



The Maronite Voice

A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA



Volume VI

Issue No. VIII

September 2010

The Holy Cross is the Ultimate Victory of Love Every Suffering, Even Death Itself, by the Power of God, Can Bring Something Good Into Our Lives

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The Season of the Holy Cross is one of my favorites, for we are called to reflect on the ultimate victory of Love and how this victory puts everything back into perspective. The Cross is not a symbol of resignation or defeat, Jesus is not a helpless victim. On the contrary, he endured man's twin enemies of sin and death, and by a divine love and mercy so strong, and unfortunately so lacking in the world, he overcame victoriously all that oppresses us.

The Season of the Cross, when Love triumphs over sin and death, comes at a time when we return to school, reapply ourselves after the summer months, and reflect on the Lord's call to examine ourselves carefully, for "we know not the time or the hour of our Master's return" (Matt 25:13). In this Season we focus on the Cross and see that our Heavenly Father would never have allowed suffering, sin or death to distort his creation unless he could richly bestow upon us, even in the midst of our trials, that love and mercy which makes "all things work together for the good of those who love him" (Rom 8:28).

Thus, every suffering, even death itself, by the power of God, can bring something good into our lives, if only we allow it.

This triumph of love over hate and good over evil, is what we celebrate in the Season of the Holy Cross. By our Lord's victory, we too affirm that there is no power on earth capable of separating us from the love of God. As Saint Paul said, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom 8:31).

In this Season, dear brothers and sisters, as we begin anew our many responsibilities, let us once again, and with confidence, rely completely on the love and mercy of the One



The Exaltation of the Holy Cross by Fr. Abdo Badwi, University of Holy Spirit, Kaslik, Lebanon (USEK), Department of Sacred Art.

"who so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (John 3:16).

A Blessed Season of the Holy Cross to you.
Sincerely yours in Christ,
+Gregory John Mansour
Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

Schedule of Bishop Robert Shaheen

September 7- 8, 2010

Presbyteral Council Meeting, St. Louis, Mo.

September 9, 2010

Clergy-Vatican display

September 15, 2010

Clergy Day, Detroit, Mich.

September 17, 2010

Wedding at St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

September 18-19, 2010

Saint Raymond's Cathedral. Annual Festival

October 3, 2010

Annual Liturgy for Daughters of Saint Paul, St. Louis, Mo.

October 8, 2010

History Committee Meeting, St. Louis, Mo.

October 9 - 25, 2010

Middle East Synod, Rome, Italy ☐

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Maronite Convention 2011

St. Sharbel Church
Newtown Square, Pennsylvania

July 6- 10, 2011

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



Eparchial Condolences

Lulu (Abdo) Montesi, (the aunt of His Excellency Bishop Robert Shaheen) of Danbury, Connecticut, loving wife, mother and grandmother entered into eternal life on Friday morning, July, 23, 2010.

Daughter of the late Famia (Gabriel) and Louis Abdo

Rishdan, Lulu was born in Olean, N.Y., on April 27, 1928. A resident of Danbury since 1930, Lulu graduated from Danbury High School in 1946 and from Danbury Hospital School of Nursing, Class of 1949.

Lulu was employed at Danbury Hospital for many years and retired in 1989 as the Assistant Director of Nursing at Glen Hill Convalescent Home.

Loving wife of fifty-three years to her devoted husband, Maurice Montesi, Lulu is also survived by her children, Mark Montesi, Sharon Montesi and her husband, Robert, Thomas Montesi and his wife, Jennifer and Mary Beth Hallisey. She is also survived by her six grandchildren, Gabriel and Emily, Daniel and Jillian, Ryan and Ben.

Lulu is also survived by her sisters, Edna Michael and Mary Abdo; her brothers, Albert and his wife, Rose and John and his wife, Dolores. She was also predeceased by three of her sisters, Aileen Shaheen, Esther Define and Marcia Taylor. In addition, Lulu is survived by her many loving nieces, nephews and friends.

A Liturgy of Christian Burial was celebrated on Tuesday, July 27, at St. Peter Church, Danbury, Conn. Condolences can be sent to His Excellency Bishop Robert Shaheen at The Pastoral Center, 1021 South 10th Street, St. Louis, MO 63104.

Bishop Gregory Mansour, along with the clergy and faithful of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon and of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, extend their heartfelt sympathy and the promise of our prayers to Bishop Robert Shaheen and his family. May the Lord God grant Lulu eternal rest in His Kingdom and consolation to her family and loved ones. ☐

Beatification of Brother Stephen Nehme



Beatification day in Kfifane, Lebanon.

by Camil Y. Saade

Tens of thousands of faithful, hundreds of educated professionals holding degrees of all disciplines and at all levels, in addition to tens of corporate, Civic and religious leaders at a high ranking positions, gathered on one beautiful summer day to honor and pay homage to a simple monk who didn't even have a grammar school degree. This monk lived a very simple and deep Christian life, who desired not earthly glories. Socials and parties never caught his interest. He preferred solitude and he prayed with deep faith and piety. Thus he received heavenly glories and Godly blessings.

Since June 27, 2010, Lebanon has one more Saint, Brother Estephan (Stephen) Nehmé Al-Lehfeidi. The ceremony of beatification saw the participation of almost 70,000 people. The blessed was a monk from the Lebanese Maronite Order (LMO). Participants included Lebanese President Michel Suleiman, Lebanon's Prime Minister Saad Hariri, and many dignitaries and Government personalities. On the eve of the beatification, with bells ringing throughout the region's churches, a procession began at midnight from the house of Brother Estephan in *Lehfed*. Thousands of participants walked during the night to the Monastery of Saints Justinian and Cyprian in *Kfifane*, where the Beatification ceremony took place.

Msgr. Angelo Amato, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, read the decree of beatification issued by Pope Benedict XVI. Maronite Patriarch His Beatitude Nasrallah Peter Cardinal Sfeir delivered the homily and Fr. Elias Khalifie, Superior of the Maronite Order, expressed Lebanon's "gratitude" for the promptness shown towards the beatification of Brother Estephan.

Soon after the beatification and for weeks thereafter, buses from Syria, Jordan and Iraq as well as faithful from Lebanon and all over the world poured into *Lehfed*, Hometown of Brother Estephan, to visit his parental house and take samples from the water fountain that he discovered.

Lebanese President Michel Sleiman, who has his summer residence in *Lehfed*, as well as politicians and other religious and civic leaders were among the pilgrims.

For more information and pictures on Brother Estephan and the beatification celebrations please visit www.lehfed.com.

Should you be interested in learning of future events on Brother Estephan contact info@lehfed.com. □

Minneapolis, Minnesota The Death of Chorbishop Namie

Chorbishop James B. Namie, passed away on August 17, 2010 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, at the age of 84. Chorbishop Namie is predeceased by his parents and six brothers and three sisters. He is survived by several nieces and nephews.



Chorbishop James Namie

He was ordained to the priesthood on June 5, 1954 for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis and served in several parishes there. He came to the Eparchy of Saint Maron in 1970 and began working at the Maronite Chancery in Detroit, Michigan, and he continued to do so when it moved to Brooklyn, New York. During his years of service to the Maronite Church, he served as Director of Vocations, Secretary to Archbishop Francis M. Zayek, and Chancellor. He was elevated to the rank of Periodeute on March 30, 1988 and was ordained a Chorbishop on September 23, 1991. He retired to Florida in 1997.

Chorbishop Namie's Wake was held on Friday, August 20 at Saint Maron Church in Minneapolis and the Funeral Liturgy on Saturday, August 21 at Saint Anthony of Padua Church in Minneapolis. Condolences may be sent in care of: to Saint Maron Church, 600 University Avenue, NE, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55413.

Bishops Robert Shaheen and Gregory Mansour, along with the clergy and faithful of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon and of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, extend their heartfelt sympathy and the promise of our prayers to Chorbishop Namie's family. May the Lord God grant his servant, James, eternal rest in His Kingdom and consolation to his family and loved ones. □

Uniontown, Pennsylvania Maronite Servants Retreat

by the Maronite Servants

The Maronite Servants of Christ the Light were graced to share in five days of retreat and extended silence at the Mount Saint Marcrina House of Prayer in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. The spacious and scenic grounds of this

Scranton, Pennsylvania Sodality Officers Installed



From left to right: Tresa Van Heusen, Sr. Barbara Jean Mihalchick, Therese Touma and Sr. Marla Marie Lucas.

monastery offered the perfect setting for our meditation and solitude.

The retreat theme was "*Seek My Face*", exploring Jesus' call to a life of deeper prayer, especially through Sacred Scripture. Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick, OSBM, a member of the Sisters of St. Basil, directed the retreat. Sister currently serves as vocation directress and the program director of the House of Prayer. The Divine Liturgy was offered each day by Fr. Nadim Helou, newly assigned Administrator of St. George Maronite parish in Uniontown, Pennsylvania.

