

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

MELKITE GREEK-CATHOLIC CHURCH

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PRAYER INTENTIONS

P. H. S.: Rev. Dn. Jos. Daratony. Mich. Abda. Marie Barron. Nikki Boudreaux. George Bales Sr. Lucille Bales. Jayne Buckley. Chris Carey. Maryann Nappi Donahue. Carol Downer. Dav. Fairclough, Sr. Rob. Fairclough, Sr. Sara Gomez. Niko Mayashairo. Mary McNeilly. Jos. Ed. Bartnicki. Sue Solsman. Sus. Vieselmeyer. Dean & Sherry Yockey. **MEMORY ETERNAL:** ✱Rev. Char. Aboody. ✱Rev. Mich. Jolly. ✱Rev. Jos. Francavilla. ✱Rev. Theo. Leonarczyk. ✱Rev. Frank Milienewicz ✱Dn. John Karam. ✱Marie Abda. ✱Charl. & James Abda. ✱Marie Abda. ✱Nancy Abda. ✱Janice Assaf. ✱Thalia Assaf. ✱Joe Barron. ✱Paul & Mary Ann Bauman. ✱A.J. Bolus. ✱Veronica Bolus. ✱Jos. Bolus. ✱Gary Bolus. ✱Nich. Cianci. ✱Patricia Cimakosky. ✱Ann & John Coury. ✱Mary Sue Betress. ✱Cecilia Davidson. ✱Margt. Dillenburg. ✱Eric Jolly. ✱Jos. King. ✱Blakely Landell. ✱Elaine Manuele. ✱Frank Milewski, Sr. ✱Frank Milewski, Jr. ✱Mary L. Mooty. ✱Karen Murray. ✱Marie Patchoski. ✱Anth. Simon. ✱Bill Simon. ✱Char. Simon. ✱Ruth Sirgany. ✱Mary A. Walsh. ✱Gen. Zaydon.

CLERGY:

Rev. Christopher Manuele, Presbyter

DIVINE SERVICES:

Tuesday :

Compline0:00 P.M

Saturday:

Great Vespers: 3:15 P.M

Sunday:

Orthros 9:00 A.M.

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 A.M.

Holy Days:

Eve: Great Vespers: 5:30 P.M.

Day: Divine Liturgy ... 5:30 P.M

HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION:

Before Vespers at 3:00 P.M.; following any service; or by appointment.

HOLY ANOINTING OF THE SICK:

Following services /call the Rectory.

HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING:

Call rectory at earliest convenience.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR:

Report Sexual Abuse: 1.800.479.5910

THOMAS SUNDAY



Icon of Saint Thomas and the Lord

DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

07 APRIL 2024 ♦ TONE 01 EOTHINON 01 † FIRST SUNDAY AFTER HOLY PASCHA / THOMAS SUNDAY

EVLOGITARIA OF RESURRECTION:

ANTIPHNS:

FIRST:

SECOND:

THIRD:

ENTRANCE HYMN:

APOLYTIKIA:

KONDAKION: Pascha

INSTEAD OF THE TRISAGION:

PROKIMENON:

EPISTLE:

ALLELUIA:

GOSPEL:

HIRMOS:

KINONKON :

POST-COMMUNION HYMN:

INSTEAD OF ‘BLESSED BE THE NAME ...’:

CONCLUSION:

Handout

Liturgy Book p. 29

Liturgy Book p. 32

Liturgy Book p. 38

Liturgy Book p. 180

Liturgy Book p. 38

Handout

Liturgy Book p. 181

Liturgy Book p. 51

Liturgy Book p. 54

Acts of the Apostles 5:10-20

St. John 20:19-31

Handout / Liturgy Book p. 182

Handout

Liturgy Book p. 180

Liturgy Book p. 180

Liturgy Book p. 184

In the assemblies bless God, the Lord, from Israel’s wellsprings.

All of you who have been baptized...

Come, let us rejoice in the Lord, let us sing gladly to God our Savior!
For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

All the celebrations of the mysteries of heaven take on a special quality of joy and beauty in which one longs to participate. No one is merely a spectator or a pupil: every one is engaged in an action. Everyone is in readiness, calling on and waiting for the coming of tile Lord, who is coming, yet always present. They gather to receive the saving power of God and to rejoice in His goodness and glory

In these public functions there is constant motion and personal participation. Every act, ges-
ture and movement of the body has its meaning. People sway with their bodies, move their hands,
raise and lower their eyes, bow their heads. Their voices rise and fall in heartfelt supplication. Evey-
ry person performing a bodily gesture in the celebration points to a spiritual reality and acclaims it.

