



The Maronite Voice



A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA

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May 2018

Courage, The "Breaking of the Bread," and The Holy Spirit

The courageous way in which Jesus went to his death has inspired millions over the ages. He deliberately and intentionally "broke the bread" of his own Body at the Last Supper, the night before his passion and death, giving his disciples a glimpse into the true meaning of a strong, determined, and sacrificial love. The next day his disciples, except for John, were too frightened to stand with him, afraid to admit that they were his companions. Even after his Resurrection, although he ate, prayed, and "broke bread" with them, they were still very much afraid.

But something happened on that 50th day after Passover, "Pentecost." The Holy Spirit descended on Mary, the Apostles, and other disciples gathered out of fear, hiding in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. This outpouring changed the frightened into bold witnesses and the demoralized into courageous evangelists. This gift of courage, the Holy Spirit, became a reference point, in fact, the beginning of the early Church's desire to go into the whole world and share the Good News.

We find here a great lesson whenever we are demoralized or frightened, whenever we would prefer to hide rather than to face the difficulties before us, whenever we say we would "die for" Christ, as Peter promised, but as the cock crows three times, we deny him rather than live courageously under criticism, anger, or hardship.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is not just a gift which was given 2,000 years ago. We, today, must pray for this Holy Spirit. We must deliberately, intentionally and with determination "break the bread" of our own humanity, our own will, our own comfort level, so as to enter, like Jesus did, into the hostile, dark, and difficult aspects of our world. This was the determined passion of Dr. Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, Pope John Paul II, Pope Francis, and so many others who have employed the principle of non-violent struggle to effect change in the dark world of hatred and injustice. This courage is inspired by the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.



(Continues on page 9)

Schedule of Bishop Elias Zaidan

May 5 - 6, 2018

Pastoral Visit to Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Lombard [Chicago], Ill.

May 10 - 13, 2018

Pastoral Visit to Our Lady of the Cedars Church, Houston, Tex. (First Communion on Saturday, May 12, and Ordination to the Subdiaconate of Dr. Gabriel Habib on Sunday, May 13)

May 15, 2018

Enthronement of the Most Reverend George Thomas as Bishop of Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nev.

May 19, 2018

20th Anniversary of St. Jude Church, West Covina, Calif., Divine Liturgy and Banquet

May 20, 2018

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

May 23, 2018

Pastoral Visit to St. Maron Parish, Cleveland, Ohio

May 26 - 27, 2018

Pastoral Visit to Our Lady of Lebanon Parish, Lewisville, Tex: Ordination to the Subdiaconate of Dr. George Andary

May 28 - June 5, 2018

Eparchial Pilgrimage to Greece

June 6 -16, 2018

Annual Synod of Maronite Bishops, Bkerke, Lebanon

June 9, 2018

Ordination to the Priesthood of Deacons Elias Yazbeck and Rami Razzouk at Our Lady of Help, Zouk Mikhael, Lebanon. □



Save the Date

Thursday, October 4, 2018

Join us for the

Ninth Annual Benefit Dinner for The Eparchy of Saint Maron

New York Athletic Club, New York City

Details to follow

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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

Detroit, Michigan Palm Sunday Celebration



His Excellency Bishop A. Elias Zaidan celebrated Palm Sunday Liturgy at St. Maron Church in Detroit, Mich. He was joined by Chorbishop Louis Baz, Pastor, and Fr. Milad Yaghi, Secretary to the Bishop.

The church was packed for the Liturgy, with children eagerly awaiting the traditional Palm Sunday procession with their candles.

Bishop Zaidan delivered a thoughtful homily on the significance of Palm Sunday. He told the story of how Jesus rode through Jerusalem on a donkey to a crowd of faithful worshippers who gathered to lay palm branches along his path. And he reminded the congregation how important it is to give praise to God and encourage others to come to church.

Also during the Liturgy, Bishop Zaidan inducted Dr. Edouard Daher and Elias Hazkial into the Order of St. Sharbel and emphasized the importance of the Order as a way for people to support the Eparchy. His Excellency also gave a special plaque of recognition to one of the church's younger parishioners, Rita Shemmai, who plays the organ at church, describing her as a role model for other children her age.

Bishop Zaidan made a special point to mention that it would be Chorbishop Baz's last Palm Sunday at St. Maron's, in light of his impending retirement in July. His Excellency recognized Chorbishop Baz for his years of faithful service and the parishioners applauded in appreciation. Following the Palm Sunday celebration, the children enjoyed a procession indoors, as the cold Michigan weather prevented an outdoor celebration. □



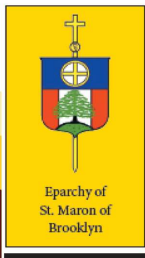
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Birmingham, Alabama *Order of St. Sylvester*



From left: Fr. John Paul Kimes, Mary Milton, Bishop Zaidan, Jeanette Wyrick and Msgr. Richard Saad.

On April 15, 2018, Bishop Elias Zaidan inducted Mary Milton and Jeanette Milton Wyrick of St. Elias Maronite Church in Birmingham, Ala., into the Pontifical Equestrian Order of St. Sylvester, Pope and Martyr. This is one of the five Orders of Knighthood awarded directly by the Pope. It is intended to honor Catholic lay people who are actively involved in the life of the church, particularly as exemplified in the exercise of their professional duties and mastership of the different arts. The ladies were recommended by their Pastor, Chorbishop Richard D. Saad, and nominated by Bishop A. Elias Zaidan.

Mary and Jeanette are sisters and are both active, lifelong members of St. Elias Church, beginning with membership in the MYO and continuing into leadership positions in the parish on the Pastoral Council and Finance Committee. Both ladies have been very involved in every aspect of parish life. Both work in the parish office helping with administrative tasks.

Beyond the parish level, both have been active members of NAM and have served on its Executive Board in the past. Jeanette served on the Eparchial Pastoral Council of Bishop Robert Shaheen and is presently on the Eparchial History Committee. Jeanette received the Silver Massabki Medal in 1982 and the Gold Massabki Medal in 1998; Mary received the Silver Massabki Medal in 1989.

Mary is an active member of the Order of St. Charbel and has recruited many new members. Presently, St. Elias Church has the largest number of members of the Order of any parish in the country.

Professionally, Jeanette was certified as a Chaplain by the National Association of Catholic Chaplains and worked as a Chaplain and the Manager of the Pastoral Care Department at St. Vincent's Hospital for twenty-eight years before retiring.

Mary is a professional licensed Realtor with RE/MAX Advantage and has served many clients and won many awards in her thirty-one years, and she is still active in the business.

Both ladies credit their parents and grandparents for being role models for them in service to the church. Their paternal grandparents were among the first members of St.

Elias which was established in 1910. Their maternal grandparents were among the original members of St. George Melkite Greek Catholic Church in Birmingham. □

New Bedford, Massachusetts *Sodality's 100th Anniversary*



Photo by Beth David.

by Dr. Jacques Barbour

On Sunday, March 18, 2018, the day before the Feast of St. Joseph, the St. Joseph Sodality at Our Lady of Purgatory Church, New Bedford, Mass., celebrated its 100-year Anniversary. Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, celebrated the Divine Liturgy with Pastoral Administrator of Our Lady of Purgatory Church, Fr. Fadi Rouhana along with Fr. Jack Morrison, who had served as pastor for the previous nine years. Deacon Jean Mattar and Subdeacon Joseph Abraham also concelebrated the liturgy.

