

The Maronite Voice



A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA

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Catechism and the Maronite Family

FAITH OF THE MOUNTAIN

As the summer draws to a close and children begin a new school year to acquire knowledge and to renew their bonds of friendship, it is also time for us to return to our parishes. Just as children return to their schools each year, it is also important that they return to their second home, their Church, to deepen their faith and to renew the bonds of community. Regarding the religious education of children the Maronite Patriarchal Synod noted: The family is the first and primary place....the parish is the second." It is a joint effort between the family and the Church to transmit the faith and tradition to our children.

Catholics in the United States use the word "catechism" to describe the Church beliefs and teachings. The root of the word "catechesis" is from the Greek word meaning "to echo or resound." Catechesis, the "handing of the faith," is the act of resounding or echoing the Church's teachings to the world. We do not have to make it up and we do not teach something other than what the Church teaches – we echo it to the next generation.

Parents collaborate with God to bring a new human life into the world. Following the birth of each fruit of their love, a child is brought to their Church to receive their spiritual rebirth by Baptism and they are welcomed into the community of faith. Just as it is a parent's duty to nourish a child through food, love, and care, it is also important for them to nourish the spiritual health of a child. It is in the family that the lifelong process of catechesis begins.

It is our duty as a community to help raise each child. Unless we speak about faith to our children, how will they learn? More importantly how will they understand why we call ourselves Christian, Catholic and Maronite? Children must know why we live as Christians, whether that is going to Church on Sundays, going out in service to help those in need, praying before meals and at bedtime, etc... Human beings are creatures that depend upon our senses: our sense of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. It is through these senses that we come to know the world as it is.

This is also true of the spiritual selves. We learn of the love of God by being loved and being taught how to love others – first in the family and then in the world; we learn of the mercy of God by being shown mercy and being taught how to extend mercy; we learn of the beauty of God by experiencing the beauty in His creation. In other words we use the physical senses God has given us to see and experience the physical world to help us understand and experience the spiritual world. Sometimes I see parents with their children, even infants, dipping their children's hands into the holy water and showing them how to bless themselves – repeating the words "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." This is exactly as it should be. This is catechesis.

There are many ways for parents to teach their children. Children are God's gifts to parents. With that gift comes a grave responsibility.

Continues on page 9

Schedule of Bishop Elias Zaidan

September 2 - 4, 2016

Pastoral Visit to Our Lady of the Cedars Church, Houston, Tex.

September 7 - 9, 2016

In Defense of Christians (IDC) National Advocacy Convention, Washington, D.C.

September 10, 2016

St. Sharbel Church Banquet, Clinton Township, Mich.

September 11, 2016

Ordination of Chorbishop Louis Baz, St. Maron Church, Detroit, Mich.

September 16 - 17, 2016

Lebanese Diaspora Energy Conference, New York, N.Y.

September 18, 2016

Homecoming Festival, St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

September 25, 2016

Daughters of St. Paul, Liturgy and Banquet, St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

September 26 - 29, 2016

Catholic Extension Society: 2016 Mission Bishops Conference, Chicago, Ill.

September 30, 2016

Talk and Liturgy for the "Society for Catholic Liturgy," Los Angeles, Calif.

October 2, 2016

Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon-St. Peter Cathedral, Los Angeles, Calif.

October 3 - 5, 2016

USCCB Meeting of Subcommittee on Catholic Home Missions, Lexington, Ken.

October 7, 2016

50th Anniversary Celebration of the Presence of a Maronite Bishop in the U.S., Eparchy of Saint Maron, Brooklyn, N.Y. □

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Maronite Convention 2017

Saint Rafka Maronite Mission

Greenville, South Carolina

July 5 - 9, 2017

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

Eparchial Condolences



Our Deepest Sympathy **M**sgr. James T. Khoury passed away in Florida, on Tuesday, August 16, 2016, at the age of 72. He was predeceased by his parents, Emil and Frances, and his sister Patricia Murphy. Monsignor Khoury was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts, and was ordained a priest on October 11, 1975, by Archbishop Francis M. Zayek.



Following his ordination, he served as parochial vicar at Saint Joseph Church in Waterville, Maine; and pastor at Saint George Church in San Antonio, Texas; Saint Joseph Church in Olean, New York; Saint Maron Church in Youngstown, Ohio; and his home parish of Saint Anthony Church in Lawrence, Mass. He was elevated to the dignity of *Periodent* with the title of Monsignor in 1995.

Monsignor Khoury is survived by his brother Brian, and his sisters, Joan Charest, Eileen Khoury, and Sheila Deeb, as well as many nieces and nephews and many relatives and friends.

Bishop Gregory Mansour along with the clergy and faithful of the Eparchy of Saint Maron extend their heartfelt sympathy and the promise of our prayers to Msgr. Khoury's family and friends.

May the Lord God grant James eternal rest in His Kingdom and consolation to his family and loved ones. □

U.S. Maronites at World Youth Day – Poland



U.S. Maronites at the World Youth Day in Poland.

A Reflection by Paul Elhallal

On July 24, 2016, a group of twenty-eight Maronites from both eparchies left for Krakow, Poland, to attend World Youth Day. We, along with millions of young Catholics from all corners of the world, came together upon the request of the Holy Father to hear his desire for the path of the Church, and how the youth can be those missionary disciples. We came to Krakow to be set alight with the flame of the Holy Spirit, and to go out to the world and be witnesses of Christ. We came in order to personally experience Christ in his mercy, and we were not left wanting.

We arrived at the host parish of St. James the Apostle in Wicawica Stare, outside of Krakow, and were taken in by the wonderfully hospitable families of the parish for housing and breakfast accommodations. Early each morning, we met at the parish and made the half-hour trek into the city by bus or train to attend the events of the day. The first day was the opening ceremony and Mass hosted by the local Archdiocese of Krakow in Bonia Park. Each subsequent day had a catechesis session for us in the morning at a local parish, and then various options in the evening. On the third day, we welcomed Pope Francis with magnificent fanfare and jubilation, and the fourth day brought a day of pilgrimage to the Shrines of St. Faustina and St. [Pope] John Paul II. The closing Mass on the last day at the Campus *Misericordiae*, the "Field of Mercy," involved a six-mile trek outside of the city the day before just to find a space in our section at the park.

Every day was a brand new experience of Christ, and every experience brought us face-to-face with beauty in such unexpected ways. Beauty was meeting fellow Catholics from Iraq and Syria, who despite their unspeakable pain, were so joyful, reverent, and in love with Christ. Beauty was seeing 2.5 million young people stand together and sing the *Sanctus* with tearful eyes and moved hearts. Beauty was seeing thousands upon thousands of young European men and women coming out to experience Christ, even when everyone is saying that the Church in Europe is dead. Beauty was seeing the extreme will to communicate with someone, even

without a common language. Beauty was singing at the top of your lungs with the Italians on a train that is so crammed that you have your face pressed against the glass. Beauty is being rendered speechless by the magnificence of the churches in Krakow. Beauty is being moved to conversion by the simple words of a simple man, chosen to be the Vicar of Christ on earth. Each of these little things was truly an experience of God. They were experiences that moved us and brought us to the person of Christ through the very language that He instituted—beauty. And from the mouth of our Holy Father, we were set aflame to go out into the world and proclaim the mercy of God to everyone we encounter.

The next World Youth Day will take place in Panama 2019. Consider joining us on this inspiring pilgrimage. □

Paul Elhallal is a Maronite young adult from Our Lady of Lebanon Parish in Washington, D.C.

Diocese of Metuchen Begins Project Support in Lebanon



Delegation meets with Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, Papal Nuncio to Lebanon.

by Msgr. Joseph Kerrigan

Led by Maronite Bishop Gregory J. Mansour, a four-member delegation from the Metuchen Diocese, New Jersey, visited Lebanon June 2-13, 2016, with high hopes that it will be the start of something fruitful for the poor and marginalized in Lebanon.

The goal of the trip was to establish a program of long-term project support in Lebanon in areas of charity and justice. To that end, the team was introduced to the leadership of *Caritas* Lebanon and Catholic Relief Services Lebanon, and had the opportunity to visit various projects and talk with staff and beneficiaries from Beirut to near *Baalbek*.

The Metuchen delegation also sought to gain a better understanding of refugee conditions in Lebanon, so as to better prepare for a proposed refugee resettlement program in the diocese.

Bishop Mansour and Deacon Aaron Sandbothe from the Maronite Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn accompanied the Metuchen Diocese's Director of Catholic Relief Services,

Msgr. Joseph Kerrigan, who joined Deacon Peter Barcellona, Susan Feeney and Melissa Chedid.

