



The Maronite Voice



A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA

Volume XV

Issue No. III

March 2018

Noonday Devil

The Desert Fathers used to say that there are many devils out there to tempt and discourage us from leading a true spiritual life, but the worst of all is the "noonday" devil!

This devil is so tricky that he gets us to either work, work, work, so that we avoid dealing with our loneliness, our hurt, or our relationship with God and others, or he tricks us to be bored, restless, depressed, or despondent, so that nothing we do might bring us any joy or peace.

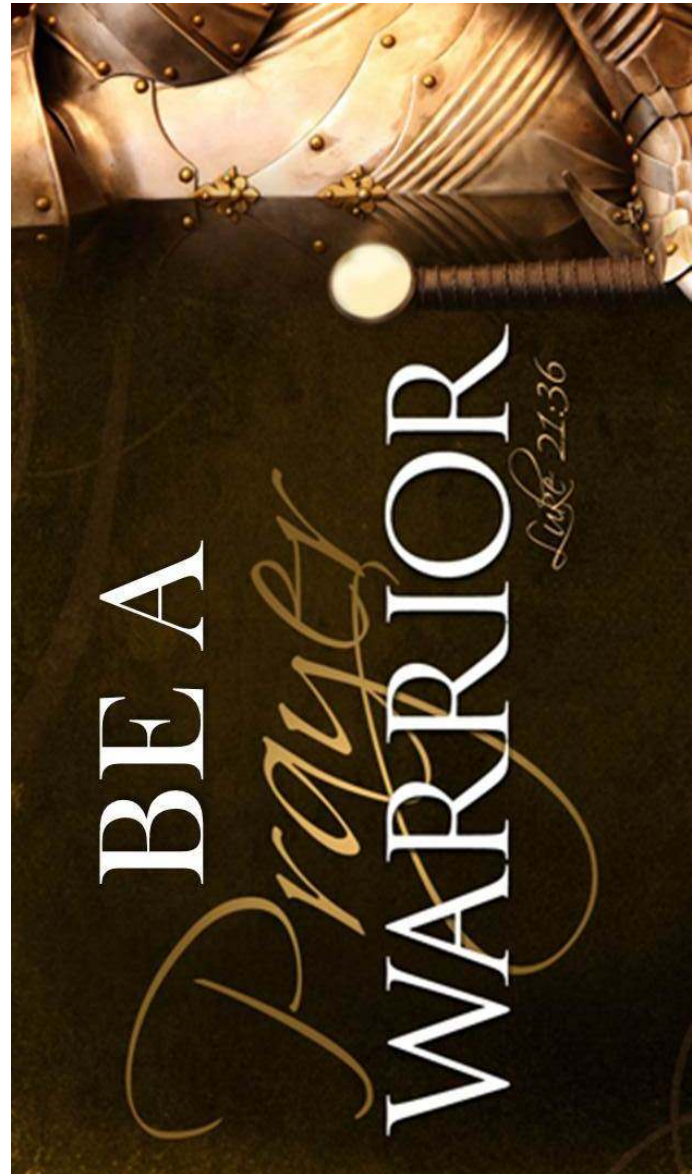
By either extreme, this devil succeeds and is much more effective than the ones that come at night, in darkness. The noonday devil looks at us soberly and plies us with half-truths so that we either believe that nothing matters at all and all our efforts are useless, so why waste time trying, or that we can never do enough to find peace and joy in this life.

The Desert Fathers used to call the weapon of this devil by the Greek word "acedia." In English, we would call it sloth, despondency or laziness. Thus, whether it is hyperactivity with no real purpose or meaning, or spiritual laziness with no real hope for peace or joy, the results are the same: discouragement, depression and anger, all of which are quite poisonous, but there is a remedy.

When we look around at the divisive, unhappy, restless, angry world in which we live, we know there is something terribly wrong in our world, and also in our own personal lives. The noonday devil wants us to think there is no hope, no solution, no way out. But there is a remedy.

When we love God, love properly our own self, and love others, we trick this devil, and come to know the truth that our efforts really do matter; our caring for our self and others really does change things, and our love for the God who made us really does bring us a certain peace and joy that no matter what circumstances we face, whether good or bad, we will not lose our peace and joy.

We must free ourselves then, with God's grace, from this noonday threat to our peace of mind and to our natural joy in God, and love our way out of every temptation to discouragement, despondency, and depression, knowing that love is the only true remedy for this terrible affliction. Love not only fulfills the commandments, but leads us to God himself, and once and for all, this noonday enemy is defeated and our joy and peace return.



Let this be our Lenten discipline, to love more, so that the more generous we are in loving self, others, and God, the happier we will be.

Happy Lent and Happy Easter!
+ Gregory J. Mansour
Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

Schedule of Bishop Elias Zaidan

March 3, 2018

Dedication of the New Cathedral, Knoxville, Tenn.

March 4, 2018

St. Maron's Feast Day Celebration, Our Lady of the Cedars Church, Houston, Tex.

March 5, 2018

Caritas Lebanon-USA Board Meeting, St. Louis, Mo.

March 6 - 7, 2018

Eastern Catholic Bishops Meeting, St. Louis, Mo.

March 9 - 12, 2018

Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon Cathedral, Los Angeles, Calif.

March 16 - 25, 2018

Pastoral Visit to St. Maron Church, Detroit; St. Sharbel Church, Clinton Township; and St. Rafka Church, Livonia, Mich.

March 26, 2018

Blessing of the Holy Oils, St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

March 27 - 31, 2018

Mission Retreat at Our Lady of the Cedars Church, Houston, Tex.

April 1, 2018

Easter Liturgy, St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

April 6 - 8, 2018

Pastoral Visit to St. Joseph Church, Phoenix, Ariz.

April 12 - 15, 2018

Pastoral Visit to St. Elias Church, Birmingham, Ala.

April 16 - 17, 2018

Clergy Enrichment Days, Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary, Washington, D.C. □

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Maronite Convention 2018

Our Lady of the Cedars Maronite Catholic Church

Houston, Texas

July 11 - 15, 2018

For more information contact the NAM office at (914) 964-3070 or visit

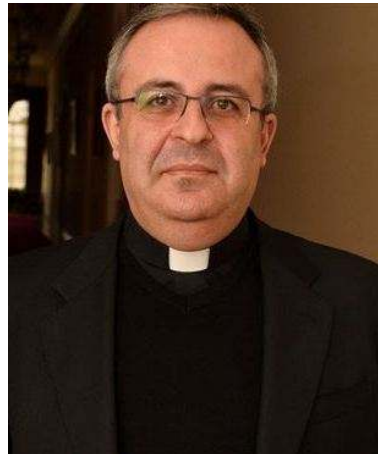
www.Namnews.org
www.Namconvention2018.com

Episcopal Election

The Holy Father granted his assent to the canonical election by the Synod of Bishops of the Maronite Church of Rev. Rafik Warsha, as Bishop of the Curia, assigning him the Titular See of *Apamea* in Syria of the Maronites. Bishop-Elect Warsha will replace His Excellency Bishop Joseph Naffah, who was transferred to the Patriarchal Vicarate of *Jibbee-Ehden* and *Zghorta*, Lebanon.

Born on October 22, 1971, to Jamil Warsha and Ninatte Kamel, Bishop-Elect Warsha received a degree in Philosophy and Theology from the Holy Spirit University (USEK), *Kaslik*, Lebanon, in 1994, and a Doctorate Degree in Moral Theology in 2005 from Alfonsiana University in Rome, Italy. He was ordained a priest on April 17, 1996, and in 2011 His Beatitude Patriarch Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai assigned him as Secretary of the Maronite Patriarchate. He is a moral theology teacher at USEK, *La Sagesse* University and Saint Joseph University in Beirut, Lebanon, and is fluent in Arabic, French, English and Italian

The Episcopal Ordination will take place on April 7, 2018, at the Maronite Patriarchate in *Bkerke*, Lebanon. □



Detroit, Michigan

Saint Maron's Feast Day Celebration

by Chris Rahi Kassab

St. Maron Parish in Detroit., Mich., celebrated the Feast Day of St. Maron on Saturday, February 3, 2018, with a special Liturgy and dinner reception at the Parish's Hall.

