

# *the* Maronite **Voice**



*Feast of the Holy Cross*

14 SEPTEMBER





# the Maronite Voice

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#### **Publishers**

Most Reverend Gregory John Mansour  
Most Reverend A. Elias Zaidan

#### **Editor**

Chorbishop John D. Faris

#### **Managing Editor**

Rev. Aaron Sandbothe

#### **Art and Design Director**

Ms. Glory Rasi

#### **Production Coordinator**

Subdeacon Michael Maynes

#### **Parish News Editors**

Dr. Mabel George Howard  
(Eparchy of Saint Maron)  
mabelgeorgehoward@gmail.com

Rev. Pierre Bassil  
(Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon)  
ptbassil@aol.com

#### **Feature Writers**

Anna Salloum  
Brandon Shulleeta

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#### **Contact Us**

Phone: 804.346.1160  
Email: MaroniteVoice@gmail.com  
Mailing Address:  
4611 Sadler Road  
Glen Allen, VA 23060

#### **Office Hours**

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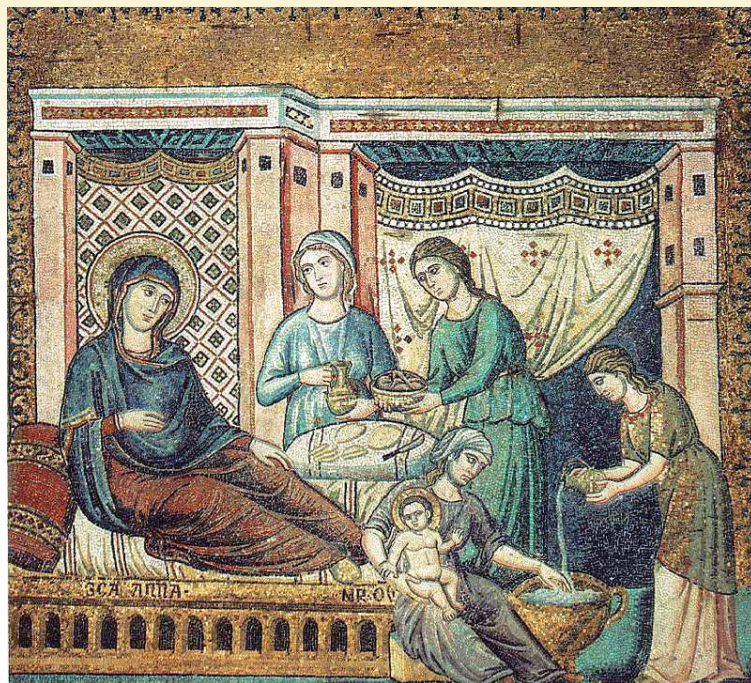
# The Conception and Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary

by Bishop Gregory J. Mansour

Most of us are familiar with the Marian stories from the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles: Mary at the annunciation, visitation, birth of our Lord, his presentation in the Temple, his finding in the temple, the wedding of Cana, her following of his preaching, his death on the Cross, his resurrection appearances, and the descent of the Holy Spirit. Mary's role in the Scriptures is intertwined with that of our Savior.

Nonetheless, there are also two feasts in the Church's calendar that come to us, not from Sacred Scripture, but from Tradition. They pertain to the beginning of Mary's life and are hidden and subtle: her conception and birth. 8 September, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is exactly nine months after her conception in the womb of her mother which we celebrate on 8 December.

The conception and birth of the Blessed Virgin show that God's work in Mary is often hidden and grace-filled, like most good things that happen in life. This subtle work of God in Mary is also true of her appearance or devotion in Guadalupe, Fatima, Aparacida, Lourdes or Lebanon. Mary at her conception



and birth, as well as Mary during her heavenly life throughout history, is God's way of telling us that Mary brings sublime consolation, peace, guidance and protection to those who ask.

Jacob of Serug describes God's subtle work with Mary this way:

*“Our Lord, descending to earth beheld all women; he chose one for himself who among them all was pleasing.*

*He searched her and found humility and holiness in her; limpid impulses and a soul desirous of divinity.*

*From her childhood, she stood firm in unblemished uprightness; she walked in the way without offenses.”*

(HOMILY I; HYMNS ON THE MOTHER OF GOD)

These verses, from the 5th century Syriac poet, priest, and monk, remind us of why we so often turn to Mary, who discreetly intercedes for us, as she did at the wedding of Cana, “Son, they have no more wine” (JOHN 2).



*“Our Blessed Mother’s conception and birth, often hidden from our view, give us one more subtle and sublime opportunity to seek her intercession in prayer.”*

Throughout my battle with Covid-19, she was my constant companion. This is also true for every soul seeking her help, desiring a deeper union with Christ. When Saint James was discouraged in his effort to preach the Gospel of Christ in Spain, Mary appeared to him. One truly finds in Mary a trusted companion and intercessor.

From that first century when Mary appeared to the discouraged Saint James until today, we find in Mary a subtle, sure and sublime intercessor. Here is how one of our monks in Petersham, Brother Ephrem, chose to invoke the Virgin’s intercession:

“O come, like the early morning,  
holy and serene:  
full of grace, immortal,  
as you behold the living God.

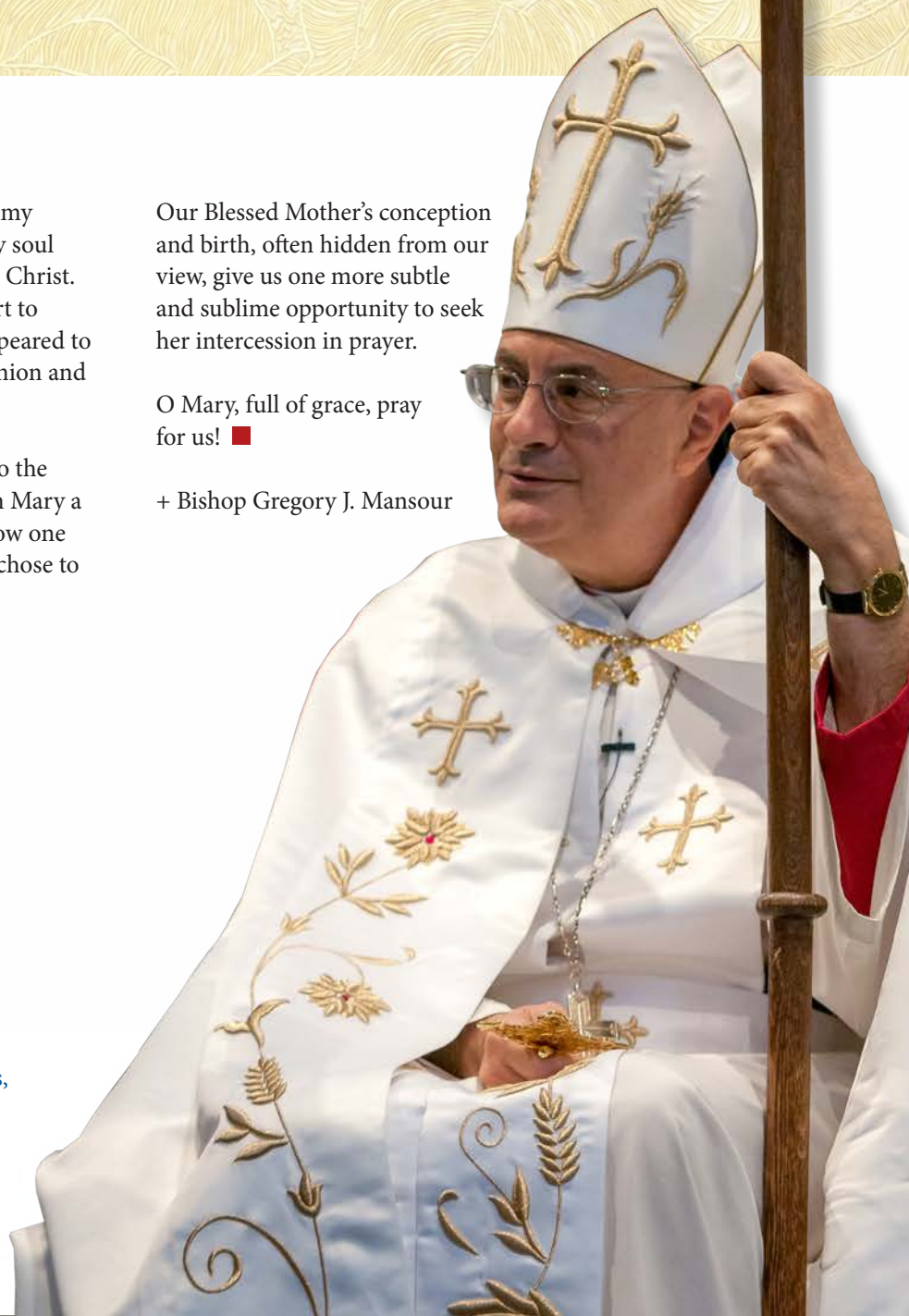
O come, like the mild air,  
like the time of gentle rains:  
we yearn to hear your voice,  
your song, pure as silence,  
until we breathe forth  
the fragrance of that anointing.

Look tenderly on us sinners,  
that we may be raised up in your likeness,  
and open up our hearts with yours  
to his everlasting Light.”

Our Blessed Mother’s conception and birth, often hidden from our view, give us one more subtle and sublime opportunity to seek her intercession in prayer.

O Mary, full of grace, pray for us! ■

+ Bishop Gregory J. Mansour



## Schedule BISHOP GREGORY J. MANSOUR

- 13-15 AUGUST North Jackson, OH | Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon
- 16 AUGUST Pittsburgh, PA | Pastoral Visit
- 19 AUGUST Order of St. Sharbel Virtual Meeting
- 23 AUGUST New Brunswick, NJ | Pastoral Visit
- 27-31 AUGUST Michigan | Family Wedding
- 4-6 SEPTEMBER MYA Leadership Virtual Workshop
- 26 SEPTEMBER Danbury, CT | Ladies Retreat
- 1 OCTOBER Online Benefit Dinner
- 3-4 OCTOBER Brooklyn, NY | Cathedral Family Retreat
- 10-11 OCTOBER Providence, RI | Ordination to Diaconate of Farid Zarour
- 16-18 OCTOBER North Jackson, OH | Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon | Deacon and Subdeacon Retreat

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**The Most Reverend Gregory J. Mansour has made the following decisions with regard to the appointment of priests:**

Accepted the request of **Reverend Samuel Najjar, JD**, to retire from the pastorate of Saint Michael the Archangel Church in Fayetteville, NC, effective 1 July 2020.

Appointed the **Reverend Adib Salameh** as Temporary Administrator of Saint Michael the Archangel Church in Fayetteville, NC, effective 1 July 2020.