People in prayer see the saints around them, wrapped in their icons with a mantle of eterni-
ty; candles flickering in a thousand hues of light; incense whirling in a warm atmosphere; music
swelling from every corner of the assembled congregation; vestments of multicolors and designs
which sway and shine. The deacons move around between the people and the celebrant. In the mid-
dle of the sanctuary stands the Bishop, image of Christ, presiding over the celebration.

The priests do not stay at the altar. They and their retinue of assistants come out of the sanc-
tuary and walk in the midst of the congregation: first, perhaps, to incense, then to carry the Gospel
book, finally to transfer the oblations or to receive them in a solemn procession, where angels min-
gle with us to carry the King of all and welcome His coming among them. They go around the
church to sprinkle the people with perfume, to shower the congregation now with flowers, now
with a smile, and yet another time with encouragement and a blessing.

It is not possible to understand Eastern Christianity by only reading or talking about it. It is
necessary to experience its life, its actuality, by being present at its celebrations. The organic and
completely self-evident center of Eastern Christianity is in its celebrations. “Come and see!”

The Holy Place

“I shall enter into Your dwelling place; before Your holy temple I shall bow in fear of
You.” (Psalm 5:7)

The sanctuary and the altar have been, throughout the spiritual development of the Church,
gradually hidden and separated not by an ecclesiastical, bureaucratic mandate but by the Christian
sense of the sacred, by a real sense of the awesomeness of the mystery of God. St. John Chrysostom
and all the Fathers constantly call the altar the “terrifying table”, and the mystery of the altar
“terrifying mysteries,” “the terrifying sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ to which we have to
approach with fear and trembling.” This is sacred terror and not fear of the unknown. It is a mystic
trembling in the presence of heaven: “Take off your shoes,” said God, “for the place where you
stand is holy” (cf Exodus 3:5).

The more secularized we become, the more our vision of the sacred and the holy becomes
blurry, and even blinded. The closing of doors and curtains is not setting apart the clergy as if in a
special class, shutting off the People of God from participation. It is rather a forceful revelation that
there is a mystery, and that we cannot see or experience this mystery by physical contact. No hu-
man eyes or physical sight can penetrate or comprehend it. Only love and the surge of the soul on
the wings of faith can meet the Lord and God of all.

‘The sticharion of the priest is fashioned after the robe of Aaron, the one going all the way
down to his feet (Exodus 28:33).

‘Moreover it has the appearance of fire, according to the Prophet who says: ‘He makes His
angels spirits and His ministers a flames of fire ‘” (Psalm 103:4; Hebrews 1:7), St. Germanos of
Constantinople, Historia Ecclesiastica, 14 (C. 725 AD)

PASSAGE TO HEAVEN: AN APPRECIATION OF DIVINE LITURGY– I

[excerpted from Eyes of the Gospel by Archbishop Joseph M. Raya]

Foreword

The Epistle to the Hebrews presents an expansive vista depicting the history of our salvation: the manifestations of God to the Old Testament prophets, the incarnation of Christ and His all-sufficient self-offering. It concludes this anamnesis of God’s faithful love to us with the following injunction:

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another ...” (Hebrews 10:25)

Our response to God’s fidelity, then, is to be faithful to Him by being steadfast in our belief and to be faithful to one another by supporting each another in the Christian life. And this faithfulness to God and to one another is described as centered in the regular “meeting together” or synaxis of the Christian community: what we call the Divine Liturgy.

In looking for a way to express our call to be faithful to God and one another through the Divine Liturgy, we turned to one of our hierarchs, Archbishop Joseph Raya, who through his translations of the liturgical texts has placed his stamp on so many Byzantine churches in the English-speaking world. In The Eyes of the Gospel, published almost twenty years ago, Archbishop Joseph had woven a number of reflections on various of the prayers and movements of the Divine Liturgy. Archbishop Joseph has graciously allowed us to rearrange and reproduce his meditations in a new format. We trust that, in breaking the bread of his thought, as we do the Eucharistic bread, we have not rent it asunder.

To highlight the connection of the Church’s Liturgy with models of Biblical prayer, we have interspersed within this book a number of Scriptural texts to which the Liturgy refers or which it echoes. To emphasize the continuity of our Liturgy today with that of the Eastern Churches over the centuries, we have also included passages from some historic commentaries on or references to the Liturgy, for our celebration each Sunday resonates with the worship of thousands of years.

