السلام، رئيس السلام .. اجعل يا رب هذه السنة الجديدة سنة خالية من التردد،
احفظ ولادك داخل قلبك وداخل بيتك .. باركنا يا رب بشفاعتك امك العذراء وجميع القديسين...امين

John the Baptist (Prepare the way for the Lord!)



There is an important principal that we can learn from the story of John the Baptist. Even though our Bible seems to have little to say about John, he conveys to us a simple but important message that still applies today about the repentance of sins.

How did John 'prepare the way'?

We are clearly told that John was sent to 'prepare the way' for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 1:2-3), but what exactly did he do in preparing the way? In Luke 3:3-4, we are told, "And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Also in Matthew 3:1-3, "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

So how did the people cooperate with John in preparing the way for Jesus? They confessed their sins and were baptized as a sign that they have turned from their sins, as Matthew 3:6 tells us, "And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."

What does it mean to 'prepare the way'? It means to create a favorable environment or to make it easy for one to come to you and operate in your life. Let's take a look at Luke 3:4-5, "As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth." Apparently, John the baptist was creating a favorable environment and making it easy for Jesus to enter into and operate in the lives of the people.

The same is true on the other side of the coin. Notice how John the baptist prepared the way for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ through preaching repentance and baptism for the remission of sins. He created a favorable environment for Jesus to enter and operate in. The same principal is true on the other side of the coin, where people get involved in deep sins in order to gain spirit guides, etc. When people get involved in heavy Satanism, they can commit gross sins such as bestiality (sex with animals) in order to gain spirit guides or other demonic powers. Such sins defiles a person and creates a 'favorable environment' for the spirits to dwell and operate. Sin 'prepares the way' for the devil and his demons, while repentance and remission of sins prepares the way for the Lord!

How does this apply to us today?

I believe the Lord gave me a beautiful revelation about how we can 'prepare the way' for the Lord in our own lives. John the baptist was

said to be sent fourth to prepare the way for Jesus, but what exactly did he do? He preached the repentance of sins and baptized people for the remissions of their sins. He was getting people ready for Jesus' arrival by getting them to turn from their sins and repent! For as Hebrews 12:14 tells us, "...holiness, without which no man

shall see the Lord."

I believe a valuable principal we can to learn from this story is that if there are unconfessed sins in our lives, they can hinder us from 'seeing the Lord'. We need to repent of our sins and turn from them and receive forgiveness (1 John 1:9). By repentance of our sins, we 'prepare the way' for Jesus to operate in our lives!

1 John tells us that if we confess our sins, we not only receive forgiveness for them (1 John 1:9), but they are washed and cleansed from us by the blood of the Lamb (1 John 1:7). They are removed as far from the east to the west (Psalms 103:12)! If we fail to acknowledge our sins, however, Proverbs 28:13 tells us that we will not prosper, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

Simply acknowledging our sins is not enough, as John clearly rebuked the Pharisees for not living upto their confessions in Matthew 3:7-8, "But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to be baptized, he denounced them. 'You brood of snakes!' he exclaimed. 'Who warned you to flee God's coming judgment? Prove by the way you live that you have really turned from your sins and turned to God.'" (NLT) Proverbs 28:13 also makes it clear that we are to turn from our sins, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

The teaching and practicing of water baptism and repentance never seized when Jesus was glorified. After Jesus rose again, He appeared to His disciples and gave them the great commission to go fourth and preach the gospel to every creature (race, nation, etc.) and baptize them (Matthew 28:19). Water baptism and repentance was also preached and practiced in the early church as well, as we can see in Acts 2:38, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Conclusion

The Bible doesn't necessarily have a lot to say about John, but we do know this, he was sent fourth to prepare the way, and he did that by preaching the repentance and remission of the people's sins. I believe that by confessing and turning from our sins, we can prepare the way for the Lord to move and operate in our lives as well.

Following Jesus Kids bulletin



John the Baptist

Even before John was a baby, his parents knew God had a special plan for him. Zacharias and Elizabeth were too old to have a baby. His birth was a miracle. He was Jesus's cousin.

Zacharias and Elizabeth were good parents and taught John what it meant to obey God.

They thought, when he was old enough, John would also become a priest.

1



But God had a special mission for John. Instead of working at the temple as a priest, he moved to the desert.

He wore clothes made from camel's hair. He ate locusts and wild honey (Matthew 3:4).

He began to preach an important message.

2



John taught people they needed to repent.

Many people came to listen to him.

Some people thought he was crazy. Some religious people told him off.

But others believed his message and repented of their sins.

They said sorry for the bad things they have done and began to obey God.

3



John baptised them in the Jordan River.

It was a way to show they really meant what they said.

It was like washing the bad things away.

Many people repented of their sins and were baptised by John.

John was preparing the way for Jesus.

4

LITURGY OR MASS INTENTIONS



Divine Liturgy intentions can be scheduled for those who have died, and on the occasion of a birthday, wedding anniversary, for healing for the conversion of sinners, for the grace to face the challenges in life, for the success in a new job, for those serving in the church and country in different levels, for good weather, bountiful harvest, for world peace, in thanksgiving for the blessings received, etc. You can find so many reasons to think about a Mass offering. We offer the Mass for a specific intention because we believe in the immense spiritual value of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The custom of giving offering to have Liturgies said for specific intentions is a laudable one and should be maintained as much as possible. Church teaching and Canon Law (nos. 942-958) provide important guidelines on how to preserve the dignity and appreciation of this practice. Overall, it should be well noted that Liturgy offerings are never to be viewed as a means of parish fundraising.

COMMEMORATIONS OF THE DEAD: The Apostolic Constitutions refer to the repetition of the Mass on the third, ninth and fortieth days: "Let the third day be observed in remembrance of the dead with psalms, lessons, and prayers, because Christ rose from the dead on the third day. Let the ninth day be observed in remembrance both of the living and the dead, and also the fortieth day, in accordance with mourning customs of the Israelites at the time of Moses' death. Finally, let the anniversary day be observed in memory of the dead."

In contemporary Byzantine practice, the dead are commemorated on the ninth and fortieth days and on the anniversary of their departure from this world.

Formerly under the jurisdiction of the local Latin Ordinaries before the Exarchate was established under the leadership of the late Bishop Justin Najmy of this Parish, all Melkites have been subject to the latter since its erection in 1966. The Constitution of the Melkite Eparchy which is now a sole Diocese since 1976 still acknowledges this definitive protocol. Our parishes follow local discipline in the various customs e.g., clergy attire, stipends (Mass Offerings), etc. except in Liturgy and Ritual. Our relationship with the local Latin Dioceses and Latin pastors must be permeated with a spirit of love and friendship and cooperation.

Effective January 1, 2008, which by-passed us, the schedule of offerings for Masses in parishes is now \$25.00; Funerals: \$300.00; Weddings: \$300.00.

Canon Law prohibits accepting stipends or offerings for Masses more than one year in advance (rolling calendar) Canon 953. The time within which Masses must be celebrated (1 year) begins the day the intention is received (Canon 955 #2.)

May the memories of our beloved deceased be eternal and many thanks for your understanding and undivided attention in regard to these guidelines and restrictions.

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2 COR 9:7

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