The delegation also spent time in prayer and pilgrimage, visiting sites associated with the Lebanese Saints Sharbel, Rafka and Nematallah Hardini, touring the Sacred Valley, and meeting Patriarch Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai and other officials at the Maronite Patriarchate in *Bkerke*.

Ms. Feeney, from St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Skillman, N.J., said, "You read about the refugee situation in the newspapers, but when you are actually on the ground in Lebanon and present to hear firsthand a story of a Syrian woman who struggled to get her orphaned niece and nephew out of Syria and to a safe place with her in Lebanon, you realize the day to day struggle for survival these refugee families face. I came away inspired and in awe of the work of the individuals who are being Christ every day to these vulnerable Syrian families at the refugee camps, schools and shelters."

As the team turns to project support, several potential options have emerged. One from CRS Lebanon actually involves helping the Maronite Archdiocese in Cyprus. There is a project with *Caritas* Cyprus and the Maronite Archdiocese of Cyprus, led by Archbishop Joseph Souief, where there are options to provide shelter for migrants and refugees, establish charitable activities on the Turkish side of Cyprus, assist with peace building activities between Muslims and Catholics, and support development projects, including job creation initiatives, to bring Christians back to villages.

Another idea is to assist the Good Shepherd Sisters Youth Center in *Deir Al Ahmar*, Lebanon, where there are opportunities to fund expansion of a youth center for refugee children, and to support a summer camp, trauma counseling programs, and after-school care.

A third option is to assist a boarding school run by the Sisters of the Most Blessed Sacrament in *Jbeil*, Lebanon. Updates on the progress of the relationship can be found by going to ccsolidarity.org, or by contacting Msgr. Joseph Kerrigan directly at jkerrigan@ccsolidarity.org. □

Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon *Maronite Mercy Pilgrimage*

by *Father Albert Constantine*

His Excellency, Bishop Elias Abdallah Zaidan, accompanied by six priests, recently led a group of 156 Pilgrims on a tour of Italy from May 25 through June 4, 2016, for the Holy Year of Mercy.

The Pilgrimage began in Milan and wound its way throughout Italy with stops in Padua, Venice, Florence, Assisi, Cascia, Rome and San Giovanni Rotondo. Along the way, we had the good fortune to experience the beauty of the great country of Italy and experience its people's tremendous hospitality and welcoming spirit as well as its culture and history.

More importantly, we had the chance to visit magnificent basilicas, cathedrals and churches and we saw our faith come alive before our very eyes. Our Bishop and Priests offered The Divine Liturgy daily and we prayed with Saint Ambrose, Saint Anthony, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Rita, Saint Paul,



Santa Maria Maggiore and Saint Padre Pio. As we celebrated each Liturgy, we could feel the presence of the Saints with us, inspiring us to continue our Pilgrimage and giving us the spiritual nourishment we needed. At every turn, we sensed that we had seen the best that one could see and experienced the best that one could experience, but then we would go to another destination and realize that the best was yet to come!

Being in the presence of the Saints, praying with them, and walking where Saint Peter and Saint Paul lived and died for their faith was an experience of a lifetime and each one of us is so much richer for the experience. There was a very special feeling of gratitude that came over us each time we said a prayer or learned more about the history of our Church and those who came before us and enriched us by their sacrifices.

The Pilgrimage was indeed a blessing; everything we saw, learned and did was a treasure to behold; but for many of us, if not all of us, being in the presence of the Holy Father during his Papal Audience was truly an awe-inspiring experience and a true highlight of our Pilgrimage. It is of course always a privilege to be in the presence of the Pope and receive his blessing. What is even more remarkable is that His Holiness singled out our Bishop and the members of our group for a special blessing during his public address. No words can express the feelings that swarmed over us as we heard His Holiness' blessing and words of welcome. In this year of Mercy, we all felt that the hand of God touched each one of us.

As we made our way back to our Parishes and our homes, we came back imbued with a renewed sense of purpose; we were made more alive by the incredible experiences we shared and had our determination to live our faith daily, in everything we do, fully strengthened.

We are truly grateful to our priests and all the people who worked extremely hard to ensure that our Pilgrimage was everything it could possibly be, and more. We are also grateful to all the Pilgrims who accompanied us on this, once-in-a-lifetime journey, and who were so determined to live fully this incredible experience of Faith.

Finally, and most importantly, our gratitude goes to our Bishop who organized and led our group, worked tirelessly and ensured that each one of us was well looked after and that we all had an experience to treasure. □

Grosse Pointe Shores, Michigan *Patriarch Bechara Rai Makes Special Visit to Cousin*



Patriarch Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai with his cousin Dr. Daher Rahi.

by Chris Kassab

His Beatitude Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai, Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, recently made a private visit to the home of his cousin Dr. Daher Boutros Rahi, in Grosse Pointe Shores, Michigan. Dr. Rahi is an active and respected member of St. Maron Maronite Catholic Church in Detroit, Mich.

During the visit, Cardinal Rai celebrated a special Liturgy at St. Maron Church in honor of the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul.

Following the Liturgy, Dr. Rahi announced that he and his family were donating \$50,000 to establish a scholarship in Patriarch Rai's name to benefit college-bound students attending St. Maron Church.

"I grew up with His Beatitude in a small village in Lebanon, and we used to play together as children," said Dr. Rahi. "So many times he would go missing, and we would find him kneeling in prayer at the altar of the church. He has always held a very special place in my heart."

The Cardinal Bechara Peter Rai Scholarship will be awarded annually to a high school student parishioner of St.

Maron Church who maintains a 3.5 grade point average or higher, demonstrates dedication to both the church and the community and has received a letter of acceptance to an accredited university.

Dr. Rahi also presented Cardinal Rai with an additional check for \$50,000 to help the poor and needy in Lebanon.

"Every time I speak with Cardinal Rai he tells me about the beautiful people in Lebanon who come to him in need of support," said Dr. Rahi. "It is an honor for me to send this donation back to Lebanon with His Beatitude to help those who are struggling in my homeland."

Patriarch Rai was overwhelmed with emotion and gratitude after learning of the establishment of the scholarship in his name and receiving the donation for the needy. It was a moving moment, and the church erupted in loud applause.

Following the presentation, Patriarch Rai delivered additional exciting news. "This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Maronite Diocese in Detroit," he said. "After consulting with Bishop Elias Zaidan, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, and Archbishop Paul Sayah, Patriarchal Vicar General, I have decided to elevate Monsignor Louis Baz, Pastor of St. Maron Church, to the rank of Chorbishop."

All of those in the church responded to the news of the elevation with a standing ovation and another thunderous round of applause. Msgr. Baz - who will be ordained a Chorbishop in a special ceremony later this year - has been the Pastor of St. Maron Church for the past seven years. □

Brooklyn, New York *Bishop Mansour Welcomes Patriarch Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai to the Eparchy of Saint Maron*

I have the joy of welcoming a Shepherd, a Good Shepherd. Even my most difficult days as shepherd of the flock entrusted to me are nothing compared to that of the shepherds of the Middle East. For over three years, Archbishops Boulos Yazigi (Antiochian Orthodox) and Yohanna Ibrahim (Syriac Orthodox) have been missing. They were kidnapped near Aleppo, and still we do not know if they are dead or alive. Their only "offense" was that they were tending the flock entrusted to them.

A week ago a man dressed as a priest arrived in *Qamishli*, Syria, at the 101st commemoration of the "*Sayfo*," the Syriac name given to the Ottoman genocide of Syriac, Armenian and Assyrian Christians. He was stopped at the door; there he detonated his suicide vest killing himself and several others. His goal was to reach the Syriac Orthodox Patriarch, Ignatius Aphrem Karim.

Scores of bishops, priests and religious have been killed, kidnapped and tortured by those who hate.

But there is something that those who hate do not understand. The shepherds of the Middle East cannot be frightened. They cannot be defeated by terror or threats. They are the Good Shepherds, of whom Jesus predicted would come after him; they are the ones who like him, lay down their lives for their flock.

Our Maronite Patriarch is one of those Good Shepherds. He cannot be frightened nor will he run at the approach of wolf. With gratitude and deepest respect we welcome the Father and Head of the Maronite Church, Patriarch Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai.

+ Gregory John Mansour
Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

Waterville, Maine



From left: Archbishop Paul Sayah, Patriarch Bechara Rai, Bishop Gregory Mansour and Fr. Larry Jensen.

by Fr. Larry Jensen

No one at St. Joseph Maronite Catholic Church in Waterville, Maine, would have ever dreamed that two out of the three persons mentioned in the Maronite Liturgy during intercessions: "We remember ... especially Francis, the Pope of Rome, Bechara Peter the Patriarch of Antioch, and our Bishop, Gregory ..." would be visiting us at the same time!!