## Schedule BISHOP A. ELIAS ZAIDAN

- 19 AUGUST St. Louis, MO | Caritas Board Meeting
  - 25 AUGUST St. Louis, MO | Installation of Most Reverend Mitchell Rosanski, Archbishop of St. Louis, MO
  - 4-6 SEPTEMBER MYA Workshop, Online
  - 28-30 SEPTEMBER USCCB Subcommittee Catholic Home Missions Meeting
  - 6-7 OCTOBER USCCB International Justice and Peace Committee Meeting
  - 16-18 OCTOBER North Jackson, OH | Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon | Deacon and Subdeacon Retreat
- 

### Vivian Akel Appointed to National Review Board of U.S. Bishops Conference

Four new members have been appointed to serve on the National Review Board (NRB) by Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The NRB advises the bishops' Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People and was established as part of the *Charter for Protection of Children and Young People*, a comprehensive set of procedures established and adopted by the U.S. bishops in 2002 to address allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy.

In his letter to the newly appointed members, Archbishop Gomez reminded them, "The National Review Board plays a vital role as a consultative body assisting the bishops in ensuring the complete implementation and accountability of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. As it states, 'The whole Church, especially the laity, at both the diocesan and national levels, needs to be engaged in maintaining safe environments in the Church for children and young people.'"

Among the appointees is Vivian Akel, LCSW, the Safe Environment Coordinator for the Eparchy of Saint Maron. Vivian is a retired Clinical Social Worker currently holding the position (volunteer) of Safe Environment Coordinator for the Maronite Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn as well as Pre-Cana facilitator. Her prior experience includes 21 years with the New York City Department of Education as a School Social Worker providing all aspects of Social Work Services with school age children, parents and educators. In addition, Ms. Akel held the position of Director of Social Work in an acute care medical center supervising social workers providing services to patients, families and medical personnel. Ms. Akel began her career working in a Community Mental Health Center in Brooklyn New York providing outpatient psychotherapy to individual patients, couples and families and maintained a private practice until her retirement in 2014. She received a Master's Degree in Social Work from Hunter College School of Social Work and is currently enrolled in a Spiritual Direction training program at Fairfield University's Murphy Center for Ignatian Spirituality. Ms. Akel has been married for 34 years and has two adult children.

# The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Her Praises in the Ancient Church

by Fr. David A. Fisher

*Then the tribes of Israel heard that Anna had conceived the immaculate one. So everyone took part in the rejoicing. Joachim gave a banquet, and great was the merriment in the garden. He invited the priests and Levites to prayer; then he called Mary into the center of the crowd, that she might be magnified. (On the Birth of Mary, St. Romanos the Melodist [c. 490-c. 556])*

We must always resist the modern tendency of turning the Sacred Scriptures into a history book. The Scriptures are in no way concerned with giving us a biography of Moses, David, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, Luke, or even the Holy Virgin Mary. For the Sacred Scriptures are a proclamation and revelation of the self-disclosure of God in Jesus Christ. St. Ephrem wrote: "Scripture brought me to the Gate of Paradise, and the mind stood in wonder as it entered." At the Gates of Paradise, we enter into that perfect relationship with God and his holy martyrs and saints, the Church of heaven that John speaks about in his Apocalypse/Revelation, whose queen is the Holy Virgin.

Jesus reveals to us that God is not a philosophical concept of notions of divine perfection, rather God is the perfection of a relationship, which means love. God is from all eternity Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

communion as perfection, communion of eternal love. It is this life into which we enter as members of the Church, this is why we listen to the prophets, honor the saints, and adore Mary, who is the image par excellence of the Church. From her nativity, Annunciation, the flight into Egypt, the presentation in the Temple, the wedding at Cana, and at the foot of the Cross; Mary, image of the Church, contemplates all these things in her heart, shares in his suffering, listens to his words, stands by his Cross, and shares in his Resurrection.

The Fathers of the Church pondered the silence of Mary, rejoiced in her nativity and maternity, followed her example of sanctity, and invoked her prayerful assistance. As noted by Chorbishop Seely Beggiani in his book *Early Syriac Theology*, "It was natural for Syriac writers to see Mary as the fulfillment of Old Testament types and a symbol of the future church."



## The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The *Protoevangelium of James*, whose original title was *The Nativity of Mary*, was written probably around 145 AD. While not being one of the four canonical Gospels, it is from this influential early Christian writing that we read of the Nativity of Mary.

And her months were fulfilled, and in the ninth month Anna brought forth. And she said to the midwife: What have I brought forth? And she said: A girl. And said Anna: My soul has been magnified this day. And she laid her down. And the days having been fulfilled, Anna was purified, ... and called her name Mary. ...

And when she was a year old, Joachim made a great feast, and invited the priests, and the scribes, and the elders, and all the people of Israel. And Joachim brought the child to the priests; and they blessed her, saying: O God of our fathers, bless this child, and give her an everlasting name to be named in all generations. ... And Anna made a song to the Lord God, saying: I will sing a song to the Lord my God, for He has looked upon me, and has taken away the reproach of mine enemies;

The *Protoevangelium of James* is not a biography but a proclamation of the earliest traditions of the Church concerning Mary, the one chosen to be the holy mother of the Christ; the *Theotókos* (*God-bearer, Mother of God*), as the Third Ecumenical Council, held in Ephesus in 431 will proclaim as dogma.

From this early Christian apocryphal writing and other lesser known apocryphal writings of that time, we discover the devout parents of Mary, Joachim and Anna, Joseph a widower who will become betrothed to Mary and will be the protector of the Holy Family. Also, we discover the oldest teachings of the perpetual virginity of Mary.



The Nativity of Mary along with her acceptance of God's will expressed to the Angel Gabriel at the Annunciation, will form the hinge on the door of human history. Because of the "yes" of Mary to "let it be done to me according to your will," the door of human history is opened to the Father to send his Son for our salvation.

She is the leaven of our new creation, the root of the true vine whose branches we have become, by virtue of the germination proper to baptism. She is the point of arrival of the reconciliation of God with men, on which occasion the angels sang: "Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth and good will toward men." — *Severus of Antioch* (c.465-538 AD)

### Saint Ephrem the Syrian: Poet of the Virgin Mary

The poetic theological and spiritual writings of St. Ephrem on the role of Mary in salvation history, are



## “The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary”

*Continued from page 9*

some of the most beautiful and profound expressions of faith to be found among the Church Fathers. His work on the significance of the Holy Virgin for the Church and its mission to the world, will influence later Syriac writers, such as Narsai (d. 502AD) and Jacob of Serug (d. 521 AD).

For St. Ephrem, Mary is the beauty of creation: “Only you [Jesus] and your Mother are more beautiful than everything.” He sees Mary as All-Holy: “Handmaid and daughter of blood and water [am I] whom You redeemed and baptized.” He is possibly the first to speak of the Holy Name of Mary: “Blessed are you also, Mary, whose name is great and exalted because of your Child.” For Ephrem, Mary is a defender of the Church’s faith in Christ:

“His death on the Cross attests to his birth from the woman. For anyone who dies must have been born as well. . . Therefore, the human conception of Jesus is demonstrated by his death on the Cross. If anyone denies his birth, the Cross proves him wrong.”

Additionally, Mary is a symbol of the Church: “Three angels were seen at the tomb, these three announced that he was risen on the third day. Mary, who saw him, is the symbol of the Church which will be the first to recognize the signs of his Second Coming.”

As regards the Nativity of Mary, some have held that St. Ephrem is the first Christian writer to explicitly refer to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. He wrote:

*In Mary, as in an eye,  
the Light has made a dwelling and purified her spirit,  
refined her thoughts, sanctified her mind, and  
transfigured her virginity.*

St. Ephrem affirms the enduring belief of the Church, that Mary is the greatest of our human race and the

perfect example of one who gave their whole life in service to God’s will.

### **St. Romanos the Melodist**

St. Romanos the Melodist (d. 560) was born in Emesa (modern Homs) Syria, of Jewish parents who seemingly converted to Christianity. As a young man he moved to Beirut, and was ordained a deacon, serving in the Church of the Resurrection. From there he moved to Constantinople, to live as an ascetic in the Marian shrine known as Blachernae. It was here, living a monastic life, serving as a deacon and cantor, that Romanos created the *kontakion*, the first formal construction of Byzantine chant.

St. Romanos although known for being one of the most important founders of Byzantine hymnology; represents the Syriac poetic, musical tradition of expressing theological and doctrinal truths in hymns. In expressing his theology of Mary in musical verse he brings the tradition of St. Ephrem two centuries forward. He sings of Mary’s Nativity as an address to Mary’s mother Anna:

Your birth is worthy of veneration, O holy woman, because you brought to light the joy of the world, the powerful mediatrix of graces for men. Indeed, she is the rampart, the defense, and the haven of whoever trusts in her. Every Christian finds in her, in your fruit, a protector, a defense, and the hope of salvation.

These words of St. Romanos are a summation of the devotion to Mary in the Church of the first half of its first millennium. The birth of Mary is the beginning of the Christ-event, which is our salvation and deification. Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is the Theotókos who never ceases to intercede for us before the throne of God. ■

*Rev. David A. Fisher is a priest of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon and Adjunct Professor of Eastern Christian Thought at St. Charles Seminary.*





## PASSING OF FATHER YOUSSEF ELKHOURY

Bishop Gregory Mansour received the sad news of the passing of Reverend Youssef Elkhoury at the age of 86 on 5 July 2020. Father Youssef was a retired priest who was living with his family in Buffalo, New York.

Father Youssef grew up in Mazraat Eltoufah and later moved to Saint Jacob's Seminary in Karm Saddeh to study for the priesthood, and later at the Patriarchal Maronite Seminary in Ghazir, Lebanon. During his seminary studies, Father Youssef married Kattour Shehadi on 18 August 1957. Father Youssef was ordained a priest on 15 January 1962.

Father Youssef founded the Parochial School of Mazraat Eltoufah. He then served as the Pastor of Saint Doumit in his home village until he immigrated with his family to Buffalo, New York, in May of 1983 where he assisted at Saint John Maron Church.

In addition to his wife Kattour, Father Youssef leaves behind their seven children: Henri, Sheeman, Rodrick, Fouad, Adla, Alissar, and Nila, with 20 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Father Youssef has three siblings remaining: Shahida, Khalil, and Hanna, who live in Sydney, Australia, with their families. His other three siblings have passed before him: Nayef, Georgette, and Daoud.

Letters of condolence can be sent to his wife Kattour at 198 N. Seine Drive, Cheektowaga, NY 14227.

## PASSING OF MRS. RENÉE ABISAAD

In June, we received the sad news of the passing of Mrs. Renée Abisaad, the mother of the Reverend Joseph Abisaad. Her funeral took place in Bsoos, Lebanon, on 13 June 2020. Because of the closure of the Beirut Airport, Father Joseph was not able to attend.

Mrs. Abisaad was preceded in death by her husband, Antoine, and son, Jacques. She is survived by her son, Father Joseph, and her daughters Josette, and Lisette.

