

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of the Wicked Tenant Farmers (Matthew 21:33-42)

DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

23 AUGUST 2026 ♦ TONE 04 EOTHINON 02 † THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST / THE WICKED TENANTS

GREAT DOXOLOGY:

Liturgy Book p. 17

ANTIPHONS:

FIRST:

Liturgy Book p. 29

SECOND:

Liturgy Book p. 32

THIRD/BEATTITUDES

Liturgy Book p. 125

ENTRANCE HYMN:

Liturgy Book p. 41

APOLYTIKIA:

Resurrection (Tone 4)

Liturgy Book p. 42

Dormition

Liturgy Book p. 175

Patron: Saint Joseph

Liturgy Book p. 47

KONDAKION: Dormition

Liturgy Book p. 176

TRISAGION:

Liturgy Book p. 50

PROKIMENON:

(Tone 4)

Liturgy Book p. 57

EPISTLE:

1 Corinthians 16:13-24

Brethren, watch, stand fast in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let everything you do be done out of love. Now, I beg you, brethren: you know that the members of Stephanas' family are the first-fruits of Achaia and have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. To such as these, you too become subject, and to every helper and worker. I rejoice at the presence of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because what was lacking on your part they have supplied — for they have refreshed both my spirit and yours. To such as these, therefore, give recognition. The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla with the church at their house greet you heartily in the Lord. All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. I, Paul, greet you with my own hand. If any man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. My love is with all of you in Christ Jesus.

Amen.

ALLELUIA:

(Tone 4)

Liturgy Book p. 62

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

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

GOSPEL:

St. Matthew 21:33-42

The Lord told this parable: "There was a man, a landowner, who planted a vineyard, and put a hedge around it, and dug a wine vat in it, and built a tower; then he leased it to the vine-dressers, and went abroad. But when the fruit season drew near, he sent his servants to the vine-dressers to receive his fruits. And the vine-dressers seized his servants, and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent another party of servants more numerous than the first; and they did the same to these. Finally, he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But the vine-dressers, on seeing the son, said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and we shall have his inheritance.' So they seized him, cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. When, therefore, the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-dressers?" They said to him, "He will utterly destroy those evil men, and will lease the vineyard to other vine-dressers, who will render to him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, '*The Stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone; by the Lord this has been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes*'",

HIRMOS: Dormition

Liturgy Book p. 177 / p. 77

KINONKON: Dormition

Liturgy Book p. 83

COMMUNION HYMN:

Liturgy Book p. 87

POST-COMMUNION HYMN:

Liturgy Book p. 89 / Liturgy Book p. 90

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Events in August

13TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Saturday, August 22

Confessions : 3:45 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, August 23

Confessions: 9:45 a.m.

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

14TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Saturday, August 29

Confessions : 3:45 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, August 30

Confessions: 9:45 a.m.

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

15TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Saturday, September 5

Confessions : 3:45 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, September 6

Confessions: 9:45 a.m.

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

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

23 August:: ✠Dr. John Abda, by William Abda

✠Elizabeth M. Bachefski, by Parish Community

30: August ✠Elizabeth M. Bachefski, by Parish Community

Dr. John Abbda; James Kane, by Parish Community.

2026 WEEKLY COLLECTION

August 9

Weekly Offering: \$ 464

Candles: \$ 7

Total: \$ 471

Thank you for your support!

THE CHURCH IN YOUR HOUSE

ST PAUL WROTE MOST OF HIS EPISTLES to communities rather than individuals. Often, however, he would end an epistle by extending greetings to people whom he knew in that community and from people known to them. Among the latter mentioned in 1 Corinthians are Priscilla and Aquila *“and the church that meets at their house”* (1 Cor 16:19).

We first meet this couple in Acts 18 where we are told, *“Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them”* (vv 1-3). They became close friends of St Paul and left Corinth with him when he continued his travels. *“Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila”* (v. 18).

Their journey to Syria would take them down the coast of Asia Minor where there were several Christian communities. It seems that Priscilla and Aquila remained in Ephesus, half-way to Syria. St Paul greets them at the end of his Second Epistle to Timothy, who was in Ephesus at the time.

The Jews, expelled from Rome in AD 49, were allowed to return in the year 54. Priscilla and Aquila seem to have returned to Rome at that time. In his Epistle to the Romans St Paul greets them as *“my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life”* (Rom 16:3-4).

The Church in Their House

We learn from St Paul’s Epistles that, both in Ephesus and in Rome, the local gathering of Christians assembled at the home of Priscilla and Aquila. During the age of persecution in the Roman Empire there were no church buildings as we know them; Christianity was illegal so believers met in private homes.

St Paul does not specify what the believers did there, but the description of the first Christians in Jerusalem probably applies everywhere in the first century: *“They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers”* (Acts 2:42). As Jews, Priscilla and Aquila probably attended prayers in the synagogue but gathered Christians in their home for the breaking of bread and to hear the apostles’ teaching.