Bishop Mansour, installed three new members, Rania and Halim Chouba and Luiz Cabral and renewed the commitment of twenty-five other members who were present. Each member is to offer a prayer to St. Joseph for the faithful departed. During the Liturgy, two tablets were presented during the offertory with the names of prior members who have gone to Eternal Rest. The members pray for a "happy death," meaning for the repose of the souls to rest eternally with our Lord. The members also commit to recite the Act of Consecration to St. Joseph daily. After the Divine Liturgy, a celebration brunch took place at the Century House. In his homily, Bishop Mansour spoke about the commitment St. Joseph had to Mary when it was known she was with child conceived by the Holy Spirit. He stated that the "St. Joseph Sodality at OLOP is the oldest known sodality in the Maronite Church today in both eparchies," and possibly the oldest and most active Sodality known worldwide.

At the brunch which followed current President Dr. Jacques Barbour, welcomed the new members and spoke with current members and guests along with clergy. Dr. Barbour talked about some of the activities that the Sodality had completed in the past few years including spiritual days of reflections, serving the parish on feast days and two recent pilgrimages, one to St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City to see the new Shrine of St. Charbel, and more recent Lenten trip to the Dominican Monastery in Springfield, Mass. □

Flint, Michigan *Visiting Our Seniors*



by Deacon Joseph Pavlovich

A project was conceived in the religious education classes at Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Flint, Mich., to have our students and parents visit our homebound senior citizens in order to brighten their day and let them know how much they are loved.

On Sunday, March 11, 2018, the K-1 students of teacher Betty Dillon and their parents, along with the 7th grade students of teacher Marleine McLeod, visited Marie Daher, 90, at her home. They brought her an art project signed by the entire class along with a potted orchid. A good time was had by all.

The following Sunday, March 18, the 2nd grade students of teacher Freda Hearsch and their parents visited Ceal Abdella, 89, at her assisted living residence. They were joined by Betty Dillon's and Marleine McLeod's students also. The students gave Ceal an angel statue and a card signed by all the students. Everyone then sang "Happy Birthday" to Ceal. All who attended were very moved by the whole experience. It is planned that these visits will continue to encourage our students not to forget the pioneers in our community of God. □



Uniontown, Pennsylvania *Lenten Season: A Time for Prayer*



by Dr. Mabel George Howard

The Lenten Season is typically known as a time for prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Many parishioners of St. George Church in Uniontown, Penn., emphasize "prayer" during this special time to honor religious traditions. Prayer can lead to a personal uplifting in one's life. It provides a vehicle for inner soul searching, spiritual introspection, and a renewal of the heart. Prayer encompasses every aspect of the liturgy and Stations of the Cross celebrated on Friday evenings during Lent.

In preparing for Lent and focusing on the theme of "prayer," Father Habib, Pastor, celebrated a special liturgy in honor of St. Maron's Feast Day (February 9). In his homily, Father Habib spoke about this most reverent man and his devotion to prayer. St. Maron, priest and hermit, is the patron saint and spiritual Father of the Maronite Church. He lived a quiet life of solitude in the mountainous region of Syria near Antioch, and his followers spread his religious teachings throughout Syria and Lebanon. St. Maron was known for his missionary work, healings, miracles, and faithfulness to God. At the conclusion of the liturgy, Father Habib extended a special blessing to the parishioners for their spiritual health and well-being. He emphasized their commitment to prayer during Lent and throughout the year.

Also, St. George parishioners strive to make a difference in the lives of those in need by participating in the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Rice Bowl during Lent. Through monetary donations, the CRS Rice Bowl program offers resources to families and communities locally and globally experiencing challenging issues with hunger, migration, poverty, homelessness, etc. The Most Reverend Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn and former pastor of St. George Church in Uniontown, is the Chairman of the CRS Board of Directors. Bishop Gregory encourages all Catholic Churches in the U.S. to join in prayer and become involved in this rewarding humanitarian effort that reaches more than 120 million lives in 112 countries worldwide. He states that this is a work of compassion.

St. Louis, Missouri *Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter*



On March 10, the Altar & Rosary Society (ARS) of St. George Church hosted a religious retreat for the congregation entitled, "Lent: A Season of Renewal." A video from the religious website (Forum) entitled "A Lent to Remember" was presented followed by a discussion concerning the Sacrament of Reconciliation and an examination of conscience based on the Beatitudes and the Ten Commandments. This led to a conversation about forgiveness, empathy, and the importance of prayer. The ARS members recited the Rosary and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary that was followed by the evening liturgy. The ARS retreat allowed for fellowship, prayer, meditation, and reflection.

Palm Sunday, the commencement of Holy Week, is a celebration of our King, Jesus Christ, and his triumphant journey into Jerusalem. The St. George altar was adorned with arrangements of blessed palms for the parishioners. During Palm Sunday liturgy, the children in the Maronite Christian Formation (MCF) classes sang responses to prayers, and Father Habib reminded them to pray for Jesus' blessings every day. Carrying their blessed palms, Father Habib led the congregation in a procession outside on the church grounds as traditional prayers were recited. Also, the Ladies Guild sponsored a breakfast for the children. The Maronite Youth Organization (MYO) helped serve breakfast and organized an Easter Egg Hunt for the children. The eggs were filled with religious gifts and treats. This was a joyful day for families and friends to pray together.

During Holy Week, the St. George congregation participated in several Maronite religious traditions, rituals, and prayers. Father Habib celebrated the "Coming to the Harbor" liturgy, symbolizing Christ as the true light, the Harbor of Salvation, and the church as the vessel reaching the harbor. "Prayer of the Faithful" was recited throughout the week with the Exaltation of the Holy Cross to invoke God's mercy and love. In the "Rite of the Lamp" ceremony, seven candles, representing the seven Sacraments, were lit and inserted into dough infused in olive oil. The faithful were anointed with the blessed oil, and prayers were recited for forgiveness of sins and healing of the body and soul. "Washing of the Feet" took place on Holy Thursday. Father Habib washed the feet of twelve parishioners representing the twelve apostles at the Last Supper and conveying Jesus' humility and love for us. Good Friday featured the Stations of the Cross and the "Adoration of the Cross" in memory of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus Christ. Pallbearers processed through the church carrying the casket covered in a black shroud as the faithful chanted hymns. The "Blessing of Spiritual Retreat" Mass was celebrated on Holy Saturday. Easter Sunday was the "Rite of Peace." The church was adorned with an array of beautiful and colorful flowers as pallbearers carried the empty casket draped in a white cloth through the aisles of the church to celebrate the glorious resurrection of Christ. By the sadness of His death and the joy of His resurrection, Jesus brought peace to the earth. Christ is risen! He is truly risen!

The Lenten Season is a time for prayer; a time for peaceful worship; a time for personal healing; a time to support others; a time to cherish loved ones; a time to count God's blessings; and a time to embrace our Maronite faith. □

The Saint Raymond Maronite Cathedral Community in St. Louis, Mo., celebrated the Palm Sunday Divine Liturgy on March 25, 2018, at 11:00 a.m. Father John Nahal, Rector, was the Celebrant. The Cathedral was filled to capacity with hundreds of parishioners and visitors. Father John invited all of the children to join him at the foot of the altar as he talked to them about Jesus. They were very attentive and enthusiastic. They carried their beautifully decorated candles and processed with their families around the Saint Raymond Complex. Following the Liturgy, the annual Palm Sunday Luncheon was held at the Cedars Hall. Friends and family gathered together to enjoy delicious Lebanese cuisine. The Ladies' Society provided a bake sale with an array of tasty treats. It was a wonderful day thanks to all the dedicated workers.

