

the Maronite **Voice**



Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord

26 May 2022



the Maronite Voice

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“Behold I make all things new”

(REVELATION 21:5)



The Sunday after the feast of the Resurrection, which is the eighth day of celebration, is known in the Maronite Church as “New Sunday.” On that Sunday, we read from the Second Letter of St. Paul to Corinthians: “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” (COR. 5:17). During the week leading up to New Sunday, we have seen the various appearances of Christ after his Resurrection: to Mary Magdalen, to the Disciples at Lake Tiberias, on the road to Emmaus and others. The Gospel of this day focuses on Jesus’ appearance to Thomas in the Upper Room inviting him to “put his finger in his wounds and believe” (JOHN 20:26-31). St. John Paul II has made this day “Divine Mercy Sunday,” highlighting the love and compassion of Jesus and encouraging us to trust in the Lord and His mercy.

We now look at Christ differently. We see him as He truly is, the Divine Son of God. The Church is now on a new path, putting away the



old ways. The Scriptures encourage us to look at ourselves differently as well — we are now a “new creation.” Received in faith, the Holy Mysteries, especially Baptism and the Eucharist make us new creatures, not just better persons. Baptism incorporates us into the very Body of Christ; the Eucharist gives us the very Body and Blood of Christ. Both transform and re-create us if we are open to the grace we receive.

The lack of faith in the Resurrection of Christ that the Apostle Thomas exhibited was replaced with a firm confession of faith. “My Lord and My God!” is the exclamation of Thomas. That is among the earliest professions of faith.

We should live our lives as new creations. Jesus has taught us how to do that and the Church always presents that expectation to us. As Christians, baptized into the flock of Christ and fed on his Body and Blood, we should stand out in the crowd. The world should see in us that we no longer live in the “old” way of slavery to sin, but in a new way — the way of life in the Spirit.

Being a new creation in Christ means we must think and act more like Christ. We must “put on the mind of Christ” as St. Paul tells us in his letter to Philippians (2:5). Thinking as Christ thinks should lead us to act as Christ acts. For us, that will be a new way of life — a new way to see our neighbor, a new way of speaking, a new way of living in our families and in our communities. As St. Paul says, “everything has become new.”

In today’s world, we see a lot of new inventions. The world is constantly changing and becoming more secular. Moreover, we are always buying new clothes, new gadgets, new equipment ... However, we are not keeping up spiritually. We don’t set a proper time for God and His Church. We become so involved in matters of this world, thus slowly slipping away from the Lord. Let this season of the Resurrection be an opportunity to renew our faith in God and our commitment to serve Him in our brothers and sisters. ■

Bishop A. Elias Zaidan

Schedule BISHOP A. ELIAS ZAIDAN

- 21-22 MAY** Las Vegas, NV | St. Sharbel Church | Pastoral Visit
- 27 MAY** Glendale, CA | Visit and Mass of His Beatitude Raphaël Bedros XXI Minassian, Armenian Catholic Patriarch to the Armenian Catholic Eparchy of Our Lady of Nareg in the United States of America and Canada
- 29 MAY** Crestwood, MO | St. Raymond-St. Elizabeth Church | Pastoral Visit
- 30-31 MAY** Installation of Most Reverend Earl K. Fernandes, Bishop of the Diocese of Columbus, OH
- 3-23 JUNE** Lebanon | Annual Meeting of Maronite Synod of Bishops
- 24-25 JUNE** Latrobe, PA | St. Vincent College | MYO Conference
- 26 JUNE** Simi Valley, CA | Sts. Peter and Paul
- 28-29 JUNE** Washington, D.C. | International Religious Freedom Summit
- 11-17 JULY** Minneapolis, MN | Clergy Conference and NAM Convention
- 24 JULY** Los Angeles, CA | Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon-St. Peter Cathedral



Come and join fellow Maronite Young Adults (ages 18-35) on pilgrimage to encounter Christ and joyfully witness to the diverse beauty of our Catholic faith. Our group will unite with Pope Francis and hundreds of thousands of pilgrims coming from across the globe.