We hope that this work will serve more than one purpose: first of all it can provide those of us who regularly attend the Liturgy with a new appreciation of the mystery we celebrate. But if we are truly committed to be faithful to one another, this reflection can also be a means of encouraging one another: an avenue for us to lead others to participate in the Liturgy themselves.

Introduction

Justin, one of the first apologists of the Christian faith, himself born shortly after the Apostles, gives an account of his faith and of the practice of the Christians of his time. He describes in detail the celebration of the Eucharist as it was conducted, and claims that these details are what the Lord Himself ordered His disciples to follow.

The account of the Liturgy described by Justin witnesses to the details of the Sacred Supper of the Lord and harmonizes with the details of the Breaking of the Bread by the Apostles. It is this same Liturgy of the first Christians that Clement of Rome describes and which the Church kept faithfully and transmitted in all its integrity. It is from this Liturgy that the Byzantine Liturgy derives and has its origin.

The ancients called this gathering of the faithful synaxis, a convention: a community that looks to eternity. Worshipping together in community, the faithful experience more readily both their unity in Christ and the power of the Spirit. They learn how to open and abandon themselves to the revelation of God, to experience Him, and thus be able to witness to their religious experience.

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS IN APRIL

Saturday Evening, April 06
NO DIVINE SERVICES

Sunday Morning, April 07
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PASCHA:
FAITHFUL THOMAS SUNDAY
Resurrection Orthros: 9:00 a.m.

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.
Parish Paschal Potluck
Wednesday Evening, April 10
Memorial Service: 7:00 p.m.

SERVANT OF GOD,
THE PRIEST MICHAEL JOLLY
Saturday Evening, April 13
Confessions: 3:00 p.m.
Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.
Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.
Thomas Sunday, April 14
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PASCHA:
MYRRHBEARING WOMEN SUNDAY

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.
Saturday Evening, April 20
Confessions: 3:00 p.m.
Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.
Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

2023 WEEKLY COLLECTION

April 31	
Weekly Offering:	\$ 1,535.00
Holy Land:	\$ 50.00
Monthly:	\$ 45.00
Candles:	\$ 25.00
Total:	\$ 1,655.00

Thank you for your support!

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

O St. Joseph, chaste spouse of the Lady Theotokos, head of the Holy Family, we again place ourselves under your patronage. † Through your powerful intercession, bestow up on us every good thing both spiritual and temporal. † Protect this your parish from all spiritual harm and renew in us the spirit of repentance and a fervent desire for the kingdom of heaven. † Make this vineyard flourish with new souls and by an increase of faith, hope and love; may forgiveness, peace and joy reign within our holy fellowship. † In all we do, may the Name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

07 April: Paschal Flower Intentions
13 April: Mary Ann Bauman
from James & Betsy Zaydon
14 April: Mary Ann Bauman
from Thomas & Kelly Bolus
20 April: Paul & Mary Ann Bauman

Thank you to those who decorated
the Church for Pascha 2024

Clarks: Anastasia, Symeon, Mary, Elizabeth & Margaret
Fitzpatrick: Sean, Leo, Gabriel & Luke
Leflers: Nathan, Annie, Bruno, Noemi & Monserrat
Millers: Annie, Margaret, William, Daniel, Carolina & John Henry

The Gospel Preached in Jerusalem (Acts 5:12–20)

ONE FEATURE OF THE PASCHAL SEASON in Byzantine Churches is the reading of the Acts of the Apostles. Every day, beginning with Pascha itself, this story of the early Church is read at the Divine Liturgy. While the text of Acts itself begins with Christ's ascension, our public reading of it begins as we commemorate His resurrection. While Christ's followers struggled until Pentecost to grasp the reality of the resurrection and its meaning for mankind, the Church sees Pascha as the source of its life, the fountainhead of its existence to this day.

Divine power in the Church comes from the empty tomb and the blessing of the risen Christ upon His disciples – “*Receive the Holy Spirit*” (Jn 20:22) – which we also hear read on this Sunday. The paschal liberation in Christ from captivity to death begins to touch individuals and communities as the Church develops in the first century AD.

Acts paints a picture of the first Christian community in Jerusalem, then in Samaria, in Damascus and Antioch and the cities of Asia Minor. Finally Acts affirms that within the lifetime of the apostles a Church had been established in Rome, capital of the empire, the focus of life in the Mediterranean world of that era. The events recorded in this book would occur again and again through the centuries as the Church became established among different peoples and cultures.

Some of these characteristics listed in today's passage, Acts 5:12-20, are:

Signs and Wonders (vv.12, 14-16) – The Church is first of all characterized as a transforming presence, just as Christ's own earthly ministry was, according to the Gospels. The sick are healed just by Peter's passing shadow, and those “*tormented by unclean spirits*” (v.16) are delivered.