Holy Week was a reflective time for the parishioners with daily practices and rituals. The community was blessed with the presence of The Most Reverend Bishop Elias Zaidan at Divine Liturgy and Consecration of the Holy Oils on Monday, March 26, at 7:00 p.m. During Thursday of the Mysteries, March 29, men of the parish volunteered to represent the apostles for the Washing of the Feet. After the Good Friday Service of the Burial of Our Lord at 7:00 p.m., a special Lenten dinner was served at the Cedars Hall.

Bishop A. Elias Zaidan and Father John Nahal concelebrated the Easter Midnight Divine Liturgy, Saturday, March 31, at 10:00 p.m. and Easter Sunday Divine Liturgies April 1, at 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Following the Sunday Liturgies was an Easter Egg Hunt for all the children sponsored by the MYO and MYA.

The Saint Raymond community would like to thank Father John Nahal and all of the dedicated volunteers who made the entire Holy Season a blessed event. □

Be submissive to good, unbending to evil,
gentle in generosity,
untiring in love, just in all things.

St. Columban

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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:

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109 Remsen Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

or

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

Cincinnati, Ohio Annual Retreat



by Rose AbiRadi

The St. Anthony of Padua Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, Lenten Retreat was held on Saturday, March 10, 2018. This Lenten Retreat has been an annual event sponsored by the Cincinnati NAM Chapter for many years. Reverend Vincent Farhat, Pastor of St. Maron Church, Philadelphia, Penn., led the retreat.

The theme for the retreat was "Forgiveness in Most Difficult Times," wherein Father Vincent shared many realistic stories about everyday life and how we respond to catastrophic situations. Father Farhat's genuine message was that we must always open up our hearts to others no matter how painful it may be. Significantly, Father Farhat instructed us in handling personal forgiveness, a poignant concept that allows us to reach to our God with the knowledge that always He will forgive us. The message of the retreat provided many blessed lessons. □

North Jackson, Ohio Feast of Saint Joseph

by Peter Harb

Sunday, March 11, 2018, was a day filled with laughter and tears, happiness and sadness, hope and despair. The Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in North Jackson, Ohio celebrated the Feast of Saint Joseph, the husband of Mary, the Mother of God. The Shrine also celebrated a 40 day liturgy to honor the life and legacy of an amazing woman and member of the shrine family, Giovannina Mediati, better known to her friends as Joanne. Maronite Youth Organization (MYO) members from Cleveland, Youngstown, and Pittsburgh came to join the celebration of this sacred day.

Saint Joseph was an obedient servant of God, full of compassion and love. He humbly accepted God's will when his wife Mary told him that an angel came to her and told her that she will give birth to a son who will be called Jesus. Saint Pope John Paul II refers to Saint Joseph as "a man of great spirit. He is great in faith, not because he speaks his own words, but above all because he listens to the words of the Living God. He listens in silence. And his heart ceaselessly perseveres in the readiness to accept the Truth contained in the word of the Living God."



Joanne Mediati was also an obedient servant of God. She gave her life to her family and to the shrine. She engaged with each person who attended liturgy and events at the shrine, used her amazing cooking skills to help make a variety of events of the shrine as successful as possible, and was a leader in many organizations at the shrine. She has built up the tradition of service at the shrine, and has shown nothing but love to each person she had come across, always giving more than receiving.

Following the liturgy on Sunday, the shrine family and the family of Joanne all gathered together at Saint Joseph's Table to celebrate two amazing legacies through sharing a meal together. We can learn so much from Saint Joseph and Joanne. They have shown what it means to truly live out our faith, and for that, we are eternally grateful. ☐

Dartmouth, Massachusetts Discernment Weekend

by Sr. Natalie Sayde Salameh, MSCL

A Discernment Retreat weekend was offered by the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light at the Mother of Light Convent in Dartmouth, Mass., on April 6 – 8, 2018. The theme, “Speak Lord, Your Servant is Listening,” guided the young women to break down the process of vocational discernment, whether to marriage or religious life, equipping them with tools to guide a discernment journey.

Through a series of presentations, reflections, group

sharing, and prayer, the Sisters explained how to be attuned to God's voice. As one of the retreatants remarked, "Thank You Sisters, for a peaceful retreat. I'm so blessed and thankful to be able to spend this weekend in your presence."

A guest speaker, Debbie Perry, shared her witness as a married woman, including the moments of joy and difficulty, insisting with the women that God must be number one in any marriage. The Maronite Servants shared on their own experiences as consecrated religious and what helped them in making their vocational decision. Mother Marla Marie, who celebrates her 35th anniversary of religious life, explained how God is more than enough and has deeply fulfilled her.

The Divine Liturgy was offered each day in the Convent's Chapel, celebrated by Father Nichols, Chaplain, in addition to Eucharistic Adoration. On the last day, the retreatants participated in the Mystery of Penance, receiving God's mercy on the Feast of New Sunday/Divine Mercy.

The retreatants were given the space they needed to de-compress from their busy lives and just "be" for the Lord. They each commented that they enjoyed getting to know each other and spending time with like-minded young women who are seeking fulfillment and happiness in God's will for their lives.

If you are seeking resources for discernment, contact the Sisters at sister@maroniteservants.org. For more information about the mission of the Maronite Servants visit their website: maroniteservants.org. ☐



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

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

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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. ☐

Tampa, Florida *Faith of the Mountain Award*



On Easter Sunday, April 1, 2018, Christina Kerbaji, received the Faith of the Mountain Award for her exemplary youth leadership in the contribution of time and talents in the parish of Sts. Peter and Paul, Tampa, Fla. □

As in previous years, the retreat program offered a good mix of spiritual, family, and fun activities. On the spiritual front, adults and teenagers participated in morning and afternoon workshops centered around the main theme, "Your Will Be Done." Children participated in their own interactive workshops in four separate age groups.

Besides workshops, families bonded together at the many attractions of the center including canoeing and fishing, during meals prepared by a fellow parishioner and evening entertainment, including many rounds of BINGO, and at nightly bonfires where s'mores kept everyone happy. On Sunday morning, Fr. Edward celebrated the Divine Liturgy before everyone packed and departed.

Once again this year, our family retreat helped us reflect on our relationship with God based on the Lord's Prayer. □

Courage

Continued from page 1

May the Mother who stood courageously at the foot of her son's Cross grant us her same courage so that we may "break the bread," face our struggles with love, and joyfully witness to our Lord's life-giving passion, death, and resurrection. Come, Holy Spirit, give us this courage and joy.

O Mary, help of Christians, pray for us.

+Gregory J. Mansour
Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

Houston, Texas *Annual Family Retreat*



by Samantha Georges

For the tenth consecutive year, the Annual Family Retreat at Our Lady of the Cedars Church in Houston, Texas, was a big success. The main goals of this annual retreat are to promote bonding within and among families in our parish, and spiritual renewal and growth for parents and kids alike. This year's retreat was held March 16 - 18, 2018.

Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

May 5 - 7, 2018

Ordination of Richard Thornton to Diaconate, Troy, N.Y.

May 10, 2018

Feast of the Ascension, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

May 12, 2018

Honoring of Mr. Toufic Baklini, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

May 13, 2018

Pastoral Visit to St. Sharbel Mission, Raleigh, N.C.

May 20, 2018

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

May 23, 2018

Path to Peace Gala for Holy See Mission to the UN, Manhattan, N.Y.

May 25 - 29, 2018

Home Visit, Flint, Mich.