The pilgrimage will include:

Cost: \$2999 (airfare included)
\$1950 (airfare not included)

- × 8 Nights lodging in the Hotel Roma
- × Buffet breakfast
- × Transportation & Round trip air fares to and from Lisbon
- × WIFI
- × Transfers to and from airport*
- × A welcome and farewell dinner
- × A complete meal plan, and a visit to Fatima
- × Registration for WYD activities with Pope Francis, the Opening Mass, Stations of the Cross, Catechesis, Overnight Vigil and Closing Mass

If you are interested in joining our pilgrimage or have any questions, please contact:
 For the Eparchy of Saint Maron - Sr. Therese Maria Touma @ 508-965-6945 or srtherese2010@gmail.com
 For the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon - Fr. Tony Massad @ 810-691-7055 or abounatony@gmail.com

Please note: Limited space available. The final payment for the pilgrimage is due March 28, 2023. The price does not include travel insurance. Each person will be responsible for their own if they wish.

*Transfers to and from airport in Lisbon only included for \$2999 package

*These above prices are for the first 37 registrants who send their deposit by June 1st. Any number over 37 will have to pay an additional \$200.

Schedule BISHOP GREGORY J. MANSOUR

- 22 MAY** Tequesta, FL | Mary, Mother of the Light Church | Pastoral Visit
29 MAY Brooklyn, NY | Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral
1-21 JUNE Lebanon | Annual Meeting of Maronite Synod of Bishops
23-26 JUNE Latrobe, PA | St. Vincent College | MYO Conference
28-30 JUNE Washington, D.C. | International Religious Freedom Summit
2-3 JULY Brooklyn, NY | Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral
9-10 JULY Cranston, RI | St. George Church | 25th Ordination Anniversary of Fr. Tony Saab
11-18 JULY Minneapolis, MN | Clergy Conference | NAM Convention | *Teelumiere* Board Meetings
23-31 JULY Family Time
-



Peter and Paul—Apostles, Martyrs, Patrons of the Church

by Rev. David A. Fisher

Fraternal Exchanges

Each year on 29 June, the Church solemnly celebrates the memory of Saints Peter and Paul, who were martyred in Rome during the reign of the emperor Nero. On this feast day, since the Second Vatican Council and the warming of relations between the Catholic and the Orthodox Church, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople of the Orthodox Church sends a representative delegation to greet the Bishop of Rome. This fraternal gesture is returned on 30 November, the feast of Saint Andrew, when the Pope sends a delegation to Constantinople, the patron of the Church of Constantinople. St. Andrew was martyred by crucifixion in Achaea, in 60 AD.

The Calling of the Apostles

In those days he departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God. When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose Twelve, whom he also named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called a Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. LUKE 6:12-16

In the Creed, we profess that the Church is holy, catholic and apostolic. What does this apostolic foundation mean? “Apostle” comes from Greek and means *one who is sent*. These men who had experienced the resurrected Lord Jesus are foundational to the life of the Church and its call to

evangelize the world. In experiencing the victorious and risen Lord, their lives were changed. They shared their experience with others so that their lives might be transformed, and the world redeemed.

Sacred Scripture and Holy Tradition reveals to us the centrality of ministries of Saints Peter and Paul. Peter the “Prince of the apostles” and Paul the “apostle to the Gentiles,” labored to the point of martyrdom, to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to the Jewish and Gentile communities. While the apostolic preaching within the Jewish community met much resistance and little lasting success, their success in preaching to the Gentiles constructed the foundations for the future of the Church and the eventual conversion of the Greco-Roman world.

And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.

MATTHEW 16:18

Saint Peter

Peter is revealed in Sacred Scripture as the head of the apostles, or the Twelve, and later in the Acts of the Apostles, as leader of the Apostolic Church. His personality is often bold, brash, and authoritative. For example:

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” MATTHEW 14:29-30



Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) JOHN 18:10

Once when Jesus was praying in solitude, and the disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" They said in reply, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, 'One of the ancient prophets has arisen.'" Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter said in reply, "The Messiah of God." He rebuked them and directed them not to tell this to anyone. LUKE 9:18-21

It is especially his profession of faith that makes Peter the Prince of the apostles and the rock. Even then Peter did not understand what being the Messiah meant for Jesus. He was unwilling to accept that it meant that Jesus was to suffer and die. Only then would the Messiahship of Jesus fully appear.