Condolences may be sent to Reverend Joseph Abisaad at: Saint Sharbel Church, 3679 Providence Road. Newtown Square, PA 19073-3006.



**National Apostolate of Maronites**  
Official Lay Apostolate of  
Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn  
Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon

## NAM NEWS

The NAM board would like to announce that NAM will be moving forward without an executive director for the near future. We would like to thank Sandy Nassif for all of her hard work and dedication this past year and wish her all the best in her future endeavors!

Please note that our mailing address has moved to **2110 Redwood Pl, Canfield, OH 44406**. You can also continue to reach us via email at [Info@Namnews.org](mailto:Info@Namnews.org) or call us at 914-964-3070.



# The Old Testament and Our Maronite Church (Part I)

by Father Anthony J. Salim

This three-part series is about the Old Testament, which in fact makes up a good two-thirds of the Sacred Collection of books we Christians call “The Bible.” It has a triple focus: 1) A concise summary of the Old Testament (Part I); 2) an exploration of how the Writers of the New Testament used the Old Testament to compose the New Testament (Part II); and 3) an attempt to show how our Antiochene-Syriac-Maronite Church uses the Old Testament (Part III).

For me as a Catholic Christian, the words and deeds made known to us in what we Christians recognize as “New Testament” or “New Covenant” have formed my knowledge and love of Jesus the Savior of the world and still do. For example, I could not imagine living a full Christian life without the powerful words of the Gospel-writer St. Luke, in his story of the Prodigal Son and his father’s great mercy (Lk 15:11-32) as proclaimed annually in the middle of our Maronite Lenten Fast. Or, who can even dare to contradict the Evangelist John when he tells us in the profoundly simplest way possible that “God is love” (1 Jn 4:16B)? I find these fundamental truths in the New Testament. I can also find them in our liturgical texts, specifically in our Lectionary.

We know that the Holy Spirit was truly inspiring the writers of the Gospels (the Four Evangelists), the Writings of St. Paul, and the other New Testament writers. Nevertheless, we cannot fully understand how these writers composed these Writings unless we realize that they reflected on God’s truths as they were embodied in the Old Testament, then used their awesome writing skills to express them as New Testament Writings. This also means that we too must read the Old Testament Writings, discover them for ourselves, then see them reflected in the New Testament.

I suspect that this idea may sound strange to many Catholics. Yet, in our seminary classes, we study the Old Testament. It is increasingly seen by prospective teachers of religious education, namely “catechists,” as they too study both the Old and New Testaments.

Happily, more and more ordinary Catholics are learning about both Testaments in Bible study. You are reminded here that to help your own Bible study, Catholic Bibles have helpful introductions at the front of your Bible, as well as introductions and summaries of each Writing, and helpful notes on nearly every page of each Book. Taking the time to read these diligently will greatly enhance your understanding.

So just what is the Old Testament? First, we recognize that the Old Testament is the Bible of the Jews, who were first called by God to believe in Him. For them, the Bible chronicles their calling and eventual settling in the Israel of today, with a hope for the coming Messiah. Religious Jews still consider the words of the many Writings of the Old Testament as God’s revealed word, and the source of its Covenant with God, embodied in the Torah, or Law of Moses.

The Lord Jesus was a Jew, as was his mother Mary, St. Joseph, the Apostles and the first Disciples of Jesus. Although we may not realize it, for Jesus, and for his Mother Mary, St. Joseph, and the Apostles, the Old Testament was their Bible. We also know that until St. Paul wrote his earliest Epistle to the Christians in the community at Thessaloniki (the Thessalonians) 20 or so years after the Resurrection of Christ, there was no written New Testament as we know it today. Thus, for this and for many other reasons, we ought to revere the Old Testament.

Devout Jews have an easy and traditional way to remember the categories of the Old Testament: TaNaKh. The 3 capital letters in this English abbreviation stand for:

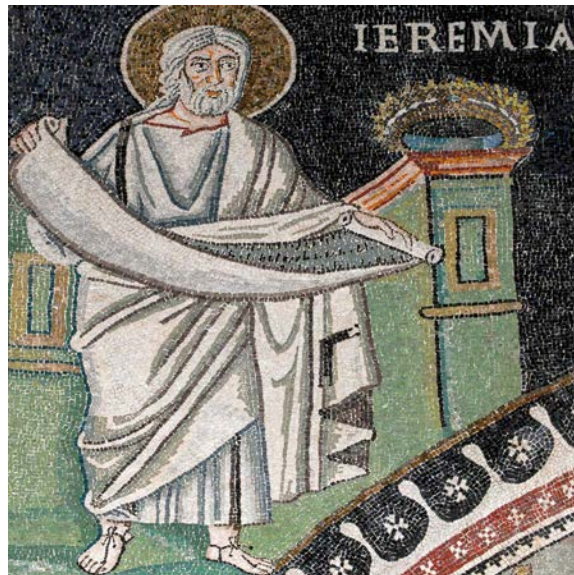
- T—*Torah*, or the Law of Moses, also spoken of as the Mosaic Law. Torah are the first five books listed in the Bible. They are attributed to Moses. There is another Greek term for Torah, and that is “Pentateuch.” This term contains the Greek word for “five,” hence the first five Books of the Bible.
- N—*Nevi'im*, or the Prophets. Although all these books of prophecies are important, they are usually listed into two groups: Major and Minor Prophets
- Kh—*Kethuvim*, or Writings other than *Torah* or the Prophets. These are various kinds of Writings, grouped in such categories as the Historical Books or the Wisdom Literature, etc. Of particular importance in this second group is the Book of Psalms. The Psalms are the liturgical songs of Israel, sung in their worship. The Christian Churches use them reverently as well in Christian worship, most especially in the daily Divine Office of all Traditions. Maronites chant the Psalms in Evening Prayer (*Ramsho*) and Morning Prayer (*Safro*), as well as in the celebration of the seven Sacramental Mysteries.

It is important to note a distinction made between the terms “Old Testament” and “Hebrew Scriptures.” As the whole Bible finally came to be as we know it today, a basic listing of what made up the Old Testament was ultimately accepted. It is known today as the “Hebrew Bible” or “Hebrew Scriptures.” As time went on, other Writings of Jewish texts, basically in Greek, were considered by Christians as a fuller listing comprising what is considered today as the complete Old Testament. These other Writings are known by two terms, “Deutero-canonical” (meaning texts that go beyond the original Hebrew listing), or “Apocrypha.” Protestants accept the Hebrew Bible as inspired by God but not so the Apocrypha. Yet, they are not forbidden to read the Apocrypha for their rich spiritual benefit.

Thirty-nine books make up the Hebrew Scriptures. If one adds the seven Deuterocanonical Works/ Apocrypha, the total number of Old Testament books is 46 texts that make up the complete Catholic Bible.

When you are choosing to buy a new Bible, be sure that the version (in other words, which translation) you choose is readable for you. Please note that currently, the translation that Catholic Churches in the United States, including our Maronite Church, use is that of the New American Bible Revised Version (NABRE). (We will see more about another important Syriac Version of the Bible, the Peshitta Version, in Part III.) If the translation you choose is not by a Catholic publisher, make sure that it includes the Apocrypha, because then you can be assured that you will have all the Writings that our Catholic Church accepts. As is customary in Catholic Bibles, the Deuterocanonical Works are already integrated into the Table of Contents.

As we Christians share the Bible of the Jewish people — the Hebrew Scriptures — we should always remember that as a people first called by the One God as the First Israel, they are our spiritual sisters and brothers with whom we share the New Israel God’s words and truths. ■



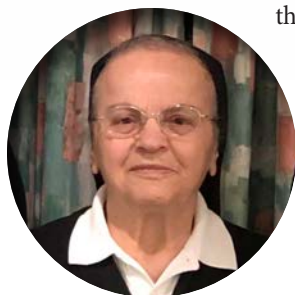


## Families turn to nuns to help elderly in North Jackson, Ohio

by Brandon Shulleeta

Sister Marie Madeleine Iskandar was happy to be a middle school principal in Lebanon and wanted to stay put.

So, when religious leaders told her that a ministry for elderly people in Ohio needed her help, she was initially reluctant but decided to make the sacrifice — one that ultimately would help scores of vulnerable people, specifically the elderly, including many with severe memory loss.



More than 30 years since being assigned to launch the adult day care program, Sister Madeleine is the president and executive of Antonine Sisters Adult Care in North Jackson, Ohio, where dozens of elderly people, many of whom are afflicted by Alzheimer's, are in the trusted care of a few nuns.

"I thank God," the nun said of the work being done by the Antonine Sisters. "God was always with me."

What started as a small number of elderly people attending adult day care provided by a few nuns in 1991 grew into something much bigger. About 35 to 40 elderly people now attend day care Mondays through Fridays, from morning through the afternoon. It gives the caregivers of the elderly people — usually their kids — a chance to go to work and leave their loved ones in good hands.

In addition to the day care program, more than 60 elderly people live at the Antonine Village as assisted-living residents under the care of the nuns. While there are somewhat similar programs elsewhere, the nuns make all of the difference.

"You hear it all of the time: 'I want to take Mom where the sisters are,'" Iskandar said. "We are trying to give them what they really need, and the families are in peace of mind when they are working. They know where their mom or dad is."

The nuns — there are currently four — who run the programs at Antonine Village are more than just holy, caring people. They're also highly-educated and trained medical professionals, including certified professionals in the fields of nursing and physical therapy. All of the nuns at Antonine Village are Maronite Catholics, Sister Madeleine said.

"They're really great," Sister said of her nun colleagues. "They really give their life — you won't believe it — 24 hours, seven days a week."

If an assisted living resident needs something in the middle of the night, for example, a nun is there to help. Those cared for by the nuns receive liturgical services, food, health services, entertainment, companionship and vital needs like memory care, physical therapy and





speech therapy. There's even a beauty shop on site. While many in the nuns' care have memory issues, many are also well into their 90s or even older.

Among the nuns, Sister Madeleine is the oldest at 85. "I'm a nun 61 years," she who speaks English well said, though it's the Lebanese native's second language. She laughed: "I'm not a young chick anymore. I still work like 18."

"People are giving me grace to keep going. They give me energy to keep going," Iskandar said, adding that when someone in poor health needs help getting water, going to the restroom or even just standing up, she gives no thought to being 85 years old herself; she's just quick to help.

"Thank God I have good health. Thank God," she said. "I have no physical problems."

The full-time residents and day care clients do not have to be Catholic to receive the nuns' services. They pay for the services, though financial assistance is available as needed.

Sister Madeleine said there haven't been any cases of the coronavirus among the clients or nuns as of an interview on July 16. She said they've taken extra precautions, to keep everyone safe. While the assisted-living residents were not allowed to receive guests inside the facilities after the coronavirus breakout, loved ones were able to

come to their windows and wave — which was a loving way for kids to see their elderly parents and know that they're OK. Limited outdoor visitations have since been allowed by appointment and with mask requirements.