The Postulants Reflection

Therese Touma: "As a postulant, I found this retreat encouraging as it gave me the opportunity to get to know myself more in the light of the Holy Spirit, and to grow in my desire to see, know and love the Lord more deeply, as an intimate friend. I learned that if I want to grow in my friendship with Christ, then I need to give him more of a chance to speak to me, share himself and transform me into his image." Tresa Van Heusen: "On our first day of retreat we were asked to meditate on Isaiah 6. I was struck by the words, "here I am, send me!" I found myself saying to him, "here I am, send me!" With all the love and forgiveness I have received from Our Lord, my desire is to serve his will, to go where he wants me to go, and do what he wants me to do." □

Tulsa, Oklahoma Council Election

Bishop Slattery and the Presbyteral Council of the Catholic Diocese of Tulsa, Oklahoma, are pleased to announce the results of the recent Presbyteral Council election. Fr. Elias Abi-Sarkis and Fr. Michael Knipe were elected by their brother priests, and both have agreed to serve on the Presbyteral Council for a three year term, beginning with the meeting in September. □



Pictured with Father Marini and Subdeacon Rade are (from left): Secretary Mary Ann Smith LaPorta; Treasurer Jeanette Soma Wager; Prefect Ann Abbott Bryant; and Vice Prefect Anne Hazzouri McAndrew.

On Sunday, June 27, 2010, the newly-elected officers of Our Lady Queen of Peace Sodality were installed during the morning Divine Liturgy at Saint Ann Maronite Church in Scranton, Penn. The Pastor, Father Francis Marini, assisted by Subdeacon Robert G. Rade, blessed the new officers as they began their two-year terms of office. Our Lady Queen of Peace Sodality is the sole apostolate organization of the women of the parish. □

Deadline for next month's issue of
the Deadline is... *The Maronite Voice* is September 25, 2010.

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

Send all changes of address, news, pictures and personal correspondence to:

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Email: Gmsebaali@aol.com

Pictures must be original. Digital pictures must be in "JPG" format and in high resolution.

The Maronite Voice is also available online, in PDF format, at www.stmaron.org. □

Effective Ways You Can Help Your Eparchy

Please consider the following ways in which you can help the Maronite Church!

Planned Giving: Consider Your Legacy

This is a creative way to support the Church. Planned giving can involve contributing through your will, insurance policy, or retirement assets. Also, it can be a way to make a donation and to provide yourself with a steady source of income; a charitable remainder trust is one example.

Suggested wording for a bequest to the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn:

"I give and bequeath to the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, located in Brooklyn, New York, _____% of the residue of my estate [or: the sum of \$_____]."

Suggested wording for a bequest to the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon:

"I give and bequeath to the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, located in St. Louis, Missouri, _____% of the residue of my estate [or: the sum of \$_____]."

Tax-Smart Giving of Appreciated Stock or other Assets

The gift of an asset such as common stock or mutual fund shares is a smart way to make a contribution and receive maximum tax benefits based on the value of the asset. Gifts of other appreciated assets, such as land, antiques, and homes, can also be utilized as potential gifts with valuable tax benefits. Gifts of these assets should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

For more information on any or all of these options, please contact Eparchy of Saint Maron Stewardship Director John F. Kurey, Esq., at 718-237-9913 or by e-mail at johnkurey@yahoo.com; or Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon Vice-Chancellor, Mrs. Mary Denny, at 314-231-1021 or by email at mdenny@usamaronite.org. □

Roanoke, Virginia Annual Festival

The 12th Annual Lebanese Festival at St. Elias Maronite Catholic Church in Roanoke, Va., June 4-6, 2010, was the most successful ever, a result festival organizers attribute to the great teamwork of parishioners.

"The dedication of all of us pulling together was so evident over the past several weeks and made for a wonderful weekend," according to parishioner Sam Silek. He added that many visitors commented on the excellence of the dance troupes made up of the parish youth and how their participation helped make the festival successful. Sam and his

wife Dawn have been co-chairs of the festival for the past eleven years.

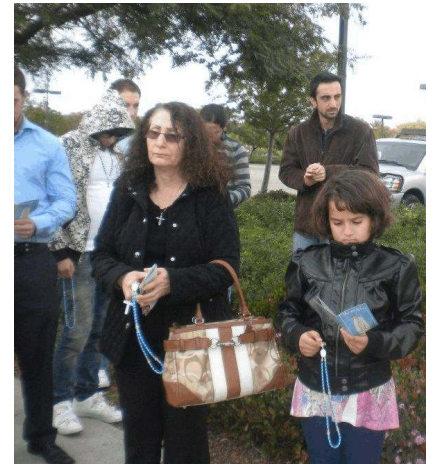
The event attracted huge crowds all three days, drawn by the chance to sample Lebanese food, enjoy the dancing and hear live Lebanese music all three days. There were games and special treats for children, including a Moon Walk and well-attended tours of the church which explained the Maronite liturgy and tradition.

The newly assigned St. Elias Pastor, Father Kevin Beaton, said he was greatly impressed by the spirit of cooperation and enthusiastic support shown by St. Elias parishioners and suggested that this spirit bodes well for the future. □

San Diego California Forty Days for Life

by Mary Ghosn

Meeting together outside the San Marcos Center office of Dr. George Kung (Abortionist) and braving the cold and intermittent drizzle, twenty decades of the Most Holy Rosary were offered up in supplication to the Blessed Virgin Mary by the youth and young adults of the St. Ephrem Church in San Diego, California. They effectively were joined in prayer with people in over 160 cities across the U.S., Canada, Australia and Northern Ireland for the largest *40 Days for Life* Spring Campaign yet.



What is 40 Days for Life?

It is a focused pro-life effort that consists of: forty days of prayer and fasting; forty days of peaceful vigil; and forty days of community outreach!

While all aspects of *40 Days for Life* Campaign are crucial in our effort to end abortion, the most visible component is the peaceful prayer vigil outside the local abortion facility. That is why St. Ephrem Parishioners joined in praying that, with God's help, this groundbreaking effort will mark the beginning of the end of abortion in our city -- and throughout America!

The Pro-Life Center for the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon wishes to personally acknowledge and thank all the participants by name: Michael Abi Khalil, Minerva Abi Khalil, Andrew Chammas, Chris Chammas, Luke Chammas, Joe Chammas, Kaoussar Fram, Elizabeth Fournier, Frank Fournier, Natalie Fournier, Andrew Ghosn, Francis Ghosn, Mary Grace Ghosn, Jessica Ghosn, Joelle Ghosn, Deacon and Mrs. Georges Ghosn, Patrick Jamaa, Maya Massamiri, Phillip Massamiri, Charbel Mouannes, Dominique Mouannes, Sam Haddad, Lima Haddad and Elias Rachdan. □

Flint, Michigan *Ordination to Priesthood*



Eucharistic procession during the ordination of Fr. Tony Massad (Msgr. David George and Fr. Vincent Farhat leading Fr. Tony and Msgr. Spinosa incensing).

by Mary Ann Sheehan

Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Flint, Michigan joyfully and enthusiastically celebrated as Deacon Tony Massad (a member of the Parish) was raised to the order of priesthood by the imposition of the hand of Bishop Robert Shaheen, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon.

In a full Church complimented by two video screens in the hall for the overflow, the beautiful ceremonies began accompanied by our own choir. We were also graced by some of the choir of Our Lady of Lebanon parish in Washington, D.C. Their voices kept us focused on the praise and thanksgiving we offered to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for bringing Fr. Tony to this point in his life – and for allowing us to share in his journey.

His first liturgy of Thanksgiving followed Sunday morning. We were also blessed by the large number of priests of all ranks and several orders who welcomed Fr. Tony into the brotherhood of priesthood. Many deacons, subdeacons and seminarians joined us as well as the Antoine Sisters and Sister Marie Marla Lucas and two postulants of the Order. As mentioned, both of our Bishops were with us as well as Chorbishop Michael Thomas, Vicar General of the Eparchy of Saint Maron and Msgr. Alfred Badawi who assisted Bishop Shaheen. Msgr. Ronald Beshara, Msgr. David George, Fr. Anthony Salim and Msgr. Anthony Spinosa, the first four pastors of Our Lady of Lebanon in Flint were also in attendance.

At the end of the Liturgy, Mrs. Colette Rizk read a poem she had written in Fr. Tony's honor – tracing parts of his growing up years to this day. She read first in English and then in Arabic.