Peter is given the honor of being the first to enter the empty tomb of Jesus, even though John reached the tomb before him, an action acknowledging his role

as leader of the apostles in witnessing to the truth of Christ:

So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. JOHN 20:3-7

In the Acts of the Apostles, Peter speaks with boldness and authority among his Jewish brothers and sisters. He speaks as the rock of the Church:

Therefore let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, "What are we to do, my brothers?" Peter [said] to them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit. ACTS 2:36-38

Peter was martyred in the Roman stadium on Vatican Hill, crucified upside down, to express his humility and unworthiness to be crucified like the Lord.

For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:9

Peter and Paul—Apostles, Martyrs, Patrons of the the Church

Continued from page 9

Saint Paul

Just as Peter had two names, “Simon” and “Peter,” Saul used both the Hebrew name Saul of Tarsus and Paul, which was the Greek form, a derivative of the Latin, *Paulus*. Saul of Tarsus was present at the stoning of Saint Stephen the deacon and first-martyr:

They threw him out of the city, and began to stone him. The witnesses laid down their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul. As they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he fell to his knees and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them”; and when he said this, he fell asleep. ACTS 7:58-60

Paul, it seems, was either a Pharisee or at least shared in their ultra-orthodox understanding of the Law of Moses. He also professes to have been a student of Gamaliel, one of the leading rabbinical scholars of that time. It was Paul’s strict adherence to the Mosaic Law that made him persecute the first Christians, whom he felt did not respect the tradition of their ancestors. All this changed on the road to Damascus:

As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?”
“Who are you, lord?” Saul asked.
And the voice replied, “I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting! Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”
ACTS 9:3-6

Paul was a Jew of the diaspora, born in the predominantly Greek city of Tarsus. Since the 6th century exile of the Jews, more Jewish people lived in the dispersion or diaspora than in Judea. Paul

was not only schooled in the orthodoxy of Judaism, but also was exposed to the predominant religious and philosophical beliefs of the Greco-Roman or Hellenistic world. We see this dual aspect of Paul’s intellectual character in his preaching at Athens, where he debated in the synagogues and in the streets with Greek, Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. Eventually he goes to the Areopagus and speaks to the Athenians there:

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.
ACTS 17:22-23

Paul, with his disciples, established many local churches, suffered many imprisonments, beatings, and shipwrecks. Eventually, like Peter, he suffered martyrdom during the reign of the emperor Nero. Since he was a Roman citizen, he could not be crucified, but was beheaded at Tre Fontane near the present day Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls in Rome.

Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Cephas and stayed with him for fifteen days. GALATIANS 1:18

We know that Peter and Paul encountered each other, knew how the other preached and understood the truth or salvation in Christ. We know that in Antioch Paul challenged Peter on how he followed the Mosaic Law when he was with Jewish Christians as contrasted with when he was with Gentile Christians.



But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face, for what he did was very wrong. When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile believers, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision... "You and I are Jews by birth, not "sinners" like the Gentiles. Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. GALATIANS 2:11-12, 15-16

Luke, in Acts, records that in Jerusalem the same question had vexed the early Christian community; concerning the obligation to follow the Mosaic Law to be saved and if the Law was to be therefore imposed on Gentile converts. It is here in Jerusalem that Peter and Paul speak with a united voice.

The apostles and the presbyters met together to see about this matter. After much debate had taken place, Peter got up and said to them, "My brothers, you are well aware that from early days God made his choice among you that through my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness by granting them the Holy Spirit just as he did us.

He made no distinction between us and them, for by faith he purified their hearts. Why, then, are you now putting God to the test by placing on the shoulders of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? On the contrary, we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they." The whole assembly fell silent, and they listened while Paul and Barnabas described the signs and wonders God had worked among the Gentiles through them. ACTS 15:6-12

Peter and Paul witnessed to the faith to the point of laying down their lives in imitation of Christ. They were martyred in Rome during the persecution of Nero, as previously mentioned. Both Peter and Paul had suffered many times in Roman prisons and had endured many beatings and hardships. Indeed, their witness was not only in their preaching but was a witness of the totality of their persons. They remained single minded in their ministry of preaching and teaching; the ministry of evangelization and apostolic governance of the Church.