Sister is joyful about what God has done through her and the other nuns — what she referred to as "divine providence" — to help so many people. It's a great outcome for a nun who was very reluctant to leave Lebanon 30 years ago — largely because she liked her job as a school principal. It was a life in which she was "very happy," she said.

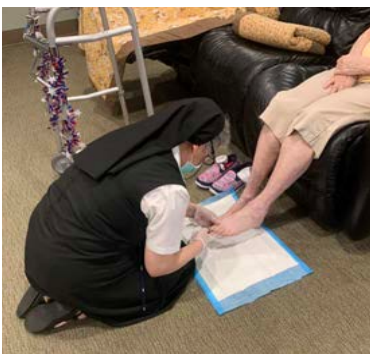
"I have no idea whatsoever what this day care is about, because we don't have this system in Lebanon. You know, I prayed too many times — to tell them: 'No, I don't want to go. I don't like to go,'" she recalled saying at the time.

After more consideration, Sister Madeleine remembers telling the Catholic leaders how she felt about her new assignment to start a day care: "I told them if this ministry is going to be closed because of me, then I will go, because I don't want to come," she said. That set the stage for her ultimate arrival in the U.S. as Catholic leaders determined her help was indeed needed.

Sister is thankful to God for directing her to Antonine Village, and she called upon people to pray for Church vocations and those who are considering entering ministries.

"We need vocations," Iskandar said. "To continue the ministry, we need vocations all over, not only day care or assisted living but in every ministry of life." ■

*Brandon Shulleeta is a freelance journalist from Glen Allen, Va.*





## The Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon: A Reminder in America of Lebanese Devotion to Our Lady *by Anna Salloum*

If you were asked to describe the definition of a miracle, how would you put that into words? Miracles occur every day, whether they come in the form of healing, reunification of a war-torn land, or closure to a difficult legal or financial matter. The National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in North Jackson, Ohio, indeed experienced something out of the ordinary that could be considered a miracle. An event that takes at least a year's time, if it happens at all, happened in less than a month.

Bishop Shaheen made a petition during his time, to elevate the status of the Shrine, but it was on a June trip to Rome that a very excited

Bishop Zaidan was able to personally hand deliver the petition. In July, 2014, Pope Francis declared the Shrine a Basilica. It is one out of just 85 in the United States and blessed to be the only Maronite Basilica outside of Lebanon. A basilica must “stand out as a center of active and pastoral liturgy,” according to the 1989 Vatican document *Domus Ecclesiae*. Indeed, this special place has stood out and shown that. How did the Shrine come to plant its roots in Ohio, a state also known as “the heart of it all?”

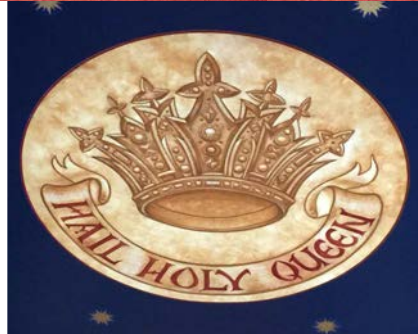
We need to go a little bit back in time. The first wave of Maronite immigrants to settle in Ohio did so in the late 1800s. By the 1960s there

was a strong Maronite presence. Monsignor Peter Eid, who had already been a fixture in the community since the 1930s, wanted something special for his fellow Maronites.

Msgr. Peter came upon a sign that read “PROPERTY FOR SALE 80 ACRES.” There was pushback from the owner of the land, because she felt that it was better suited for something else. Furthermore, she was adamant about not selling land to a Catholic person. Msgr. Eid called upon his local prayer warriors, including his brother, Father Maroun Eid, and confreres Maroun and Elias Abi Nader. A novena started, and before the nine







days were over, Msgr. Peter received a phone call from the landowner. The land was purchased and 1961 marked the start of this great undertaking.

Three communities, in particular, situated in Ohio (Youngstown and Akron) and New Castle, Pennsylvania, cooperated in this special project. The parishes in these areas were still under the jurisdiction of Latin bishops, since Bishop Zayek had not yet come to the States. Interestingly enough, there was also encouragement from the Latin and Byzantine community, for they enjoyed the Maronite liturgy, spirituality traditions and had been strong supporters from the beginning. Ground was broken in 1964, to construct a replica of the Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in Harissa, Lebanon. Even the stone details were made to match the original. In 1965, on the Feast of the

Assumption, the Shrine was dedicated with a small afternoon celebration. Now, 55 years later, the Marian feast spans three days.

The three days start with kickoff celebrations and liturgies that include both Latin and Byzantine rites, concluding with a Maronite Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Assumption. The pilgrimage includes prayer, singing, praise, learning, fellowship and, of course, food prepared by the local Maronite parishes. The August celebration is considered a highpoint of the year at the Shrine, but visitors can count on other special moments throughout the year such as the annual novenas to Saint Theresa, Saint Joseph, the feast of the Divine Mercy and Holy Week.

Since the early 2000s, the Basilica has been fortunate to have Chorbishop Anthony Spinosa at the

helm, a shepherd who from a young age always had a desire to become a priest. Originally from Cambridge, Massachusetts, he was raised in the Latin rite and he didn't know any Maronites. But, in the 1970s, he met a few of them and was very drawn to the liturgy and heritage, thus entering into the Maronite seminary.

The Basilica and its grounds are open for groups and pilgrimages that would like to host days of reflection, retreats, and conferences. While it has expanded as much as it needs to for now, it is up to us Maronites to continue spreading the word and educating our fellow friends and neighbors on the beauty of our liturgy and tradition. ■

*Anna Salloum is a parishioner of Our Lady of Lebanon in Miami, Florida.*



# MYA to Hold Virtual Retreat

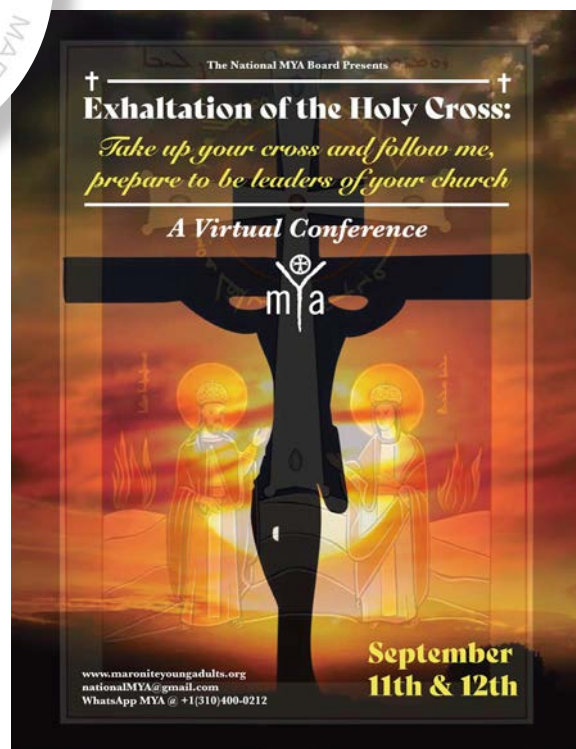
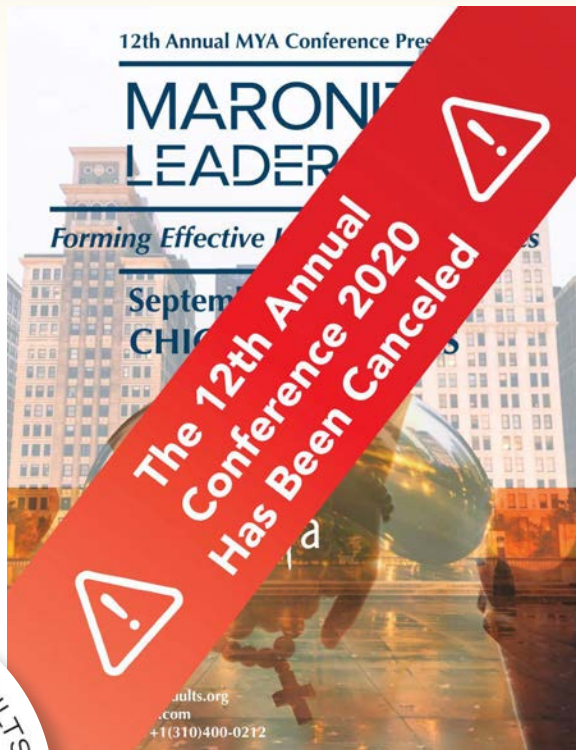
by Maya Khoury, National MYA Board Member



On behalf of the National MYA Board, we sincerely regret to inform you that this year's 12th National MYA Conference scheduled for Labor Day weekend has been cancelled due to COVID-19. This was a difficult decision, but we take the safety and health of our members very seriously. We hope to meet next year on Labor Day weekend in Chicago. Thank you for all your support during these unforeseen times!

In the past several months, the National MYA has been very active with various virtual events to bring our members across the country together through Zoom. The National MYA Board prayed a rosary live on Instagram to honor Mary at the end of May. Many live viewers prayed along with the board. In June, we held an event with Bishop Gregory Mansour regarding the topic of Science vs. Religion. It was an enlightening discussion where attendees were able to ask questions following his discussion. In July, we had a similar meeting with Bishop Elias Zaidan. His topic was on Relativism. We will be continuing each month with a series of Zoom meetings with both Bishops.

We will be hosting a virtual National MYA Retreat on 11-12 September. More details will be coming soon. Please check our Instagram and Facebook for frequent updates. We hope you are all staying safe and well during this pandemic, and you're all in our thoughts and prayers. God bless you all! ■



# Ordinations

## Priestly Ordination | St. Sharbel Church Portland, Oregon

by Fr. Peter Zogbi

It was 27 June 2020, the day of my ordination to the priesthood. I came early to the church where I was to be ordained: St. Sharbel's in Portland, Oregon. As I approached the stairwell carrying my ordination vestments, I could see what appeared to be the wire cover for a fan lying on one of the steps. My heart sank to my stomach. I turned around the corner of the church to see a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which I had revered with a kiss every Sunday since I was a child, had been smashed to pieces by a man suffering from a psychological problem.

There are 365 days in a year, and I have been alive for 25 years, so I don't consider it a coincidence that this event happened, of all nights, on the night before my ordination to the priesthood of Jesus Christ. The Lord wanted to remind me of the times I live in — a time of fear and sickness, a time of anger and hurt, a time where the world is in dire need of God. In this very time, there is nothing I would rather do than stand before the altar, and raise Jesus Christ toward the heavens,

offering Him to the Father. In that moment, I remind God of what He already knows: He *must* love us. He must love this broken world because His own Son is a part of it. He must save us because He promised to be our savior, and He sealed this pledge with His only-begotten Son. Jesus is the one gift we can offer the Father that He can never refuse. When I stand before the altar, I bring all of the hurt and sadness I see in the world today and I ask God confidently to make it better, knowing He would not dare refuse this gift which I offer through His own mercy. I consider there to be nothing greater that I could do to make the world a better place.