When and where Christianity was tolerated, the Church not only met in homes, it acquired houses for community use. In the twentieth century such a house-church was excavated in the ruined Syrian city of Dura-Europus. This house-church, dating from the third century, was extensively decorated with frescoes much like later Byzantine churches. It even had a separate room dedicated as a baptistery: a pattern which would be employed once church buildings became common.

Every Home a Church

In the first centuries AD the home was the usual meeting place of the Church. In later centuries it came to be seen that the Christian family was itself a Church, a “domestic church.” St Paul taught that the family was an image of God the Father and His family: the

Son and all those who in Christ have become adopted children of God: “*I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named*” (Eph 3:14-15). The Church is the heavenly family, uniting all who are in Christ to the heavenly Father. In the same way a Christian family takes its identity (its “name”) from God. It is formed by God at the Mystery of Crowning and is the place where family members are meant to encounter God and help one another draw closer to Him.

In our Eastern tradition, because the home is the icon of the Church, the home becomes a domestic church. The Mystery of Crowning is where the domestic church is consecrated. It is not just a coincidence at a wedding, as the bride and groom circle the sacramental table, that the same hymns are sung as at an ordination when the priest-to-be is led around the holy table. As we read in *A Guide for the Domestic Church*, published by the Melkite Eparchy of Newton, a wedding in the Christian East is “an ordination for service in the domestic church. Husband and wife are called to a unique sharing in Christ’s priesthood by their holy crowning. Their home is their church with a little ‘c’.”

Now a church is known not so much by its architecture or its interior design but by the function it plays, the activities it nurtures. A church must be hallowed by the blood of gracious sacrifice, perfumed by the incense of fervent prayer, echoing God’s word and re-echoing man’s response in humble adoration. Anything less and we have Shakespeare’s “bare ruined choirs”.

Our mothers and fathers must rediscover their role as priests of the home and exercise their sacramental powers: the father by blessing his children and the food that nourishes them, by preaching the most eloquent of sermons by the nobility of his conduct; the mother by enabling her family to celebrate the fasts and feasts of the year and by her tending of the light burning before the icons. The children, too, should learn to assume roles in the domestic church as soon as practicable: they can help read the daily Scripture passages and assist in the preparation of the foods proper to our tradition.” *A Guide for the Domestic Church* offers specific suggestions on implementing many of these practices over the course of the year. Another useful resource for living as a domestic church may be found online at www.melkite.org. Download the “At Home” kits for each of our Church’s fasting seasons (“Great Fast at Home,” “Apostles’ Fast at Home,” etc.) for reflections, prayers and activities you can use to keep the spirit of these seasons alive in your house church.

Pass On Your Family Traditions As the passing on of Holy Tradition is one of the main tasks of the priests of the wider Church, so too passing on of the family story is an important role for parents, the priests of the domestic church. Parents should tell family stories with a sense of appreciation, remembering the good things from their own growing-up years as well as the stories they heard from their parents and grandparents. If you have never done this before, sit down some evening and make a list of these stories and lessons as well as the lessons you want your children to learn from them.

If, with St. Paul, “*We know that in all*” in both the good and bad events of our lives to bring us to where we are in our life now. And so we can tell our stories with a sense of destiny: that God has been at work in our family and is still working, calling us to grow in His love and service. As God worked in the past to bring us to this place in the same way He is preparing us for something else.

EXPLANATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY - I

By Rt. Rev. Philip Rączka, PhD

Introduction

The Divine Liturgy is our prayer par excellence, understanding and celebrating it is at the foundation of our life in Christ. In it we experience our Lord, in his Word and in his Eucharistic Body. It is also the place where visitors typically have their first encounter with the Melkite Church. Do they encounter a Christian community that is in communion with Christ and each other celebrating a beautiful liturgy in unison? We hope this explanation of the Divine Liturgy, focused on the Sunday service, will assist our faithful.

The Divine Liturgy has three principal parts, it begins with the Enarxis (entrance), followed by the Liturgy of the Word with its hymns and scripture readings, and it is completed with the Liturgy of the Eucharist (thanksgiving) with its prayers and actions including the distribution of Holy Communion. The biblical and patristic basis as well as the development and meaning of the Divine Liturgy is explained for each of these parts.

On Sunday, as we are celebrating the greatest feast, that of the Resurrection, we stand for the major part of the celebration. Kneeling and prostrations are for the times of repentance, not for Sundays and Feast Days. The exceptions being the prostrations for the Feasts of the Cross, and the Kneeling Prayers of Pentecost.

The clergy opening ceremonies of the Kairon (door prayers), Clergy Vesting, and the preparation of the bread and wine (Prothesis) for the Divine Liturgy are not commented on here, since normally they are performed in private by the priest and deacon.

PART 1: THE ENARXIS

The Great Incensation

Before the Divine Liturgy starts, the deacon (or priest in his absence) incenses the entire church beginning at the Holy Table. Since the Holy Table represents Christ, he says a prayer to Christ while censuring it:

Being God You were present in the tomb with your body, in Hades with your soul, in Paradise with the Thief, on the throne with the Father and the Spirit filling all things, but encompassed by none.