May 30 - June 25, 2018

Annual Maronite Bishops Synod, *Bkerke*, Lebanon. □

The Most Unexpectedly Religious Film of the Year

by
Bishop Robert Barron

I went to see *A Quiet Place*, John Krasinski's new thriller, with absolutely no anticipation of finding theological or spiritual themes. I just wanted a fun evening at the movies. How wonderful when a film surprises you! I don't know if I can find the golden thread that draws all of these themes together into a coherent message, but I think one would have to be blind not to see a number of religious motifs in this absorbing film.

The basic structure of the narrative is laid out in simple, deft strokes. We learn that a terrible plague of fierce, devouring creatures has descended on the earth. Where are the monsters from? Outer space, maybe? We're never told—which makes the story more compelling. The few people who have survived the holocaust have learned that the creatures, though blind, are extraordinarily acute of hearing. Therefore, the key to survival is silence. Our attention becomes focused on the Abbot family, two youthful parents and three small children, making their quiet way through a beautiful but dangerous open country. When the youngest of the kids flips a switch on his toy rocket, causing buzzing sound to pierce the silence, one of the beasts devours him just before his terrified father can save him.

We flash-forward several months later, and we watch the Abbots (can the name have possibly been accidental?) going about their lives in what could only be characterized as a monastic manner: no conversations above a whisper, elaborate sign language, quiet work at books and in the fields, silent but obviously fervent prayer before the evening meal, etc. (I will confess that this last gesture, so thoroughly absent from movies and television today, startled me.) Given the awful demands of the moment, any gadgets, machines, electronic entertainment, or noisy implements are out of the question. Their farming is by hand; their fishing is done with pre-modern equipment; even their walking about is done barefoot. And what is most marvelous to behold is that, in this prayerful, quiet, pre-modern atmosphere, even with the

threat of imminent death constantly looming, a generous and mutually self-sacrificing family flourishes. The parents care for and protect their children, and the remaining brother and sister are solicitous toward one another and toward their parents. The young girl even regularly risks her life to pay silent tribute to her fallen brother at the spot where he was killed.

Monsters and beasts in the more reflective horror movies are evocative of those things that frighten us the most: illness, failure, our own wickedness, death itself. How wonderful that a Hollywood movie would suggest that what is needed to keep the darkness at bay in our time is silence, simplicity, a return to the earth, prayer, and care for one another.

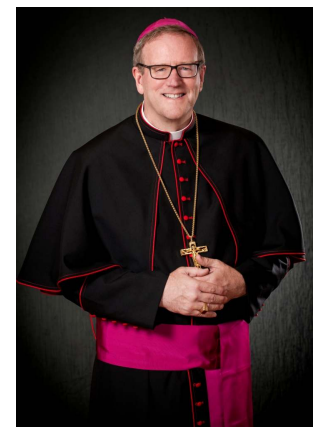
The central drama of *A Quiet Place* is that Mrs. Abbott is expecting a child. The entire family realizes, of course, that a wailing infant would, given the circumstances, mean almost certain death for all of them. And yet, they decide not to kill the child at his birth but to hide him and mute his cries in various ways. When so many in our culture are willing to murder their children for the flimsiest of reasons, when the law gives full protection even to partial-birth abortion, when people blithely say that they would never bring a baby into such a terrible world, the monastic family in this film welcomes life, even into the worst of worlds, and even when such an act is of supreme danger to them. As the baby is coming into the light, the mother finds herself alone (watch the film for the details) and in the most vulnerable situation, for one of the beasts has made its way into their house. As she labors to give birth, the devouring animal lurks. I was put immediately in mind of the scene in the book of Revelation, where Mary is in the throes of child birth as the dragon patiently waits to consume the child.

As the abbess is struggling to give birth, the abbot has gone in search of his endangered children. He finds them, to his horror, trapped in an abandoned car, one of the beasts clawing at them through the roof, like the T-Rex in

Jurassic Park. After mouthing the words, "I love you; I have always loved you" to his daughter, who gapes at him through the car window, the father screams, drawing the monster to himself. This act of self-emptying love, which serves to liberate his children from danger, is beautifully evocative of the speculations of the Church Fathers regarding the death of Jesus. In his act of self-sacrifice on the cross, the fathers argued, Jesus lured the dark powers into the open and away from the human beings who had been in their thrall. Along similar lines, in an odd working of plot or Providence that can be likened to the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, it becomes clear in the wake of the father's death that he has left behind for his family the means by which the monsters can be defeated.

I have no real idea whether any or all of this was in the mind of the filmmaker, but I do know from John Krasinski's Wikipedia page that he is the son of a Polish-Catholic father and an Irish-Catholic mother and that he was raised a devout practitioner of his faith. So until definitively shown otherwise, I am going to maintain that *A Quiet Place* is the most unexpectedly religious film of 2018.

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.

Apostolic Faith: Ancient Faith (Part Two)

by
Rev. David A. Fisher

God did not intend us to be burdened with care and troubled about many things ... He meant us to be free from care and to have one work to perform, to sing as do the angels, without ceasing...the praises of the Creator, and to delight in contemplation of Him. St. John of Damascus.

IV. The Eucharistic Mystery

In Saint Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, there is found the oldest passage in the New Testament concerning the actual celebration of the Eucharist:

“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. Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 11:23-27 New American Bible, Revised Edition/NABRE.)

So often we tend to define the Church as an institution rather than as an event. By reflecting upon the nature of the Eucharistic celebration we rediscover that the Church is not just another human institution or even just another religion within the pantheon of world religions, rather it is the event in which God transforms men and women through the Prayer of Great Thanksgiving = Eucharist, by receiving together as brothers and sisters in the Lord, his Body and Blood.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us of the essential elements of the liturgy by which Our Lord promised he would be present to his Church:

#1352 **The anaphora: with the Eucharistic Prayer** - the prayer of thanksgiving and consecration - we come to the heart and summit of the celebration ...the Church gives thanks

to the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, for all his works: creation, redemption, and sanctification.

1353 In the epiclesis, the Church asks the Father to send his Holy Spirit on the bread and wine, so that by his power they may become the body and blood of Jesus Christ and so that those who take part in the Eucharist may be one body and one spirit.

In the institution narrative, the power of the words and the action of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, make sacramentally present under the species of bread and wine Christ's body and blood, his sacrifice offered on the cross once for all (The Catechism of the Catholic Church.)

The firm belief that Christ is present in the bread and wine offered by Holy Church to the Holy Trinity, to be transformed into the Body and Blood of its Savior, is held as an article of faith by all the Ancient Churches (Roman Catholic, Eastern Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Ancient Oriental Orthodox, Assyrian Orthodox).

In the disciples' encounter with the Risen Lord on the road to Emmaus in Luke's Gospel, there is given to the Church the Apostolic Witness that Christ is really present in Word (Sacred Scripture) and Eucharistic Mystery (Bread and Wine):

“And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:30-32, NABRE).

In the Catholic Church the reawakening of liturgical theology that began in the nineteenth century, and has continued forward in dialogue with the Orthodox

Churches, has led to the rediscovery that the Eucharist makes the Church. The Church is the Body of Christ in the world because its Eucharistic Lord and Savior is present in the Holy Mysteries given to the faithful.

V. The Patristic Heritage

The Ancient Faith is given first expression after the Apostles themselves by the Fathers of the Church. Indeed, these theologians were not men and women of the ivory tower or academic institution; rather they were monks, nuns, hermits, and bishops outstanding in their ability to communicate their experience of God in prayer, fasting, self-denial, and pastoral ministry. Before the 4th century and Constantine's legalization and promotion of the Church, many of the Patristic thinkers were martyrs and confessors (scourged) for the Christian faith.