My opportunity to do this was made possible by a host of people who deserve thanks. I wish to thank my bishop, A. Elias Zaidan, who has supported me from the start of my journey and who made me a priest by the laying on of hands. In addition, I wish to thank the members of my family who have been a constant source of love and support for me. I thank all the clergy who have impacted me in any way, inspiring me along my path to the priesthood. I thank all my friends who have been there for me. Certainly, many more people deserve to be mentioned by name, but space will not allow. Nevertheless, I conclude by thanking God for His endless mercy toward me. ■





## Ordinations Continued

### Diaconal Ordination | Saint Maron Church Minneapolis, MN

by Joan Moses

In this time of pandemic, many lives have changed in America. Many lives seem to be on hold except those of our first responders and medical miracle teams. First responders for God are called to action in constant ways to creatively serve their sheep. One among them called to rise to the next level of service is Subdeacon Chady Jalkh, who took the name of Deacon Mikael. Our congratulations go to him on his ordination on Friday, 22 May, at St. Maron Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The Liturgy was celebrated by Bishop Elias Zaidan, Chorbishop Sharbel Maroun, Father Albert Constantine, and Father Emmanuel Nakhle, who adeptly offered the organ accompaniment to soloists Caroline Zogheib and Marian Hitti. Subdeacons James Farhat and George Younes assisted.

The setting was intimate without congregation present. The beautiful Liturgy was augmented by Bishop Elias Zaidan's homily, where he addressed the virtual congregation and then in a more specific way, the man to be ordained:

*In the Gospel of Matthew today, Christ is calling people to join Him. How quickly they responded — without question. Immediately they left their nets, their livelihood, their families. Christ did not look from where they came. Christ was looking through His grace for what they could do, each one of them. Here He succeeded. He was able to mold them by His grace to do His work and they became true fishermen. Fishermen do not keep just what they have, they keep fishing new ones, always recruiting new members keep bringing more to the Lord Himself. This is our ministry today as deacon, priest, bishop, as sons and daughters of God we need to keep bringing people in to the Lord our God. Regardless of our profession, we are called to be fishermen and fisherwomen. ... Christ had the charisma. He had a special calling. They answered. And paying homage you chose changing your name as the old tradition, you changed your name you were born with to signify your new life you are called to do. I heard Mikael was your baptismal name as well after Archangel Michael. I hope the archangels are praising God. The hoosoyo today talked about how all deacons would be praising the Lord wherever they are. This is now your new ministry — to praise God in word and in deed in the way we live our life.*

Then Bishop Elias addressed Chady in Arabic, before Chady directed his thanks to his mother Antoinette and his uncle Abbot Jalkh and the eight other priests who belong to the Jalkh family.



## Diaconal Ordination | St. Michael the Archangel Church | Fayetteville, NC

This year, for the Feast of St. Maron, St. Michael the Archangel Church in Fayetteville, North Carolina was proud to celebrate this great feast as well as the ordination of Subdeacon Charles VanHeusen to the diaconate. St. Michael's was blessed by Bishop Gregory Mansour's presence as well as several clergy, both Maronite and Latin, who were involved with Chuck's years of discernment and formation.

Thanks is offered for the encouragement and support of Fr. Sam Najjar (St Michael's Pastor), Fr. Jack Morrison (Eparchial Director of Ministries), Fr. Steve Shott (St Ann's Pastor and Deacon Chuck's Spiritual Director), Fr. James Garneau (past Director of Deacon Formation for the Diocese of Raleigh), Fr. Ian VanHeusen (ECU Neuman Center Director, Parochial Vicar St. Peter's of Greenville, NC, and Chuck's son) and Deacon Felix Saez (current Director of Deacon Formation for the Diocese of Raleigh). A special "thank you" to those who traveled a distance for this blessed celebration; Fr. Claude Franklin, Deacon Michael & Ghada Touma, Subdeacon Michael and Francine Maynes, and Subdeacon Norbert & Laila Vogel.

With over 220 clergy, parishioners, friends, and family anticipated in attendance, the Ordination was moved to the St. Ann's Church of Fayetteville, NC where Subdeacon Chuck assists the Catholic Filipino Community. St. Michael's choir was grateful to the Filipino choir who joined them for the ordination. A reception was held immediately following the ordination in St. Ann's Social Hall with the Ladies Guild of St. Michael's Parish acting as hostesses and servers. ■



## Maronite Jewelry As unique as it is Beautiful!

- A. Large Antiochene Cross
- B. Small Antiochene Cross
- C. Rubbula Cross
- D. Saint Sharbel in Circle Cross
- E. Saint Sharbel Medal
- F. Large Saint Sharbel Medal
- G. Solid Rope Chain
- H. Solid Heavy Rope Chain
- I. Camel
- J. Gents Cedar Ree Ring
- K. Cedar Tree Cuff Links
- L. Small Circle Cedar
- M. Large Cedar Tree
- N. Serpent Bracelet
- O. Bangle Bracelet
- P. Antiochene Cross Ring

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# EPARCHY OF OUR LADY OF LEBANON

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY

January - December 2019

	TOTAL
Revenue	
40000 Restricted Income	3,286.50
40100 Bequest	98,875.00
Zyne Family Foundation	175,000.00
<b>Total 40100 Bequest</b>	<b>273,875.00</b>
40500 Parish Assessments	494,000.00
40700 Eparchial Appeals	
40702 Lenten Appeal	225,348.50
40705 Christmas Appeal	40,649.00
<b>Total 40700 Eparchial Appeals</b>	<b>265,997.50</b>
41000 Second Collections' Balance	<b>8,113.00</b>
42000 Donation Income	
42100 Individuals	26,529.08
42200 Businesses	2,600.00
42300 Organizations	7,651.30
<b>Total 42000 Donation Income</b>	<b>36,780.38</b>
43000 Fundraising	<b>25,800.00</b>
43500 Capital Campaign disbursement to Eparchy	<b>351,476.06</b>
44000 Grants Income	
44100 Catholic Extension Grant	
44105 Missions	25,000.00
44110 Vocations	15,000.00
44115 Youth Office	25,000.00
44120 Stewardship Office	41,000.00
44125 Fiscal Management	12,519.24
44130 Stipends	19,745.00
44150 Seminarians	30,000.00
<b>Total 44100 Catholic Extension Grant</b>	<b>168,264.24</b>
44400 Koch Foundation	10,000.00
44500 Dan Murphy Foundation	
44510 Sts. Peter & Paul Mission	12,500.00
44515 Youth Camp LA	12,500.00
44520 Seminarians	25,000.00
<b>Total 44500 Dan Murphy Foundation</b>	<b>50,000.00</b>
44600 CHM Grant	130,650.00
Nassef Endowment Grant	50,000.00
<b>Total 44000 Grants Income</b>	<b>408,914.24</b>
45000 Maronite Voice	43,414.00
45500 Retreat Income	24,200.00
46000 Order of St. Sharbel	500.00
46050 Annual Membership Dues	80,255.00
46100 Perpetual Membership Dues	111,250.00
<b>Total 46000 Order of St. Sharbel</b>	<b>192,005.00</b>

	TOTAL
47500 Religious Articles	3,651.10
48000 Maronite Heritage Institute	1,820.00
49000 Miscellaneous Income	3,381.38
49500 Mission Clergy	<b>48,056.92</b>
51000 Eparchial Publications & Media	7,229.77
Restricted-Mission Tucson AZ	5,060.56
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$2,197,061.41</b>
GROSS PROFIT	<b>\$2,197,061.41</b>
Expenditures	
(R) Restricted Expenses	
61000 Grants	
61100 Catholic Extension	
61105 Missions	25,000.00
61110 Vocations	20,700.00
61120 Stewardship Office	1,000.00
61125 Fiscal Mangement	2,115.84
61130 Stipends	19,795.00
<b>Total 61100 Catholic Extension</b>	<b>68,610.84</b>
61300 Dan Murphy Foundation	
61310 Sts Peter & Paul Mission	12,500.00
61320 Youth Group LA	12,500.00
<b>Total 61300 Dan Murphy Foundation</b>	<b>25,000.00</b>
<b>Total 61000 Grants</b>	<b>93,610.84</b>
62000 Eparchial Appeal Disbursements	
62100 Missions	36,169.56
62200 National Shrine of Our Lady	22,534.85
62300 Eparchial Offices	<b>49,604.34</b>
62400 Brochure Package Printing	27,569.33
<b>Total 62000 Eparchial Appeal Disbursements</b>	<b>135,878.08</b>
63000 Charity Expense	
CHM Grant	
62103 Youth Services	5,650.00
<b>Total CHM Grant</b>	<b>5,650.00</b>
<b>Total (R) Restricted Expenses</b>	<b>279,077.92</b>
(U) Operating Expenses	
72000 Salaries	
72100 Bishop	39,600.00
72300 Chancellor	19,999.98
72500 Administrative Assistant	40,999.96
72550 Fiscal Officer	65,999.96
72575 Director of Communication	35,700.00
72600 Housekeeper/Janitor	16,801.50
72700 Bishop Assistant	14,400.00
72800 Archivist Scanner	23,396.15
<b>Total 72000 Salaries</b>	<b>256,897.55</b>
73000 Payroll Expenses	42,878.26
74000 Benefits	
74100 Health Insurance	82,016.09



	TOTAL
74200 Retirement	54,300.00
74300 Medical Expenses	11,483.21
<b>Total 74000 Benefits</b>	<b>147,799.30</b>
75000 Building	
75100 Utilities	28,980.94
75200 Telephone & Fax	5,234.60
75300 Maintenance & Repairs	28,274.06
<b>Total 75000 Building</b>	<b>62,489.60</b>
7600 Insurance	
76100 Liability/Multi-Peril	19,068.00
76200 Volunteer Accident	1,100.00
76400 workers compensation	1,799.00
<b>Total 7600 Insurance</b>	<b>21,967.00</b>
77000 Office Expense	<b>72,962.29</b>
79000 Professional Fees	
79100 Legal Fees	73,349.35
79200 Accounting	32,273.75
79400 Stewardship Office	72,000.00
79600 Archivist	6,756.15
79700 Membership Dues	16,247.00
79800 Other	3,175.00
<b>Total 79000 Professional Fees</b>	<b>203,801.25</b>
80000 Diocesan Office	
80100 Archivist	2,256.00
80200 Stewardship	6,023.04
80500 Immigration	24,935.25
80600 Ministry	<b>20,200.16</b>
80700 Office of Protection of Minors	7,179.34
80710 Background Checks	8,647.48
<b>Total 80700 Office of Protection of Minors</b>	<b>15,826.82</b>
<b>Total 80000 Diocesan Office</b>	<b>69,241.27</b>
81000 Automobile Expense	
81100 Insurance	8,977.74
81200 Registration/Title	265.61
81300 Maintenance	1,434.65
81400 Fuel	1,323.32
<b>Total 81000 Automobile Expense</b>	<b>12,001.32</b>
82000 Religious Supplies	3,800.18
83000 Table Expense	22,933.67
83100 Household Expense	6,287.74
84000 Maronite Voice	30,000.00
85000 Heritage Center & Institute	300.00
86000 Real Estate Taxes	215.37
86500 Travel/Conference (Bishop, priests, staff...)	<b>77,113.90</b>
86600 Honorariums/gifts	100,149.10
86700 Bank Service Charges	8,910.34
86800 Retreat Expense	
86810 Priests	17,527.25
86820 Deacon/Subdeacon	4,532.80