His Excellency Bishop A. Elias Zaidan, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, and Chorbishop Louis Baz, Pastor of St. Maron Church, were joined on the altar by Fr. Milad Yaghi, Secretary to the Bishop; Chorbishop Alfred Badawi, Pastor of St. Sharbel in Clinton Township; Fr. Hanna Tayyar; Fr. Paul Tarabay, from the Order of the Blessed Mary in Ann Arbor; and Fr. Tony Massad from St. Rafka in Livonia, Mich.

During the Liturgy, His Excellency Bishop Zaidan gave a moving homily about St. Maron and the significance he holds in the Catholic Church. He also inducted parishioners Antoine and Beline Obeid into the Order of Saint Sharbel. Bishop Zaidan blessed the new statue of St. Maron and the parishioners with a relic from St. Maron's bones.

Following the Liturgy, guests gathered at St. Maron's Hall for a reception organized by Mrs. Louana Ghafari and Rudy Jabbour. Chorbishop Baz thanked Mrs. Ghafari for her hard work and presented her with a beautiful bouquet of flowers. He also expressed his gratitude to Mr. Rudy Jabbour for assisting with the banquet and event book. Also during the reception, His Excellency Bishop Zaidan and Chorbishop Baz surprised long-time parishioner Mrs. Theresa Ghafari with a Papal Decoration as a Dame of St. Sylvester in recognition of her many years of service to St. Maron church. Following the formal program, guests enjoyed Arabic music and dancing. □



ANNUAL LENTEN APPEAL 2018



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Please bring your gift to your Maronite Parish on any Sunday during Lent in a special envelope marked "Annual Appeal."

MAIL A GIFT OR MAKE A DONATION ON-LINE:

Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn
109 Remsen Street
Brooklyn NY, 11201
www.stmaron.org

Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles
1021 S. 10th Street
Saint Louis, MO 63104
www.eparchy.org

Tequesta, Florida *A Dream Come True*



by Pierre Azzi

On Thursday, January 25, 2018, Raymond Mabarak, seasoned parishioner of Mary, Mother of the Light Church in Tequesta [Palm Beach], Fla., celebrated his 96th birthday aboard a B-17 bombers. In 1942, at twenty-years old, Raymond was building B-17 bombers, the famous "Flying Fortress," at the Briggs factory in Michigan. He was exempt from military service because he was working in a critical industry. In other words, Raymond could have spent all of WWII safe and sound at home, no one ever became an American hero by choosing a comfortable bed and hot meals over fighting for freedom.

When Raymond went to the recruiting center in 1942 to enlist, he was turned away because he worked in an essential industry. They told him he could not join because he needed to build planes for the war effort. He insisted he wanted to join. They told him he would have to get his employer's permission. Undeterred, Raymond went to his employer and asked for permission to enlist. His employer told him he was crazy but eventually signed the waiver.

Raymond went back down to the recruiting office with the waiver and was again turned away, this time because he only weighed 120 pounds, six pounds short of the minimum weight. A normal person would have given up satisfied that he at least tried to serve. But Raymond was so determined to serve he would not give up. He went out, bought a half-dozen bananas and a quart of milk. He ate and drank everything on the steps of the federal building, then ran in and told them to weigh him quickly before his body had time to digest.

Raymond wanted to be part of the crew of a B-17 bomber, like the ones he had previously built. Due to heavy casualties in Europe, however, he was assigned to the 97th Infantry, famously known as the Trident division. He was shipped out to Europe and there he fought in the Battle of the Bulge and helped liberate Germany and Czechoslovakia. His Trident division fired the last shot during the European Theatre of Operations on May 7, 1945.

When Raymond left home to join the Army, his mother told him "God be with you." Raymond credits this simple

blessing and the intervention of Our Lady for protecting him when the transport ship next to his was sunk by a U-Boat, when a friend was shot just inches away from him in Czechoslovakia, and countless other times through his long and full life.

Seventy-six years after Raymond enlisted in the Army in order to fly a B-17 bomber, Raymond finally had a chance to fly in one for the first time as a special 96th birthday present (see picture).

In addition to his service to America, Raymond and his wife, Delores, have been active and generous parishioners of both St. Maron Maronite Church in Detroit, Mich., and Mary, Mother of the Light Church. Among other things, Raymond led an effort that recruited thirty-five new members to the Order of Saint Sharbel. We thank God for blessing us with real heroes like Raymond Mabarak. □

New Bedford, Massachusetts *A Day of Reflection*



led by Fr. Fadi Rouhana, Pastor, Our Lady of Purgatory Maronite Church of New Bedford, Mass., held its Annual retreat, "The Good Samaritan - Seeing Christ in Others, " at the Sacred Heart Retreat Center in Wareham, Mass.

It was a day of devotion that began with the opening prayer, the living rosary, two breakout segments, one on the Parable of the Good Samaritan and the second on "The Cultural Lebanese American family in 2018," followed by Eucharistic Adoration and Liturgy. This is the second year the parish of Our Lady of Purgatory has had a spiritual day of reflection. Participants who attended, stated that it was an "enriching day of discussion, reflection and faith." □

Food For Thought

The Message of Jesus is troubling and disturbs us, because it challenges worldly religious power and stirs consciences.

Pope Francis, February 16, 2018

THE ORDER OF SAINT SHARBEL



Perpetual Members

★ **George Yacoub**

★ **Joseph Shami**

*St. Ignatius Church,
Dayton, Ohio*

★ **George Frem**

*Our Lady of the Cedars Church,
Jamaica Plain, Mass.*

★ **Maria Theresia Tremmel**

*Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral,
Brooklyn, N.Y.*

★ **Claire Mooradd** (upgraded)

*St. Anthony Church,
Springfield, Mass.*

Annual Members

★ **Mounir Bsabes**

*Our Lady's Church,
Austin, Tex.*

★ **Pascale Bouakar**

*St. Elias Church,
Birmingham, Ala.*

The Order of Saint Sharbel is an organization of lay people and clergy who have pledged their spiritual strength and financial support for Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary and the retired Maronite clergy of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA.

For more information about the Order ask your Pastor, visit www.orderstsharbel.org or write to:

Eparchy of Saint Maron
109 Remsen Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

or

Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon
1021 South 10th Street
St. Louis, MO 63104

Saint Louis, Missouri Saint Maron Feast Day



by Shelly Vitale

On Sunday, February 4, 2018, at the Divine Liturgy, the community of Saint Raymond Cathedral joined together to celebrate the Feast of Saint Maron. Members of the Order of St. Sharbel, officers and representatives of every organization and The Knights of Saint Gregory the Great formed an Honor Guard. Bishop A. Elias Zaidan celebrated and Concelebrants were Father Milad Yaghi, MLM, Secretary to the Bishop; Father John Nahal, Rector of Saint Raymond; Deacon Lou Peters; and Subdeacons Anthony Simon and David Wahby.

During his homily, Bishop Zaidan spoke about Saint Maron and what it means to be a Maronite. He said that the Maronite Church is open to everyone and we are of one voice and one heart. The Bishop invited all the officers and members of various organizations and committees of Saint Raymond Cathedral to come forward for a special blessing and installation. The parishioners also participated in the blessing by the Relics of Saint Maron and were given the opportunity to revere them.

After the Liturgy, a reception and awards program was held at the Cedars Hall, where guests were treated to a feast-day meal. Following the luncheon, Father John, along with Bishop Zaidan, Father Milad, and Doctor Maged Haikal, President of the Parish Pastoral Council, presented the National Apostolate of Maronites, Faith of the Mountain and Silver Massabki Awards. Before bestowing the awards for 2017, Father John asked all former recipients of both awards to come to the stage. The recipient of the Faith of the Mountain Award for 2017 was Gina Fanetti, and the recipients of the Silver Massabki Award for 2017 were Subdeacon David and Kathleen Wahby and Mary Cohen-Ehlen. The hall was filled with thunderous applause in honor of these well-deserving people. Father John thanked everyone for attending and expressed his appreciation for all of their hard work and dedication. □

Appeal from Caritas Lebanon

Christians in Lebanon are suffering! If you are able to relieve some of the suffering, please contact

Fr. Elias Abi Sarkis, Director

8315 South 107th East Ave.

Tulsa, OK 74133

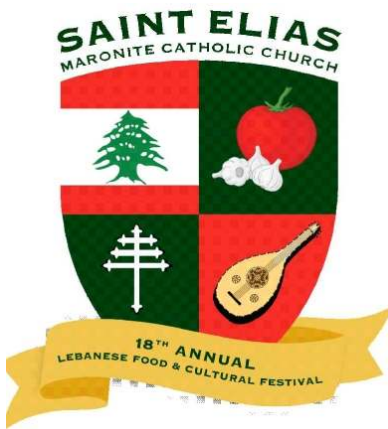
Ph: 918-872-7400

or visit *Caritas Lebanon* at <http://www.caritas.org.lb>.