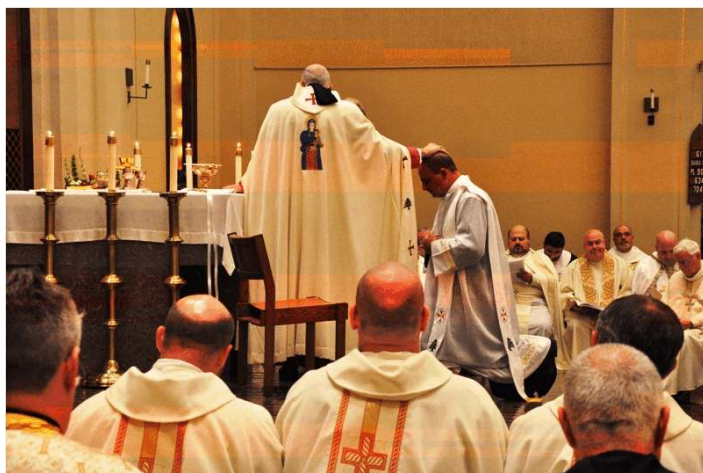
The day began gray and overcast. As we left the church, the weather changed and the sun began to shine brightly as we walked through Sharbel Center to the beautiful gleaming white tent where a meal was served to over 500 guests. The sun shone as if a special blessing was given to all of us

through the "Son" to our son.

As we pledged our continued love, prayers and support to Fr. Tony, his ministry as a brand new priest began among us. Our Pastor, Fr. Hanna Tayar, worked very hard to prepare for this Ordination; however, he was attending his Father's funeral [in Lebanon], so he could not be with us for the celebration. Fr. Tony stayed with us that first week and celebrated daily Liturgy, his first Sacrament of the Sick, first incense service, first funeral liturgy and first burial in the cemetery.

The Maronite Church in Michigan also congratulated Fr. Vincent Farhat who was ordained June 25, 2010 in St. Mary Cathedral, Lansing, Mich. After the celebration of his first Liturgy of Thanksgiving on Saturday morning, Fr. Vincent joined us in Flint for the Ordination of Fr. Tony. Fr. Tony has been assigned to St. Maron Church in Cleveland, Ohio as Parochial Vicar to Fr. Peter Karam. □

Lansing, Michigan *Ordination to Priesthood*



Bishop Gregory Mansour ordains Deacon Vincent Farhat and elevates him to the Order of Priesthood.

The ordination of Deacon Vincent Farhat took place on June 25, 2010, at St. Mary Cathedral in Lansing, Michigan. The Most Reverend Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, imposed hands on Fr. Vincent. Also in attendance were the Most Reverend Bishop Robert Shaheen, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon; Most Reverend James Murray, Bishop Emeritus of Kalamazoo, Michigan; and Most Reverend Carl Mengling, Bishop Emeritus of Lansing, Michigan along with many clergy from the Maronite, Latin, Melkite and Ukrainian Catholic Church. Fr. Vincent was surrounded by his brothers, sisters, many relatives and friends from all over the United States and Canada. The ordination was followed by a dinner reception. Fr. Vincent celebrated his first liturgy of thanksgiving on Saturday June 26, 2010, in loving memory of his parents, Leo and Virginia Farhat and his sister Ann Farhat. He has been assigned to St. Anthony Maronite Church in Lawrence, Mass., as Parochial Vicar to Msgr. Peter Fahed Azar. □

Latrobe, Pennsylvania *Maronite Youth Workshop*



The MYO team: from right - Mr. and Mrs. Albert and Barbara Dohar, Fr. Gary George C.Ss.R., Deacon William George and Mrs. Rosa Calabria.

*by Fr. Gary George C.Ss.R.
National Youth Director*

My Dear Family and Friends of MYO,

The theme for this year's workshop was "Heroes". A short video of comic book heroes created with the help of digital imagery was shared as an introduction to this year's theme. As the week progressed, short videos of real life heroes were also shared. This led to a week of searching for the true heroes in our lives. The youth were introduced to saints and modern day heroes who often go unnoticed but who have done or are doing remarkable things out of love for Jesus. I discovered from the youth that some of the greatest heroes in their lives were in their own families. This was very inspirational to hear and share during group sessions. Each group constructed their own hero including special



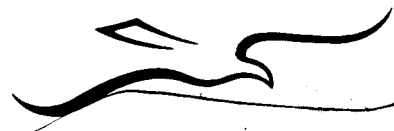
The MYO group who attended the retreat with Bishop Robert Shaheen, Bishop Gregory Mansour and clergy.

characteristics and traits befitting a hero. I was humbled when a group of young adults publicly stood up and said Fr. Gary was one of their heroes. I elaborated upon a famous line from the movie Spiderman "with great power comes great responsibility". I pray each parent and leader will not take this gift for granted.

I feel this year, like so many of the past years, we were able to accomplish something that was so unique in the world in which we live. We were able to have a group of over 280 youth gather in prayer each day around the Eucharist and again each night to celebrate a healing service through the laying on of hands, anointing with the oil of gladness, and the mystery of penance. One of the highlights of the workshop was spending a few minutes each evening in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. With Bishop Robert Shaheen, Bishop Gregory Mansour, numerous clergy and religious supporting our youth, we became a voice for so many families and youth in need of healing. I want to encourage the small group of youth that attended the vocation evening session, and I offer my prayers and support for the future. Please do not hesitate to contact any of our clergy with your questions and desires to want to serve as a priest and religious.

Listening to the reports from around the country and on Facebook, this retreat truly was an experience filled with grace. Hopefully the inspiration will continue into the months ahead. I want to thank a dedicated group of advisors: Albert, Barbara, Marie-Elizabeth and Johnny Dohar along with Rosa Calabria, Deacon William George and Samar Boulos who helped prepare much of the materials as I was in a time of transition. I also want to thank the parents and chaperones that willingly and freely gave of their time and energy to help us keep everything together.

For those who have visited Saint Vincent's know that the Benedictines have the true spirit of hospitality and care for others. The food was incredible! The facilities were state of the art. The campus set in the Laurel Mountains of Pennsylvania was serene and beautiful. The staff was most accommodating and helpful. Apart from getting drenched in the rain not once but twice we were still able to be there with smiling faces and joyful hearts. I feel a deep desire to thank each and every person who attended and those who wanted to but could not because of illness or other difficulties. I feel we are growing as an organization which was evident with a follow-up gathering of youth at our National Shrine during the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady. I cannot do this ministry alone, so I am reaching out to all parents and youth who have never attended and would love to participate. Please contact me at abounag1@hotmail.com and mention that you want to be part of the MYO program. I will be sending out a letter to the parishes in the next few weeks to place in your bulletin. I thank our Bishops and clergy who have responded so powerfully and ask that you consider joining us again next year at St. Vincent's for the MYO workshop during the week of June 27 through July 2, 2011. Please keep us in prayer and hope to speak to you on Facebook in the days ahead. You are the Brilliant champions for Jesus. ☐



Birmingham, Alabama Marian Assumption Festival

by Jeanette Wyrick

As our Centennial Year continues, St. Elias Maronite Church in Birmingham, Alabama, celebrated the Feast of the Assumption in a very special way. A 2-day Marian Festival was the inaugural event for the new grotto of Our Lady of Lebanon on the grounds of the church.

Spiritual activities were planned for Saturday, August 14 and Sunday, August 15 including talks about our Blessed Mother, videos, prayer services, rosaries prayed together, candlelight processions, and a blessing with the icon of Our Lady of *Ilige*.

We invited our neighbor, St. George Greek Melkite Church, to participate as well as all Catholics from the

Birmingham area. Talks were given by our pastor, Chorbishop Richard Saad, Melkite Archimandrite Frank Milienevicz of St. George and Reverend Mitch Pacwa from EWTN during the two day celebration. Representatives from two religious communities of Sisters, the Knights of Columbus, the ladies of Magnificat, and Teams of Our Lady came from the surrounding area to participate in this spiritual festival with us.

As always, participants did not leave hungry as meals were provided at noon on Saturday and for dinner on Sunday evening. Religious articles were available for sale.

We felt blessed to honor Our Lady of Lebanon in such a special way and we look forward to many more inspirational events at our grotto. The grotto is also the site for an 80-niche columbarium for St. Elias parishioners. □

Flint, Michigan Vacation Bible Camp



Fr. Hanna Tayar, Pastor, blesses the children with the Holy Eucharist.

by Michelle Tennis

Thirty children from Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Flint, Michigan, signed up for this year's Summer Bible School which ran August 2 - 6, 2010. The focus for the week was on animals from the Bible. The children began each day with the Divine Liturgy followed by a lot of exciting projects. They made posters, finger painted, and made lion masks and swords. They also toured the church and learned some new songs which they shared with parishioners during Friday's Liturgy. They ended the week with a pizza party which included breaking a *piñata* they had made which was filled with candy and toys. □

Food for Thought

The Lord does us the honor of placing his confidence in us and calling us to the ministry, showing us his mercy. This call is not reserved for a few; it is for everyone, each in his own state of life.

Pope John Paul II

Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

September 5, 2010

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

September 11 - 12, 2010

Ground Breaking for New Church, Jacksonville, Fla.

September 13, 2010

USCCB Pro-Life Meeting, Washington, D.C.