The authority of Peter is embodied in his successors in the Papal magisterium in guiding the Church as Head of the College of Bishops. The inspiration of Paul persists in the missionary life of the Church, preaching the Gospel, and in his epistles found in Sacred Scripture. Together, Peter and Paul give us the enduring witness of the living Apostolic faith. ■

Rev. David A. Fisher, is a priest of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon and Adjunct Professor at St. Charles Seminary, Philadelphia, PA

Ordination

Ordination of Michael Charchaflian to the Priesthood

Fr. Michael Charchaflian was born in Damascus, Syria, on 4 July 1958, from an Armenian Father, Joseph, and a Syriac-Armenian Mother, Virginie. He is the oldest of five children, Clara, Rita, and Pierre and Paul. He attended the Armenian Sister Academy, as well as Lazarists' Fathers and Marist's Friars, and graduated high school from the Lycée Français. His family immigrated to Lebanon and later to Argentina. At the age of 19 he came to the U.S. as a student and graduated from the University of Lowell in Electrical and Computer Engineering. He pursued his master's degree at Worcester Polytechnic Institute and worked as a Field Problem-Solving Engineer for Digital Equipment Corporation. Later, he founded and managed Automation & Information Planners, a Technology and Strategy Consulting Firm. Father Michael was married and has a son, Hovig, and a daughter, Kenar.

In 2005, he served with the American Red Cross hurricane disaster relief. This human and spiritual experience sparked his calling to serve the Church. He attended St. John Seminary and was ordained a deacon in the Armenian Church in 2015. He later continued his studies at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia, and received a Master of Arts degree in pastoral theology from the Pontifical College Josephinum.

For the past ten years, Father Michael worked as a prison chaplain at the Billerica House of Correction. For the past four years, he assisted at St. Anthony Maronite Church in Lawrence, MA at the request of his pastor, Fr. Elie Mikhael. In 2020, Bishop Gregory incardinated Father Michael into the Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn. He continued to serve at St. Anthony Church until his recent six-month assignment at St. Sharbel Church in Somerset, New Jersey. Fr. Michael was ordained to the priesthood on Saturday, 19 March, at St. Anthony Church by Bishop Gregory. ■





Eparchy of Saint Maron Annual Clergy Retreat

Bishop Gregory Mansour and the priests of the Eparchy of Saint Maron gathered for their annual retreat at the Bethany Center in Lutz, Florida from 7-11 March. Father Gerry Blaszcak, SJ was the retreat director. ■

Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles 2022 Clergy Retreat

by Father George Hajj

Thanks be to God, after the exceptional two years of isolation, a few weeks ago on 21 March, we priests of the Maronite Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles processed in and concelebrated the Eucharist with our Bishop, under the mantle of St. Joseph, hosted by Fr. Wissam Akiki and the parish family in Phoenix.

Our canonical retreat from March 21 to the 25 was at the Franciscan Renewal Center in Scottsdale, Arizona. Every year, we spend a week in community, praying the Divine Liturgy and breviary, breaking bread, talking and reading, laughing, joking, and hiking. We all laughed because, whatever happens to our dear homeland, no one can take Jesus from us. Our hearts thrilled with the joy of God as we chanted in reverent harmony and listened quietly as Rev. Dennis McManus of the Archdiocese of Mobile and bi-ritual Maronite scholar, led our retreat. He focused on the theme of the conversations of Jesus in their authentic Judaic meaning and how Jesus delves into the heart of everyone, finds the key that is keeping that heart locked and then opens it into healing, conversion, and discipleship, from the woman, caught in adultery, to Martha, to the Samaritan woman, to the paralytic, the blind man and Peter.

The summit of the retreat was a time for all to receive the mystery of reconciliation on Wednesday

evening, as we celebrated the Feast of St. Rafka. The retreat was another anchor in our priesthood, realizing the fact that to be a good priest requires a greater personal sanctity. Priests are generally not getting the guidance and accountability to sustain that greater sanctity, and this is our fundamental crisis.