Checks may be made payable to Caritas Lebanon.

Thank you for your consideration. □

Birmingham, Alabama Annual Festival



The St. Elias Maronite Catholic Church in Birmingham, Alabama, is having its 20th Annual Lebanese Food and Cultural Festival on April 13 and 14, 2018. There is no admission charge.

Some of the Lebanese delicacies that will be offered during the Festival will include baked kibbee, rolled grape leaves, spinach pies, falafel sandwiches, and many other items. For dessert the public can sample Lebanese

sweets including a variety of baklava, *Kiak* and Lebanese ice cream.

Many cultural events explaining the rich history and tradition of the Maronite Catholic faith, which originated in Lebanon, will be held during the two-day event. A Heritage Room will showcase demonstrations of the Birmingham Lebanese Community and cultural displays from Lebanon. Daytime tours of the newly renovated Church will be held, including a discussion of the famous stained glass windows and the use during Church services of Aramaic, the native language spoken by Jesus.

Nightly entertainment will again feature the extremely popular world-renowned Amin Sultan Band from New York outside in a tent with music and dancing from 6:00 to 9:30 p.m., on Friday and Saturday. The public is also invited to attend the Divine Liturgy service which will start at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday. On stage in the main Hall, Friday night and Saturday, the youth will perform traditional Lebanese dances. A Silent Auction will be held beginning on Friday night and concluding Saturday at 8:00 p.m., featuring catered Lebanese dinners, vacation packages, collector items, and many gift certificates to restaurants and events in the Birmingham area.

Twenty-five percent of all proceeds for the Festival will go to local and national charities other than St. Elias. In the last nineteen years, St Elias Church has donated over \$467,000 to other charities from Festival proceeds. Check out our website at <http://www.stelias.org/festival.htm>. □

Food For Thought

As we grow in our spiritual lives, we realize how Grace comes to us and to others, and must be shared with everyone.

Pope Francis, February 7, 2018



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Orlando, Florida *Silver Massabki Award*



Pictured from left to right: Gail Bell, Barbara Fidler (award recipient) Fr. Bassam Saade, Pastor, Amine and Paula Harb and Bill Hinshaw.

by Diane Manhire

Barbara Fidler of Saint Jude Maronite Church in Orlando, Fla., received the Silver Massabki Award for all her hard work and support of the parish with her time, talent, and treasure. She received this honor at the Parish's annual St. Maron Luncheon on February 11, 2018. □

Houston, Texas *Couples Encounter*



by Eliana Abou-Jaoude

The Couples Encounter Ministry of Our Lady of the Cedars Church, Houston, Tex., extended an invitation to all married couples in the parish to celebrate Valentine's Day by renewing their vows. It was an edifying occasion during which seventy couples, whether they have been married for one year or are coming upon milestone anniversaries, gathered to receive a blessing by Fr. Edward Hanna. Father Edward's main message in his presentation

was that love for each other can be celebrated more than once, and a vow renewal celebration is the perfect way to reaffirm that love in the company of other parishioners. Fr. Edward also guided the couples in their exchanged promises, which were promises of forgiveness, respect, acceptance, sacrifice, and the most important, keeping Christ as the focus of their married life.

Couples danced to the tunes of a local singer and his band. The cutting of the cake was done by couples who have been married for fifty years. The night ended in the hope of many more occasions for celebration, and a lifetime of love and laughter. □

Torrington Connecticut *Friendship Team*



by Fr. Tony Saab

Five faithful ladies came together at Saint Maron Church in Torrington, Conn., with the goals of welcoming new parishioners, visiting families facing challenges and difficulties, and reaching out to the needy and sick. Fr. Tony Saab, Pastor, blessed the team and sent them forth to bear witness to Jesus' Gospel of love and service. □

Low Cost Opportunity For Noursat

Sling is an internet-based TV service that will allow you to access the various NOURSAT channels at a reasonable cost. The service requires an internet connection and purchase of a unit that would run on the television such as a flash-drive (for example, Roku). There are various packages that can be added to Arabic Mosaic for additional charges; however, with the basic Arabic Mosaic you can get: TV Charity, Noursat Mariam, Noursat Kids, Noursat Music, Noursat of the East and others.

You can learn more about it at www.sling.com or by calling 1-888-940-6789. □

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 125th Anniversary

by Suzanne Tavani

For 125 years St. Maron Church on Ellsworth Streets in Philadelphia, Penn., has served as the home for Maronites throughout the Greater Philadelphia region. More than just a building, St. Maron has served a community where generations of Maronites from the Middle East have gathered to honor and share their religious traditions.

Throughout 2017, the 125th Anniversary Committee created activities and events to honor and commemorate this wonderful legacy, culminating in the anniversary weekend on December 1 – 3, 2017.

The weekend kicked off with a Friday evening liturgy celebrated by His Excellency Bishop Gregory J. Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, and concelebrated by Bishop Antoine Chbeir, Bishop of Lattakia, Syria; Chorbishop Seely Beggiani; Msgr. Peter Fahed Azar; Fr. Naji Kiwan; Fr. David Fisher; Fr. Richard Canulli, Fr. George Hajj; Fr. Tony Massad; and St. Maron's Pastor, Fr. Vincent Farhat. The Liturgy was followed by a buffet and the viewing of "St. Maron's 125th Anniversary Video," which chronicled the history of the parish through the eyes of members of the founding families, many of whom are still parishioners. You may view the video at [youtube.com/watch?v=8haFTZ8kjHg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8haFTZ8kjHg). Many of the original families came to America to escape persecution, build a future, and share in the American dream. We are grateful for their tremendous sacrifices.

Saturday morning began with an informative and entertaining lecture by Chorbishop Seeley Beggiani on the history of ritual and traditions in the Maronite faith. He was followed by the honored guest for the weekend, His Excellency Bishop Antoine Chbeir, who shared the details of his mission in war-torn Syria.

Charity and providing for our brothers and sisters in the Middle East has been a hallmark of St. Maron Church. In fact, in 1925, a group of our earliest parishioners organized the Maronite Charitable Society as a way of helping immigrants from the Middle East settle into a new life in the United States. The Anniversary Committee decided to revive this idea of helping our brothers and sisters overseas by organizing a fundraising effort with proceeds being directed to Bishop Chbeir to help with his activities in Syria.

Saturday evening Liturgy was celebrated by His Excellency Bishop Gregory J. Mansour and was concelebrated by Bishop Chbeir; Metropolitan Stefan Soroka, Archbishop of Philadelphia for Ukrainians; Chorbishop Seeley Beggiani; Msgr. Peter Fahed Azar; Msgr. James Root; Fr. Kamil Chouefati; visiting priests, Deacon Anthony Khoury, and Subdeacon Fahid Nammour. Liturgy was followed by a Grand *Hafli* attended by over 250 guests at the



Doubletree Hilton in Center City Philadelphia with entertainment by Amin & the Sultans. In addition to members of the clergy who concelebrated the Liturgy, honored guests included the Consul General of Lebanon to the United States, Majdi Ramadan, and Mike Naber, Executive Director of NAM.

The weekend's festivities concluded on Sunday with Liturgy followed by a brunch in the Msgr. Sharbel Community Center.

The greatest lesson of the weekend was found in the last line of the video which says, "The newest members of our Church family bring us youth, energy, and hope for the future. To those new families, we give you our legacy on which to build. *In shallah* ... another 125 years of children and families proudly saying "I am from St. Maron's!" □



Deadline for next month's issue of The Maronite Voice is March 22, 2018.

The Maronite Voice is the official newsletter of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon and of the Eparchy of Saint Maron.

Send all news, pictures and personal correspondence to:

The Maronite Voice
4611 Sadler Road

Glen Allen, Virginia 23060

Phone: (804) 270-7234; Fax: (804) 273-9914;

Email: Gmsebaali@aol.com

Digital pictures must be in "JPG" format and in high resolution (300dpi). The Maronite Voice is also available online, in PDF format, at www.stmaron.org. □

Washington, D.C. Discernment Weekend

by Msgr. Peter F. Azar

Hearing God's call in a world where there is so much noise is never easy. Nonetheless, we know there are men in our parishes called to the priesthood. Can we help them hear this call?