	TOTAL
86830 Bishop's Retreat	1,000.00
<b>Total 86800 Retreat Expense</b>	<b>23,060.05</b>
88000 Seminarian Expenses	
88100 Assistance	64,200.00
88200 Supplies	860.00
88300 Health Ins & Medical Expense	17,152.44
88400 Room & Board and Books	110,677.20
88500 Tuition & Fees	193,960.93
88600 Travel Expense	14,296.19
88700 Miscellaneous	11,995.39
88800 OSS Diamond Pins	15,597.00
Priests Education	36,902.50
<b>Total 88000 Seminarian Expenses</b>	<b>465,641.65</b>
89000 Papal Honors & Dues	350.00
90100 Miscellaneous Expense	22,409.83
<b>Total (U) Operating Expenses</b>	<b>1,651,209.67</b>
63100 Maronite Patriarcat obligations	
63110 Bishops Retirement Fund-Lebanon	15,900.00
63120 Aid to institutions	6,000.00
63130 Patriarch Liturgical commissio	1,500.00
<b>Total 63100 Maronite Patriarcat obligations</b>	<b>23,400.00</b>
89500 Capital Camp EXP	0.00
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$1,953,687.59</b>
NET OPERATING REVENUE	<b>\$243,373.82</b>
Other Revenue	
98000 Investment Gains/Losses	57,241.73
98100 Interest Income	4,696.54
98150 Dividend Income	49,638.15
98160 Capital Gains	6,514.63
<b>Total Other Revenue</b>	<b>\$118,091.05</b>
Other Expenditures	
99000 Investment Fees	23,452.19
<b>Total Other Expenditures</b>	<b>\$23,452.19</b>
NET OTHER REVENUE	<b>\$94,638.86</b>
NET REVENUE	<b>\$338,012.68</b>

N.B. - Item 43500: The Maronite Catholic Foundation is an endowment fund to support different ministries as highlighted by the Eparchy's Capital Campaign  
This item represents the prior expenses paid for the launching of the Campaign.

- Items 74000/100/200/300: The Eparchy covers the health insurance and retirement benefits for the diocesan priests who are not affiliated with any parish.



# Maronite Catholic Foundation

## PROFIT AND LOSS January - December 2019

	TOTAL
Income	
42000 Donations	
42100 Individuals	396,549.53
42200 Businesses	60,500.00
42300 Organizations	279,000.00
<b>Total 42000 Donations</b>	<b>736,049.53</b>
43510 Capital Campaign - Individuals	1,201,588.46
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,937,637.99</b>
GROSS PROFIT	<b>\$1,937,637.99</b>
Expenses	
65000 Bank Charges	1,626.14
66000 Campaign Fees	455,969.46
66500 Disbursement to Eparchy	351,476.06
69000 Professional Fees	
69100 Legal Fees	50.00
<b>Total 69000 Professional Fees</b>	<b>50.00</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$809,121.66</b>
NET OPERATING INCOME	<b>\$1,128,516.33</b>
Other Income	
98000 Other Revenue	
98150 Dividend Income	25,490.40
98200 Investment Gains/Losses	24,063.98
<b>Total 98000 Other Revenue</b>	<b>49,554.38</b>
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>\$49,554.38</b>
Other Expenses	
99000 Other Expenditures	
99100 Investment Fees	10,530.72
<b>Total 99000 Other Expenditures</b>	<b>10,530.72</b>
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>\$10,530.72</b>
NET OTHER INCOME	<b>\$39,023.66</b>
NET INCOME	<b>\$1,167,539.99</b>

# Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon Retirement & Health

## PROFIT AND LOSS

January - December 2019

	TOTAL
Income	
Bank Interest	26.30
Premiums	
Health Insurance Premium	583,307.59
<b>Total Premiums</b>	<b>583,307.59</b>
Realized Gain (Loss)	24,450.71
Retirement Contribution	274,237.00
Wachovia Income	
Dividend Income	24,106.04
<b>Total Wachovia Income</b>	<b>24,106.04</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$906,127.64</b>
GROSS PROFIT	<b>\$906,127.64</b>
Expenses	
Contribution to Retirement Acc	274,176.00
Health Insurance Cost	474,561.58
Investment Fees	11,340.83
Retirement Monthly Payout	114,000.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$874,078.41</b>
NET OPERATING INCOME	<b>\$32,049.23</b>
NET INCOME	<b>\$32,049.23</b>

The profit on the balance sheet is due to the Eparchy's contribution to some of the priests' benefits.



# Our Eastern Code Of Canon Law Turns 30

by Father Jobe Abbass, OFM Conv.

In early 1981, the vicar general (protosyncellus) of the Maronite eparchy of Brooklyn came by our Franciscan novitiate on Staten Island with a prospective candidate. My grandparents had emigrated to America in the early 1900s and, like my grandparents and parents, proud to be Lebanese and Maronite, I was happy to meet Fr. John Faris.

It was only a short while later that Fr. Faris invited me and the novitiate community to a Mass (Divine Liturgy) celebrated by Archbishop Francis M. Zayek at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Lebanon in Brooklyn. This was the first Maronite Mass I ever attended since the Maronite Church where I grew up had effectively closed by 1952. That was also the beginning of a lifelong friendship between Archbishop Faris and me as I, following profession and ordination and with all the necessary permissions, followed in his footsteps to complete a license and doctorate in canon law at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome (1987-1991). Beginning in 1992, I taught Eastern canon law for the next 27 years until I retired from full-time teaching in 2018. In 1981, I would never have imagined that, as we are about to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the promulgation of the Eastern Code on October 18, 2020 (also the centenary of Archbishop Zayek's birth), I would be writing an article for *The Maronite Voice*.

Consistent with the desire of all the twentieth century popes, Pope John Paul II promulgated the 1990 *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches* as a separate and distinct Code for the 23 Eastern Catholic Churches *sui iuris*. Of equal title and dignity with the Latin Code, the Eastern Code represents the first, complete Eastern legislation common to the Churches in communion with the Roman Apostolic See. In presenting the Eastern Code to the twenty-eighth General

Congregation of the Synod of Bishops (25 October 1990), the pope declared that the Eastern and Latin Codes, together with Pastor bonus governing the Roman Curia, are integral parts of "one body of canon law" in the universal Catholic Church.

The Eastern Code recognizes four levels of relative autonomy in the Churches *sui iuris* (from most to least): patriarchal, major archiepiscopal, metropolitan and other. There are six patriarchal Churches, of which the Maronite Church is the largest, four major archiepiscopal Churches, five metropolitan Churches and eight other Churches *sui iuris*. The expression "Church *sui iuris*" (that is "a self-governing Church" replaces "rite" which, in the past often referred to the community. Instead, a "rite" is now defined in canon 28 as the multifaceted expression of a manner of living the faith which finds expression in liturgy, spirituality, theology and canonical discipline.

While some commentators initially may have criticized the Eastern Code as a mere copy of the Latin Code, that is simply not true. Nowhere is that better illustrated than in the part of the Eastern Code dealing with the consecrated life. Just as monasticism in the Church began and flourished in the East, it is given a certain priority in the Eastern Code while, at the same time, allowing for other and varied forms of consecrated life. In fact, unlike the Latin Code which only recognizes two institutional forms of consecrated life (religious and secular institutes), the Eastern Code allows for six institutional (monasteries, orders, congregations, societies in the manner of religious, and institutes of ascetics) and three personal forms (ascetics, virgins and widows) of consecrated life. Regarding ecumenism, the quest for seeking the unity of Christians, although the Latin Church can fall back upon one 1983 canon (c.



755) and the norms of the 1993 *Ecumenical Directory*, the Eastern Code dedicates canons 902- 908 (Title XVIII) to this important subject and special concern for all the Christian faithful of the Eastern Catholic Churches.

One subject that has occupied me for most of my teaching years involves the relationship of the Eastern and Latin Codes within the Church's one body of canon law. While the opening canon of the Latin Code establishes no relationship between the Codes, canon 1 of the Eastern Code does. It states: "The canons of this Code concern all and solely the Eastern Catholic Churches unless, with regard to relations with the Latin Church, it is expressly established otherwise." Initially, the possibilities for such a relationship seemed wide-ranging especially in the context of ascription, the interritual celebration of the sacraments, and canonical interpretation to clarify parallel passages or fill lacunae in one or the other of the Codes. Added to this, in 2011, the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts issued an official Explanatory Note in which it declared that the expression "Church *sui iuris*," used 245 times in the Eastern Code, could, under certain circumstances, also intend the Latin Church by analogy. As a result of more recent studies, however, it would appear that the

relationship of the Codes may be more limited than originally thought. In any case, as we celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Eastern Code, I am confident that Eastern canonists and scholars may well spend another 30 years defining more precisely the interaction of the two Codes, integral parts of the Church's one body of canon law.

As I conclude this article, might I make just one request? Just as I more fully discovered the Maronite Church and my roots by way of the study of the Eastern Code over these 30 years, in the same way, beginning with each of the Eastern Catholic Churches, could we not more fully discover and embrace the Eastern Code by sending clerics, religious and other prepared Christian faithful to study, not at Latin canon law faculties but, rather, at Eastern canon law schools or faculties? The Eastern Code is a good Code, it has served us well over these 30 years and it is, after all, the law that applies to us. Now, we need more specialists who will study and make it better known over at least the next 30 years. On this occasion, committing to such an undertaking would make an apt anniversary gift that would truly redound to the greater benefit of all the Churches and their canonical discipline. ■





**EPARCHY OF SAINT MARON OF BROOKLYN  
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP**

109 Remsen Street  
Brooklyn, New York 11201-4212  
Tel: (718) 237-9913 Fax: (718) 243-0444  
[chancerystmaron@verizon.net](mailto:chancerystmaron@verizon.net) [www.stmaron.org](http://www.stmaron.org)

25 June 2020

Prot. No. 243/1/20  
Circ No. 20.20

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Enclosed please find a summary of the **2019 Audited Financial Report** for the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn. The full audited financial statements are available at the Chancery.