During this retreat, a lucid and holy joy filled us. How good it is for brothers to live in unity! If we are to survive the coming darkness, even to flourish, we must find supportive small communities: the family, priestly fraternity, strong parishes, reading groups, etc. Find your sacred community, built on the Word and the Holy Mysteries, and be faithful to it.

Please pray for your priests, as I know you do. Pray that we love God enough to obey Him, as He speaks through our Bishop and the Pope. Pray that we commit ourselves to becoming saints. ■



Saints in the Maronite Calendar

May

On 3 May, our Maronite calendar commemorates **The Holy Martyrs, the Lector Timothy and his wife, Maura**. On former Maronite calendars, Timothy is commemorated alone on 3 May while Maura is commemorated alone on both 25 September and 10 November. Our current Maronite Calendar still commemorates Maura alone on 10 November. Several Maronite churches are dedicated to Saint (Mort) Maura in *Mayfouq, Kfarsghab, Karm El-Mohr, Kobayat, Rachiine, Mizara Bnachii and Bekarzala*.

The Martyrs Timothy and Maura suffered tortures during the reign of Emperor Diocletian (284-305) in Upper Egypt. Timothy was the son of a Christian Priest named Pikolposos, and an Ordained Lector. He was not only responsible for reading the Holy Scriptures during the Divine Liturgy and other services but was also the keeper and copyist of the books of the Holy Scriptures and Liturgical Books. He was denounced as a keeper of Christian books, which the Emperor had ordered to be confiscated and burned.



Timothy was brought before the Governor Arian who had him tortured for his refusal to turn over the Holy Books, which he had hidden. The Governor had red-hot iron pokers shoved into his ears, which caused Timothy to go blind. However, having endured the pain bravely, he gave thanks to God for allowing him to suffer for Him. Next, the torturers hung him upside down and tied a heavy stone around his neck, but Timothy remained steadfast.

The Governor heard that Timothy had a young wife, Maura, whom he had just married. Arian ordered that Maura be brought before him, hoping that seeing her could break Timothy's will. However, he encouraged her to prepare herself to follow his path. She proclaimed herself a Christian. At this, Arian ordered that her hair be torn from her head and her fingers cut off her hands. Like Timothy, she endured the pain and gave thanks to God.

Arian had Maura thrown into a boiling cauldron but she felt no pain. Arian thought the torturers put cool water in the cauldron out of sympathy for her, but when he touched the water, his hand was scalded. Arian initially repented having witnessed this, but Satan still held sway over him. Under Satan's influence, Arian ordered that Timothy and Maura be crucified facing each other, which they endured for ten days, during which they sang hymns and encouraged one another as they suffered, until the Holy Martyrs offered up their souls to Our Lord in year 286.

May Saints Timothy and Maura's prayers be with us, and may they intercede for all Christian marriages, that all Christian spouses may rejoice in suffering together and encourage one another in their daily struggles to follow Our Lord Jesus Christ!

June

On 13 June, the Maronite Calendar commemorates **The Holy Martyr Aquilina of Byblos**. The Holy Martyr Aquilina (a Latin term meaning “little eagle”) suffered persecution during the reign of Roman Emperor Diocletian (284-305).

Aquilina was born in 281, in Byblos (modern day Jbeil, Lebanon); her father, who was a Christian, was named Eutolmius. She was educated by Evthalios, the Bishop of Byblos, and raised in Christian piety by her parents. She was filled with the love of Christ and at 12 years old converted a pagan friend of hers to Christianity, through her example and teachings.

Governor Volusian heard that Aquilina was teaching others to reject paganism and ordered her to be brought before him for questioning. When Volusian accused her of leading her friends from their ancestral gods to belief in “Christ, the Crucified One,” she proclaimed: “I am a Christian!” He told her that if she did not renounce her error, she would have to undergo terrible tortures. Aquilina responded that she was not afraid of suffering; she would be able to imitate her Lord Jesus Christ, in dying and rising like Him.

At this, Volusian ordered that she be stripped and flogged mercilessly hoping that it would break her will, but she responded that with the power of Jesus she could sustain any sufferings Governor Volusian or Satan could impose on her. Volusian told Aquilina that he believed that she would change her mind in time. However Aquilina responded that she had lived as a Christian since her childhood and would die a Christian.