Let us increase our efforts to discern with them, to the best of our abilities, and put them on the right path. In this way we will be privileged to accompany men who show signs of a vocation to the priesthood, as well as promote the beauty of the priesthood in all that we do.

The Office of Vocations of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon and that of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, will be holding a discernment weekend April 13 - 15, 2018, at the Maronite Seminary, in Washington, D.C. If you know of anyone discerning a vocation to the priesthood, or would like to know more, please give him Fr. Gary George's phone number (314-363-3300) or Fr. Dominique Hanna's phone number (404-525-2505) or let Fr. Gary or Fr. Dominique know, and either Vocation director will gladly give him a call.

They will be able to experience a weekend in the life of a seminarian by joining us for Liturgy, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, meals, prayers and free time.

Friday, April 13, 2018

5:00 p.m. Arrivals
6:00 p.m. *Ramsho* (Evening prayer)
6:30 p.m. Welcome by Msgr. Peter F. Azar, Rector
7:00 p.m. Dinner at the Seminary
8:30 p.m. Social Time

Saturday, April 14, 2018

8:00 a.m. *Safro* (Morning prayer)
8:30 a.m. Breakfast
9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy
10:30 a.m. Talk by Fr. Dominique Hanna
11:30 a.m. Lunch at the Seminary
Noon Excursion to the Bible Museum, Downtown Washington, D.C.
5:30 p.m. *Ramsho* (Evening prayer)
6:30 p.m. Dinner
8:30 p.m. "Testimony" and Q&A with the Seminarians

Sunday, April 15, 2018

8:00 a.m. *Safro* (Morning prayer)
8:30 a.m. Breakfast
9:00 a.m. Reflection led by Fr. Gary George
9:30 a.m. Quiet Time for Confessions or Individual Talks
11:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy at Our Lady of Lebanon Parish
Noon Brunch
3:00 p.m. Departure ☐

Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

March 2 - 4, 2018

MYO/MYA Retreat, Our Lady Star of the East Church, Pleasantville, N.J.

March 5, 2018

Caritas-Lebanon Meetings, St. Louis, Mo.

March 6 - 8, 2018

Eastern Catholic Bishops Meetings, St. Louis, Mo.

March 11, 2018

Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

March 12 - 13, 2018

Meetings with USCCB Bishops and Seminary Visit, Washington, D.C.

March 13 - 14, 2018

Catholic Relief Services Board Meetings, Baltimore, Md.

March 17 - 18, 2018

Parish Visit, Our Lady of Purgatory Church, New Bedford, Mass.

March 19, 2018

First Vows of Sister Natalie Sayde Salameh, St. Anthony of the Desert Church, Fall River, Mass.

March 21, 2018

Presbyteral Council Meetings at the Chancery Office and Chrism Mass, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

March 22, 2018

CAMECT Meetings at Armenian Orthodox Prelature, Manhattan, N.Y.

March 23, 2018

Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

March 25, 2018

Palm Sunday Service at 11:30 a.m., Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.; Divine Liturgy at 5:00 p.m. at Manhattan Mission, Manhattan, N.Y.

March 27, 2018

Chrism Mass, Diocese of Brooklyn, Brooklyn, N.Y.

March 28, 2018

Rite of the Lamp, Our Lady of Mercy Church, Worcester, Mass.

March 29, 2018

Liturgy of the Washing of the Feet, St. Anthony Church, Springfield, Mass.

March 30, 2018

Liturgy of the Signing of the Chalice, Torrington, Conn. Burial of the Lord in the evening, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

March 31, 2018

Saturday of the Awaited Light Service, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

April 1, 2018

Easter Sunday, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y. ☐

"America" Magazine's Survey of Women in the Church

by
Bishop Robert Barron

Last month, *America* magazine published a fascinating survey regarding the attitudes of women in the Church. They were kind enough to publish a few of my reactions to the study, but I would like, in this article, to offer a fuller response to their findings.

One of the most disturbing conclusions from the survey is that women are increasingly disengaging from the life of the Church. The *America* editors themselves observed that this does not bode well for evangelization, for women have traditionally played a crucial role in the passing on of the faith. I couldn't agree more. Hans Urs von Balthasar famously opined that Jesus' own faith and sense of identity (at the level of his human nature) was awakened by the smile of his mother and by her relaying of the story of Israel. I have always taken this as emblematic of the indispensable contribution of mothers to the religious formation of their children. That said, I am equally concerned about the massive attrition of men from the practice of the faith, for study after study have indicated that the fidelity of fathers and grandfathers has a disproportionately significant impact on the faith-development of children, both male and female.

A second finding of the study is that women feel the Church should do more to welcome unmarried parents, the divorced, the widowed, and singles. Once again, I strongly concur. I'm a great devotee of the Catholic Action model that was so prevalent in the period prior to Vatican II but which has largely fallen into desuetude in the last forty or fifty years. In line with Catholic Action instincts, we ought to gather people of similar backgrounds, experiences, and formation and teach them the method of "see, judge, and act." So yes, parishes could bring together single mothers, widows, etc., and invite them to look at their lives in light of the Gospel and to determine, on that basis, what ought to be done. It is indeed true that, too often, parish life revolves almost exclusively around the concerns and interests of married people and their families. This can and should change.

A third conclusion of the survey I will admit I find a bit puzzling. Only 18% of the women questioned feel that they are "very much involved in decision-making." Now I fully understand that, given the hierarchical structure of the Church, the final call in most matters belongs to the pastor or the bishop; nevertheless, in my experience in two major Archdioceses, Chicago and Los Angeles, women are rather massively involved in the process of decision-making. Parish staffs and leadership teams are predominantly female, and increasingly, chancery offices and pastoral centers have ample female representation. And this is not simply my subjective impression. I distinctly recall a study by the theologian Catharine LaCugna, which appeared twenty-five years ago in the pages of *America*. She reported that 80% of religious education instructors and sponsors for the catechumenate are women; that 75% of Bible study leaders and participants are female; that 80% of those who join prayer groups are women; and that 70% of those who are

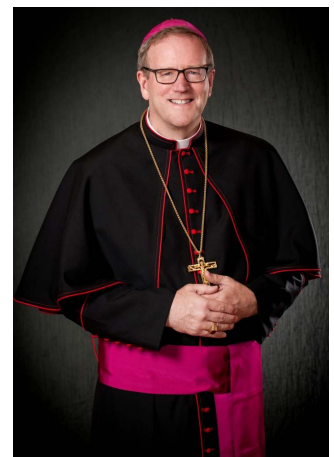
active in parish renewal programs are female. I can't help but speculate that those numbers have only increased in the last quarter century. And mind you, I enthusiastically applaud this development, which has only enriched the life of the Church.

An intriguing finding of the survey is that most Catholic women consider the care for the poor and the Eucharist as the two most essential elements of Catholic life. Well, Pope Benedict XVI said that the Church has three essential tasks: it worships God, it evangelizes, and it cares for the poor. So my first response to this statistical finding is, "Two out of three ain't bad." The Eucharist is indeed the central act of worship, the "source and summit of the Christian life," and serving the poor is the moral commitment that flows most directly from rightly ordered worship. However, I must say that I do worry that the women surveyed didn't seem to put evangelization on an equal footing, especially now when so many are drifting into the ranks of the "nones." I also remark a certain cognitive dissonance. On the one hand large numbers of women say that the Eucharist is central to one's identity as a Catholic, and yet 75% of women stay away from the Mass on a regular basis. The Fathers of Vatican II wanted "full, conscious, and active" participation in the liturgy. This survey confirms what a thousand other surveys over the past five decades have indicated, namely, that we are a long, long way from realizing that conciliar aspiration.

I must say that what both surprised and heartened me the most was the discovery that fully 90% of the women surveyed say that they have not experienced sexism in the Catholic Church. Obviously, any type of sexism at any time is bad, but I wonder whether any other organization could put up numbers as good as these. Would 90% of women in the corporate world, in Hollywood, in government, or in education say that they never experienced sexism? I sincerely doubt it. I think that these numbers indicate that, though we still have a lot to do to address the problems of sexism and misogyny in the Church, we have indeed made a good deal of progress. □

About the Author

Bishop Robert Barron is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries.