The Fathers of the Church represent the expression of many languages and cultures as the Christian faith began to spread beyond the Holy Land and Mediterranean world. Armenia becomes the first kingdom to adopt Christianity as its official religion in 301 AD, followed by Aksum (ancient Ethiopia), and eventually the "Ecumenical Empire," that being the Roman Empire itself. The Fathers of the Church spoke, thought, and wrote in Greek, Syriac, Latin, Coptic, et al.

(Continues on page 18)





Spiritual Poverty and Freedom

by Sister Marla Marie Lucas, MSCL

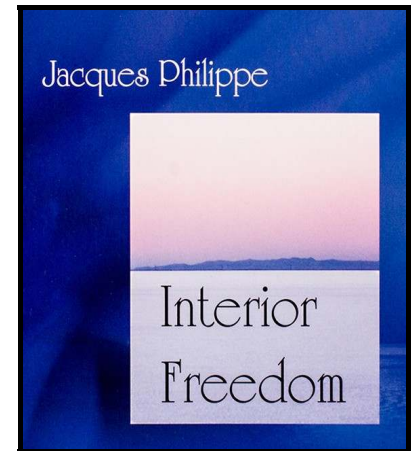
Our spiritual reading of "Interior Freedom" has come to a conclusion with the article on Chapter Five summarized here. You are encouraged to make spiritual reading a daily prayer exercise for soul and mind.

As we have been reflecting in previous chapters, our true self-worth is identified in our relationship with God as beloved sons and daughters. This interior life is cultivated by our living out the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. In this deeper relationship with God as our Father, we are truly free. This interior relationship with God and neighbor requires a daily deepening of prayer and conversion. In Chapter five, Father Philippe cautions us of the dangers of the world enticing us to find our identity in the secular values of riches, physical appearance, and accumulating possessions. We see our family and friends consumed by this pursuit and they live in a frantic rush of "doing" and neglect the simplicity of "being." There is no true freedom here. The world offers us an illusion of fulfillment and freedom by becoming someone superficial and conforming to what amounts to self-absorption. Some symptoms of being caught up in this illusory freedom are restlessness, feeling we are not enough, sadness, and emptiness.

"Identification of the self with the good one is able to accomplish leads to spiritual pride: consciously or not we consider ourselves the source of that good, instead of recognizing that all the good we are able to do is a free gift from God. This pride leads us to pass judgment on those who do not accomplish as much as we do, to be impatient with those who prevent us from carrying out a given project ..." (p. 123).

How do we move from the "doing" mode to the "being?" Fr. Philippe gives us the keys of humility and spiritual poverty. These two spiritual postures free us from the need to create an identity or a thirst for success, or reducing our relationship with God as one that expects a reward for our good works. God loves us for ourselves, unconditionally. We can take a deep breath and let go, we are loved, we are his, and we are enough!

Humility and spiritual poverty help us to shed the illusion of having to "do" for God (recall the Martha and Mary story in the gospels). "If our treasure is in God, no one can take it from us. Humility is truth. I am what I am in God's eyes: a poor child who possesses absolutely nothing, who receives everything, infinitely loved and totally free" (p. 124).



Trials or purification are beneficial for us in this journey and can be put to great spiritual profit for us. Our trials whether spiritual, emotional, physical, or other, if embraced in faith, can purify us to see more clearly that all we have and all we are is pure gift. "These trials are beneficial, because they lead us to locate our identity where it truly belongs." Fr. Philippe quotes a priest's advice to him, "When you no longer believe in what you can do for God, continue believing in what God can do for you" (p. 126).

This spiritual poverty becomes an open door to relying on God's infinite mercy. "At the bottom of that nothingness, they have finally discovered the inexpressible tenderness, the absolutely unconditional love, of God. Henceforth their only support and hope is the boundless mercy of their Father God" (p.129).

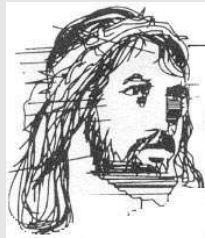
Fr. Philippe reminds us that when God becomes our "everything," it is then that we have nothing left to lose. We are truly free.

Dear Lord, I desire you to be my everything. Help me to embrace my poverty and with St. Paul say, "I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me" (2 Corinthians 12:9). □

Priestly Discernment Weekend at Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary

by Fr. Dominique Hanna

Ten men from both Eparchies, the Eparchy of Saint Maron and the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, joined Msgr. Peter Azar, Rector of Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary in Washington, D.C., Frs. Armando Khoury, Gary George and Dominique Hanna, and the four seminarians to discern in more depth their vocation to the priesthood. The weekend started on Friday, April 13, 2018, with the Divine Liturgy followed by words of welcome by the Rector and dinner at the Seminary. That evening the seminarians prepared a bonfire and all of us gathered around it to eat *s'mores* and meet each other.



***If the Lord
is Calling
You,
The
Church
Needs You!***

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

The discussions were centered on a weakness or challenge that was experienced in the past, but has not been shared with anyone yet. Even though the men did not know each other before this weekend, they opened their hearts to the group and talked about difficult life events that made them who they are today.

Safro (Morning Prayer) on Saturday, was served by the seminarians and their guests and in addition to a talk on the identity of the priest and the Divine Liturgy, the group took a trip to the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and the Franciscan Monastery of The Holy Land in America where they saw replicas of Holy Land shrines. In the evening, priests and seminarians spoke about their vocation stories and how the discernment process with God's grace continues to lead them to become better ministers of the Church.

The group gathered on Sunday morning for prayer and a talk on the importance of Mary, the Mother of God, in the life of every vocation to the priesthood. The Divine Liturgy was celebrated across the street from the Seminary at Our Lady of Lebanon Church, where the men were welcomed by the Pastor.

Let us accompany these men and

all those who feel called to the priesthood with our prayers, so God may reveal his will to them to better serve his inheritance. □

Prayer For Priestly Vocations

Father, in every generation You provide ministers of Christ and the Church.

We come before You now, asking that You call forth more men to serve our eparchies in the ministerial priesthood.

Give us priests who will lead and guide Your holy people gathered by Word and Sacrament.

Bless us with priestly vocations so that we can continue to be a truly Eucharistic Church, strengthened in our discipleship of Jesus Christ, Your Only Son.

Raise up, we pray, men who are generous in their service, willing to offer their lives and all their gifts for Your greater glory and for the good of Your people.

We make our prayer in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, through Christ, our Lord.
Amen.



Our Lady of the Cedars Prepares for the 2018 NAM Convention

Registration for the 2018 NAM Convention in Houston, both for the convention and for the hotel rooms, has now been open for a few weeks, and the response has been above expectations!!

The NAM Hotel for the 2018 Convention, the Marriott Marquis, is in the heart of Downtown Houston. To make your reservations, please call the Marriott Group Reservations at (877) 622-3056, or go to the personalized Passkey website: "<https://aws.passkey.com/go/NAMConvention2018> and use code "NAM Convention."

The cut-off date to make reservations at the discounted rate is June 18, 2018. It is always good to reserve early, and once you book the hotel, make travel arrangements early to take advantage of reasonable airfares.