This past year we continued to invest in educating our five seminarians, we paid monthly pensions for our fifteen retired priests, assisted our youth and young adults, afforded continuing education for our sixty-five deacons and subdeacons, and we reached out to support our many brothers and sisters in Lebanon, Syria and the Middle East. Expenses were offset by efforts to augment income by means of donations, grants, and our Annual Benefit Dinner in New York. The Eparchy showed again this year a net positive after expenses in 2019, but we are still in need of help for repairs, tuition and expenses for our Seminary.

Our finances are audited by the independent accounting firm of Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP. Likewise, all of our parishes and missions have been directed to have an independent accountant approve their annual financial report, have their parish finance council review finances every quarter, and publish their annual report in the parish bulletin.

I thank the members of the Eparchial Finance Council for giving wise advice and helping implement good internal controls for all financial matters in the Chancery: Mr. Edward Massoud, our Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Raymond Espinal, our Compliance Officer, along with Mr. Albert Ashkouti, Chorbishop Seely Beggiani, Dr. Peter Gabriel, Mr. John Schlageter, Esq., Chorbishop Michael Thomas, Judge Dianne Yamin and Deacon Steven Marcus. Their help has been invaluable.

I also thank our Eparchial Stewardship Director, Mr. John Kurey, along with the members of the Order of Saint Sharbel, and all our Eparchial donors who are always so very generous with their financial help. I also thank every pastor and parishioner of the Eparchy for their compliance to Eparchial policies and their generous support and encouragement.

Because of our careful savings over the years, in April of 2020 we were able to use \$100,000.00 to reduce parish assessments and give parishes some needed relief from the financial impacts of Covid-19. Likewise, because of the great need in Lebanon and Syria, we did more this year than last to assist our fellow Christians.

I thank all who have assisted to enable the Maronite Church to fulfill the mission that our Lord gave to her, to be the "light of the world" and "salt of the earth." (Matthew 5:13)

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *Gregory*

+ Gregory J. Mansour

## Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

### Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

Year Ended December 31, 2019

(With Comparative Totals for 2018)

	2019			2018 Total
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	
<b>Revenues, Gains and Other Support</b>				
Diocesan assessments	\$ 505,900	\$ -	\$ 505,900	\$ 508,127
Contributions	412,211	-	412,211	300,490
Grants	64,842	341,943	406,785	351,344
Bequests	197,750	-	197,750	-
Diocesan appeal	182,501	-	182,501	180,870
Contributed use of facilities	120,000	-	120,000	120,000
Special events	184,225	-	184,225	189,370
Less direct cost of benefits to donors	(42,636)	-	(42,636)	(44,285)
Other	33,554	-	33,554	27,832
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,658,347</b>	<b>341,943</b>	<b>2,000,290</b>	<b>1,633,748</b>
Net assets released from restrictions	512,918	(512,918)	-	-
<b>Total revenues, gains and other support</b>	<b>2,171,265</b>	<b>(170,975)</b>	<b>2,000,290</b>	<b>1,633,748</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Eparchial program	1,447,866	-	1,447,866	1,121,417
Chancery	220,593	-	220,593	178,384
Stewardship office	123,000	-	123,000	120,750
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>1,791,459</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,791,459</b>	<b>1,420,551</b>
Changes in net assets before other items	379,806	(170,975)	208,831	213,197
<b>Other Items</b>				
Investment income (loss)	567,041	-	567,041	(249,357)
Interest income on noninterest-bearing loans	18,778	-	18,778	21,528
Contribution of interest on non-interest-bearing loans	(18,778)	-	(18,778)	(21,528)
Interest expense, Heart of Jesus	(37,401)	-	(37,401)	(39,789)
Depreciation and amortization, Heart of Jesus	(49,038)	-	(49,038)	(49,038)
Legal settlement	-	-	-	(100,000)
Changes in net assets	860,408	(170,975)	689,433	(224,987)
<b>Net Assets, Beginning</b>	<b>7,235,692</b>	<b>567,473</b>	<b>7,803,165</b>	<b>8,028,152</b>
<b>Net Assets, Ending</b>	<b>\$ 8,096,100</b>	<b>\$ 396,498</b>	<b>\$ 8,492,598</b>	<b>\$ 7,803,165</b>



## Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

Statements of Financial Position  
December 31, 2019 and 2018

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 527,574	\$ 611,462
Pledges receivable, current portion	240,458	225,474
Loans receivable, current portion	291,423	291,423
Other receivables	8,947	17,367
Investments	4,492,156	3,577,921
Assets whose use is limited	971,984	755,113
Prepaid expenses	11,456	4,716
Total current assets	6,543,998	5,483,476
<b>Pledges Receivable, Long-Term, Net</b>	93,035	189,629
<b>Loans Receivable, Long-Term</b>	50,000	100,000
<b>Land, Buildings and Equipment, Net</b>	3,726,703	3,864,216
Total assets	<u>\$ 10,413,736</u>	<u>\$ 9,637,321</u>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 8,998	\$ 112,794
Funds held for others, second collections and mideast assistance	38,131	3,643
Funds held for others, disability fund	971,984	755,113
Mortgage payable, current portion	62,840	60,380
Total current liabilities	1,081,953	931,930
<b>Mortgage Payable</b>	839,185	902,226
Total liabilities	1,921,138	1,834,156
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Net assets without donor restrictions	8,096,100	7,235,692
Net assets with donor restrictions	396,498	567,473
Total net assets	8,492,598	7,803,165
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 10,413,736</u>	<u>\$ 9,637,321</u>

## Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

Statement of Functional Expenses

Year Ended December 31, 2019

(With Comparative Totals for 2018)

	2019				2018 Total
	Program	Administrative	Fundraising	Total	
	Eparchial Program	Chancery	Stewardship Office		
Clergy salaries	\$ 67,200	\$ 16,800	\$ -	\$ 84,000	\$ 79,600
Lay salaries	48,528	12,132	-	60,660	58,848
Payroll taxes	17,625	4,406	-	22,031	16,102
Clergy benefits	10,367	2,592	-	12,959	6,457
Lay benefits	1,117	279	-	1,396	701
Vocations	410,508	-	-	410,508	119,188
Grants	274,650	-	-	274,650	221,310
Bishop appeal disbursements	137,672	-	-	137,672	144,270
Donations	56,729	-	-	56,729	47,100
Clergy support	15,548	-	-	15,548	5,811
Religious expenses	3,168	-	-	3,168	18,508
Rent	96,000	24,000	-	120,000	120,000
Professional expenses	30,822	84,840	-	115,662	100,294
Conferences	15,603	-	-	15,603	26,763
Stewardship expenses	-	-	123,000	123,000	120,750
Travel	36,518	-	-	36,518	40,757
Household	25,074	6,269	-	31,343	31,712
Office	37,931	9,483	-	47,414	45,671
Insurance	-	25,271	-	25,271	22,548
Maintenance and repairs	40,659	10,165	-	50,824	17,885
Utilities	10,877	2,719	-	13,596	14,868
Telephone	10,428	2,607	-	13,035	13,333
Publications	24,712	-	-	24,712	37,991
Depreciation and amortization	70,780	17,695	-	88,475	88,475
Other	5,350	1,335	-	6,685	21,609
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,447,866</b>	<b>\$ 220,593</b>	<b>\$ 123,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,791,459</b>	<b>\$ 1,420,551</b>



# Parish News

CLINTON TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

## Movie Night at St. Sharbel Church

On Saturday, 11 July 2020, the St. Sharbel Maronite Youth Organization (MYO) of St. Sharbel Church hosted their first ever outdoor movie night! The evening was filled with faith, fun, and some delicious food, including pizza, caramel, cheddar, movie theater popcorn, and chips! There was all kinds of fun — even in the way the MYO members sat. There were lawn chairs, inflatable chairs, and even mats with decorative throw pillows. These amazing accommodations led to an amazing turnout of youth, all excited to see their friends and a great movie. In addition, the movie was a beautiful story about how pain could truly be your greatest inspiration, instead of your worst enemy. Even through wearing masks and social distancing, everyone had a great time! A heartfelt thank you to Chorbishop Alfred Badawi, pastor of St. Sharbel Church, Deacon Mike Maggyar, and MYO advisors Amanda Abi-Samra, Anthony Fawaz, and Elias Yammine for all their hard work, faith, and passion. It was truly a night to remember. ■



LEWISVILLE, TEXAS

## Graduations | Our Lady of Lebanon Church

by Sara Kumar

On the Feast of St. Sharbel at the 11:00 AM Liturgy, our parish celebrated the joyous occasion of the graduation of our Class of 2020 High School seniors. The graduates were: Dany Ghreichi, Maria ElKhoury, Sean O'Flaherty, Andrew Wegendt and Kaline Elandary. This was a special year, because for the first time our parish was able to offer each of the five graduates a scholarship for their first year in college. These new graduates are entering college at a very difficult time, and they will have to make many adjustments and sacrifices. Our pastor, Fr. Assaad ElBasha, offered great encouragement by reminding the graduates that not only are their parents proud of them, but so is our entire parish community! These new graduates grew up in our parish and now they are ready to step into a new chapter of their lives. Our pastor reminded the graduates about the importance of staying in contact with their families and keeping their Catholic faith alive when they are on the college campus. The parents were so happy with the positive and encouraging message Fr. Assaad brought home to our Class of 2020 graduates. We are all praying for their future success! ■



LAWRENCE, MASSACHUSETTS  
**Passion Week At Home**

by Jenny El Helou

In the midst of the chaotic COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, numerous churches closed their doors and citizens were advised to stay-at-home. In order to observe the Liturgical Year without breaking quarantine, members of Saint Anthony Church in Lawrence, Massachusetts, participated in a creative project to celebrate Hosanna Sunday and Passion Week. Their mission was to support the congregation during this difficult time and help them to celebrate Passion Week at home. Several parishioners and clergy prepared 800 packages containing Holy Oils, Blessed Palms, and a letter from Father Elie Mikhael and Father Andrew El Tabchi. The Maronite Youth Organization assisted in contactless delivery of the packages door-to-door to each Saint Anthony family home. Hopefully, this kind and religious gesture brought a piece of the Maronite Church into the homes of the faithful. ■



*Blessed Palms, Holy Oils, Letter to Parishioners*

DARTMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS  
**Virtual Light of Life Bible Camp**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light offered a 3-day Bible Camp (29 June – 1 July) for children ages 5 to 12. The theme, “In the Footsteps of Saints Peter and Paul,” via Zoom (10 AM to 11:30 AM), focused on the courage of St. Paul and the trust and faith of St. Peter. The virtual camp provided a way to connect with the children, create fun crafts, share Bible stories, sing, dance, pray, and learn about the faith. This program was well received by the children and parents. The Maronite Servants of Christ hope to organize more activities in the future. If anyone is interested in a Zoom Vacation Bible Camp, contact the Maronite Servants at [sister@maroniteservants.org](mailto:sister@maroniteservants.org) for information about resources and how to coordinate a project in your own parish. ■



NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS  
**OLOP Education Foundation Scholarships**

by Matthew Thomas

On 28 July 2020, Fr. Vincent Farhat, Pastor of Our Lady of Purgatory Church in New Bedford, Massachusetts along with members of the OLOP Education Foundation awarded scholarships to four deserving students. The 2020 award recipients were the following:

- Natalya Chedid, daughter of Wassim and Elizabeth Chedid,** will study Aerospace Engineering at Emory Riddle Aeronautical University.
- Michael Mello, son of Michael and Joan Mello,** is a Liberal Arts Major at Bristol Community College.
- Gabrielle Chedid, daughter of Zakhia and Hiba Chedid,** is an Architecture Major at UMASS Amherst.
- Christopher Chedid, son Zakhia and Hiba Chedid,** is a Mechanical Engineering Major at UMASS Dartmouth.