Furious at her answer, Volusian ordered that her eardrums be punctured with flaming iron rods, which caused her brain to dislodge through her nose. Then he had her entire body lacerated with a rake, which caused her to faint and fall on the ground. Thinking that she

was dead, Volusian had her thrown outside the walls of Byblos, to be eaten by dogs.

However, an Angel of God came to her, healed her and told her to present herself once again before Governor Volusian. She did as the Angel instructed. Upon seeing her Volusian thought he was dreaming or that Aquilina was a sorceress. He ordered her imprisoned to be beheaded the next morning. However, the next day, 13 June 293, when the guards went to the prison, and before they could carry out her execution, they found that the Holy Martyr Aquilina had given up her spirit.

The Christians gave her a proper Christian burial outside of the city, which later became a site for pilgrimages and healings. Her relics were later transferred to Constantinople and a basilica was built in her honor, which unfortunately was destroyed in a fire.

In Byblos (Jbeil) itself, the exact sites where Aquilina lived, died and was buried, are not known. However, the most compelling site of her original tomb is the sanctuary dedicated to Saint Aquilina in the *Kassouba Quarter*, which is outside the city walls, and devotion to her has been renewed in recent years. ■



Father Fadi Rouhana: Jesus' life was one of humility *by Brandon Shulleeta*

“The journey of Jesus Christ is a journey of humility.”

This is a philosophy held by Father Fadi Rouhana, that helps shape his approach to life and priesthood. He laid it out from the beginning of Christ's life to the end — from being born in a manger, to being baptized in the river of Jordan among sinners, washing the feet of his disciples, and ultimately suffering on the cross.

“It's very important to be humble. ... Humility is the solid foundation of all virtues,” Rouhana said. “Love and humility are for me, in my heart and my eyes, the keys to my priesthood and serving.”

Father Fadi is the administrator of Saints Peter and Paul Mission in Tampa, Florida. The path to priesthood had very humble beginnings for Rouhana, who is now 47 years old.

After being born in a religious Maronite Catholic family in a small Lebanese town, he became an art and theater teacher. He also found himself often preaching the word of God to students. But he says he felt a calling to priesthood.

While in his early-30s, Rouhana was sent to Nigeria as a deacon for three years. There, he lived in a very small home and witnessed poverty and disease. He became ill and had major weight loss

when he was inflicted with malaria, a disease spread by parasites that can be life-threatening. His time in Africa was a struggle, but it was a humbling experience.

He said he often had people knocking on his door seeking help — people with AIDS asking for prayers, some seeking food, and others needing someone to listen to them. He described a time when he saw two people fighting over a tree. Both wanted to rest in the shade, but there was a dispute over who had rights to the shade.

He later served a priest in Lebanon and in Romania before coming to the United States.

“I don't complain here about anything. Every day I wake up, I say, ‘God bless America. Thank you, God, for this beautiful morning, this beautiful day,’” Rouhana said, reiterating again with a laugh: “God bless America.”

Rouhana was ordained in 2010 and was a priest at a church in Massachusetts before coming to Saints Peter and Paul Maronite Church in 2018.

As a priest, he said he's focused on being humble, trying to lead by example and listening to parishioners, so that he can help them with their needs.



Rouhana said he has a close relationship with parishioners and that when he first became the church's pastor he visited homes and prayed the rosary with them. He said it was important to bring the Blessed Mother to people's homes, "and she will do the rest."

"Never be afraid of loving the Blessed Mother too much, because we can never love her more than Jesus Christ did," Rouhana said.

He said having a close relationship with the Blessed Mother will help you with your daily struggles. "I believe when the Virgin Mary holds your hand, you cannot fall," he said. "So long as the Virgin Mary is in your mind, you are safe from deception."

Just as priests pray for parishioners, Rouhana asked that parishioners also pray for their priests and to remember they too are humans who need continued support and love. ■

Brandon Shulleeta is a journalist and parishioner of St. Anthony Maronite Catholic Church in Glen Allen, VA.