September 14, 2010

Cardinal Justin Rigali's 25th Anniversary as a Bishop, Philadelphia, Penn.

September 18 - 19, 2010

Dedication of St. Rafka Church and Fr. Bart Leon's 25th Anniversary of Ordination, Greenville, S.C.

September 23 - 24, 2010

New York State Bishops Conference, N.Y., N.Y.

September 26, 2010

Retirement Party for Msgr. Sharbel Lischaa, Philadelphia, Penn.

September 27 - 28, 2010

Catholic University Board of Trustees Meeting, Washington, D.C.

September 29, 2010

New York Oriental Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue, New York, N.Y.

September 30, 2010

Finance Council Meeting, Brooklyn, N.Y.

October 1 - 3, 2010

Deacons/Subdeacons and Wives Retreat, Washington, D.C.

October 3, 2010

Installation of New Syro Malankara Bishop, Rockville Center, N.Y. (3:00 P.M.)

October 6, 2010

Co-host for Muslim, Jews and Christian Prayer Service for Peace in the Middle East, Brooklyn, N.Y.

October 7, 2010

Presbyteral Council Meeting, Brooklyn, N.Y.

October 9 - 25, 2010

Bishops Synod on the Middle East, Rome, Italy. □

Saint Louis, Missouri Order of St. Sharbel Fall Retreat



From the Book Shelf

A Fall Retreat, sponsored by St. Raymond Cathedral in St. Louis, Missouri, will be held for the members of the Order of Saint Sharbel; their spouses and guests, who may be interested in the Order, on October 29 - 31, 2010 at the Drury Plaza Hotel in Saint Louis.

The weekend promises to be filled with spiritual richness and joyful fellowship. All of the retreat activities will be held at the Pastoral Center Complex of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon.

The weekend package which includes all meals and activities is \$200 per person. Please make check payable to St. Raymond's Cathedral.

The Drury Plaza Hotel is located at 4th and Market Street and is five minutes from St. Raymond's Cathedral. The room rate is \$99 per room. To make reservations please call the Hotel at (314) 231-3003 and mention the Order of Saint Sharbel.

Please Fax your arrival/departure information to the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon at (314) 231-1418 or by email to: Mdenny@usamaronite.org.

Name _____

Date Arriving _____

Airline _____

Flight No. _____

Arrival Time _____

Date Leaving _____

Airline _____

Flight No. _____

Departure Time _____

Email _____

Cell Phone _____

Maronite Book of Hymns according to the Antiochian Syriac Church, published in 2008 by the Patriarchal Liturgical Commission, contains Maronite Syriac tunes for the Maronite *Qurbono*; psalms as well as various Maronite and Marian hymns.

This 569 page hard cover book is available from Saint Maron Publications for \$25 plus \$5 shipping.

Maronite Syriac Hymns CD of the Maronite *Qurbono*, prepared by the Patriarchal Liturgical Commission in 2008 with Fathers Nassim Hagge and Youhana Geha, soloists, on a double CD is available from Saint Maron Publications for \$25 plus \$5 shipping.

The Maronite Icons according to the Maronite Liturgical Year and the Feasts of the Saints was prepared by the Icons Workshop at the Maronite Eparchy of Cyprus. It consists of 60 icons (41 for Sundays and Holy Days and 19 for Maronite Saints). This collection of icons (14" x 20") along with a booklet explaining each icon is available from Saint Maron Publications for \$100 plus \$10 shipping.

Mary in the Maronite Church, by Archbishop Boutros Gemayel and translated by Fr. Georges El-Khalli, is now available from Saint Maron Publications for \$15 plus \$4 shipping.

The Prayer of the Faithful, three volumes of morning and evening prayer of the faithful in English, is available from Saint Maron Publications.

Volume One (Sundays of the Church; Season of Announcements; Birth of the Lord and Epiphany) is available for \$40 plus \$5 shipping.

Volume Two (Seasons of Great Lent and Resurrection) is available for \$40 plus \$5 shipping.

Volume Three (Seasons of Pentecost and Holy Cross) is available for \$30 plus \$5 shipping.

The Maronite Pontifical by His Excellency Bishop Stephen Hector Doueihi, Bishop Emeritus of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn.

The Maronite Pontifical contains all rites delegated to the bishop in the liturgical celebrations. It describes the actions which the pontiff, as a celebrant, performs and the prayers he says during these celebrations. It includes mainly the rites of ordination to the priesthood and the solemn consecrations reserved to the bishop in the Christian worship.

The Maronite Pontifical is available for \$20 plus \$5 shipping.

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by Cathy George

The *Faith of the Mountain* series was written specifically for our Maronite children in the United States. In 1980 Chorbishop Dominc Ashkar, then Pastor of Saint Maron Church in Youngstown, Ohio, wrote a series of mimeographed booklets for the children of his parish in honor of the Year of the Family. They were distributed to his parish and to youth in diocesan youth workshops. In 1982, they were rewritten under the leadership of His Excellency Archbishop Francis Zayek by Bruce L. Brown and Carol Boasi Brown in coordination with Chorbishop Seeley Beggiani. These books became the official religious education texts for Maronites in the U.S. In 2000, the series was revised again by Chorbishop Ashkar and Janie Gustafson, Ph.D, for grades one through eight. Age-appropriate stories and situations were added and religious vocabulary words were defined. The series was approved by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office of the Catechism.

By 2010, the series needed revision. Two Maronite catechists and a non-Maronite catechist were asked to review the series and give suggestions with input from Monsignor George Sebaali and Bishop Gregory Mansour. The revised series offers more options for teachers and parents. It allows teachers to choose activities that best fit the situation of the parish as well as the needs of the students. Some of the books were rearranged according to Church Year. Some of the grades were rewritten to be more age-appropriate. The Maronite liturgical vocabulary and prayers were checked so that they would be correct and consistent throughout all the grade levels.

The title of this series, *Faith of the Mountain*, refers to the faith of our ancestors, unshakable as the Lebanese mountains. Chorbishop Ashkar called the series this because the mountains are mentioned in Scripture and liturgy, the dwelling place of God, where he communicates with his people. There are eight books in this series. Each grade level has twenty-four lessons arranged in six units. Each grade has an overall theme. Each grade level has an introduction to liturgy. Each also has what it means to be a Maronite Catholic today and encourages pride in Maronite heritage.

There are three components of the revised series: an activity book, a student manual, and a teacher's manual. The activity book, new this year, has at least nine activities for each chapter that are age-appropriate and thought-provoking. The teacher has the option to use as many as he or she wishes. The teacher also has the option to send activities home to be done with the parents. Some of the activities in the older levels require research online with parental help.

For each lesson in the student manual there is a story or activity to stimulate curiosity or interest in a topic. The explanation of the chapter topic also includes religious vocabulary words and concepts, related Scripture passages, and related parts of the liturgy. For each chapter there is a focus on a particular saint or holy person who has applied the chapter's topic to his or her everyday life.

In the Teachers' Manual, there is an overview of the

whole series. A detailed description of what is covered in every grade level is at the beginning of the book. A scope and sequence chart of grades one through eight is also included. A list of objectives, references to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Scripture references, church vocabulary, parts of liturgy, and saints or role models are included in the chart. Topics include the Trinity, the seasons of the Maronite Church, Jesus as the Good Shepherd, Christian Morality, the Mysteries, The Church's Liturgy, the Bible, our Maronite Faith, Church History and organization, and saints.

A planning sheet for a 25-week schedule is also included in the Teacher's Manual. It gives the teacher plenty of options. There is also a minute by minute break down for a 45-minute lesson plan for each chapter.

At the beginning of each chapter there is an introductory page that explains lesson objectives. It also gives a summary of chapter concepts. There is a link to an aspect of faith that the students should explore, related Scripture passages, a focus on a particular part of liturgy, church vocabulary and a study of a saint or holy person. There is also a list of materials needed to teach the lesson.

In this revision, an effort was made to ensure that the series was more user-friendly to both the catechist and student. For our students: we wanted to make sure that the text was understandable and on their level, and that there were enough activities to make the religious education session educational and enjoyable. For our catechists: our teachers wanted to teach their lessons in order of the church liturgical seasons and on the students' educational level and we tried to accommodate that. First grade curriculum was simplified. Sacramental preparation was increased in second grade and further grades.

The *Faith of the Mountain* series also has a high school series. It was written by Carole A. Buleza and published in 1996. There are four books of twenty loose leaf lessons. The books are topical and can be used in any order. There are four consistent themes that are present in the core sections: liturgy, theology, spirituality, and morality. Book one deals with culture, liturgy, and history. Book two deals with religion, theology and non-Christian religions. Book three deals with marriage, spirituality, and art and literature. Book four deals with science and technology, morality and church.

The Teacher Resource Manual includes lesson objections, backgrounds to the lessons, references and lesson plans for each chapter. It also has the student booklets in the back of the manual. We recommend that it should be revised next.