To register for the 2018 NAM Convention, please visit www.namnews.org. Make sure to select the additional items offered, like the many excursions, the baseball outing, and the local parish Church tour. You will also have the chance to select your seats for the Saturday Grand Banquet when you register online. Alternatively, you can download the registration form from the NAM website, or from www.NAMConvention2018.com, or you can make a copy of the form published in this magazine. The completed forms can be mailed back or faxed to the NAM office using the contact information shown on the form.

The workshops planned for this Convention should appeal to everyone. The lineup includes, among others: Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio's "Living Our Faith - Opportunities & Challenges;" "The Challenge of Reuniting the Catholic and Orthodox" by Chorbishop John D. Faris; award-winning physician and trailblazing researcher Dr. Huda Zoghbi's "Scientific Advances and Their Impact on Health and Society;" and in the grand finale of workshops, Cardinal Leonardo Sandri

and Archbishop Paul Matar will discuss "The Commission on Lebanon and the Middle East."

Businessman Philippe Ziade will share with the Young Adults his great business success in a workshop titled "Faith alongside Success."

A staple at recent NAM Conventions, the "Theology on Tap" gathering of the Young Adults with our two Bishops is taken to a new dimension in Houston; it is scheduled at St. Arnold's Beer Brewery, a perfect setting for this popular activity. Other excursions to NASA and the Museum District will be fun and exciting for the Young Adults who will be together as they explore these interesting destinations. A "Parish Feud" game show will take place at the convention and will be hosted by the Lebanese-American comedian Nemr. More details on the workshops and the program are posted in the opposite page of this issue.

In addition to excursions to the Museum District and the Kemah Boardwalk, and a service project volunteering at the Houston Food Bank, the Youths will enjoy a full day of worship, fun programs, and music.

For little ones, children under the age of 12, fun activities in arts and crafts are planned at the hotel during the day, in addition to an excursion to Houston's Children's Museum, a premier venue full of exciting children's attractions.

Of course, our Houston team did not forget about our other young (at heart) conventioners, our seniors! We will have a dedicated room stocked with card, backgammon, and board games, accessible all day for unlimited use. Be prepared to partake in cards and backgammon tournaments; you may even be crowned a champion in one (or more) of these traditional games, and earn bragging rights for your parish!

General excursions (open to all conventioners), include a trip to NASA, the Museum District (various museums appealing to all interests), the Houston parish's Our Lady of the Cedars Church tour (a renowned

architectural beauty), and a baseball outing to watch the World Champion Houston Astros take on the Oakland Athletics at Minute Maid Park.

We look forward to hosting the NAM Convention on July 11-15, 2018. Come as a family or come alone and enjoy the Houston Area, all liturgical services, cultural and educational workshops, excursions, entertainment, and much, much more. And remember, response has been overwhelming, so register early, to make sure you find a spot at the hotel. □

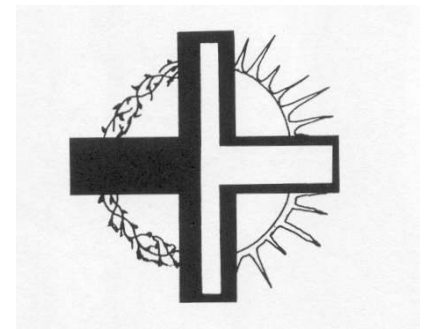
Appeal from Caritas Lebanon

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. □





55th Annual Maronite Convention

Maronites - Deep Roots, Growing In Faith

With the convention a short two months away, the committees are hard at work preparing for their guests. This year's convention starts on July, 11, 2018, in Houston, Tex., and everyone has been working on a full schedule of informative and inspiring workshops, colorful excursions and fun events for the evenings' entertainment.

Workshops

★ **To Become What We Are: The Challenge of Reuniting the Catholic and Orthodox**

Thursday, July 12, 2018: 10:30 a.m. – noon, Chorbishop John D. Faris, St. Louis Gonzaga Maronite Church

Chorbishop John D. Faris is a long-time member of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, which was founded in 1965 and is sponsored by the Committee for Ecumenical Relations of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The members of national bilateral dialogue commissions are sanctioned by the hierarchies of the two churches to examine divisive issues, and to make recommendations regarding ways to overcome them. As such, the agreed statements are issued on the authority of the dialogue commission itself, and do not bind the authorities of either church.

Chorbishop Faris will discuss the historical divisions in the one Church of Christ, the current state of ecumenical dialogue, the challenges we face, and a vision of a re-united Church.

★ **Living Our Faith – Opportunities and Challenges**

Thursday, July 12, 2018: 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio, Crossroads Initiative

Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio (*Dr. Italy*) was raised Catholic and has a PhD in theology from Loyola University. Dr. D'Ambrosio is a renowned author of several books on the richness of the Catholic tradition and founder of the Crossroads Initiative, a Catholic ministry that creatively proclaims the Gospel to young people through music and media. His ministry includes speaking at parish, diocesan, and national events. Dr. D'Ambrosio is heavily involved in broadcast media, including weekly radio appearances on Catholic network such as Relevant Radio, EWTN, and the Sirius XM Catholic channel. He has hosted an EWTN series on the Early Church Fathers for over ten years and has served as an expert commentator on religious issues on national news.

The Western culture in which we find ourselves is increasingly hostile to Christian faith. How can we not just survive, but thrive and grow in this environment? Dr. D'Ambrosio will share from the experience of the early

Church and his own life journey some stories that will give us vision and practical tips on how we can meet the challenge

★ **Scientific Advances and Their Impact on Health and Society**

Friday, July 13, 2018: 10:30 a.m. - noon, Dr. Huda Y. Zoghbi, Baylor College of Medicine

Dr. Huda Y. Zoghbi is a professor in the Departments of Pediatrics, Molecular and Human Genetics, Neurology and Neuroscience at Baylor College of Medicine. She is also an investigator at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the director of the Jan and Dan Duncan Neurological Research Institute (NRI) at Texas Children's Hospital.

Dr. Zoghbi's interest is in understanding healthy brain development as well as what goes awry in specific neurological conditions. She has published seminal work on the cause and pathogenesis of the autism spectrum disorder Rett syndrome and late-onset neurodegenerative diseases, and has trained many scientists and physician-scientists. Dr. Zoghbi received numerous honors including election to the National Academy of Medicine and National Academy of Sciences, the Breakthrough Prize, Canada's Gairdner International Prize, and the National Order of the Cedar.

Dr. Zoghbi will discuss new data on discovery of genetic bases of neuropsychiatric diseases and the implication of such discoveries for improving health and developing therapeutics.

★ **Project Roots**

Friday, July 13, 2018: 10:30 a.m. – noon, CLFW

Are you interested in becoming Lebanese? Would you like to reclaim your Lebanese citizenship? This workshop will explore the qualifications and the possibilities for interested people. It will detail the steps and papers needed as well as the support provided to assist in this process. It will also highlight the importance to preserve our heritage by maintaining the unique demographic diversity of Lebanon.

★ **Maronites in the U.S.: Present and Future**

Friday, July 13, 2018: 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., Bishop Gregory Mansour and Bishop A. Elias Zaidan

After highlighting the major endeavors of the past, our Maronite Bishops will share their vision for the growth and direction of the Maronite Church in the U.S. in the coming years. They will highlight the important elements needed for better individual and spiritual growth and more active Church involvement, taking into consideration the various challenges and opportunities of the present.

★ **How to Have a Happy Marriage**

Saturday, July 14, 2018: 10:30 a.m. – noon, Dominick Albano

Dominick Albano is passionate about helping facilitate a life-changing encounter with Jesus. While in high school, he began giving talks, leading retreats and small groups, and

sharing his story of conversion. Since then, he has spent his entire professional life in ministry.