Arriving Saturday, June 25, 2016, His Beatitude Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai, the Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, was greeted by the parishioners. Traveling with him were Archbishop Paul Sayah, his Vicar General; Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron; and his Vicar General, Chorbishop Michael Thomas; Deacon Simon Abi-Nader, security; and press secretary, Walid Ghayid.

A traditional Maine luncheon, served by ladies of the parish, included Maine Lobster Rolls and Maine Wild Blueberry Pie.

The Church was filled to overflowing. Parishioners and friends from as far away as Florida and upstate New York came to join in the festivities. Concelebrating with the Patriarch were those traveling with him and area clergy from the Melkite, Latin, and Russian Orthodox rites. The congregation was spiritually inspired through the profound prayers of the Liturgy of the Faithful Departed beautifully sung by the choir and congregation. We were all moved by the Patriarch's words during his homily. Truly we could feel the Holy Spirit was at work.

After the Liturgy, an all-American turkey dinner, prepared by the Knights of Columbus, was open to all

parishioners and friends. After the meal the Patriarch gave a thought provoking speech concerning the Middle Eastern Conflict. The Patriarch was gracious in meeting, praying, and blessing everyone. He blessed religious sacramentals many of which were to be given to the sick.

Cincinnati, Ohio



From left: Father Todd Grogan, Archbishop Paul Sayah, Archbishop Dennis Schnurr, Patriarch Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai, Bishop A. Elias Zaidan, Father George Hajj, Father Siju Azhakath, and Ms. Kirsten Evans.

by Linda Conour

Friday, July 1, 2016, was an incredible day for the Parishes of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Cincinnati and St. Ignatius Church in Dayton, Ohio, as His Beatitude Patriarch Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai came for a special visit. For many, this was a once-in-a-lifetime event, and the joy and excitement of meeting the head of the Maronite Church was uplifting and spiritually moving.

The day started with the "One Church of Mercy" Conference that had been planned by representatives of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Roman Catholic Church, St. Anthony of Padua Maronite Catholic Church, and St. Ignatius Maronite Catholic Church.

The conference was hosted at Annunciation Church in Cincinnati. The theme of the Conference was: *Christians of the East and West join together to promote greater awareness of Eastern Rite Catholic communities and religious freedom for all* (www.onechurchofmercy.org).

Presentations were made from a panel that included His Excellency Dennis Schnurr, Archbishop of Cincinnati; His Excellency A. Elias Zaidan, Bishop of the Maronite Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles; Father Siju Azhakath, Director of St. Chavara Syro-Malabar Catholic Mission; Father Todd Grogan, Pastor of Annunciation Church; Father George Hajj, Pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Church; Ms. Kirsten Evans, Executive Director, In Defense of Christians (www.indefenseofchristians.org); and Keynote Speaker His Beatitude Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai. After the outstanding panel presentations, a question and answer session ensued, engaging the large group of participants at the Conference. Plans for continued dialogue and efforts are

underway, spearheaded by the One Church of Mercy Committee: Father Todd Grogan and Dr. Sandi Chakeres from Annunciation Church, Mr. Tony Stieritz from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Father George Hajj and Mrs. Linda Conour from St. Anthony of Padua Church, and Father Guy Sarkis from St. Ignatius Church.

Patriarch Rai celebrated an evening Pontifical Divine Liturgy at St. Anthony of Padua Church with the Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem leading the procession inside the Church. Archbishop Paul Sayah, Bishop Elias Zaidan, Father George Hajj, and Father Guy Sarkis concelebrated. Patriarch Rai gave an uplifting homily and then presented special gifts to Archbishop Dennis Schnurr and Bishop Joseph Binzer of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati as a thank you for welcoming him to the city.

A Grand Banquet at the Marriott Kingsgate Hotel and Conference Center in Cincinnati immediately followed. After the sit-down dinner and welcome speeches, framed prints of the One Church of Mercy Icon were presented to the Patriarch and all the Bishops attending that night as a gesture of gratitude for their presence and a remembrance of the visit. It was an elegant and truly memorable evening that was enjoyed by all. □

Youngstown, Ohio 60th Anniversary Of Sr. Mary Augustine Nemer



NAM President Samir Farah, and National Coordinator Rose Sayhoun present Sr. Mary Augustine Nemer with a certificate of appreciation for her 60th Anniversary.

by Rose Sayhoun

President Samir Farah of the National Apostolate of Maronites (NAM) and National Coordinator Rose Sayhoun presented Sr. Mary Augustine Nemer a Certificate of Appreciation for celebrating her 60th year of

entrance into the Daughters of St. Paul; for her dedication to working with the poor in Africa for the past thirty-one years; and for being a prime example of what the Vocation Awareness Program means.

His Excellency Bishop A. Elias Zaidan was the main celebrant at the Liturgy on July 31, 2016, accompanied by Chorbishop Michael Kail, Pastor of St. Maron Church, Youngstown, Ohio. During his homily, Bishop Zaidan congratulated Sr. Mary Augustine on her long service to God and to the Church both here in the United States and in Africa. He also encouraged everyone to pray for more vocations in the priesthood and religious life.

Sr. Mary Augustine was born in Youngstown, Ohio, on April 2, 1939, and was baptized as Adele Rose Nemer. Her father, Ferris Nemer, was born in *Jernayah*, South Lebanon and came to the United States before the First World War. He was a soldier in that war and became an American citizen.

Ferris met and married Sara Joseph and they had six daughters, Sr. Mary Augustine being the second to the last. Sister attended St. Joseph's Grade School on Rayen Avenue in Youngstown. At the age of sixteen, she joined the Daughters of St. Paul as an Aspirant on September 1, 1955. She was attracted to their mission of spreading the Gospel message through the mass means of social communications.

After finishing her high school and college education at the St. Paul House of Studies in Boston, Mass., Sr. Mary Augustine was sent to many different and beautiful places in the U.S. – Texas, California, Florida, Louisiana, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Hawaii.

In 1985, Sr. Mary Augustine was asked to go to the Daughters of St. Paul Convent in Kenya, Africa, which had just opened, to help train the postulants and novices in the art of publishing and printing. The Sisters also produce audio visuals, DVDs etc. and have radio programs.

After finishing her term as superior in Kampala, Uganda, Sr. Mary Augustine returned to Nairobi, Africa, where she is currently working in the editorial department as a copy editor, besides teaching various classes to the novices. She is also helping with the accounts and takes care of all the immigration departments for the sisters and novices.

She relates that her sixty-one years spent in God's service (thirty in the U.S. and thirty-one in Africa) have been very fulfilling. She says, "God has certainly blessed me and I am very grateful to Him and also to all of my family, relatives and friends who have given me so much spiritual, moral and financial support during these long years."

After the Liturgy, light refreshments were offered in Antioch Hall to friends and relatives who joined in the celebration. Many offered donations in support of the poor in Africa and in exchange for items made by them. □

“Jesus seeks hearts that are open and tender toward the weak; hearts that are not hard, but docile and transparent.

Jesus wants truly consecrated hearts that live by His forgiveness and share it compassionately with their brothers and sisters.”

Pope Francis, July 30, 2016

Utica, New York *Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher*



Mr. Nathan Hanna, KHS, pictured above with his wife, Sara (Hobaica) Hanna and sons, Matthew and Nathan and Bishop Gregory Mansour, was appointed by Her Excellency Vicki Downey, the Eastern Lieutenant of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher, to serve as the Diocesan Coordinator for the local Diocese of Syracuse, N.Y. The Equestrian Order is a group of Christian faithful with a concern to support the Christians in the Holy Land. Nathan, is a Maronite and parishioner of Saint Louis Gonzaga in Utica, N.Y. ☐

Houston, Texas *Feast of Saint Sharbel*



On Sunday, July 17, 2016, Our Lady of the Cedars in Houston, Texas, celebrated the Feast of St. Sharbel with two solemn liturgies. Father George Bou Chaaya, the associate pastor, celebrated both Liturgies that were well

attended by the faithful despite the summer time exodus out of the Houston heat.

Both liturgies included an outdoor procession with the Saint's Icon and Relics while the Choir sang the Litany of Saint Sharbel and other traditional Saint Sharbel hymns. During the processions, several parishioners with various chronic conditions were invited to carry the Saint's Icon and the Holy Relics.

After the 11 o'clock Liturgy, the Knights of the Cedars cooked a lunch for all who attended. This was a welcome activity during an otherwise slow summer schedule at the parish.

Through the intercession of St. Sharbel, may God protect us all and keep a watchful eye over our community and all our parishioners.