Since 1993, Our Lady of Purgatory Education Foundation has granted more than 40 scholarships to high school seniors and college students amounting to over \$24,500. The monetary awards are meant to help with any educational needs as the students continue to further their studies. Parishioners appreciate the involvement of all participants; however, it is important to note that the OLOP scholarships are based upon the individual recipient’s involvement in the parish — and not of his/her entire family. ■



# Parish News

WATERVILLE, MAINE

## Helping God's Less Fortunate

by Larry Grard

St. Joseph Church in Waterville, Maine, held a \$10,000 grand raffle at their Christmas Bazaar. Parishioner, Jeanne Thomas, was the lucky winner. Working as a hospital sterilization technician, Jeanne heard about a medical ship that travels to Africa to care for the poor. She learned that Mercy Ships are hospital ships where medical personnel transform the lives of the less fortunate in Africa. Jeanne was so inspired by these brave individuals that she used her money to finance a trip to Africa aboard Mercy Ships. Jeanne reflected upon the 2,000 year old example of Jesus – *bringing hope and healing to the forgotten poor*. On 31 January, she embarked upon this exciting one-month stay working as a volunteer aboard a Mercy Ship docked in Dakar, Senegal, off the West Coast of Africa. Jeanne was able to lend her medical expertise for many different serious medical problems. Maxo Fax or *maxio* facials were a huge problem. Many had tumors growing all over their bodies, and doctors had to rebuild people's faces. Countless individuals were burned almost beyond recognition. Jeanne was pleased that all work done was Christian-based and non-denominational. Jeanne commented, "My experience was very humbling. It was sad to witness the suffering, but also rewarding to help, because helping God's children is directly related to my Catholic faith. If you serve and help people, you know it is God-driven." This

entire experience proved to be Jeanne's mission of a lifetime. ■



UNIONTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

## St. George Church Syriac Language Study

by Dr. Mabel George Howard

The faithful and friends of St. George Church have embarked upon a new parishwide cultural mission. Fr. Aaron Sandbothe, organized a virtual 10-week Syriac language study



taught by Fr. Michael Shami. Fr. Michael, a newly ordained Maronite priest, is the Director of Liturgy for the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles. Over 30 participants either gathered in the Saint George Parish Hall or via Zoom video conference from home for weekly Syriac instruction.

Father Michael relayed the importance of being exposed to the Syriac language. This study class was created for individuals to become familiar with the Syriac alphabet and script, gain a basic knowledge of pronunciation and grammar, recognize a relationship with our sister churches and traditions, and feel an appreciation for this ancient language. ■

FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

## Farewell/Retirement Celebration for Father Sam Najjar

On Sunday June 14, 2020 St. Michael the Archangel Parish held a Farewell/Retirement Celebration for Father Sam Najjar immediately following Divine Liturgy. Fr. Sam served as pastor from June 2006 thru June 2020. His encouragement of young families and the parish youth contributed to the upbuilding of their parish family. Thank you, Fr. Sam Najjar for your many years of service!



On June 29, 2020, Fr. Adib Salameh arrived in Fayetteville ready to begin immediately as the new pastor. Despite a full day of driving on Monday the 29th, Abouna was awake and ready to celebrate daily Divine Liturgy the next morning Tuesday the 30th! His enthusiasm to serve as a good shepherd is already evident to the St. Michael's parishioners as he continues to lead and guide them. Welcome Abouna Adib! ■

# National MYO Virtual Retreat 2020

by National MYO Team



Over 250 participants consisting of youth, advisors, and clergy members came together for an exciting three-day virtual retreat (26-28 June) themed “Ignite Your Light: #ComeHolySpirit.” During the first day, Fr. Edward Hanna shared a helpful metaphor; just as WiFi connects us all as one while we quarantine at home, so also does the Holy Spirit keep us connected to Jesus. Sister Therese Maria, MSCL, reminded us that each person has the Holy Spirit dwelling within them and that we are all called as beloved children of God to be open, to pray, and to love God and others through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Virtual Eucharistic adoration along with worship was planned by an awesome team from St. Maron Church in Youngstown, Ohio. Inspiring testimonies were shared over the three days by seminarians, youth members and a married couple. Seminarian Christian Hbaiter shared that he was truly able to experience joy when he accepted that his life “is no longer defined by goals but defined by purpose.” Seminarian Chris Nahra in his testimony encouraged us to see that we are each on a unique journey with the Lord, leading to everlasting life.

We were blessed to have both of our bishops, Bishop A. Elias Zaidan of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon

of Los Angeles, and Bishop Gregory Mansour of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, join us for the final day of the retreat. They helped us understand how to better live out the fruits or signs of the Holy Spirit in our everyday lives. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (GALATIANS 5:22-23).

While we were disappointed we were not to come together in person, uniting virtually allowed us to feel connection and belonging. We even had our newly ordained Fr. Peter Zogbi give the youth a priestly blessing! It was a beautiful weekend full of love and zeal, as our lights were ignited with the love of the Holy Spirit. We are reminded that no matter what life throws at us, we will always have the Holy Spirit and our MYO family to lean on. We are always united in the mystical body of Christ. ■

#ComeHolySpirit

Follow us on Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, and TikTok! @maroniteyouth





## Eucharistic Adoration *Vivian M. Akel, LCSW*

**A**s Catholics, we believe in the real presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. We witness and participate in the Holy Sacrifice by which bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ each time we attend Divine Liturgy. When we receive the Holy Eucharist during the Divine Liturgy, we are inviting and accepting our Lord Jesus into our hearts thereby uniting with Him in a most intimate way.

Another way to unite with our Lord Jesus is to pray a holy hour with Him in Eucharistic Adoration. Jesus invites us to join Him in prayer many times, as evidenced in the Scriptures.

As young Catholic school children many of us spent the first Friday of each month in our parish church engaged in a holy hour of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. We may not have had a true appreciation of the real presence of Jesus in the monstrance at that time, or even known how to pray a holy hour of Adoration. As adults, the experience is so much more meaningful and unitive. Adoration is sometimes described as a continuation of our experience of Christ's presence in our heart following Divine Liturgy.

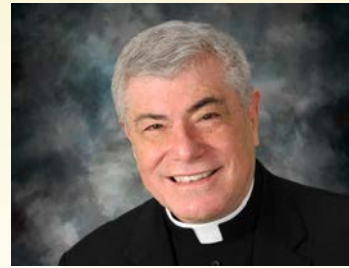
Eucharistic Adoration is a personal time to stand before God and focus on our relationship with Him with humility and spiritual openness. This dialogue with God requires silence and attentiveness. Silence allows us to hear God's voice as we place ourselves fully in His presence and allows us to engage in a one-to-one conversation with Him. Prayer during this time can also include an examination of conscience, meditation, petition and prayers of gratitude.

On a recent trip to Rome I visited a great number of Basilicas during our days of a walking pilgrimage through the city. I discovered exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Eucharistic Adoration each evening at the Basilica Di Santa Maria in Via Lata, walking distance from our hotel. I experienced a strong longing to unite with Jesus there and wished to end each day in His presence. I was pleased to see the number of people who also came to spend time in silent prayer and adoration.

Although Eucharistic Adoration usually refers to exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance, Catholics believe in the continuous real presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist which is safely housed in every tabernacle in every Catholic Church, evidenced by the lit sanctuary lamp. One could view it as an ongoing invitation to spend time with Our Lord Jesus in his home, at any time. All that is needed is the desire, silence and attentiveness to hear the voice of God welcome us to abide with Him. ■



## From the Editor



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I have a confession to make. I lie. If a doctor asks me how I feel, no matter what, I respond that I feel great. If my leg is broken in four places, I prefer to ignore it and walk it off. Because I am not open with doctors, they really cannot do much for me.

Sometimes I treat God the same way. I feel ashamed of what I have done, don't want to confess it. My shame keeps me away from God. A more positive approach would be to admit my guilt so that God can forgive me. While **shame** and **guilt** seem to be identical, they can have very different consequences.

In the Book of Genesis, Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit.

At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly **felt shame** at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the breeze of the day, and **they hid themselves from the presence of the LORD** God among the trees of the garden.  
(GENESIS 3:7,10)

**Out of shame, Adam and Eve could not face God and even hid from him.** Even when He is looking for us, do we allow our shame to keep us away?

Another example was the Samaritan woman, conversing with Jesus at the well. Jesus told her, "Go and get your husband." "I don't have a husband," the woman replied. Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband—for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now."

**The woman was ashamed of her situation** and tried to mislead Jesus. **Out of shame, we cannot face the truth.** To hide the truth, we try to deceive ourselves and others.

\*\*\*

**And then there is guilt. Guilt is not always a bad thing!**

Jesus told the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector standing on the steps of the Temple. The Pharisee proclaimed how good he was.

But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.' **I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God.**

The tax collector, reviled by society, admitted his own guilt and was forgiven.

Hanging on a cross next to that of Jesus, the good thief admitted his guilt.

"Don't you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom." Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise." (LK 23:41-43)

Shame may keep us away from God. A sincere admission of guilt can be the first step in healing. ■

Chorbishop John D. Faris



THE MARONITE VOICE  
ST. ANTHONY'S MARONITE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
4611 SADLER ROAD  
GLEN ALLEN, VIRGINIA 23060-6108

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We have seen the disaster that struck Lebanon on 4 August. This is a country already struggling with pandemic and crushed by economic collapse. As Christians, as Maronites with Lebanese blood in our veins, we cannot ignore the situation.

Please, do what you can to help. Bishop Gregory J. Mansour and Bishop A. Elias Zaidan can safely transfer your contributions to those in Lebanon who can effectively help.



**Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn**  
109 Remsen Street | Brooklyn, NY 11201 | [www.stmaron.org](http://www.stmaron.org)

**Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles**  
1021 S. 10th Street | St. Louis, MO 63104 | [www.eparchy.org](http://www.eparchy.org)