In 2016 Matthew Kelly invited Albano to join Dynamic Catholic and travel as a speaker and evangelist for parish missions, conferences, men's groups, school events, youth groups, and retreats. He loves to share Saint John Paul II's message, "We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures; we are the sum of the Father's love for us!"

Everyone wants to be happy. What do you want? Happiness. What do you want for your kids? Happiness. What does your spouse want? Happiness. What do your neighbors, bosses, friends, family, and the strangers you meet on the street want? Happiness. But half the time we don't know what will make us happy, and the other half of the time we know what will definitely make us unhappy, and we choose it anyways. In this short workshop, Dominick will unpack the three things that matter most to happiness in a marriage, and how to let that happiness spill out into the rest of your life.

★ **Commission on Lebanon and the Middle East**
Saturday, July 14, 2018: 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., *His Eminence Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches and His Excellency Paul Matar, Maronite Archbishop of Beirut*

This panel discussion will look at the present situation of the Christians of Lebanon and the Middle East. It will bring to light the Vatican's views, perspectives, efforts and hopes as well as the Church of Lebanon's approach to the current crisis and its efforts to find a lasting solution.

Children's Program

The Children's Program focuses on the NAM theme "Deep Roots, Growing in Faith" but with a fun children's twist: "Grow like a Cedar of Lebanon" (taken from Psalm 92:13).

Children will explore the significance of the Cedar tree in our Maronite faith and history through a variety of fun crafts and activities. Throughout the weekend, we will work together to construct our very own tree using these many crafts. Be sure to look out for our finished project on Sunday!

No trip to Houston would be complete without a visit to the awesome Children's Museum. Packed with almost 100,000 square feet of interactive exhibits, the museum offers fourteen hands-on galleries with plenty of fun and learning opportunities.

If we're not out-and-about at the Museum, or indoors crafting our project, you can find us playing a variety of games around the hotel. We'll finally wind down our busy, fun-packed weekend with Movie Madness on Saturday, to make sure we're well-rested for our *hafli* that night.

Snacks and drinks will be included throughout the week. □

Washington, D.C. ***Clergy Enrichment Days***

by Msgr. Peter F. Azar, Rector

In the name of both our Bishops, Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary in Washington, D.C., hosted Maronite



Enrichment Days, April 16 - 17, 2018. This event was a homecoming for the alumni of the Seminary and an acquaintance/re-acquaintance with the Seminary for Maronite priests and friends of the Seminary.

The two-day gathering was filled with fellowship and comradery with our Bishops and attending clergy from both eparchies.

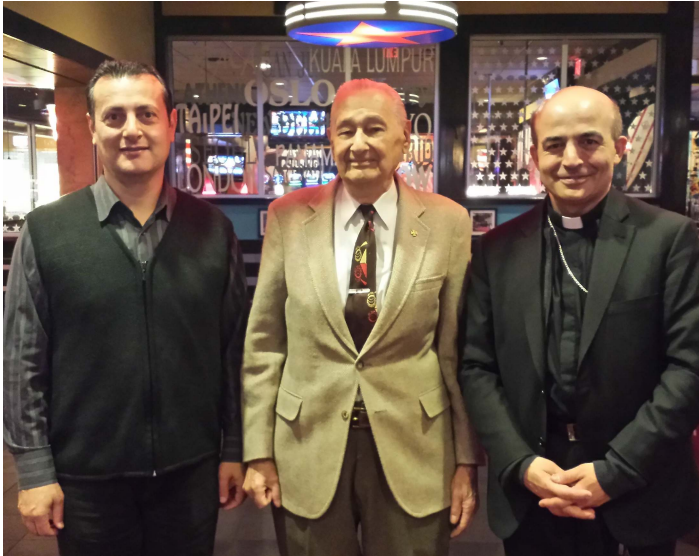
Moreover, the Maronite Seminary sponsored two talks concerning the Syriac tradition. Chorbishop Seely Beggiani presented themes in Syriac Spirituality; and Fr. Armando Elkhoury re-introduce us to Jacob of Sarug (A.D. 451 – 521) and shared insights into his theology.

The participants who attended stated that it was an enriching two days of discussion, reflection and faith. The Seminary Alumni Association is considering doing such an event at least once a year. Many thanks to Bishops Gregory Mansour and A. Elias Zaidan who fully supported this event with their presence and blessings.

Discernment Weekend

The essential beauty and attractiveness of the Catholic Church is demonstrated to the world in many ways, but on April 14 - 15, 2018, it was made apparent at Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary by the witness of ten young men who attended the first Maronite Discernment Weekend in the United States in five years. These young men from throughout the country traveled far so that they may have a greater intimacy with Almighty God by discerning a possible call to the priesthood and to learn about seminary life. Together we shared our vocation stories, broke bread, prayed together, and shared some wisdom about what is required of seminarians: a virtuous life and a pure intention – that is, to secure our own salvation and to advance the glory of God by sanctifying others. I am happy to report that I saw in many of these men a great passion and love for Christ that truly inspired me; a love very much like that same love with which Christ loved and united Himself to His spouse, which He redeemed by His precious blood: "Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it" (Eph. 5:25). We pray for these young men that they keep their hearts open to Christ and discern His will for them. □

Las Vegas, Nevada *A Benefactor Remembered*



Norman Hasmann (center) with Father Nadim Abou Zeid (left) and Bishop A. Elias Zaidan (right) in Las Vegas in 2015.

Norman Hasmann was not a Maronite by birth – he was Maronite by choice. He happened to be driving by St. John Maron Parish in Williamsville, New York, one day in the 1960s and saw a statue of St. John Maron outside. Drawn inside, he became a faithful communicant of the parish for over two decades. He was a Member of the Order of Saint Sharbel, attended multiple Conventions of the National Apostolate of Maronites, and had a special devotion to St. Sharbel.

Have you considered including the Maronite Church in your will? A will is an expression of your commitment to the principles, people and institutions that you cherish. As an active participant and supporter of your Church, a bequest can ensure that the work of the Maronite Church can continue after you are gone. It is a lasting testament that has great significance.

Remembering the Eparchy or your parish in your will is easy to do. Here are examples of words you can use to do this:

“I give and bequeath to the [Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn] [Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles] [St. _____ Parish], located in CITY, STATE, _____% of the residue of my estate [or: the sum of \$ _____].”

Anyone who does this will become a Member of the Maronite Church’s Legacy Society in his/her respective Eparchy.

For more information, contact Stewardship Director John F. Kurey, Esq., MBA, at saintmaron@yahoo.com or maroniteswest@yahoo.com or at 718-237-9913 or 314-231-1021. □

Norman and his wife, Phyllis, moved to Las Vegas in 1987. Although his new city did not have a Maronite parish at the time, he remembered the Maronite Church and the many Maronite friends he made over the years. Phyllis predeceased Norman, so in 2012, in response to an article Norman read in *The Maronite Voice* about a Legacy Society being created to recognize people who remembered the Maronite Church in their estate plan, he named the Eparchy of Saint Maron, the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, and Saint Sharbel Parish in Las Vegas as beneficiaries under his will.

Over the years, Norman kept in touch with the Maronite Church by reading *The Maronite Voice* and exchanging letters with the Bishops. He was also visited regularly by an emissary from the Maronite Bishops and Father Nadim Abou Zeid, Pastor of St. Sharbel Parish in Las Vegas.

In 2015, Norman was visited by Bishop A. Elias Zaidan. During the meeting, the Bishop asked Norman, "You seem so happy, Norman – what is the source of your joy?" Norman smiled and replied "Being a Maronite."