We have used the whole package in our parish of St. Anthony in Glen Allen (Richmond), Virginia, since the beginning. In getting feedback from our catechists, we are excited about the new revision for grades one through eight for a variety of reasons. Teachers and parents may not see huge changes in the student texts. In fact, it looks rather simplified compared to the older version. But in the revision, we are glad to see section references to the Catechism of the Catholic Church; the simplified text for the lower grades; the inclusion of more sacramental preparation; and updated material on the Church and the saints. The activity book is an incredible plus! It gives teachers many more opportunities to explore the subject matter which is exactly what the teachers have been requesting. □

Austin, Texas

Adults Become Sons and Daughters of Saint Maron

by Msgr. Don Sawyer

The life of Our Lady's Parish is the Divine Liturgy and its religious education of adults and children. They are the life blood of any parish.

This year five adults joined the Church. They were made up of people coming from different places in life. A few were Mormons, Baptists, Methodists and some from no tradition.

Their journey into the Maronite Church started when friends invited them to come and see. A few heard of Eastern Christianity and were intrigued with the idea of learning of a Christianity that is rooted in the Holy Land, that was Semitic (Judaic-Christian) and was linked to the Church of Antioch as mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. They came to check out what we Easterners have to offer and were immediately attracted to the Divine Liturgy which emphasizes God's mercy and love. Instead of judgment the visitors find love and joy. They were delighted to hear of God's love of everyone.

The parishioners of Our Lady's are very supportive and receptive of people and do not try to change or condemn anyone. They are present for the newcomers and, knowingly or unknowingly, teach them by example. Once anyone comes to the parish, all ethnic and family affiliations are left at the door. No one asks anyone from what country their family comes. It is truly the spirit of Saint Maron who

draws people of many nations together. Our Lady's Parish is made up of people from over twenty-seven different countries with varying backgrounds and experiences.

In July Monsignor Sawyer invited people personally to join the class that was starting in August. Everyone in the parish was invited, but he spoke particularly to non-Catholics who had been attending the Liturgies to come study the Bible and see what the Church teaches.

The Adult Classes began in August with the Bible, studying Genesis and Exodus. Much attention was given to studying the temple worship in Jerusalem and Judaism. The curriculum gave the students the background with which to understand our own Divine Liturgy. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews is studied in depth because Jesus is the High Priest. Chorbishop Seely Beggiani's Commentary on the Divine Liturgy is excellent material to understand the what's and the whys of the Maronite Liturgy. It goes step by step of what is being prayed and why. The entire emphasis is prayer and worship of the Holy Trinity.

One month into the classes those who had never been baptized received the Anointing of Oil of the Catechumens during the Divine Liturgy. The parishioners were asked to pray for those individuals who then inscribed their names in the Book of the Elect. At every Divine Liturgy the catechumens and those who were to be brought into the church would go up for

a blessing given with a prayer that God "would enlighten their minds to His mysteries and bring to completion what He began in them".

Father Anthony Salim's "Captivated by Your Teachings" served as the text for understanding the Catholic Faith through Eastern and Maronite eyes. The class worked its way paragraph by paragraph through the

book. Each class was different and was filled with laughter and the joy of the Lord. Questions were an integral part of the curriculum. The "cradle Catholics" learned that they had to shift their thinking and approach to the Faith. It was wonderful seeing how the people started to understand their Faith and connect the dots. The classes were not just assimilating information, but a growth of each person's walk with the Lord. It was a building on the foundations that were there in each person's life. It was a continuum of their individual walks with the Lord. The class grew in "the wisdom of the Lord" and became a great support system for the people.

On Pentecost Sunday, the birthday of the Church, Carolyn Cunningham, Greg McBroom, Donna Parsons and Elizabeth Velasquez were all baptized, confirmed and received First Communion. Robert Rogers was already baptized, so he was confirmed and received First Communion. In an unprecedented occasion, three couples had their marriages blessed: Mike and Carolyn Cunningham, Gene and Donna Parsons, and Elizabeth and Ruben Velasquez.

The Maronite Church's mission is to abide by the commandment of its Lord and Savior, "Go baptize all nations in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and teach them all that I have commanded" (Mat 20:19). If we do not follow His command then we cease to have a reason to exist. The Syriac Church of Antioch was a missionary church from the beginning, reaching as far as to India and to China. At the end of the Liturgy we pray that the Church remains "a way of salvation and the light of the world."

Our Lady's Parish is privileged to have been chosen as an instrument to bring these men and women to the Maronite Church. Pentecost 2010 was a great day for us. We witnessed mature adults being baptized, chrismated, crowned and receiving the Eucharist. We welcome our brothers and sisters from different backgrounds into the Maronite Church. They are now children of the Church of Antioch, holders, guardians, sharers and promoters of the Syriac tradition, followers of Saint Maron. They are Maronites!! ☐



Lebanon: Beating in My Heart



Eucharistic procession during the ordination of Fr. Dany Abi Akar in Lebanon

by Seminarian Chris Fabre

I have three stories to tell, but because they are all connected, they could be viewed as one. This first is about my vocation, the second is about the ordination in Lebanon of my friend Fr. Dany Abi Akar, and the third is about the people and the spirit of Lebanon. I've probably been called by God to serve Him most of my life, however, recently I attended the Discernment Weekend at the Seminary in Washington DC, and that calling came into focus for me. I met the seminarians, our Vocations Director, Msgr. Charbel and the Rector, Chorbishop Beggiani. I knew with certainty after the first night that God was indeed calling me. What had been just a question finally became a clear answer. I didn't have revelations or hear God's voice calling me in a physical sense, but I knew distinctly and clearly that He had been calling me, and I knew that I without hesitation I wanted to answer Him. "Here I am Lord," like a schoolboy answering when his name is called, indicating to the teacher that he is present and ready.

At the Discernment Weekend, I forged friendships that continue to foster and encourage me in the Lord. I

got a peek into what I thought was seminary life, but what I later learned reflected a lot more. The seminarians and clergy were constantly offering themselves in little things, and in bigger things. All the guys being ordained this year to their various ordinations invited me. For a person in my position, that appealed to me for a lot of reasons. I write this sitting at the airport in Beirut, waiting for my flight home. I spent the last week with my friend, Dany Abi Akar, now Abouna Dany, seeing his ordination in Lebanon where he is from. In a few weeks I will go to Michigan to see Vince and Tony ordained. Such an honor and so exciting to see a life officially consecrated to the Church, married as Our Lord Jesus was, to his bride the Church.

God showed me through this experience, and through seminarian friends of Dany, the priests and bishops and more broadly through the Christian people of Lebanon, what His church was based on, where it started, and how fiercely the flame burns in the hearts of the faithful. Dany and his family welcomed me on the day I arrived like a king. (I am one of those cradle Catholics with no Lebanese family background that found the Maronite Church, so I was in for a crash course

in things cultural and spiritual). This is the second story, about Lebanon, a people, a faith, and a place - the spiritual heart of our Maronite faith.

I found Dany, his family, the clergy and his seminary friends there so incredibly welcoming. I was not only the guest and foreigner, but I was to be served first, sit in the best seat, enter doors first, etc. I started to remember the discernment weekend, and I realized that this quality of Lebanon, of the Christian faithful, and really of Maronite Catholics, is what I saw at Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary in DC, it not just 'seminary life' as I thought initially. Dany was ordained by Bishop Gregory Monsour, who is not my bishop but who treated like his own seminarian - treatment I felt humbled to accept. I realized it was just the treatment 'my' Bishop (Robert) would have extended had the tables been turned and Dany was my guest and it was my ordination. It seems to me that in the West (and I include Europe, the Americas and Australia), the sense of self-reliance and intendance is the value weighted against everything else. It seemed to me that in the East where Our Lord first revealed Himself to us, the value of common good and community takes precedence over self-reliance. I can feel those values in many ways in Lebanon and in the Church (both here in the US and there as well).

There is much more to tell, but I will cut this short. I'll have to leave you with some highlights: meeting so many clergy and seminarians and friends of Dany's that I lost count, eating every type of Lebanese food made by his mom and sisters and the best French fries and fruits on the planet, seeing places through the eyes of those who were born there, seeing the seminaries and holy places with men consecrated for the Church, witnessing a friend ordained in Lebanon and in Arabic (he provided me with a word by word translation so I wasn't lost), seeing his families' village in the mountains around Q'artaba/Abboud on the day he celebrated his first Mass, spending in monasteries and seminaries with priests and seminarians laughing and talking about God, learning to relax and enjoy life as an insider though my physical

Orlando, Florida *MYO Retreat Hits All the Notes*



Fr. Dany at his first Liturgy of Thanksgiving.



by Jennie Simon

characteristics and language proved me otherwise, and finally, because of the kindness of Bishop Gregory, sitting with the Patriarch, the Bishop and Dany for a while in *Bkerke* (wow, that was a BIG one).