Bishop Robert Barron

Love and Transformation: A Lenten Reflection

by
Rev. David A. Fisher

*You are to love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and with all your strength - Deuteronomy 6:5
He answered, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind. And you must love your neighbor as yourself" - Luke 10:27.*

The Call To Love

Our Lord in the Gospel of Luke adds to the teaching of the Mosaic Law; not only must we love God but also our neighbor as ourselves. Indeed, Jesus reveals to us through his Holy Cross and Resurrection that the Hidden God, who taught his chosen people to be ethical, is the God who loves and is Love. That God is Our Father, who did not spare his only Son, and has given us the gift of his Holy Spirit, so that we might have life, and life in its fullest. God in his eternal being, who is the Holy Trinity, is Love who offers us "love beyond all telling," the transformation of our being.

The First Letter of John says, "We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him." The first Christians realized that the call to love like Christ was more than a conversion of feelings or emotions, but a transformation of being that overflows into one's total character and disposition towards others. It is the indwelling of the gift of the Holy Spirit, forming believers into the living Body of Christ, the Church. This is why the Church is Eucharistic, it never ceases to give thanks to the Father, and recalls and relives constantly the actions of its Lord at the Last Supper. The First Letter to the Corinthians gives us the earliest written proclamation of the Eucharistic words of Jesus:

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes (1Corinthians 11:23 - 26).

Early Christians spoke of this transformation of their lives and being as theosis, metanoia, divinization; becoming like the divine, becoming god-like, becoming Christ-like. This does not mean of course taking on God's nature but growing to full stature as human beings created in the image and likeness of God.

Death and Divinization

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).

For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life, but each one in proper order: Christ the first-fruits; then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ; then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to his God and Father, when he has destroyed every sovereignty and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death, for "he subjected everything under his feet" (1 Corinthians 15: 22-27).

Scripture tells us that sin results in death, but death has been defeated by Christ. Sin at its core is a two-fold rejection, that of God (Love) and of our divine created image and likeness (love). Sin is the refusal to be transformed by the Father's Holy Spirit, to become men and women constituted by love. Sin is the hell we can create for ourselves even in this life, by entrapping ourselves within the false ego of self-sufficiency, and being unwilling to "love our neighbor as yourself." Sin and the hell in which it entraps us is a denial of the example of love that Jesus taught his disciples when he washed their feet at the Last Supper; "If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14).

Jesus shows us the way to the fullness of life, that death is not the final stage of our lives, but this path involves our taking up our cross and following him. It is the path of divinization, the path of self-offering, self-denial, the path of the holy martyrs, the path of love. Scripture tells us that in the end "now these three remain: faith, hope, and love--but the greatest of these is love" (I Corinthians 13:13).

God is present always and everywhere. The fire of his love can melt away our self-centeredness, our false self-sufficiency, our prejudices, our hate and bigotry. For those who through faith are refashioned like gold in fire, for them the Kingdom shall be an eternal "theosis" in the flame of God's love, and for those who choose not to love, God's love shall be a flame of torturous loss and isolation.

The Wisdom of the Syriac Fathers

The Syriac Fathers often reflected on the commandment to love, and the transformative power of love upon our human nature. By way of example this Lenten reflection closes with the wisdom offered by St. Ephrem the Syrian, and St. Isaac of Nineveh [Isaac the Syrian].

(Continues on page 19)



Accepting Suffering by Dr. Anne Borik

In *Going Deeper* this month, excerpts from Chapter Three (Accepting Suffering) of the book *Interior Freedom*, written by Jacques Philippe, are shared for reflection.

This subject needs to be handled carefully and therefore we ask God to grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can and the wisdom to know the difference.

According to Philippe, we should not limit ourselves to accepting things grudgingly, but should truly consent to them. Accepting means to not only resign ourselves to the suffering situation but to actually welcome it. It is impossible to do this unless we believe that "In all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

There is no philosophy or theological argument that can explain this completely. Our job as Christians is to simply believe and trust.

The most painful suffering is the suffering that we reject or resist. It becomes laden with rebellion, resentment and tension, which increases the pain we experience. But, according to Philippe, when we have God's grace to accept suffering and consent to it, then it becomes less painful. "Peaceful suffering is no longer suffering," said St. Jean-Marie Vianney.

This is true of physical suffering as well. Take for example a fall. If you stiffen your muscles and try to resist the fall it often leads to broken bones and increased pain, whereas, if you are flexible and 'go with the flow' in a relaxed manner, often you can thwart the fall and prevent painful injuries. Another example is how the branches of a tree bend with the wind. The more flexible the branch is and willing to accept the stress placed upon it, the less chance of its breaking.

In accepting suffering, we find new strength. God is faithful and always gives us the strength necessary to bear day after

day what is burdensome and difficult in our lives.

Furthermore, according to Philippe, what really hurts is not so much suffering itself as the fear of suffering. If welcomed, suffering makes us grow, it matures us, trains us, purifies us and teaches us. Fear of suffering, on the other hand, hardens us and often leads us to make poor choices that we regret later in life.

By accepting the suffering which is "offered" by life, and allowed by God for our progress and purification, we spare ourselves in the long run. Let us hear these words of St. Paul when he says, "This slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison."

In our daily trials of powerlessness, let us remember that God gives us the strength we need; and know that we can do all things through Him who strengthens us. □

Prayer For Peace In Our Communities

O Lord our God, in your mercy and kindness, no thought of ours is left unnoticed, no desire or concern ignored.

You have proven that blessings abound when we fall on our knees in prayer, and so we turn to you in our hour of need.

Surrounded by violence and cries for justice, we hear your voice telling us what is required . . . "Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Mi 6:8).

Fill us with your mercy so that we, in turn, may be merciful to others. Strip away pride, suspicion, and racism so that we may seek peace and justice in our communities.

Strengthen our hearts so that they beat only to the rhythm of your holy will. Flood our path with your light as we walk humbly toward a future filled with encounter and unity.

Be with us, O Lord, in our efforts, for only by the prompting of your grace can we progress toward virtue. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. □

(United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

Prayer Gives Our Vocation its True Meaning

by
Fr. Tony Massad

Purity of heart constitutes prayer more than do all the prayers that are uttered out aloud, and silence united to a mind that is sincere is better than the loud voice of someone crying out (Aphrahat – Demonstration IV, on Prayer).

For many of us, the season of Lent is a time of sacrifice, to deprive ourselves of something we enjoy in order to tie our sacrifices to that of our Lord's, when he spent forty days and forty nights preparing in the desert for His journey to Jerusalem for His Crucifixion and Resurrection. During Lent we are all called to be a little more serious about our spiritual life and to focus on our relationship with God.

Lent, above all, is a call to prayer, to real, deep, and heartfelt prayer. It is good to give up something we enjoy, it

is good to give of our time, talents, and treasures for the needy, yet if we do not have prayer, then our actions are only selfish deprivation or social justice work. Prayer is what gives our vocations as Christians its true meaning, because Christ prepared Himself first through prayer.

What is prayer? Prayer can be many different things. Prayer can be a request from God: "God help me through this difficult time in my life." Prayer can be a "thank you" or gratitude towards God: "Thank you, Lord, for seeing me through this challenging situation." Prayer can even be an action, like making the sign of the cross or when we offer up something we do for the glory of God. Prayer can be many different things, but most importantly, powerfully, and foundationally, prayer is the time we spend with God and the conversation we have with Him. We are all called to be men and women of prayer.

There are many different ways we can converse with God. We can say our prayers privately, thanking God for everything he has given us, or prayer can be done in the community or with family and friends. Jesus says in Matthew 6:5-6 "When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

Individual prayer is a must for us to be good and faithful servants to Christ. Celebrating the Liturgy every Sunday is a necessity, but to believe it is the only prayer we are called to partake of is a grave mistake. From individual prayer we are called to partake of prayer in a group: Prayers like sitting with your

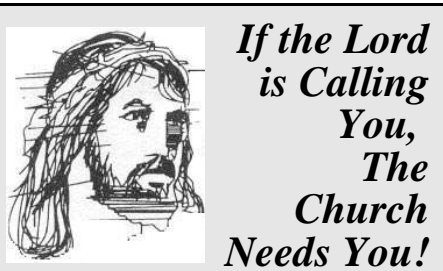
family at dinner and thanking God for the food you are about to eat and for the love that you share. Jesus tells us in Matthew, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them." The best prayer we partake of is in community; it is our Divine Liturgy, where we come together as one community to pray and offer ourselves with the priest, and partake of the Holy Eucharist, the true body and blood of Jesus Christ.