Feast of the Assumption

by Nabil Joubran

On Monday, August 15, 2016, Our Lady of the Cedars in Houston celebrated the Assumption of the Virgin Mary (Dormition of Mary) with an evening solemn liturgy. Father Milad Yaghi, Pastor, concelebrated the Liturgy with his two associates, Father George Bou Chaaya and Father Edward Hanna. Despite the Feast Day's being on a Monday, a workday for most, the Church was packed with the faithful who came to honor the Patroness of the Parish, the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of the Cedars. The Altar was decorated with an exquisite array of white carnations, and roses.

Following the Liturgy an outdoor procession took place from the Church to the courtyard, with the Statue of the Virgin Mary carried on a pedestal by four of the parishioners. At the circle where a permanent life-size statue of the Virgin Mary stands, also decorated by white flowers, the Choir sang traditional Marian hymns and the final benediction was given just in time for everyone to enter the Cedar Hall as a severe rainstorm was making its way to the area. Inside the Hall, the Knights of the Cedars served dinner, which gave everyone something to do until the storm had passed, allowing everyone to get home safely. ☐



Deadline for the next month issue of *The Maronite Voice* is September 23, 2016.

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. ☐



Eparchial Appointments

His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, has made the following eparchial assignments effective on August 1, 2016:

- ! **Monsignor Peter Fahed Azar** from Pastor of Saint Anthony Maronite Church in Lawrence, Mass., to Rector of Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary in Washington, D.C.
- ! **Fr. Armondo Elkhoury** as Vice Rector of Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary, with the permission of his Bishop, A. Elias Zaidan, Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon.
- ! **Reverend Elie Mikhael** from Administrator of the Maronite Community of Charlotte, N.C., to Pastor of Saint Anthony Maronite Church, Lawrence, Mass.
- ! **Reverend Elias Khalil** as Administrator of the Maronite Community of Charlotte, N.C. Fr. Khalil will also remain in his current assignment as Administrator of Saint Sharbel Mission, Raleigh, N.C.
- ! **Very Reverend Geoffrey Abdallah** at the request of his Bishop, the Most Reverend Antoine Tarabay of Sydney, Australia, leaves Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary in Washington, D.C., to pursue his doctoral studies in Rome, Italy.
- ! **Reverend Sami Chaaya M.L.M.** from Pastor of Saint George Church in Uniontown, Penn., to work for his Congregation, the Maronite Lebanese Missionaries in Lebanon, at their request, effective September 1, 2016.
- ! **Reverend ElBadwi Habib M.L.M.** to serve the Eparchy of Saint Maron as Administrator of Saint George Church in Uniontown, Penn., effective September 1, 2016.
- ! **Reverend Raymond Khallouf** from Parochial Vicar of St. Anthony Church, Glen Allen, Va., to Lebanon on temporary leave with faculties.
- ! **Reverend Michel Lahoud** from assisting at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y., to Florida on temporary leave with faculties.
- ! **Reverend Joseph Abisaad** as Parochial Vicar at Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Easton, Penn.
- ! **Reverend James Doran** to assist at St. Anthony of the Desert Church, Fall River, Mass. ☐

Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

September 1 - 6, 2016

Personal Silent Retreat, Morristown, N.J.

September 7 - 8, 2016

In Defense of Christians (IDC) Convocation Summit and Visit to Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary, Washington, D.C.

September 9 - 11, 2016

Ordination of Deacon Aaron Sandbothe to Priesthood, Greenville, S.C.

September 12 - 13, 2016

USCCB Administrative Board Meetings, Washington, D.C.

September 14 - 15, 2016

Catholic Relief Services Meeting, Baltimore, Md.

September 18, 2016

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

September 21, 2016

Meeting with New York Bishops, Brooklyn, N.Y.

September 22 - 29, 2016

Catholic University Board of Trustees Meetings, Rome, Italy

September 30 - October 2, 2016

Maronite Young Adults (MYA) Retreat, Philadelphia, Penn.

October 5, 2016

Eparchial Presbyteral Council Meeting, The Chancery, Brooklyn, N.Y.

October 6, 2016

Eparchial Finance Council Meeting, The Chancery, Brooklyn, N.Y.

October 7, 2016

50th Anniversary of the Presence of a Maronite Bishop in the United States, Liturgy and Dinner, Brooklyn, N.Y.

October 7 - 9, 2016

Deacons/Subdeacons Retreat and Saturday meeting along with the Eparchial Pastoral Council. ☐

Catechism and the Maronite Family

Continued from page 1

I urge all our Maronite parents to take seriously the duty that they have to catechize their children, and all of our parishes must assist parents through programs, classes and opportunities for children and youth to grow spiritually. I call upon all parents to enroll their children in the religious education programs at the local parish. Let us all make every effort to deepen our knowledge so that we can help our loved ones. ☐

+Bishop A. Elias Zaidan
Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles

From the Book Shelf

The *Miraculous Soil of Saint Rafqa*, written and illustrated by Sister Lea Lahoud, tells the story of Saint Rafqa, a little girl who loved Jesus so much that she asked Him to share his pains: "God, why are you distant from me? Why are you leaving me alone? Why have you spared me any disease? Have you forgotten me, after I adored you?"

The Miraculous Soil of Saint Rafqa makes a perfect First Communion gift or a gift to any young person who wants to learn more about Saint Rafqa. The book is available for \$10 plus \$3 shipping from Saint Maron Publications, 4611 Sadler Road, Glen Allen, Virginia 23060 or gmsebaali@aol.com. Saint Maron Publications accepts Visa or Master Card. ☐

The Four Ancient Sources

by
Rev. David A. Fisher

The sacred and holy, ecumenical, and general Synod of Trent,--lawfully assembled in the Holy Spirit, ... the purity itself of the Gospel be preserved in the Church; which (Gospel), before promised through the prophets in the holy Scriptures, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, first promulgated with His own mouth, and then commanded to be preached by His Apostles to every creature, as the fountain of all, both saving truth, and moral discipline; and seeing clearly that this truth and discipline are contained in the written books, and the unwritten traditions... (*Council of Trent, Fourth Session, 1546*).

The above teaching is from the Council of Trent, the Council that was called to confront the teachings of Luther, Calvin and the Protestant Reformers and to lay the foundations for the so called "Catholic or Counter-Reformation." The teachings of this Council would come to shape the life of the Catholic Church until the Second Vatican Council of the twentieth century. In response to the Reformers who taught that all of Christian Revelation is contained only in Scripture, the Fathers of the Council proclaimed that the "Deposit of Faith" is found in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

For many centuries after the upheavals of the Reformation and the Catholic response to it, the various Christian Churches, with little reference to the original biblical languages (*Paleo-Hebrew, Koine Greek, Aramaic*), felt secure in their "official translations" of the Scriptures, from the Latin Vulgate of the Roman Church, to the King James Version of the English speaking portions of Protestantism. Then following upon the worldwide development of history as a science in the late eighteenth and nineteenth and twentieth centuries; there emerged a renewed desire to study and understand biblical archeology, history, and languages. While this explosion of interest in uncovering the historical and linguistic underpinnings of Scripture began primarily among Protestant scholars, the full and complete commitment to this endeavor by the Catholic Church was given voice by Pope Pius XII in the midst of the dark days of World War. In his Encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, (September 30, 1943), the Holy Father wrote, "Being thoroughly prepared by the knowledge of the ancient languages and by the aids afforded by the art of criticism, let the Catholic exegete undertake the task, of all those imposed on him the greatest, that namely of discovering and expounding the genuine meaning of the Sacred Books. In the performance of this task let the interpreters bear in mind that their foremost and greatest endeavor should be to discern and define clearly that sense of the biblical words which is called literal."

In the return to the sources, some scholars examined what were the ancient attempts to create a "complete" Bible. These have come to be referred to as the four ancient versions.

The Septuagint

Often called the Alexandrian Version, the Septuagint is the

only Greek translation from possibly seven or more translations to survive completely. It was written most likely in the third century before Christ in Alexandria, Egypt, by order of the Greek ruler of that land, King Ptolemy II. The official title in the Koine (Common) Greek of the time is "The Translation of the Seventy." The title Septuagint comes from the Latin title given to the work, Septuaginta, because it was thought to have been translated from the Hebrew by seventy Jewish scholars.

The Septuagint is considered by the Eastern Orthodox Church to be the official and inspired version of the Jewish Scriptures or Old Testament. It has been used significantly throughout history in translations of the Old Testament and in many instances employed texts from ancient Hebrew biblical sources that pre-date those used by the Masoretic Text that is considered today the official Hebrew Scripture in Judaism.