To this day physical healings are regularly reported at saints' graves or shrines, in connection with their relics or wonderworking icons. The 10th-century shrine of St George near Istanbul is one such place. Remarkable here is that most of those who come by the thousands to this shrine are Muslims. One of the priests at the shrine, Father Ephrem, confided, “During my three years here, we ourselves are witnesses of miracles, such as the healing of paralytics, mutes, and the giving birth to children.”

Just as physical healing was not the chief object of Christ's ministry, the Church's focus is chiefly on spiritually healing the whole person. The Church's therapy may include Confession, spiritual guidance and the Mystery of Holy Unction, given “for healing, for relief from every passion, from defilement of flesh and spirit, and from every illness” (oil blessing prayer).

Proclaiming Christ (v. 12) – Rabbis and scholars would regularly be found gathering at Solomon's Porch, a colonnade east of the temple. It became the place where the first followers of Jesus would go to share the Gospel, sure of a curious audience.

The town square and the coffee house have in their time been places where Christians have gone to gather and to make their faith known to others. Today cyberspace may be the ultimate Solomon's Porch. As Pope Benedict XVI recently wrote, “I would like then to invite Christians, confidently and with an informed and responsible creativity, to join the network of relationships which the digital era has made possible... In this field too we are called to proclaim our faith that Christ is God, the Savior of humanity and of history, the one in whom all things find their fulfillment.”

Reluctance of the Religious Establishment (v. 13) – While people from the Jewish rank and file were drawn to the Gospel message, their religious leaders at first held back and then directly opposed this teaching which threatened their power among the people.

The apostles encountered the same reception from the leaders of Israel as has the Lord Jesus, John the Forerunner and other prophets. Politicians – be they political or religious may be more concerned with keeping “good order” than with seeking the will of God. A famous expression of this conflict between leaders and the Christ of the Gospel is the “Parable of the Grand Inquisitor” in Feodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. In it an atheist tells his brother, a monk, that Christ would be arrested and condemned to death were He to return today because His teachings would disturb the established way things are done.

Growth (v.14) – A major theme in the book of Acts is that, before the death of the chief apostles, the Church had spread from the first group at Solomon's Porch to the very heart of the empire, Rome itself. The Church began with “locals,” Jews from Galilee and Judea. Hellenized (Greek speaking) Jews soon joined them as did “proselytes,” those pagans who had adopted the Jewish belief in one God, but had not formally joined the Jewish people as this would demand complete separation from their non-believing family and associates. Finally other pagans, never drawn to Judaism began accepting Christ ultimately outnumbering the first Jewish believers.

Is the number of Christians still growing today? In 2011 BBC reported that more people go to church on Sunday in China than in the whole of Europe. In 1900 there were approximately 10 million Christians in Africa, mostly in the historic Coptic and Ethiopian Churches and among Italians, Greeks and other settlers. A little over a century later the number has reached 500 million. And where, in 1900, Africans accounted for only 2% of the world's Christians, today they number 20%. . .

Persecution (v. 17-18) – As the number of Christian's in the Roman Empire grew, they came to be seen as a threat to the state. Christians in the empire were persecuted from time to time and from region to region until AD 311, when the Great Persecution of Diocletian came to an end.

Religious persecution has often been carried out with political overtones. When Rome was persecuting Christians they were welcomed in its neighboring rival, the Persian Empire. When Rome embraced Christianity the Persians began persecuting Christians as Roman sympathizers.

Today Christians may be persecuted outright for political reasons, as in North Korea, or in strongholds of other religions in Asia and Africa. In the historically Christian nations of the West, the contemporary “powers that be” have increasingly marginalized religion, striving to keep it behind church doors for people who fancy that sort of thing. Public figures regularly pit Christian values against “human rights,” “women's health” and the like. Thus even Mother Teresa of Calcutta was vilified for calling abortion “a great destroyer of peace” when accepting the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize. One lives Gospel values in the public sector at one's own risk.

Divine Protection (vv.19-20) – The apostles, miraculously delivered from prison, went right back to the temple. As we reported to the Sanhedrin: “*Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!*” (v. 25). When questioned about why they had disobeyed the council's demand that they stop, Peter and the others replied with a phrase that has repeatedly been used since against opponents of the Gospel: “*We ought to obey God rather than men*” (v. 29).

From the apostles' preaching at Solomon's Porch to our own day the Holy Spirit, given by Christ, has protected and made fruitful the proclamation of the Gospel.