Norman passed away on March 31, 2018. His funeral arrangements were presided over, at his request, by Father Abou Zeid. Norman's legacy will live on in the seminarians his bequest helps educate, the missions and ministries his gift helps fund, and St. Sharbel Parish in Las Vegas. May Norman's memory be eternal! □

Undeserving, Never Unworthy

by Fr. Paul Mooradd

The Christian must never feel unworthy,
For such denies the fundamental gift,
God’s own Life shared with us eternally.
His love upon the Cross does our souls lift.

From slaves of sin, we drink Divinity,
Christians never sated by this wellspring,
Find the self eroded though Trinity,
Till in us God to God will ever sing.

Hence, we must always feel undeserving,
having done nothing to merit this Love.
Saved by Grace, forever forgiving -
Humility brought to Heaven above.

Thus feeling our most undeserving state of sin.
Does not divide from Love, but draws us deeper in. □



World Youth Day Pilgrimage, Panama City

by Mary Woods

In January of 2019 there will be sixteen young adults making a pilgrimage to attend World Youth Day in Panama City, where we will represent our Maronite Church in the United States (see photo collage). We look forward to having an encounter with God in His Universal Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. We will be joining Pope Francis and an estimated 500,000 WYD pilgrims, ages sixteen to thirty-five, from all over the world! In addition to the talks, Holy Masses, and ceremonies of World Youth Day, we will have the opportunity to see the Panama Canal and other historical sites. Our week of pilgrimage will be one of joyful fellowship, unity and prayer.

The theme for the 34th World Youth Day is "I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:30). Looking to the Blessed Mother's purity and simplicity for guidance, we hope to go with humble hearts that are open to the will of God, and to walk away changed. Panama, once a part of Columbia, is a predominantly Roman Catholic country. Connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the Panama Canal stretches forty-eight miles. The French started the enormous undertaking of digging the canal, but, in light of the increasing number of deaths due to disease, the United States completed it in the early 20th century. On January 1st, 2000, the United States ceded the Panama Canal back to its home country. Panama City is a thriving hub for financial dealings, and we will be happy to explore a place with such rich culture and history.

As a Christian, a pilgrimage involves a journey to a sacred place for the purpose of knowing and loving God better. In Sacred Scripture, we see many examples of spiritual journeys. In the Old Testament, Abraham travels to Jerusalem, so that he might dwell in the city of God. Moses leads the Israelites out of Egypt toward the Promised Land. Likewise, in the New Testament, the Magi follow the star to Bethlehem so that they may behold God made flesh in the humblest form of a child. Christ's ministry itself follows a journey that leads Him to Jerusalem, to His cross, where He bears the weight of my sin and yours.

Pilgrimages serve as the external manifestation of an internal voyage. They are a small representation of the journey each of us is on – the one we might call 'life.' We make our way through trials, temptations, sufferings, and joys, forming meaningful relationships along the way, walking toward God. Please pray for us, and for all those preparing, and attending World Youth Day 2019. □

Apostolic Faith: Ancient Faith

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In the Christian West the thought of Saint Augustine of *Hippo Regius* (modern day Tunisia) will come to dominate in an almost exclusive manner. Not only in the Patristic Era but into Medieval Scholasticism and the Protestant Reformation

(Martin Luther was an Augustinian Friar), Augustinian thought will be foundational to Latin theological thought, even for Saint Thomas Aquinas (for example, The Just War Theory of Saint Thomas, which he developed from the writings of Saint Augustine).

In the Christian East, however, there is found a plethora of Patristic thinkers, problems, controversies, and responses to the greatest questions of the First Christian Millennium. Here we find Aphrahat, Ephrem the Syrian, Isaac of Nineveh, Jacob of Sarug and others, writing in Syriac, often in poetic form, employing Sacred Scriptures in forming their beautiful canvas of biblical typology. We discover the Apostolic Fathers (those who knew the disciples of the Apostles) like Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus who traveled from Palestine to the persecuted Christians in Lyon; they are the first to have, be able to reflect upon, and pray with a body of writings that will become the New Testament. Among the Greek writers there are the Cappadocian Fathers (Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory Nazianzus, known as "The Theologian"), Arius the Arch-heretic, and his counter Athanasius of Alexandria, the defender of Nicene orthodoxy (The Nicene Creed), to name just a few.

It is in the Patristic era that the great Ecumenical Councils define the central Christian dogmas concerning the Holy Trinity and the nature of Christ. It also the milieu in which the unbroken Church suffers its first schisms: the Nestorian Schism after the Council of Ephesus, the Chalcedonian Schism after the Council of Chalcedon, creating a separated Christianity that has lasted until today (of course with further divisions in 1054 AD with the Great Schism of Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, et al.)

With the Fathers of the Church we see the expansion of what we call today enculturation, whose origins we see in the missionary journeys of Saint Paul and his preaching to the Gentile world. Yet, above all the Wisdom of Fathers is not one of intellectual reasoning but first and foremost the constant deepening of faith through prayer.

"Examine the actions of each day, advance in virtue, that you may become a companion of the angels" - St. Basil the Great. □

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. □

WORLD YOUTH DAY PILGRIMS

PANAMA - JANUARY 2019

*"I am the Servant of the Lord Let it be done to me according to your word."
(Luke 1:30)*



Fr. Tony Massad
(Livonia, MI)



Sr. Therese Maria Touma, MSCL,
Sr. Natalie Sayde Salameh, MSCL
(Dartmouth, MA)



Fr. Patrick Fiorello
(Roman Catholic Priest from the
Archdiocese of Boston, MA)



Rita Saikali
(Orange, CA)



Samar Tabet
(Somerset, NJ)



Vian & Vera Somo
(San Diego, CA)



Mary Woods
(Akron, OH)



Alijah Madkour
(Tampa, FL)



Paul Arias
(Somerset, NJ)



Matt Malat
(Somerset, NJ)



Afram Rassam
Danny Samuel
Liza Samuel
Shafak Yousif
(San Diego, CA)



Frank Brown
Travel Agent



Panama City

WYD
PANAMA
2019

Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania Parishioners Honored



Standing left to right: Terry Thomas, Linda Joseph, Fr. Hanna Karam, Lena Michael, Nick Punk and Jackie Sparks.

On April 8, 2018, Fr. Hanna Karam, Pastor of St. Anthony/St. George Maronite Church, Wilkes-Barre, Penn., honored five outstanding parishioners for their devotion and dedication to the Church. A reception and presentation of gifts followed the Liturgy with more than 120 people attending. ☐

Wheeling, West Virginia Good Friday Buffet

After the solemn but beautiful Good Friday services, parishioners of Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church, Wheeling, W.Va., attended a plentiful buffet in the beautiful Cedar Hall of the parish. The buffet was hosted by the Cedar Club, and the food was made by their members as well as the members of the parish. This



dinner gives the parishioners the opportunity to come together and focus on this very special day of the Lenten Season. Even though many have seen this Lenten service many times throughout the years, it always has a profound effect on a person when viewing the fallen Christ. ☐

Food For Thought

All it takes to encounter God is to acknowledge that we are needy. And the key to that encounter lies in humbling ourselves.

Pope Francis, April 20, 2018

God calls each one of us, and each call is a gift that would fill us with joy.

Pope Francis, April 22, 2018

When we are full of self-importance, we leave no space for God. So let us ask the Lord for a conversion of heart. ☐

Pope Francis, April 21, 2018