Aramaic Targums

The Old Testament or Jewish Scriptures did not enter into their final stages of editing until the post-exilic period of Judaism c. 539 B.C./B.C.E). While the oral traditions of the Jewish Scriptures stretch back to the dawn of Near Eastern civilization, and the oldest written texts discovered so far are from the time of King Solomon c. 970-931 B.C./B.C.E.), the final editing arose when the majority of Jewish believers used Aramaic and Greek as their everyday languages and Hebrew had become a "religious language." This created the need to translate the Hebrew texts into Aramaic, known to us as the *Aramaic Targums* (translations).

Bruce M. Metzger writes in "Important Early Translations of the Bible," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 150 (Jan 93), pp. 35ff. "The *Targums* are interpretive renderings of the books of the Hebrew Scriptures (with the exception of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel) into Aramaic. Such versions were needed when Hebrew ceased to be the normal medium of communication among the Jews. In synagogue services the reading of the Scriptures was followed by a translation into the Aramaic vernacular of the populace. For a reading from the Pentateuch the Aramaic translation followed each verse of the Hebrew; for a reading from the Prophets three verses were followed by the Aramaic translation." The *Aramaic Targums* were therefore more than a scholarly translation, they were in a sense at one and the same time a translation, an interpretation, and a catechesis.

Syriac Peshitta

The *Peshitta*, which can mean "simple," "common," or "straight," is the official version of the Bible for many churches of the Syriac tradition. It contains both Old and New Testaments, although in its original versions seems to have excluded 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, and Revelation,

Going Deeper Into the Spiritual Life - A Life of Prayer

by Sister Therese Touma and Dr. Anne Borek

which were later added in 616 A.D./C.E. Some scholars believe that the *Peshitta* was translated from a Greek text into Syriac, which had been a translation from Aramaic into Greek. However, the majority of scholars today seem to feel that the Old Testament is a direct translation from Hebrew and the New Testament is a direct translation from the original Greek.

While it is not totally clear when the *Peshitta* was translated, it is clear that it was intended for Syriac language communities in Mesopotamia that did not use Greek or Latin in their everyday lives. By the 5th century of the Christian era it was central to the life and worship of Syriac Christians, replacing the Diatessaron translation of Tatian, who had slipped into heresy in his final years.

The *Peshitta* is a window to, and a reminder of, the fact that Christianity flourished in a non-Roman (Latin) and non-Byzantine (Greek) world, from the very first centuries of the Church.

Latin Vulgate

In 382 A.D./C.E., Pope Damasus gave St. Jerome the task of collecting the various Latin manuscripts of the Bible in use, known as the *Vetus Latina* (Old Latin) and creating an improved and complete text of the Gospels for common (vulgar) use. The work, however, did not end with the Gospels, but came to encompass most of the books of the Bible. The Latin Vulgate would stand as the official version of the Bible in the Latin Church until the reforms of the Second Vatican Council.

St. Jerome was a master of languages, with knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Even his contemporary, St. Augustine, who himself preferred the Old Testament to be a translation of the Septuagint, acknowledges that St. Jerome was the first to translate the Hebrew Scriptures directly into Latin. Before the fall of the Western Roman Empire the Latin Vulgate became for most Latin speaking people their experience of Sacred Scripture. After the fall of the Western Empire the Latin Vulgate became common biblical ground for old Romans, Goths, Franks, Scots, and all the various "new peoples" who accepted the Christian faith in the West.

Conclusion

St. Jerome once remarked that "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ." Indeed, as Christians we believe that all of Scripture is ultimately about Christ. Just as Jesus is the Eternal Word of the Father, the Sacred Scriptures, being the Word of God, reveal to us constantly the saving work of Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit, in carrying out the will of the Father.

Sacred Scripture also reveals to us how God has used us, his earthen vessels, in all our weaknesses, with the limitations of our human languages, in creating his Word of Truth. □

In *Going Deeper into the Spiritual Life* we share practical insights and tools on prayer and spiritual direction to help better encounter the mercy of Christ in our own faith journey. Our goal is to highlight various resources for prayer, discernment (prayerfully distinguishing God's will in our life), *lectio divina* (Divine Reading) and preparation to receive the Mysteries/Sacraments.

What is Prayer?

Prayer has been described as a "quest for truth." By study we seek truth outside our minds. By prayer we absorb the truth and apply it in our own lives. (Thomas Merton, pg. 53 of *Spiritual Direction and Meditation*).

Prayer is a freely given gift from God to us, his beloved sons and daughters. It is not just asking for things we want. Neither is it just talking to God. It is much more. True prayer is a relationship animated by the Holy Spirit. It is a loving friendship with the Triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) where one listens, thanks, adores, and confidently places one's needs and the needs of others before God.

What are the four movements of prayer?

ACTS is a helpful acronym here.

- **Adoration:** This movement seeks to praise, adore and love God for his beauty, goodness and truth. For examples see Psalms 84, 100.
- **Contrition:** This movement seeks to ask God for forgiveness for sins and healing for past and present wounds. See Psalms 25, 51.
- **Thanksgiving:** This movement seeks to thank God for the blessings in one's life. See Psalms 138, 145.
- **Supplication:** This movement seeks to ask God for one's needs and the needs of others. See Psalms 23, 55.

For a summary of this see this video link on the four movements of prayer:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRj5Jz9mDog>

In next month's issue of *The Maronite Voice*, we will explore a beautiful and ancient way of Praying with Scriptures using four simple steps... *Lectio Divina*.

If you have any further questions, thoughts or need some resources on prayer or spiritual direction please email the Maronite Servants Sisters at sister@maroniteservants.org or by phone at 508-996-1753. □

My Vocation
by
Fr. Dominique Hanna

"**B**ecause zeal for your house consumes me" (Psalm 69: 9) is the motto that I have chosen for my priesthood. This verse is accompanying me during my journey and growth in my vocation to become more and more configured to Jesus, the High Priest. Along the motto, a picture of Jesus sleeping in the boat before calming the storm at sea (Mark 4:35-41) was the center of my meditation during my one-week retreat before my ordination to the holy order of the presbyterate. Most paintings of this scene show Christ standing in the boat rebuking the wind, "Quiet! Be still." What is interesting about this one is that Peter tries to wake Jesus up

while the waves are breaking over the boat and tells him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

The motto and painting summarize to a certain extent my calling to serve God and his people. The desire to have a more active part in the Church started from a younger age. I grew up in a town where the Church with the square around it is at the heart of all fun, social, spiritual and liturgical activities. "It takes a village" to raise a potential man to the priesthood also can be applied in my case. There is no doubt that my family, my parents and three siblings, played a major role instilling in my heart the love of God and neighbor, but my unofficial formation that started at age six or seven was led by the parishioners of Saint Anthony the Great Maronite Church in *Douwar*, Lebanon. For example, I began playing soccer in the square around the Church. There, I developed a sense of friendship and camaraderie that is kept and cherished throughout my formation until today. This is when I experienced firsthand how to be a team player and learned to keep my ego checked and that it is not all about me scoring and winning. Playing soccer in the Church's plaza enabled me to stay closer to God's house where I was a member of different groups: Knights of the Virgin Mary, The Choir of Saint Anthony, and the Prayer Group of the Parish, to name a few. Thus, my zeal combined with church involvement consumed so much of my time.

As I grew older in the world and ventured outside my hometown, the passion for prayer and spending more and more time in the Church did not fade away. On the contrary, they escalated, but were mixed with a feeling of fear. Not many young men were as enthusiastic about Christ and his Church as few of us were, which made



me question whether there was something wrong with us. Later on, I understood that swimming against the stream creates in the person some disappointments because he wants everyone to be like him. Thus, the decision to enter the seminary was not an easy one. After two years of college, I realized that I could better serve the world by entering the seminary to become a priest than work in a business. Having spent three years in the Patriarchal Maronite Seminary in *Ghazir*, Lebanon, I finished my studies of Theology of four years at Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary in Washington, D.C. Both seminaries helped me to comprehend as much as possible God's love and mercy for the world and equipped me to embody and reflect them to his people as a servant-leader.

Looking back at nine years of priesthood in a world where violence and hate is sometimes all that is heard and seen, I find myself so many times standing before Almighty God and, like Peter in the boat, extending my arms saying, "Lord, do you not care that we are perishing." And every time, the Lord had proven to me that he is still in charge and that his peaceful Kingdom is coming no matter how the long is the wait.

