

ST BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH
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ST. JOHN THE FORERUNNER

SUNDAY 3RD AFTER PENTECOST
Saturday June 29, Sunday June 30, 2019

WEEKLY SERVICES

Daily Liturgy: Monday-Friday at 8:30AM
Holy Liturgy: Saturday at 4:30PM, Sunday at 11:00AM
Matins/Orthos: Every Sunday at 9:00AM
Holy Confession: Every Monday at 4-6PM
Vespers: Every Saturday at 3:00PM
Holy Rosary: Every Sunday at 10:30AM

SPEEDY RECOVERY

Please continue to pray for our convalescing friends, including Rt. Rev. Edward Kakaty, Archdeacon George Yanni, Jordan Barahmeh, Michael Klockowski, Lawrence Bleiberg, Maggy Attalah, Nancy Gazzal, Rose Pawlinga, and Jean Benoit. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

WEEKLY OFFERINGS: THANK YOU!

Weekly Collection June 22/23: \$ 591.00 Memorial Offering: \$ 210.00

† MEMORIAL MASSES †

THIS SATURDAY, JUNE 29

† Antoinette Murad, 3rd Memorial Anniversary, By Alex Murad
† Raymond Chanatry, 64th Memorial Anniversary, By Eugene & Doris Hutchinson

THIS SUNDAY, JUNE 30

† Frederick Kopyt, 40th Memorial Day, By John & Dana Ata
† Antoinette Murad, 3rd Memorial Anniversary, By Alex Murad

NEXT SATURDAY, JULY 6

† Frederick Kopyt, By John & Dana Ata
† Kristin Brown, By Anthony & Sandra Showa

NEXT SUNDAY, JULY 7

† Frederick Kopyt, By Eddie & Carmella Nassimos
† Kristin Brown, By Robert Lalli

* LOCAL CHURCH'S ANNOUNCEMENTS *

Join us for the Solemn Mass and Celebration in Honor of The Sacred Heart of Jesus, Friday, June 28th at 7:00 PM Sacred Heart Church 8229 Brewerton Rd Cicero, NY 13039. Reception immediately following in the Church Gathering Area.

* ANNOUNCEMENT *

The next Parish Pastoral Council meeting will be held on Mon September 9, 6:30 PM, Rectory Meeting Rm

OUR CHURCH CALENDAR remembers many events in Christian history: martyrdoms, ecumenical councils, miracles, and even earthquakes. There are only three births celebrated, however: that of the Theotokos (September 8), the Nativity of Christ Himself (December 25), and the birth of St John the Forerunner (June 24). We do not know where or when this feast was first observed, but it is mentioned in writings of fourth- and fifth-century Fathers in both East and West (Saints Ambrose, Augustine, and John Chrysostom). The oldest shrine of the Forerunner, at Ain-Karem, home of his parents Zachariah and Elizabeth, was destroyed during the fifth-century revolt of the Samaritans against Byzantine rule. In the sixth century, the French Council of Agde (506) declared this feast a “holy day of obligation” – not surprising, considering the esteem in which Christ Himself considered John (see Mt 11:11).

John's Conception Foretold: The Gospel story of John's conception and birth, which is the Biblical basis of this feast, is found in Luke 1. We read that John's father, Zachariah, was a priest “of the division of Abijah” (Lk 1:4). According to the custom of the day, priests were enrolled in various groupings or divisions which took turns serving in the temple for two weeks at a time. The Gospel says that, while Zachariah was offering incense in the temple, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to him and announced that Elizabeth, Zachariah's wife, would bear him a son, who was to be named John.

Zachariah could not understand how this could be, as both he and his wife were up in years. Because of his reluctance to believe, Zachariah was told by the Angel, “Behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time” (Lk 1:20). And so it happened.

John and Elijah: The Angel tells Zachariah that his son would go before the Lord “in the spirit and power of Elijah, to ‘turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Lk 1:17).

In this promise we find an echo of the following prophecy from the Book of Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophetic books. “Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse” (Mal 4:5-6). In some arrangements of the Bible, these are the last words of the Old Testament, pointing it forward to the Messianic Age to come. Believing Jews held that Elijah would come to prepare the way for the Messiah. Many saw John as “Elijah,” the fulfillment of that prophecy, foretelling to all the coming of Christ. As the Lord Himself said about John, “If you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come” (Mt 11:14).

The Forerunner Is Born: The Gospel story of John continues with the narrative of his birth: “Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her. So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zachariah. His mother answered and said, ‘No; he shall be called John.’

“But they said to her, ‘There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name.’ So they made signs to his father — what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, ‘His name is John.’ So they all marveled. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God” (Lk 1:57-64).

St Augustine saw Zachariah's muteness as symbolic of the time before Christ and viewed his release as an image of its passing. “The release of Zachariah's voice at the birth of John,” he wrote, “has the same significance as the tearing of the veil of the Temple at the crucifixion of Christ. His tongue is released because a voice is being born... the voice of one crying in the wilderness.” (JuneLeaflets2019)