We are called during Lent to pray, to fast, and to give. It is through prayer that fasting is elevated from dieting to sacrifice with holy intention. It is through prayer that giving is elevated from donation to true and holy charity. It is through prayer that we are reminded of our calling, of our vocation, of our mission, to follow Jesus Christ through the Cross to be lifted up with Him in His Resurrection.

Intercession for Fostering Vocations to the Priesthood

Remember, O Lord, your holy Church which you established on the solid rock of the true faith, and send her vocations to holy priesthood and religious life.

In a world of distractions, which pull us away from loving you and our neighbor, may those whom you call to serve your Church respond to you and have the courage to do your will. We pray to you, O Lord. □



If you feel that you have a vocation to the Priesthood or religious life, contact your Pastor or write to:

Fr. Gary George, Director
Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon
Office of Vocations
1021 South 10th Street
St. Louis, MO 63104

or

Fr. Dominique Hanna, Director
Eparchy of Saint Maron
Office of Vocations
c/o St. Joseph Church
6025 Glenridge Drive
Sandy Springs, GA 30328

or

Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary
7164 Alaska Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20012

Uniontown, Pennsylvania

A Story of Grace

My name is Phillip Thomas and I am a Maronite Catholic. I am seventy four years old and I would like to share a story that happened to me in 1995.

My youngest son and I were swimming in the ocean in Melbourne, Florida. My wife stayed with my parents to help out. My son noticed some young surfers further out to our left, and asked if he could go out and talk to them. He was a strong swimmer. I noticed a rip tide (undertow) off to the right about thirty yards and warned him of it. About forty-five minutes passed and I became worried about him, then decided to swim out and see how he was. Halfway out I saw him swimming in. He said he was tired.

I decided to tread water, lie on my back and relax. Some time passed and the undertow had me. Many years ago when I was a kid my father told me about this. He said swim with it and swim around it. I thought I was a stronger swimmer than that and tried to swim out of it.

I fought it for some time. I remember being beyond the surfers. The undertow pulled me down five or six times, and now the surfers were very small. I could not beat the undertow and was exhausted.

I looked up into the sun; put my hands straight up and said "God, I am ready." I allowed myself to go under the water. The next thing I remember, I was close to shore on my knees with waves lapping up on my chest. My hands were still straight up and I was looking up to God. I heard the words from God, "Not yet." God spoke to me.

My son and a young surfer each grabbed an arm and took me to shore. I laid in the sand until I had the strength to stand. I told my son not to tell his mother and worry her.

Some years later when Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, was in town, I told him the story. He said it was not unknown that God would talk to men. I searched for the reason that I am here, and nothing I do seems good enough. I enjoy my life, and I golf five days a week in the morning (first group out). In the afternoon I cut angels and animals with a chainsaw out of logs. I give most of it away and I enjoy doing it. It relaxes me.

I am the father of three, a grandfather of seven, a great grandfather of two. I read scriptures daily, keep my family close to each other and do what I can for them. It does not seem enough for God to have given me back my life. I will continue to try to do what is right, and thank God for the life he has given me. ☐



Why NAM?

by Rose Sahyoun

The Maronite Church dates from the early Christians of Antioch where they gathered to worship and have continuously gathered as we similarly do at each of our respective parishes. We have maintained our Maronite traditions, rituals, history and Liturgy. We are connected to Lebanon as our spiritual homeland where the Patriarch

resides. Today we may be of diverse nationalities but we all worship in the Maronite traditions adapted to living in the United States of America.

Here is where NAM comes into play. You ask "Why NAM? Why the National Apostolate of Maronites? Why is NAM important? Why do we need NAM?"

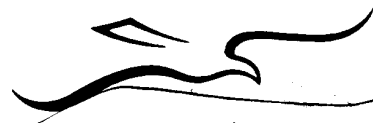
Well, the inception of NAM came about through the foresight of several Lebanese Maronite men who longed to be close to other Maronites who, with their families and friends, came to the United States for a variety of reasons. Those determined men did not want to lose their heritage and identity while assimilating. So, they decided to organize around the cities and towns where there was a Maronite church, and the people in the surrounding areas could join. They wanted to be a connecting link to unite and preserve, thus, the inception and essential reason for NAM: A unifying link between the laity and the clergy to serve the Maronites in the United States. NAM facilitated the coming of our first Bishop and Exarchate in 1966.

NAM is a living, vibrant organization of people like you and me. It exists as a National Organization to be a unifying force. NAM is working to keep our Maronite faith alive as a link to those who are interested. We are an Apostolate because we are lay people sharing our experiences. NAM is the official and largest Maronite organization in the world. Other countries have reached out to us to see how they can organize like us. NAM is an effective way to promote, vocalize support and preserve our Maronite heritage and traditions through Jesus Christ.

Many have been involved in NAM for many years and some have served as delegates, Regional Vice-Presidents, and Board Members because they believe in NAM's cause. We are proud people and want others to be proud of us. NAM has many projects and functions and hopefully they will continue to flourish and grow. We need each one of you, young and old, to join hands with us. We need your membership as an affirmation of our work. We need your children who are our future.

Through the years, NAM has developed and sponsored several projects including the birth of the Maronite Youth Organization [MYO] and the Maronite Young Adults [MYA], which now stand on their own; scholarships; Cedar tree reforestation and much more. NAM has helped enrich our pride as Maronites, helped foster lifelong friendships across this nation in both eparchies.

We are asking for your commitment, involvement and participation. We are asking you to become a member of NAM officially. The cost is minimal, but the reward is abounding. Your membership is a witness to NAM's efforts to strengthen and unify all of us. It affirms the work of the Apostolate to foster spiritual renewal, education and ethnic and social fun. We need you, and each parish is vital to this organization. Won't you join us? Register today or continue your membership. Joining is as easy as log in to www.namnews.org and submit your application. ☐





July 11-July 15, 2018
Houston, Texas



Pre-registration Deadline: **Monday, June 18, 2018**

Please complete all information or register online: www.namnews.org

Incomplete forms will not be processed. Please PRINT legibly. You will receive a confirmation via email or mail.

Primary Registrant: Please add additional family members on reverse side.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Parish: _____

Package/Program Purchased: _____

Check all that apply:

- NAM Member NAM Delegate
 NAM Board Ord. St. Sharbel
 Conv. Comm. Child (5-11)
 Youth (12-18) Yng Ad. (18-35)
 Vegetarian Age: _____

PACKAGES ONLY –Enter number of packages desired and make sure to fill in Totals and Grand Totals. Daily Workshops are included with any purchase. NAM members whose 2018 dues have been paid will receive \$15 off of the full adult package and \$10 off all other packages. This discount is void after the pre-registration deadline of June 18, 2018. If you wish to pay for your member dues with this registration: send a check payable to NAM.
 Child, Youth, Young Adult, and Excursions are additional and not included in packages. Saturday Banquet seating is chosen for you unless you contact NAM office or request on-line. The "Covenant of Behavior" MUST be completed for all Child and Youth registrants- if not accompanied by parent. See forms on-line.
 **YOUTH: If you are 18 and did not graduate from high school by summer; YOUNG ADULT: If you are over 18 and a high school graduate and younger than 35.