To all the readers of *The Maronite Voice*, keep all the priests in your prayer so that the flame of their zeal for God's Church keeps burning brightly in their hearts. ☐



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

If you feel that you have a vocation to the Priesthood or religious life, please 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
502 Seminole Ave. NE
Atlanta, GA 30307

Or

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

Uniontown, Pennsylvania Visit of the Relics of Saint Sharbel



by Dr. Mabel George Howard

During the weekend of May 20 - 22, 2016, the most sacred relics of Saint Sharbel, a pious and reverent monk, hermit, miracle worker, healer, and priest of the Lebanese Holy Land and Maronite Church, were venerated at St. George Maronite Catholic Church in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Saint Sharbel's relics were venerated on a national tour in parishes throughout the Eparchy of Saint Maron in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the canonization of the holy man. The St. George parishioners and community members were honored and humbled to receive this blessed and historic visit.

The three-day celebration began with a procession led by Father Sami Chaaya, Pastor, Father Rudolph Wakim, Pastor of Our Lady of Victory, Pittsburgh, Penn., church members and the Knights of Columbus Honor Guard. The processors chanted Arabic hymns as the relics were placed upon the beautifully decorated steps of the church altar. Hundreds of pilgrims representing various religions came to pay homage to the saint. The visitors touched the reliquary of the relics as they prayed for personal intentions. On the first night, a healing liturgy was celebrated by Father Sami Chaaya, Father Bill Kill, Father Mike Savage, and Subdeacon Dr. Mallard George while Father Ron Simboli heard confessions. All worshipers were anointed with the holy oils blessed at the tomb of Saint Sharbel in Lebanon. Liturgy was celebrated each day followed by the veneration of the relics, Eucharistic Adoration, the Angelus, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, the reciting the rosary, and the anointing of the sick. The ladies of the church welcomed guests, presented a video of Saint Sharbel, and provided refreshments in the social hall for all to enjoy. Each family was given a complimentary Pilgrim's bag containing a booklet, prayer card and medallion of Saint Sharbel, a handmade rosary from Lebanon, holy oils, and religious bracelets for the youth.

The weekend of worship and peace allowed time for silent prayer, meditation, reflection, personal healing, and spiritual introspection. The St. George community was grateful to have experienced this blessed event. Saint Sharbel was a man who lived in prayer, solitude, and austerity and was truly devoted to God. This most blessed and memorable event has helped the St. George community unite people from all walks of life in faith and love of God.

Blue Mass



by Dr. Mabel George Howard

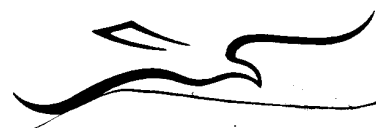
On July 17, 2016, St. George Maronite Catholic Church of Uniontown, Pennsylvania, paid tribute to the men and women of its community who serve and protect the citizens. A "Blue Mass" was celebrated by Father Sami Chaaya to say "thank you" to our local First Responders including firefighters, police officers, EMS personnel, 911 operators, rescue teams, and the military.

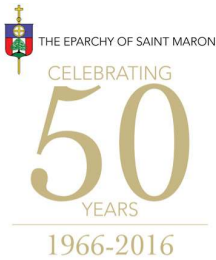
The color blue relates to the blue colored uniforms worn by a majority of community safety services. The First Responders, dressed in uniform with full regalia, participated in the liturgy by offering peace to the parishioners and presenting the gifts to the altar. State and local dignitaries and persons of many faiths also gathered in prayer to show their appreciation for the efforts of these public defenders.

In his homily, Father Sami emphasized the importance and necessity of our First Responders as he extended a special blessing and prayed for peace.

The "Blue Mass" is meant to honor those who have fallen in the line of duty and those currently serving their communities. These men and women demonstrate courage and risk their safety for others in difficult and/or tragic times. Following the Liturgy, everyone was invited to the church hall for a complimentary breakfast prepared by the Ladies Guild and sponsored by the generosity of an active parishioner.

The first "Blue Mass" was celebrated in 1934 at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Washington, D.C. Since that time, the "Blue Mass" has become an annual tradition in many dioceses and parishes across the country showing gratitude and support to the First Responders for their dedication and commitment to helping others. The St. George congregation is proud of its First Responders, compassionate caring individuals who work to keep the communities safe... "Hats off to them." □





50TH ANNIVERSARY
THE EPARCHY OF SAINT MARON
 OCTOBER 7TH, 2016
COMMEMORATIVE AD BOOK FORM



There are many opportunities to advertise and sponsor

All ads appear in the commemorative ad book. Sponsor pages will be highlighted in a special section.

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P.O. Box 717
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Make checks payable to "NAM – Eparchy 50th Anniversary"

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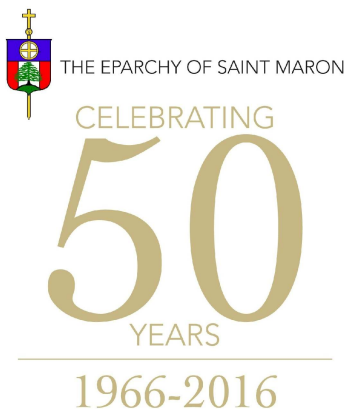
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50th Anniversary of the Presence of a Maronite Bishop in the U.S.



Fifty years ago Bishop Francis M. Zayek was assigned by Pope Paul VI as the first Maronite Bishop for the United States.

When he arrived, he found a mature laity (NAM) already working well with their clergy; a Seminary, the first outside Lebanon; a Shrine to Our Lady; and a deep hope for greater unity and progress. With his persistent love, his broad and vibrant vision of the Church, and his untiring confidence in Our Lady and Divine Providence, he was slowly able to gain the hearts and minds of God's people, and, as they say, the rest is history!

Much has happened in fifty years. We are now two eparchies, over 86 parishes and a vibrant Church, much like the one envisioned by that young missionary bishop fifty years ago.

On October 7, 2016 we hope to celebrate fifty years and consecrate ourselves in order to continue this noble mission. We hope you can join us. For more information please visit our website, www.stmaron.org. If you are not able to be with us on that day please be with us in prayer and support.

I have asked NAM delegates and members to work with our priests on a Program Ad Book. I ask you, your family and friends to participate in this endeavor if possible (see form on the previous page). This Ad Book Commemorative Journal will feature business advertisement, personal messages, and tributes for loved ones. Half of the proceeds will go directly to the National Apostolate of Maronites. Thank you for your willingness to assist in this effort; it will be, God willing, a win/win for everyone.

May God continue to bless His Maronite Church.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
+Gregory John Mansour

Event Schedule

Friday, October 7, 2016

6:00 p.m. Divine Liturgy at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, 113 Remsen Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201

8:00 p.m. Banquet at the New York Marriott at Brooklyn Bridge, 333 Adams Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201

Banquet Reservations are available for \$150 a person or a special table of ten for \$2,500. Please RSVP (for the banquet) to Msgr. James Root, Rector, no later than October 3, 2016. For questions and further information, you may call 718-624-7228 or email cathrectory@verizon.net.

Lodging Information

Rooms have been blocked at the New York Marriott at Brooklyn Bridge on Adams Street. Room rate is \$269 (single or double occupancy). This rate is available from October 6 - 9, 2016. Absolute deadline for this rate is September 16, 2016. For reservations please call 877-303-0104 or online at <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/ladyoflebanon>. Refer to group name: Lady of Lebanon ☐

Dartmouth, Massachusetts Light of Life Bible Camp



by Sr. Natalie Sayde Salameh

The LOL (Light of Life) Club began on June 27, 2016, with a week of learning about God's merciful love in engaging video, crafts, Bible sharing, games, prayer, choir practice, *dabke* rehearsal, and snacks. Sr. Therese Maria organized the program along the theme of the Jubilee Year of Mercy, "In the Footsteps of Mercy," and focused on the specific ways that lead us to Jesus, who is the visible face of our Father's mercy.

LOL Club Maronite summer camp concluded July 1, 2016, with a Divine Liturgy celebrated at St. Anthony of the Desert Maronite Church by Fr. James Doran and Fr. Fadi Ruhunna, and attended by LOL members, volunteers, and parents.

After the closing Liturgy, all those in attendance enjoyed a lunch, arcade games, bumper cars and boats at Grand Prix in Seekonk, Mass. If you are interested in a similar event for your parish children, contact Sister Marla Marie at 508-996-1753. ☐

Appeal from Caritas Lebanon

Christians in Lebanon are suffering! If you are able to relieve some of the suffering, please visit Caritas Lebanon at <http://www.caritas.org.lb>. Thank you for your consideration. ☐

San Francisco, California

A Successful NAM Convention



Convention Opening Liturgy. From left, Subdeacon Tony BouKhalil, Archbishop Paul Sayah, Bishop Elias Zaidan, Patriarch Rai, Bishop Gregory Mansour and Archbishop Youssef Soueif.

by Fr. John Al Nahal

The Maronite Convention in the San Francisco Bay Area was a joy and blessing for all of us, especially for having in our midst, the Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and all the East His Beatitude Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai, and all NAM conventioners.