I would sum up my story this way: I've lived my whole life thinking I was called to the table and for the most part always feeling that I had been given more than enough. In retrospect I think that I had been called to be a priest when I was younger, but my adolescent logical mind told me that I couldn't and that I had to provide for my family in order to get us out of the circumstances that I was born in. At some point, I forgot how to hear His call and I thought my vocation was as a dentist or a physician. Dentistry has been a super profession, and I have been able to do well by any standards. However, there was a greater calling that I think I missed earlier in life, and He was gracious enough to keep calling my name until I could reply, "here I am Lord". Now he is starting to show me that the crumbs that I had been given at the table were maybe what I required were not what he'd intended. He'd intended to serve me as a king (or as a unknown visitor) would be in Lebanon. He'd called me to His table to enjoy a feast. Now that question is left for me, "can I continue to answer His call, and be worthy of the gifts and treatment He lavishes?" Pray for my vocation, and me as I pray for those who inspire me and help me! ☐

It's been a month since we returned to Orlando from the annual 2010 National MYO retreat in Latrobe, Penn., at St. Vincent College and Monastery. "You're shiny and brand new," my husband says welcoming us home on July 24. "I feel completely full and overflowing with the Holy Spirit!" I proclaim. Our daughter glows naturally. She is ready for a nap after a week of praising, eating, learning and fun. She has made new friends and will be busy with photo sharing and staying in touch as we come back to earth from a power packed week with Jesus and many "celebrities" of our Maronite faith.

So spiritually intense; so joyful; so contemplative; so reflective; so valuable was the experience that the heart and soul relive the moments in some form every day since July 19, day 1. We will carry the moments forward as we become the people God intends us to be. We have been fortified by the MYO workshop and mission. We are sharing next year's possibilities with family and friends.

Our mind revisits the quiet rolling hills surrounding a Holy wonderland. We could not have imagined, nor can it be properly explained, the spiritual treasures we would find on our five day hiatus with the Maronite youth groups and their leaders. Like the finest of symphonies the week's events were carefully orchestrated by our spiritual directors. The Holy Spirit corralled all into one. Not one voice was unheard. At

the altar we were daily reborn into the moment when Christ consecrated Himself for His believers. How awesome to start our day with prayer too, in the Mary, Mother of Wisdom Chapel.

Each day, as the symphony played out, the image of Christ was more visible in each one. Banners were read in the student center: "We are the children of God." "We are His servants." "We are called to live Holy lives by His example." "We will study, learn, and grow in faith." "Let us celebrate God's love in and around us!"

We rejoiced with laity, bishops, priests, and religious from our country and foreign lands. Bishop Robert and Bishop Gregory impressed us with their jubilation and humility, as they mingled with us in chapel, study halls and dining areas. What great joy to be surrounded by crowds of youth who will continue to grow our Maronite faith and traditions!

We connected the God and the human spirit, gathering knowledge of Saints in heaven and on earth, and soaking up the Gospel of Christ as it relates to the challenges of the human condition. We laid down our weaknesses and gathered strength. We cast away fear and reeled in courage. We set down inhibitions and secured ourselves with laughter. We shed tears and were humbly united.

Over 300 voices rallied to become renewed in Christ, realizing the dignity in knowing Him personally. We found undeniable peace and joy in recognizing Him in others. We were given spiritual tools to take home so that we can continue a mission to lead souls to Christ. The high, middle, and low notes of a week of praises were played with such grace that each voice was heard celebrating the joy that only Christ can give. It remains with us!

To God, Father Gary George, his dedicated MYO team of spiritual leaders, and Father Bassam Saade, a resounding note of thanks and praise for the miracles of MYO which were rightly seen by our hearts. It must be a never ending and extremely rewarding process from one MYO retreat to another in putting together a symphony for Christ such as this. We will play it forward! ☐

Danbury, Connecticut *Lebanese Festival 2010*

by Janet Hudak

St. Anthony Maronite Church in Danbury, Connecticut, hosted its Annual *Mahrajan* [festival] on Friday, August 13 and Saturday August 14, 2010. It was a beautiful, sunny weekend which brought visitors from all over the Danbury area as well as other parts of Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania to join in the festivities.

Traditional Lebanese foods and desserts were served. Over 75 parish volunteers cooked the food and desserts for the event which hosted over 3,000 guests. Entertainment was provided by the St. Anthony's MYA Dance Troupe and the Nader Band.

Families and friends of St. Anthony's parish enjoyed two days of fellowship, eating, drinking and dancing into the night! As always the youth of the parish volunteered many hours to provide excellent service to the guests as hosts, food



servers and clean up committee. They also provided entertainment for the children such as an inflatable bounce house, face painting and jewelry making along with cotton candy, popcorn and ice cream.

Most importantly, St. Anthony's celebrated the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary with a Liturgy on Saturday evening which was open to all parishioners, guests and friends of the parish. In addition, the Church was open for adoration and there were blessed oils and literature available to all who came to visit the Church.

Many dignitaries from the Danbury area such as the Mayor, City Clerk and assorted state senators and representatives came to spend time with their neighbors and friends. Several of our local politicians mark their calendars each year to be sure and attend the St. Anthony's *Mahrajan* because they love the home made food, desserts and friendly welcome provided by the parish. We thank everyone for their continued support!

The 2011 St. Anthony's Annual *Mahrajan* will be held August 12 -13 from 12 noon until Midnight. ☐

New Bedford, Massachusetts *Annual Festival*

by Sarah Thomas

A glorious day greeted the festival-goers of Our Lady of Purgatory Church's annual *Mahrajan* in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Billed as an event to celebrate the Lebanese community and its spirituality, the Lebanese festival attracted visitors from all over Southern Coast Massachusetts and Southern Rhode Island. Riding on the momentum provided by the last two festivals, this year's August 7th *Mahrajan* showcased Lebanese food and dessert, as well as the traditional dance of Lebanon.

"It was a wonderful time, that really brought the community together," said Our Lady of Purgatory's Pastor Reverend Jack Morrison. "On that day we were really a family."

Encouraged by blue skies and mild weather, visitors from the area took the scenic ride to the Holy Ghost Grounds in South Dartmouth and sampled a variety of Lebanese



New Bedford, Massachusetts *MYO Fall Retreat*

by Fr. Jack Morrison

We are excited to announce the dates of and location for the MYO regional conference of New England. The conference will be held at Wisdom House Retreat and Conference Center: 229 East Litchfield Road Litchfield, Connecticut 06759 Phone: (860) 567-3163, from Friday, October 22 to Sunday October 24, 2010. We are excited to welcome back all of our youth, advisers, and clergy for a time of spiritual growth and recreation.

The cost for the conference this year is \$200.00 per person (double occupancy); \$225.00 per person (single occupancy - adults only). Final payment is due by September 30, 2010. Make check payable to the Office of Youth Ministry. All applications received after September 30, 2010 will require an additional \$25.00 late registration fee per participant.

All applications forms and documents are to be filled out and printed from the website, www.stanthonydanbury.com. It is imperative that the applications be completely filled out. Please verify that all pages are printed and included in any submitted applications. Also, please remind all participants to fill out the health Statement accurately and to include a copy of their current insurance card. Please mail applications to Our Lady of Purgatory Church 11 Franklin Street New Bedford, MA 02740. The Fax number is (508) 996-2744

If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to call or to e-mail father Jean Younes at stanthonyoffice@yahoo.com or by phone at (203) 744-3372 or Father Jack Morrison at aboonajack@aol.com or by phone at (508) 996-8934. □

Minneapolis, Minnesota *On the Steps of Saint Maron*

Join Msgr. sharbel Maroun, Pastor of St. Maron Church in Minneapolis, Minn., on a tour to Lebanon and Syria in honor of the 1630th anniversary of St. Maron, October 4-14, 2010.

The cost is \$1855 for hotel stay for nine nights; breakfast and dinner; air conditioned bus; English speaking guide and entrance fees. This price does not include the airline ticket from your city; lunch; tips and all extras at the hotel or visa.

American citizens need a visa into Syria from the Syrian Consulate in Detroit, Michigan, or the Embassy of Syria in Washington, D.C. For more information visit the website of the Syrian embassy at www.syrianconsulate.org.

To make your ticket reservation, please call Berit at (978) 469-0786. For more information email Msgr. sharbel Maroun at abouna@stmaron.com or call him at (612) 379-2758. Seats are limited, call today if you want to join this tour. □

specialties.

The crowd was treated to traditional Lebanese dances organized by Joan Thomas-Mello and Flora Coury Azar. Dressed in the customary costumes of Lebanon, parish children showed off their *dabke* and capped off the entertainment by encouraging everyone to join in the fun.