Package Options DOES NOT INCLUDE HOTEL ROOMS	Adult and Young Adult 18 years old +		Youth 12 to 18 years **		Child 5 to 11 years		Entertainment Only 35 & under - no meals included Entry after 10PM - valid student ID required	
	Before 6/18/2018	After 6/18/2018	Before 6/18/2018	After 6/18/2018	Before 6/18/2018	After 6/18/2018	Before 6/18/2018	After 6/18/2018
Full (Thur - Sun)	#__ @\$300	#__ @\$330	#__ @\$270	#__ @\$300	#__ @\$150	#__ @\$180	#__ @\$120	#__ @\$150
Weekend (Fri - Sun)	#__ @\$260	#__ @\$290	#__ @\$220	#__ @\$250	#__ @\$130	#__ @\$160	#__ @\$100	#__ @\$130
Saturday & Sunday	#__ @\$170	#__ @\$200	#__ @\$150	#__ @\$180	#__ @\$80	#__ @\$110		
Thursday Only	#__ @\$50	#__ @\$80	#__ @\$40	#__ @\$70	#__ @\$20	#__ @\$50	#__ @\$30	#__ @\$60
Friday Only	#__ @\$110	#__ @\$140	#__ @\$90	#__ @\$120	#__ @\$50	#__ @\$80	#__ @\$50	#__ @\$80
Saturday Only	#__ @\$140	#__ @\$170	#__ @\$120	#__ @\$150	#__ @\$60	#__ @\$90	#__ @\$70	#__ @\$130
Sunday Only	#__ @\$50	#__ @\$80	#__ @\$40	#__ @\$70	#__ @\$20	#__ @\$50		
Totals	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

EXCURSIONS (Children, Youth, Young Adults, Adults, and Seniors)

Wednesday: Excursion – General – Baseball Game at Minute Maid Park - Houston Astros (World Champs) vs Oakland Athletics (A's)	#__ @\$35
Thursday: Excursion – MYA – Kayaking**	#__ @\$115
Thursday: Excursion – General – Museum District – Children (under 12) to tag along to the Children's Museum**	#__ @\$25
Thursday: Excursion – MYO – Houston Food Bank – Service Project with Dinner**	#__ @\$20
Thursday: MYA – Theology on Tap with the Bishops – St. Arnold's Brewery – 2000 Lyons Ave, Houston, TX 77020	#__ @\$20
Friday: Excursion – General – NASA Johnson Space Center - Includes lunch	#__ @\$55
Friday: Excursion – MYA – NASA Johnson Space Center – Afternoon Excursion	#__ @\$20
Saturday: Excursion – MYO – Kemah Boardwalk - Includes lunch – Plan "B" (if adverse weather) – Edwards Center on I-10 – Bowling-Escape Room-Food-Games**	#__ @\$20
Saturday: Excursion & Workshop – MYA – Philippe Ziade – Workshop during Excursion to Museum District	#__ @\$20
Saturday: Excursion – General – Our Lady of the Cedars – Church Tour	#__ @\$20
I want to make a Non-Taxable Donation for Religious and Clergy attending NAM '18 - \$100__ \$200__ \$300__	

**Pre-registration and Signed Waiver Required: Contact Samer Haouila for Forms: shaouila@yahoo.com

GRAND TOTAL \$

Make checks payable to "NAM Convention" and mail to NAM, P.O. Box 717, Yonkers, NY 10702

Do Not Send Cash. If using a **CREDIT CARD** register online or complete the information below and fax to 914-964-3071

For Credit Card: Visa MC Discovery AMEX Acct#: _____ EXP Date: _____

V-code (3 or 4 digit# on front/back of card): _____ Signature: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY: AMT.PD: _____ DATE: _____ CHK#: _____ REG#: _____


For hotel reservations call Marriott Marquis Houston at 1 (713)-654-1777 code 'NAM Convention'. Hotel rate: \$139/night for single/double/triple/quad room. Parking extra. A one-night deposit is required for all reservations. **Rate valid only until June 18, 2018**



Women's Discernment Retreat

April 6-8, 2018

**How is God calling me to serve through the gift of my life?
What is my mission in the life of the Church?**



The Lord is my shepherd
there is nothing I shall
want... Psalm 23:1

Hosted by the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light

WHAT *Prayerfully reflect on the Lord's will for your life and how to discern your call.*

WHO: Women between the ages of 18-35 who are open to discerning marriage or religious life or single life of service.

WHERE: Mother of the Light Convent, 856 Tucker Rd Dartmouth MA 02747.

WHEN: Friday April 6 at 7pm with supper. Concludes Sunday April 8 at 3pm.

COST: Suggested donation \$100 to help cover some expenses.
Includes all meals and accommodation.
Please bring your own toiletries and towels.

Register by: Sunday March 25

Contact: To register for the weekend or to find out more information:
Sister Marla Marie Lucas sister@maroniteservants.org or 202-213-7700

The weekend will include:

- *Divine Liturgy, Confession, Eucharistic Adoration
- *Talks on Religious life, Marriage & Vocational Discernment
- *Fellowship with other young women

www.maroniteservants.org

Lebanese Interreligious Foundation Adyan Awarded Niwano Peace Prize

by Doreen Abi Raad (February 20, 2018)
Catholic News Service (CNS)

Adyan, a Lebanese foundation for interreligious studies and spiritual solidarity, is the recipient of the 35th Niwano Peace Prize.

Lebanon now moves "a firm step further toward its recognition as a world center for dialogue between cultures and religions," said Maronite Father Fadi Daou, President of Adyan Foundation, in announcing the international award in Beirut on February 19. "Peace has a specific name in Lebanon, and that is 'living together,'" he added.

Daou is one of the five founders of Adyan ("religions" in Arabic), each of whom are followers of different denominations of Christianity and Islam. Since its foundation in 2006, Adyan "has worked to take interreligious dialogue from apologetic debates and populist complacency, to a common commitment in what we call 'religious social responsibility,'" Daou said.

The Tokyo-based Niwano Peace Foundation established the Niwano Peace Prize in 1983 to honor and encourage individuals and organizations that have contributed significantly to interreligious cooperation, thereby furthering the cause of world peace. It is named for Nikkyo Niwano, founder and first president of the lay Buddhist organization Rissho Kosei-kai.

The award's selection committee commended Adyan for valuing "religious diversity in promoting peace and social justice" and cited Adyan as "a visible and committed actor for peace in Lebanon and the broader region."

Past Niwano Peace Prize recipients include Brazilian Archbishop Helder Camara; Jordanian Prince El Hassan bin Talal; retired Archbishop Elias Chacour of Haifa, Israel; the late Bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia of San Cristobal de Las Casas, Mexico; Father Hans Kung, a Swiss theologian; the World Muslim Congress; and the Sant'Egidio Community.

Daou recalled St. John Paul II's declaration that "Lebanon is more than a country, it is a message" of coexistence for East and West. "I really believe that this award, coming from Japan, is 'another voice' - now from the East - to remind us of what John Paul II said," the priest said.

"Worldwide, peace today signifies justice and the liberation of oppressed people," Daou said. "It also means stopping the implication of religion in political choices and ending linking religion to violence and extremism."

While it is important to discover what is common among religions, Daou noted, even more important is "to discover the differences between religions and to educate people - especially the youth - to respect those differences, as an expression of our belief in freedom of conscience and our refusal of all forms of coercion and takfirism (considering others as infidels)," he said.

Daou said the "problematic reality" in the Middle East



In this 2013 file photo, interreligious leaders gather in Beirut for Adyan Foundation's launch of their first toolkit for faith-based educational institutions on values of citizenship and public life. (Credit: CNS photo/courtesy Adyan Foundation.)

"pushes us to go a step further in order to promote interreligious solidarity in the combat of extremism and of injustice."

Recent Adyan initiatives include offering interfaith mediation dialogue and peace education to vulnerable Syrian citizens, both in Lebanon and Syria. In Iraq, working with journalists and civil society activists, Adyan focuses on spreading the values of inclusive citizenship and interreligious solidarity, particularly to heal the society from the traumas of Islamic State.

Daou said that Adyan will continue on its path "for the adoption of pluralism as a social and political value in Arab countries."

"It will also work for the promotion of resilience to all forms of extremism and for the development of social cohesion, spiritual solidarity, intercivilizational encounter and world stability," he added.

By 2016, a decade after its foundation, Adyan had more than 3,000 members with some 35,000 direct beneficiaries in twenty-nine countries. The Niwano Peace Prize ceremony will take place in Tokyo on May 9 [2018]. □

Pope's Wishes for Pontifical Maronite College

Pope Francis on February 16, 2018, shared his wishes for peace and young people in an address in the Consistory Hall of the Apostolic Palace, where he received the Community of the Pontifical Maronite College in Rome, on the tenth anniversary of the approval of the new Statute of the College.

Warning of the danger of slipping into the culture of "the



temporary and of appearances,” the Holy Father said, “These years are an opportunity for developing antibodies against worldliness and mediocrity. They are years of exercise in the ‘Roman gym’.”