It is the first time for Our Lady of Lebanon Parish to host the Maronite Convention. We enjoyed every minute of our Maronite Convention. It was the harvest and culmination of two years of hard work.

The clergy of both eparchies started arriving at San Francisco airport as early as Saturday, July 2, 2016. One of the first to arrive and celebrate the Divine Liturgy at Our Lady of Lebanon Church was the Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus, Most Reverend Youssef Soueif. Archbishop Soueif was the main speaker for the joint sessions of the clergy conference.

The clergy conference which preceded the Convention started on Tuesday, July 5, 2016, with a Divine Liturgy presided by His Beatitude Bechara Peter Rai and concelebrated by Most Reverend A. Elias Zaidan, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles, Most Reverend Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, Most Reverend Paul Sayah, Patriarchal Vicar General, Most Reverend Robert Shaheen, *Bishop Emeritus*, Most Reverend Youssef Soueif, and all priests present. Roula Jamhoury Haddad, Chairman of the Convention Choir Committee, directed the choir that served the Divine Liturgy on Tuesday, Saturday, and Sunday of the NAM Convention.

Right after the Divine Liturgy, Joseph and Carmen Maroun, chairpersons of the NAM Convention, sponsored a dinner at Spinnaker Restaurant in Sausalito, Calif., for all clergy, NAM Board members, NAM Convention Committee Chairpersons, Our Lady of Lebanon Parish Council members, and Choir members who served the Liturgy that evening.

Wednesday, July 6, was an organized trip in the NAM excursion program chaired by Margo Eid, to Napa Valley, the

wine country. Around eighty NAM conventioners participated in that trip.

The clergy conference began on Wednesday with morning prayer (*Safro*), and then a conference by Archbishop Soueif, President of the Patriarchal Liturgical Commission. Another conference by Archbishop Soueif took place in the afternoon of that same day. On that evening and every evening of the convention the clergy celebrated the evening prayer (*Ramsho*).

A dinner for NAM Convention Diamond Level sponsors with the Patriarch and Bishops was held at Zarzuela Spanish Restaurant in San Francisco by its owner Andy Debane.

Registration for the Convention opened on Wednesday afternoon, and with it the hospitality pavilion. OLL Ladies Guild and associates worked hard to prepare a generous variety of Lebanese food items offered from Wednesday until Saturday of the convention. Thanks to the hard working OLL Ladies Guild and associates. The hospitality committee was chaired by Vivian Kuzni.

Wednesday too, was the opening Divine Liturgy for the Youth and Young Adults at the hotel. OLL Youth ministry served the Liturgy, Elie Yarack directed the Choir, and Jackie Kalil chaired the Youth Committee. OLL Youth Ministry served the Divine Liturgies at noon on Thursday and Friday of the Convention as well.

Thursday, July 7, was the second day of the clergy conference and the first full day of the Convention. Archbishop Soueif conducted the morning joint session for the clergy, and in the afternoon there was a separate administrative session for each of the eparchies.

The Convention started on Thursday for the laity with a morning presentation, "The Role of Christianity in the Making of Higher Education in Lebanon," by Dr. Joseph Jabbara, President of Lebanese American University (LAU). Michael Matly chaired the Presentation and Workshop Committee.

On that same day, there was another Youth workshop: "Experiencing the Grace of Jesus" during this year of Mercy, by Rev. Gary George. The children had their own room and games. Jano Saade organized and headed the children's committee.

Thursday afternoon, Patriarch Rai had a private tour in the city of San Francisco, Golden Gate bridge, Sausalito, and Muir Wood, where he visited the tallest trees in the world, the Redwood trees. The afternoon was also a time to go on an excursion and explore the beautiful San Francisco city. There were three trips on that afternoon, one for adults, another one for young adults, and one for the youth.

At the hotel, there was a "Connecting the Dots with Faith" workshop by Nina Kouyoumdjian, Principal, Cota Capital.

The young adults had their first Theology on Tap on Thursday evening with Fr. Tony Massaad. The Evangelical and Classical Concert started at 9:00 p.m. with spiritual songs chanted by OLL Children's Choir. Joumana Mdawar continued with a prayerful program, most of which was composed by Joseph Khalife, who was present with the audience. Marc Abou Naoum played beautifully on the keyboard.

NAM President Samir Farah and NAM Executive Director Mike Naber presented NAM Scholarships to the winners this year. Leila Milki, a young angelic voice from the Bay Area ended the concert that night.

On Friday, July 8, around fifty people participated in an early 5K Run to benefit St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital. Jackie Kalil organized the event.

The clergy conference officially ended on Friday morning, July 8, after the morning prayer and breakfast with the Order of Saint Sharbel. Subdeacon Tony BouKhalil chaired the Clergy Committee.

Archbishop Youssef Soueif presented a workshop on "Maronite Liturgies and Services," and Rony Barrak, a Lebanese musician and composer, presented "Orchestral Percussion and Drum Kit."

The young adults took a trip to Alcatraz Island, and others took a cruise in the Bay and enjoyed the view from the water of the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz, Angel Island, Treasure Island, and the Bay Bridge.

Friday afternoon was a busy day with workshops, the first one was "Prayer and Entrepreneurship" by Ramy Abeed, Founder and CEO of Snip.it, which was acquired by Yahoo. The second one was a Youth Workshop, "Faith and Technology" by Fr. Fadi Chidiac, S.J., and the third one was Theology on Tap for the young adults by Fr. Guy Sarkis.



The Lebanese Star Hisham El Hajj ended Saturday's Banquet with a medley of Lebanese songs.

On Friday evening Chef Paul Sarkis, Owner of Tannourine Restaurant in San Mateo, Calif., catered a Lebanese dinner while conventioners bid on fifty items in a Silent Auction. The children, youth and young adults of Our Lady of Lebanon Parish performed a spectacular *dabke* dancing presentation. Marlene Moukhar was the choreographer of the children's and youth's *dabke* dances.

John Fayyad, Nada Khoury and Marc Homsy performed a one-hour "Tribute to Fairuz." The super star Aline Lahoud ended the night with a wonderful selection of songs, mainly singing from the repertoire of her late mother, Salwa AlKatrib.

Saturday, July 9, was another good convention day, filled with many spiritual, educational, cultural, and social activities. The morning started with morning prayer and the NAM General Assembly. Nada AbiSamra, Director of CLFW & Project Roots; Betty Hindi, Founder of World House of Lebanon; Toufic Baaklini, IDC (In Defense of Christians); and others spoke at the General Assembly.

Dr. Salwan Abiezzi presented a workshop of "Four Pillars of Healthy Living" and Dr. Roger Hajjar, Founder of Prysm Inc., presented "The Role of Faith in Successful Ventures."

While the Youth went on another excursion to the beautiful city of San Francisco, Patriarch Rai presented a summary of the present situation in Lebanon at the "Commission for Lebanon" workshop which was moderated by Fr. Toufic Nasr. The session was interesting, and the floor was opened for another hour of Q & A.

Patriarch Rai televised at the Convention Hotel an educational and informative session of Christian Dogma Formation with *Tele Lumiere*. *Tele Lumiere/Nourset* team also video recorded all events of the Convention.

More than a thousand conventioners attended the Grand Banquet on Saturday evening. Melissa Haddad and Andrea Yarack sang the Lebanese and American National Anthems, respectively. Rony Barrak did an awesome job playing on the drums and the Lebanese star Hisham El Hajj ended Saturday Banquet with a medley of Lebanese songs.

In his homily on Sunday morning, Patriarch Rai spoke about the theme of the 53rd NAM Convention, "Holiness in Solitary and Communal Living, from the family of St. Maron to San Francisco." Sharbel Khoury Hanna (11 years old) read the Epistle in Arabic.

At the end, thanks be to God, we had a successful Convention, and thanks to all committee members for their hard work and zeal. ☐

Convention Raffle Winners

The winning tickets of the Convention Raffle were drawn at the Grand Banquet of Saturday evening, July 9, 2016:

John Hanna from St. John Maron Church in Orange, Calif., won the Top Prize: a brand new Mercedes Benz Car.

First Prize: Two Round Trip Tickets from the U.S. to Beirut – Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Lewisville, [Dallas] Tex.

Second Prize: iPad Pro 9.7-inch – Angela Choucair, East Elmhurst, N.Y.

Third Prize: Joe Malone Ladies Perfume Set – Elaina Farah, N. Royalton, Ohio

Fourth Prize: Michael Kors men's watch – Ann Malkoon, West Springfield, Mass.