Thus, censuring the Holy Table honors both the Holy Table and Jesus Christ. The deacon then continues censuring the Prothesis Table, where the bread and wine are prepared, the Iconostasis, and the congregation while saying the penitential Psalm 50. This incensation is a purification of the congregation in order to begin the service. We desire to be purified that we may praise and worship God with clean hearts.

Scripture provides an understanding of the use of incense. In Psalm 140:2 it represents our prayers rising up to God. The Magi offered incense to the Christ Child because the burning of incense was a way to honor gods and kings, and Jesus is indeed our King and God (Matthew 2:11). Incense is a purification and a sacrifice to God, and was commanded to be offered in the Old Testament Temple every morning and evening. In Exodus God appeared to Moses in the Burning Bush and led the people out of Egypt by a pillar of cloud (Exodus 3:2 & 13:21-22). When the Tabernacle in the wilderness was dedicated, God came to it, and filled it with smoke, and the same happened when Solomon dedicated the First Temple (Exodus 40:34 & 1 Kings 8: 10-11). So, a cloud reminds us that God is present with us, and the incense creates a kind of cloud in the church. The smell of incense is an ethereal presence; similarly God cannot be seen, but is present.

The Initial Blessing

The priest begins the Liturgy by proclaiming the Kingdom of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father made the universe through the Son and Holy Spirit. The Son is eternally begotten of the

Father, and was incarnate of the Virgin by the will of the Father, and the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father (John 14:26), and sanctifies and enlightens all the believers, and draws the non-believers to come to Christ. We encounter the Trinity when we meditate on creation and experience salvation. Thus prayers conclude with a doxology glorifying the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Church is God's Kingdom in an incomplete form. The Kingdom began with the resurrection of Christ, and will be completed when He comes again in glory. In the meantime, we have a foretaste of the Messianic Banquet in the Divine Liturgy, and we are called to bring in new members to share in salvation and the life of God.

The Litany of Peace

The most ancient location for the petitions of the people in the Divine Liturgy is after the sermon. Acts tells us that St. Paul preached to the presbyters of Ephesus at Miletus, and then knelt and prayed with them (Acts 20:17ff). In ancient Constantinople, the Litany of Peace followed by a priestly prayer before the Three Antiphons which began the outdoor procession that used to inaugurate the Liturgy. The clergy and laity of processed each Sunday and Feast Day from the center of the city to the Cathedral while singing the Antiphons. When these processions were no longer held, the second Litany of Peace which was after the Sermon was dropped, and the one at the beginning of the Liturgy was kept.

In I Timothy we are admonished to pray for everyone including those in the government (I Timothy 2: 1ff). Thus, the Litany of Peace (which was originally after the sermon) is worldwide in scope. It is our duty as Christians to pray for all, not just for those whom we like or agree with. The petitions of the deacon (or the priest in his absence) are not the prayer; they are only directions to the congregation of what they should pray for. The actual prayer is when everyone sings, Lord, have mercy, asking God to be compassionate regarding the people that are prayed for. Since this response is the actual prayer, it should be in a language understood by all, and it behooves all present to sing this response with all of their heart, and to focus their mind on the petitions that they may offer their intercessions to the Lord for the stated intentions.

The Antiphons

An Antiphon is a Psalm chanted by the cantor with a response sung by the congregation. The Psalm verses refer either to worshipping God, or to the Feast being celebrated that day. The First Antiphon response always refers to the Mother of God; the Second Sunday Antiphon response refers to Christ, and the Third Antiphon response is the Troparion of the Sunday or the Feast. There are three antiphons to represent the three days that Christ was in the tomb thus pointing to the resurrection. Originally the Antiphons were sung while the clergy and people processed from the Forum to the Cathedral. These Antiphons were so popular that they were sung even when there was no procession, as is the case today. The Melkite Church today permits the singing of only one Antiphon in order to slightly abbreviate the Liturgy. The choice of Antiphon may be varied for the sake of variety.

The Incarnation Hymn

The Incarnation Hymn: Only Begotten Son and Word of God... is sung at every Divine Liturgy except a Vespers-St Basil Liturgy (4 times per year – Holy Thursday, Holy Saturday, Christmas Eve & Theophany Eve). This hymn from the 6th century summarizes our principal beliefs in Christ, his incarnation, death and resurrection, and ascension. By these mysteries Christ saved us. He left Heaven and became a man through the power of the Holy Spirit, and was born of the Virgin. Then He laid down his life for us, and died on the cross. On Pascha (Easter) He made his human nature immortal, and rose from the tomb, thus preparing for our future immortality and resurrection. The ancestor of this hymn is Philippians 2:6-11 which is a Biblical Christian hymn that also mentions the incarnation, cross, resurrection and glorification of Christ.

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

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