"It was such an incredible day," said event co-organizer Rachael Thomas Higgins. "Everyone worked together to guarantee a success. We were blessed to have all the volunteers and the dancers made it even more special." Event organizers are already planning for next year. □

Easton, Pennsylvania *Annual Heritage Day*

by Naomi Karam Koerwitz

Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church in Easton, Penn., celebrated its 33rd annual Lebanese Heritage Day festival on Saturday, July 31st and Sunday, August 1, 2010. The festival was established in 1978 to recognize and commemorate the rich traditions of the Lebanese-American community in Easton.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the church on Saturday afternoon and on Sunday morning. Sunday's Liturgy was celebrated by His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn. Afterward, Bishop Mansour, joined by his family, ate lunch with the community and attended the festivities. In addition, the Most Reverend John Barres, Bishop of the Diocese of Allentown, Penn., attended the festival Saturday evening. This marked the first time a Roman Catholic bishop participated and attended the festival.

Rain or shine, Lebanese Heritage Day has become one of downtown Easton's leading summer events. Each year, the festival draws thousands of people to the church parking lot at 4th and Ferry Streets, festooned with brightly colored tents and replete with the aroma and sounds of a traditional Lebanese celebration... and this year was no different.

In addition to the delectable Lebanese fare the grounds came alive this year to the music of George Kouz and his ensemble. All in all, the festival was a huge success, and the parish community of Our Lady of Lebanon looks forward to next year, when they come together to celebrate again. □

San Francisco, California *End of School Year*



Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Church, San Francisco Bay area, ended the school year which included many successful programs, for our children and youth, to name a few of them: Religious Education; Youth Ministry; Arabic Language; and children Choir. Our church plans to continue all those programs and many more for our children this coming school year.

Our motto is 'keeping the tradition alive', by teaching our children our Faith through different means: service, language, songs.. Thanks to all the volunteers who spent countless hours and donated their talents to support our church. □

Maronite Sunday at Shrine of Our Lady of Martyrs



The sister parishes of St. Ann of Troy, New York, St. Louis Gonzaga of Utica, New York and St. Anthony of Danbury, Connecticut, joined in the annual celebration of Maronite Sunday at the Shrine of Our Lady of Martyrs (also known as the Shrine of the North American Martyrs), Auriesville, New York, on Sunday, August 8, 2010.

The celebration of Maronite Sunday has been a long-standing tradition shared between the Maronite parishes

in Troy and Utica, but a new tradition was born when parishioners from St. Anthony in Danbury joined the celebration. A Divine Liturgy was concelebrated by Fr. Jean Younes, M.L.M. of Danbury and Fr. George Bouchaaya, M.L.M. of Troy. Chorbishop John D. Faris was unable to participate because of a death in his family.

A pavilion on the beautiful grounds was reserved for the parishioners and friends of the three parishes. The day was filled with prayer, fun, food and music. Old friendships were re-kindled and new friendships established. □

Springfield, Massachusetts *Birthday Blessing*



On Sunday, June 27, 2010, Fr. George Zina, Pastor of St. Anthony Maronite Church in Springfield, Mass., blessed Nora Blaisdell, a long time parishioner, on the event of her 90th birthday. Congratulations, Nora. □

Newtown Square, Pennsylvania *Weekend Summer Camp*

The First Weekend Summer Retreat for the twenty-five children that attended was a huge success thanks to Fr. Paul Mouawad, Houda Abboud, Rima Schewliet, Fairouz Muaddi, Norma Muaddi and Hilda Hourani. This was a weekend retreat held at St. Sharbel Church in Newtown Square, Penn., with lots of food, arts and crafts, Arabic classes and religious education, Liturgical music appreciation and cultural dancing which were only a few of the workshops offered to the children.

The explanation of the Divine Liturgy and the importance of morning prayer and evening prayer were stressed to all the children. Needless to say all survived the weekend and had a great time. Next year it plans to be bigger and better. □

Fall River, Massachusetts Scholarship Award



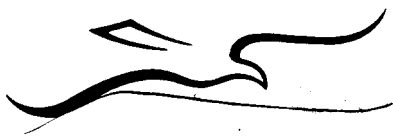
Left to right: Giulia Khoury, Chorbishop Joseph Kaddo, Michael Massoud and scholarship committee member Karl Hetzler.

by Karl Hetzler

On July 18, 2010, following the Sunday liturgy, Chorbishop Joseph Kaddo, Pastor, and the parish family of St. Anthony of the Desert Church in Fall River, Mass., awarded scholarships of \$500.00/each to two graduating high school seniors, Giulia Khoury and Michael Massoud. The scholarship program, now in its eighth year, is intended to further strengthen the bond with parish youth. The only criteria for eligibility are that the recipients be active parishioners of the church and submit a short essay of their best memories growing up in the parish. One of the scholarships is given each year in memory of Chorbishop Norman J. Ferris, while another is given in memory of Mary Ann Hallal.

Giulia Khoury, the daughter of Tom and Charlene Khoury will be attending Rhode Island College studying voice and music. Giulia has participated in the Parish MYO, Holy Family, Choir and CCD programs. She is the recipient of the 2010 Chorbishop Norman J. Ferris Memorial Scholarship.

Michael Massoud, the son of Clifford and Holly Massoud will be attending the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, majoring in Nursing /Nurse Practitioner. Michael was active in MYO, Holy Family and was a volunteer for CCD activities. He received the 2010 Mary Ann Hallal Memorial Scholarship. □



San Fernando Valley, California Busy Time at Sts. Peter and Paul Mission

Saints Peter and Paul Feast Day

This year, the 29th of June, Saints Peter and Paul Feast Day, fell on Tuesday, Fr. Jean Yammine, Pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Mission in San Fernando Valley, Calif., insisted on having the celebration of our Patron Saints on that same day. The Liturgy was celebrated by Fr. Jean, assisted by Subdeacons Dib Tayar and Albert Constantine. During the Liturgy, Father Jean blessed the water and sprinkled the faithful people with the holy water. The Liturgy was followed by a *karaoke* night, with *sajj* cheese, *zaatar* and *hookah*. A large number of people attended both ceremonies. Thank you to the big group of volunteers who worked tirelessly around the clock to make that night a memorable one.

Summer Camp 2010

Over forty children and twenty volunteers met in the parking lot of the church on June 25th. The children were put into groups and were loaded in four buses to head to the camp about an hour and a half away from the church. The camp was from Friday to Sunday, and the children and volunteers were excited for the weekend to begin. Upon arrival, the children engaged in various activities such as horseback riding, repelling, paint-balling, rock climbing, and even a massive water balloon fight! Of course there was time for prayers and Divine Liturgy. They all had smiles on their faces and their laughter never subsided during the talent shows they participated in, making crafts and having free time to explore the camp site in the beautiful Lake Castaic area. The camp was a wonderful success but would not have been possible without the help of Father Jean, the camp leaders, support of the parents, and volunteers.

Family Kermis:

On May 16, Sts. Peter and Paul Mission in San Fernando Valley California organized their first Family Kermis Day. The event started with an outdoor Liturgy, celebrated by Fr. Jean Yammine, Pastor, and assisted by Monsignor William Lesser and Subdeacon Dib Tayar. During the Liturgy Fr. Jean distributed certificates of completion to forty children of the Arabic and Catechism program of the Mission. He also presented thank you cards and a memorable picture of the Virgin Mary to each of the teachers. He blessed their efforts and sacrifices in making the past year a wonderful one. At the end of the Liturgy, Fr. Jean announced the opening of the Family kermis Day. His ultimate goal was to gather all the families and have fun. The Kermis was a big challenge for our small community. It included games, entertainment booths, a ping pong tournament, kids' jumpers, football and backgammon, as well as food, refreshments and ice cream. Also there was a raffle that included precious prizes. With the smile of sixty volunteers, the will of God, and over 500 attendees, the kermis was a big success. □

San Diego, California Pro-Life Center for the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon

by Pat Hansen

New statistics show that abortion often leaves another silent victim other than the infant and mother... that of the father of the aborted child! Post abortion counseling services are seeing an increasing number of men come forward, grieving their aborted children. Many of the same dynamics of post-abortion distress that are seen in women are also present in men (Priests for Life).

The laws of the United States do not acknowledge the right of a father to stop the abortion of his own child, but rather places that act solely within the decision of the mother. This raises a multitude of problems. On the one hand, the father who wants to defend the life of his child is often accused of meddling in something that is not his business. On the other hand, the father who wants to leave the (mistaken) decision of abortion in the hands of the mother alone is often accused of being uncaring and distant. This in turn can create feelings of isolation in the mother, which in turn make it easier for her to resort to abortion.

Furthermore, the law is a powerful teacher. It says the father has no rights in the abortion decision. And on the other side of the coin of "rights" is "responsibilities". The current state of the law regarding fathers and abortion can easily foster a sense of irresponsibility in young men.

"The Pill" 50 Years Later

This past Mother's Day 2010 marked the 50th anniversary of the birth control pill. What irony! The pill, along with its partner abortion, has made the womb the most unsafe dwelling for new life. The very word used for the pill, contraceptive, in its etymology announces that it is there to stop life because conception means "beginning" and the prefix contra means "against".