Fifth Prize: Genuine South Seas Pearl Necklace – Ferris Anthony, Midland, Mich. ☐

Convention Awards

Joseph and Carmen Maroun received the Patriarchal Medal Award for all their hard work for the Maronite Church. Amine and Paula Harb of Orlando, Fla., Eparchy of Saint Maron, and Elias and Mireille Ayoub of Los Angeles, Calif., Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, were the recipients of the Gold Massabki Medals. ☐

Fall River, Massachusetts *Scholarships Awarded*



by Karl Hetzler

On July 3, 2016, following the Sunday liturgy, Chorbishop Joseph Kaddo and the parish family of St. Anthony of the Desert Church, Fall River, Mass., awarded scholarships of \$500 each to two graduating high school seniors. One of the scholarships is given each year in memory of Chorbishop Norman J. Ferris, and another is given in memory of Mary Ann Hallal, a former CCD instructor. The scholarship program is now in its 14th year.

Recipients shown above from left to right:

- Jenna Massoud, daughter of Edward and Marie Massoud, will be attending Boston College majoring in English (Mary Ann Hallal Memorial Scholarship)
- Meredith Forcier, daughter of Gerard and Giselle Forcier, will be attending Worcester Polytechnic Institute majoring in Biomedical Engineering (Chorbishop Norman J. Ferris Memorial Scholarship)

Shown in the background from left to right: Alter Server Andro Alkhwande, Subdeacon Brian Dunn, Deacon Andre Nasser, Deacon Donald Massoud, Recipient Jenna Massoud, Father James Doran, Recipient Meredith Forcier, Chorbishop Joseph Kaddo, and Scholarship Committee Chairman Karl Hetzler. □

Worcester, Massachusetts *Sandwiches for the Needy*

by Reverend Alex Joseph, Administrator

Over a period of a month, the parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Maronite Church in Worcester, Mass., solicited donations of peanut butter, jelly, bread, and sandwich baggies. About twenty parishioners of all ages

worked hard to make Peanut Butter and Jelly sandwiches. The following day, they delivered the sandwiches to a Catholic soup kitchen, The Mustard Seed, in Worcester. The parishioners hope to continue to make the sandwiches on a monthly basis. The youth of the parish really enjoyed the experience. They are looking forward to performing this ministry again. □



Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania *Youth Activities*



by Therezia Alchoufete

The "Lebanese Youth Dabkeh Group," comprised of members from the Maronite Youth Organization of Our Lady of Victory Church in Pittsburgh, Penn., made history on Saturday, July 9, 2016, by participating in the Pittsburgh Bicentennial Parade. Not only did they march alongside the most influential leaders and community members in the City of Pittsburgh, but they also performed an original *dabkeh* at the end of the parade. These youth represented the Lebanese and Maronite Catholic community within Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and they did so with pride and charisma. It was an honor to participate in the 200th birthday celebration of our city. This dynamic group also performs annually at the Pittsburgh Lebanese Festival, the Folk Festival, and various other events around the city. □

San Diego, California 2016 Lebanese Festival



by Joseph J. Saad

America's Finest City did it again this year. St. Ephrem hosted yet another successful Lebanese Festival beneath the splendorous mantle of our Mariam Mother of Life shrine on May 27 - 29, 2016. As a longstanding parishioner and volunteer who has spent the last three years studying abroad and away from a Maronite presence, returning home to the famed *kibbeh* stand (which sold out despite deliberate overestimation of demand), the *dabke* dancers itching to show off their months of exhausting preparation, and the seemingly innumerable familiar faces of the community were fundamental ingredients for reminding me of the irreplaceable feeling of home.

The Lebanese Festival at St. Ephrem continues to hold itself out to the Maronite community and all of San Diego as an example of how to wed magnanimity with humility while enjoying the simple pleasures of delectable treats and soulful folk music. What stood out to me most as an indicator that this great annual tradition will persist whatever obstacles it may face was the fact that during the expectedly arduous clean-up following the long weekend, organizers were already fervent in exchanging ideas for improvements for next year's festival. All those who participated in the festival, volunteers and guests alike, are blessed for having had the opportunity to celebrate the joys of the Maronite tradition, Lebanese culture, and simple kinship with strangers. □

Cincinnati, Ohio 76th Annual Mahrajan

by Linda Conour

On Sunday, June 12, 2016, St. Anthony of Padua Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, celebrated its 76th annual *Mahrajan*! Crowds of people came from all around the city to enjoy the delicious homemade cuisine that the parishioners had spent months preparing in advance. The aroma of the delicious food was so enticing - as were the decadent pastries and the cold Lebanese beer that was refreshing on the hot Cincinnati afternoon! The Parish's very



talented MYO provided entertainment throughout the day with traditional and modern dances and a fashion show. Festival Chairpersons Rose Abiradi and Aimee Mezher, along with their dedicated Festival Committee and many hard working volunteers, came together with Father George Hajj to host the Parish's most successful *Mahrajan* ever! □

Glen Allen, Virginia Youth Outing

Fifteen members and five chaperones from the St. Anthony Youth Group in Glen Allen [Richmond], Va., had a wonderful day full of sun, fun and prayer in Sandbridge, Virginia, on July 20, 2016. The kids spent the day playing in the surf and sand before ending the event with pizza and prayer. God blessed the children with beautiful weather and generous volunteers who graciously offered to drive two hours each way so the kids could come together. □

The Purpose of Christian Education

by Brother John Samaha

In general, people are directed toward the desire to have more, but today's youth demand rather to be more, to realize themselves through service and love. This is the ideal of a Christian education.

We are challenged to avoid an education that creates in the mind of the student a hope of becoming rich and having the power to dominate. That does not correspond to the times in which we live. Aim to form in the heart of students the lofty ideal of loving, of preparing oneself to serve and to give oneself to others. Anything else would be education for selfishness, and we want to escape the selfishness that is precisely the cause of the great malaise of our societies.

The Church strives to propose an education that makes people agents of their own development, protagonists of history, not a passive, compliant mass, but human beings able to display their intelligence, their creativity, their desire for the common service of the nation. Education needs to recognize that the development of the individual and of peoples is, in the words of Pope Paul VI, the "advancement of each and all from less-human to more-human conditions" (The Development of Peoples, n. 20). □

Clinton Township, Michigan Ground Breaking Ceremony



From left: Fr. Roby Zibara, Msgr. Peter Karam and Chorbishop Alfred Badawi.

by St. Sharbel Church Worship Committee

St. Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church in Clinton Township, Michigan, celebrated its Ground Breaking Ceremony and Site Blessing on Sunday, July 24, 2016, for its future spiritual home. The Divine Liturgy was celebrated on the new church property by Msgr. Peter Karam, representing His Excellency Bishop A. Elias Zaidan; Chorbishop Alfred Badawi, Pastor; Father Roby Zibara, visiting priest from Rome; and Subdeacon Michael Magyar.

It was incredible to witness this very historic day despite the heavy rain that poured down that morning! However, there was an outpouring of families, friends, and beloved of St. Sharbel Church that came out to attend this very special ceremony, singing with great joy and praising the Lord, while asking for the intercession of Our Lady of Lebanon and all the saints, especially St. Peter, St. Maron, St. Elias, and St. Sharbel. Choir members from St. Sharbel contributed to the

joy of the day and the Liturgy.

A heartfelt welcome was extended to Msgr. Peter Karam, Vicar For Priests for the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon and Pastor of St. Maron Church in Cleveland, Ohio. A generous welcome was offered to all the guests of honor, including city officials and other dignitaries. The architect, builder, and the Construction Committee also participated in the Ground Breaking Ceremony. They have been working diligently with us and praying for the success of this project since the beginning of the planning stage, through the transition and they continue to work very hard to see this venture to completion. The success of this endeavor and the future of St. Sharbel Church and Community could not be possible without all of the prayers, love and patience of the parishioners who have also supported in this project spiritually. The celebration concluded with everyone sharing in light refreshments. A huge thank you to the Ground Breaking Committee for all of their hard work!

Knights of Columbus

The Msgr. Michael Abdo Council of the Knights of Columbus, with the blessing of the family of our deceased brother Michael Michael, has donated a chalice to a worthy seminarian at Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary. The chalice was presented to the family during the 40-day Mass of Remembrance of our dear friend Mike held at St. Sharbel Church in Clinton Township., Michigan. Mike was a founding member of the Council which was formed at St. Maron Church, Detroit, Mich., in 1982 and is the first Maronite Council in the world. Over the years Mike served as Grand Knight and for many years as the Council's Financial Secretary. The Council seeks to serve the Maronite parishes of the Detroit area, St. Maron, St. Sharbel, and St. Rafka. □