He cited the human, intellectual, and spiritual formation those present receive, noting it is not for their own careers but “a treasure destined for the faithful who await you in your eparchies and to whom your life awaits to be donated.” He reminded them that they will be called “to live a mission, without sparing yourselves, without calculations, without limits of availability.”

“You are called to live all this in a time that is not without sufferings and dangers, but also filled with hope,” the Holy Father continued. “The people who will be entrusted to you, disoriented by the instability that unfortunately continues to have repercussions on the Middle East, will seek in you pastors who console them: pastors with the word of Jesus on their lips, with hands ready to dry their tears and to caress suffering countenances; pastors who forget themselves and their own interests; pastors who are never discouraged, because every day they draw from the Eucharistic bread the sweet strength of love that satiates; pastors who are not afraid to be “eaten up” by the people, like good bread offered to brothers.”

The Holy Father concluded with two wishes for the Maronites present. First, for peace, especially Lebanon. Second, for young people: “As a Church we wish increasingly to have them at heart, accompany them with trust and patience, dedicating time to them and listening to them.” □

Pope Says No Fake Fasting

Pope Francis on February 16, 2018, called on the faithful to avoid “fake fasting” during Lent, according to a report in Vatican News. His remarks came in his morning homily during Mass at *Casa Santa Marta* in the Vatican.

“A true Christian must be consistent, not putting himself on show, never despising others or engaging in quarrels or disagreements,” the Pope said. He explained that the faithful should avoid behavior that is inconsistent with the spirit of Lent.

Referencing the first reading of the day from chapter 58

of Isaiah that discusses the correct manner of fasting, Francis warned against the temptation of “showing off” by fasting: “by making a fuss of it and letting people know that we are practicing Catholics and we do penance, so that people think what a good person.”

He said this sort of behavior is a trick – pretending to be virtuous. He encouraged all to fast, but to smile while fasting. And he recommended at least a partial fast for those who can’t commit to a total fast. Even “if you cannot commit to a total fast, the kind that makes you feel hunger in your bones” you can still fast humbly and consistently.

He continued by inviting the faithful to fast because it can help others. Fasting involves lowering oneself by reflecting on one’s sins and asking forgiveness from the Lord, he noted. And consistency in fasting also means acting as a Christian in other areas of life.

“Does my fast help others?” the Pope asked. If not, “it’s inconsistent and it takes you on the path to a double life, pretending to be a just Christian – like the Pharisees or the Sadducees...if I am unable to do something, I will not do it. I will do only what I can with the consistency of a true Christian.” □

Zenit.org, February 16, 2018

The Country Can No Longer Pay the Bills of Other People’s Wars, Says the President of Caritas-Lebanon

“How can you talk of peace when some are fueling wars in the Region? What are the consequences of the conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen? Only death, hatred, and violence! Where is the democracy that some wanted to bring? We see nothing but desolation. Despite everything, I believe we can still hope and live in dignity and respect.” Father Paul Karam, President of Caritas Lebanon, said this yesterday as he met a group of delegates from some Italian Diocesan Caritas on their solidarity visit to Lebanon promoted by Caritas Italy. “Lebanon” the Maronite priest said, “can no longer pay the bills of other people’s wars unleashed on our borders” – a clear reference to the conflicts



Fr. Paul Karam, President of Caritas-Lebanon.

in Iraq and Syria which have pushed into the Country of the Cedars over one million Syrians and countless Iraqis, who add their numbers to the decades-long presence of Palestinians. It is estimated that one third of the Lebanese population is made up of refugees, with serious social, political and economic repercussions for the country, and their numbers are rising. According to Father Karam, “In the first half of 2017 alone, 170 thousand children were born to refugee families. These children have no rights or citizenship, they are born invisible.”

Father Karam explained that Caritas “is trying to do its utmost to meet the needs of both local and refugee populations with dedicated projects, thanks to the support of other bodies such as Caritas Italy. The Lebanese have increasingly been the focus of our projects. Recent studies have shown that about 35% of Lebanese people live below the poverty line, and the conditions of Palestinian refugees are also worsening.” To revive its aid programs, Caritas Lebanon has launched a Lenten campaign based on three actions, to “help, donate and support, where material aid goes hand in hand with sharing and spiritual support. Let us not be fooled by large buildings, by shopping malls full of lights, by building sites that churn out luxury apartments,” the President of Caritas said. “Many of these, approximately 60%, are owned by businessmen from the Gulf countries. Here in Lebanon, the poor are getting poorer and the rich are getting richer. The middle class no longer exists. Young couples struggle to get married, to find a home and a job. Were it not for the remittances of the approximately 18 million Lebanese of the diaspora, Lebanon today would be on the verge of bankruptcy. Families live on the aid they receive from their relatives abroad.” □

Catholic World News, February 22, 2018

Love and Transformation: A Lenten Reflection

Continued from page 11

St. Ephrem writes:

Again I entreat you, brethren, since God is love, he is not well-pleased by things that take place without love. How would God accept prayer, or gifts, or first fruits, or offering

from a murderer, unless they first repented in accordance with God's word? But you will no doubt say to me, 'I am not a murderer.' And I will prove to you that you are, or rather John the Theologian will convict you, when he says, 'Every one who hates their brother is a murderer.'

So then, my beloved brethren, let us not prefer anything, let us not hasten to obtain anything more than love. Let no one have anything against anyone, let no one repay evil for evil. Do not let the sun go down on your anger, but let us forgive our debtors everything and let us welcome love, because love covers a multitude of sins.

Because what gain is there, my children, if someone has everything, but does not have love which saves?” St. Ephrem the Syrian On Love.

St. Isaac writes:

“I also maintain that those who are punished in Gehenna are scourged by the scourge of love. Nay, what is so bitter and vehement as the torment of love?”

I mean that those who have become conscious that they have sinned against love suffer greater torment from this than from any fear of punishment.

For the sorrow caused in the heart by sin against love is more poignant than any torment. It would be improper for a man to think that sinners in Gehenna are deprived of the love of God. Love is the offspring of knowledge of the truth which, as is commonly confessed, is given to all. The power of love works in two ways. It torments sinners, even as happens here when a friend suffers from a friend. But it becomes a source of joy for those who have observed its duties. Thus I say that this is the torment of Gehenna: bitter regret. But love inebriates the souls of the sons of Heaven by its delectability” (St. Isaac the Syrian, "Homily 72: On the Vision of the Nature of Incorporeal Beings, in Questions and Answers," Ascetical Homilies of St Isaac the Syrian). □

Seek Refuge in Mary



In times of trouble, Christians come to Mary for refuge, Pope Francis stressed in his homily on January 28, 2018, in the Papal Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome. He came to celebrate Mass on the occasion of the Feast of the Translation of the Icon of the Salus Populi Romani.

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Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania *First Penance*

Seek Refuge in Mary

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"We are looking for refuge," said the Holy Father. "Our Fathers in the faith have taught that in turbulent moments, we must gather under the mantle of the Holy Mother of God."

He pointed out that in the past those being persecuted and the needy would seek help from "noble, high-ranking women," who "stretched out their cloaks, which were considered inviolable, as a sign of reception, for they granted protection."

Mary, he noted, is the "highest" woman. "Her coat is always open to welcome us and gather us."

Pope Francis repeated the ancient antiphon, giving it as evidence that Christians have always recognized that Mary is the place of refuge:

Under your protection we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God: do not despise the supplications of us who are undergoing trials, but deliver us from all danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

He continued by reminding the congregation that Mary, "guards faith, protects relationships, saves us in the storms and preserves from evil." He emphasized her ability to protect:

"When Mary is in the home, the devil does not enter. Where Mary is in the home, the devil does not enter. Where there is the Mother, disturbance does not prevail, fear does not win... Mary is the sure ark in the midst of the flood. Ideas or technology will not give us comfort and hope, but what does is the face of the Mother, her hands that caress life, her mantle that shelters us. We learn to find refuge, going every day to the Mother." □

(Zenit.org, January 28, 2018)



Carney Collis, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Christopher (Michelle) Collis, and Lilah Hilal, daughter of Mr. Zaher Hilal and Dr. Elizabeth Joseph received the Mystery of Penance on Saturday, January 27, 2018, at Saint Anthony/St. George Maronite Catholic Church in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

The children are pictured with Fr. Hanna Karam, Pastor, and Subdeacon Crosby Sparks. □