A quick look at history shows that the beginnings for acceptance of destruction of life in the womb started back in 1916 and moved at a snail's pace forward until people started believing the idea that denying a life created by God was perfectly agreeable. Margaret Sanger and her Birth Control League (later becoming Planned Parenthood) made a little hole in the dyke so the water could run through. Then the pressures from the culture of death widened that hole until it has become a rushing torrent in 2010. Now over 3,000 babies a day are killed through abortion and uncountable numbers from the effects of the pill.

Besides the death and harmful effects on unborn children the hormones in the pill taken for extended periods increases the risk of breast cancer and cervical cancer. They also increase the likelihood of blood clots, which can lead to thrombosis, heart attacks or strokes. Recent studies have found that the hormonal contraceptives affect skeletal formation making the users of these pills more susceptible to bone fractures. The hormones in the birth control pill have also proved harmful to the environment. When we violate God's commandments, the consequences can prove deadly.

Let us remember to pray for fathers suffering from the pain of abortion. St. Joseph, foster father of Our Lord Jesus, pray for us. And let us keep in mind that with the gift of freedom comes the responsibility to be informed and involved citizens. We must vote our values in each election. By electing candidates that defend life, we are helping to save the lives of unborn children and protect the sanctity of all human life until natural death. God will only bless America, when we bless God by following His Will. □

Vatican to Muslims: Let's Fight Violence Together

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue sent a message to Muslims, underlining the need for a joint effort against violence. The message, published on August 27, 2010 by the Vatican, was sent to all Muslims on the occasion of the end of Ramadan, which this year will take place September 10.

"Throughout this month, you have committed yourselves to prayer, fasting, helping the neediest and strengthening relations of family and friendship," the message affirmed. "God will not fail to reward these efforts!"

The message, which was signed by the Council President, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, and Secretary, Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata, centered on the theme, "Christians and Muslims: Together in overcoming violence among followers of different religions."

The prelates noted that this theme is, "unfortunately, a pressing subject, at least in certain areas of the world." They acknowledged that "the Joint Committee for Dialogue instituted by the Pontifical Council and al-Azhar Permanent Committee for Dialogue among the Monotheistic Religions had also chosen this topic as a subject of study, reflection and exchange during its last annual meeting," which took place in Cairo last February.

In their message, the Vatican officials underlined some of the conclusions published at the end of this meeting. "There are many causes for violence among believers of different religious traditions," they noted. The message outlined some of these causes, such as: "the manipulation of the religion for political or other ends; discrimination based on ethnicity or religious identity; divisions and social tensions."

"Ignorance, poverty, underdevelopment are also direct or indirect sources of violence among as well as within religious communities," it added.

Common Good

The prelates exhorted: "May the civil and religious authorities offer their contributions in order to remedy so many situations for the sake of the common good of all society!"

"May the civil authorities safeguard the primacy of the law by ensuring true justice to put a stop to the authors and promoters of violence!" The message also highlighted some "important recommendations" published after the February meeting. (*Continues on page 20*)

The 47th Annual Maronite Convention Finishes on a High Note

by Seminarian Gaby Gubash

The 47th Annual Maronite Convention (NAM 2010), held July 7-11, 2010, at the Sheraton Birmingham Hotel, was sponsored by the National Apostolate of Maronites and hosted by St. Elias Maronite Church in Birmingham, Alabama, which is commemorating a century as a parish this year. Chorbishop Richard Saad, St. Elias' pastor, brought southern and Maronite hospitality together under the theme of Stewardship of our Maronite Church by graciously providing many workshops, cultural excursions, entertaining *haflis*, and, most importantly, celebration of the Holy Mysteries in the Divine Liturgy and community prayer of *Ramsho* and *Safro* with our Maronite Bishops, Robert Shaheen and Gregory Mansour. All of this was in the setting of the Southern city of Birmingham, a particularly unique culture of small town South within a large modern city.

Workshops included everything from our identity as Maronites, how to foster religious vocations, pursuit of the canonization of the Massabki brothers with a showing of a film that was so well received that an encore presentation was offered, handing on our Faith of the Mountain to future generations, to a beautiful exhibition of Maronite Music from the first ever compilation of the Inter-eparchial Music Commission. Many participants left feeling inspired to learn more and requested additional workshops on these important topics. Cultural excursions included being a part of the live studio audience for a worldwide EWTN broadcast of host Fr. Mitch Pacwa interviewing our very own Maronite Bishops, a visit to the world renowned Civil Rights Institute, touring the Birmingham Museum of Art, and a pilgrimage to Mother Angelica's Shrine of the Blessed Sacrament.

The Sheraton Ballroom held great Southern dinners, entertainment, and late night *haflis*, which included authentic Southern bands, the Amin Sultan Band, DJ U.B., dabke by the St.



The Opening Liturgy of the Clergy Conference and Maronite Convention was held at St. Elias Church on Monday evening July 5, 2010.

Elias Lebanese Dancers, and a performance by the Fred Astaire Dancers with Fabian Sanchez from "Dancing with the Stars." The late night Sing Alongs were another draw, where talented priests and parishioners sang the night away with religious hymns and Arabic songs. Ahlan Wa Sahalan Y'All was the greeting offered to the many conventioners visiting the hospitality room to enjoy Lebanese food, informational displays, various performances, and additional opportunities to connect with our Maronite community.

Unique excursions were catered to Maronite juniors (5th to 8th grade), youth (9th to 12th grades), young adults and young professionals (ages 18 to 35). These excursions included visits to a water park, beach, pool club, mixers, and Theology on Tap with the Bishops. The Theology on Tap was a great opportunity for Maronite young adults to seize their role as leaders of the Church and reflect on theology in their own lives with our two Maronite Shepherds. One powerful reflection commented on how Jesus was not a passive pacifist in simply turning the other cheek or walking the extra mile

for Roman soldiers who had enslaved Jews to carry equipment for one mile. Jesus, rather, reverses roles of power by freely offering to go the extra mile in order to become the giver. Becoming a giver then allows you to enter into a position of power over the receiver, take away the aggressor's power, and fight injustice with love. Maronite young adults are similarly called to respond to evil with love and never to respond with evil, by offering ourselves in clever ways that make us stand out as salt of the earth and a light to the world.

NAM 2010 continued to be an ideal opportunity for national Maronite administration beginning with the Clergy Conference, the Order of Saint Sharbel Annual Breakfast meeting, *TéléLumière* Board of Directors meeting, NAM Delegates meeting, and NAM Board of Directors meeting. Much business was done along with great networking opportunities. I personally treasure the opportunities I had to meet with Maronites from across the country that serve our Church so generously.

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Troy, New York Feast of St. Ann



by Fr. George Bouchaaya

On Sunday, July 25, 2010, the community of St. Ann in Troy, New York, concluded nine days of prayer with a Divine Liturgy to celebrate the feast of its Patroness, St. Ann.

Father George Bouchaaya, M.L.M., led the congregation in reciting the prayer before a statue of St. Ann. At the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, the saint's banner was carried down the aisle in procession, followed by the Daughters of St. Ann, each bearing a white rose. An icon of St. Ann, along with her relics, were given a place of prominence in the Sanctuary. The Daughters each placed their rose in a vase before the icon. Midway through the liturgy, Fr. Georges asked the Daughters to stand and recite an Act of Consecration to Saint Ann.

The feast day culminated with a parish picnic on the grounds of the new church in Watervliet, N.Y. Parishioners and friends shared tasty delicacies and conversation under a balmy summer sky. □

The 47th Annual Maronite Convention Finishes on a High Note

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The convention closed with the Pontifical Divine Liturgy, where the reason for us all to gather was offered in the Holy Eucharist. A final brunch was provided where farewells were given until we meet again in the City of Brotherly Love, NAM 2011 in Philadelphia.

The 47th Annual Maronite Convention in Birmingham was a terrific event and we hope to see you again in Philadelphia for NAM 2011. For more information on the National Apostolate of Maronites and all of NAM's programs and events visit www.namnews.org or call (914) 964-3070 or email nam@namnews.org. □

Vatican to Muslim

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Among these, it included: "to open our hearts to mutual forgiveness and reconciliation, for a peaceful and fruitful coexistence; to recognize what we have in common and to respect differences, as a basis for a culture of dialogue; and to recognize and respect the dignity and the rights of each human being without any bias related to ethnicity or religious affiliation."

The message underlined the "necessity to promulgate just laws which guarantee the fundamental equality of all." It also recommended recalling "the importance of education towards respect, dialogue and fraternity in the various educational arenas: at home, in the school, in churches and mosques." "Thus," the prelates urged, "we will be able to oppose violence among followers of different religions and promote peace and harmony among the various religious communities." □

Zenit.org, August 27, 2010