The Order of Saint Sharbel New Members

ANNUAL

ANTOINETTE AYOUB | *St. Joseph | Phoenix, AZ*

RENEE AZAN | *St. Joseph | Phoenix, AZ*

HIAM CHKEIBAN | *St. Joseph | Phoenix, AZ*

THOMAS LOS | *Our Lady of Lebanon | Lewisville, TX*

BART TRUDEAU | *St. Ann | Watervliet, NY*

PERPETUAL

CHRISTINE AYOUB | *St. Joseph | Phoenix, AZ*

DR. ANNE BORIK | *St. Joseph | Phoenix, AZ*

NACOLE DOBAY | *St. Joseph | Phoenix, AZ*

MARIA GEBARA | *Our Lady's Parish | Austin, TX*

ANNA MARIE MECCA | *Our Lady of Victory | Carnegie, PA*

ELIZABETH MORGAN | *Our Lady's Parish | Austin, TX*

JOSEPH MOSES | *St. Elias | Roanoke, VA*

MARY ELIZABETH SALAME | *St. Anthony | Danbury, CT*

ANTHONY SHAHEEN | *St. Louis Gonzaga | Utica, NY*

AMANDA TOLANO | *St. Elias | Roanoke, VA*



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

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

EPARCHY OF SAINT MARON
109 Remsen Street | Brooklyn, NY 11201

or

EPARCHY OF OUR LADY OF LEBANON
1021 South 10th Street | St. Louis, MO 63104

Saint Maron Church in Minneapolis, MN *by Chet Wade*



It is not just long-time parishioners who fill the pews for Divine Liturgy at St. Maron Maronite Catholic Church in Minneapolis.

“When I look out at the pews, I see Lebanese and Armenians, Jordanians and many other nationalities, from Syria, Palestine, Turkey, Iraq, Ireland, Ecuador and more,” said Chorbishop Sharbel Maroun, church pastor. Along with Maronites, “I see Syriac and Greek Orthodox, Byzantines. There are Roman Catholics, Protestants and sometimes non-Christian visitors.”

All are welcome and sought out at St. Maron Church. The diversity is by design, aiming to share Maronite traditions and Lebanese culture as well as spread the Word of God.

It is not a coincidence that “bridge” is the word Abouna Sharbel uses to best describe the parish. The parishioners of St. Maron’s always look forward to bringing people together.

When Lebanese immigrants arrived in the Twin Cities region in the late 1800s, they were looking for a place to bond together and practice their faith. St. Maron’s was founded in

1903, converting a small house into a church. The community remained strong and there are now five generations of families worshipping at the church along with more-recent arrivals.

However, as time went on it became apparent that tight bonds also could mean isolation. St. Maron’s and Holy Family Maronite Church about 11 miles away in St. Paul are the only two Maronite churches within more than 300 miles. The Lebanese community in the Twin Cities region is relatively small, making the Maronite faith and Lebanese culture relatively unknown in the region.

“I would go to places (in Minneapolis) where people would wonder who the Maronites are,” Abouna Sharbel said. “We had strong roots, but we needed to grow new branches.”

Since Abouna Sharbel became pastor in 1989, he has overseen an expansion of St. Maron’s both in physical and spiritual terms.

Much of the success in connecting with the Twin Cities community has been built by using the St. Maron

church and hall as a hub. The gold-domed church is adorned with majestic mosaics and dozens of stained-glass windows. The 500-seat Cedars Hall adjoins the church. They were dedicated in 1999. The facilities were built thanks by and large to the generosity of philanthropist and parishioner John Nasseff and all the very generous parishioners of Saint Maron.

The church and Cedars Hall stand approximately on the spot where St. Maron Church moved in 1948, in a residential neighborhood about 1 ½ miles from downtown Minneapolis. Most of the old church was torn down to make way for the current buildings. By acquiring additional properties, there also was room for the Peter Nasseff Maronite Home for seniors.

In addition to the parish liturgies, the church has hosted bishops and archbishops from other churches as well as many community and governmental leaders. The church celebrates the Divine Liturgy for seminarians of the local Latin seminary and hosts priests, deacons, and seminarians on a regular basis. The Cedars Hall is popular for community functions for

parishioners and non-parishioners, ranging from events for other clergy members to wedding receptions and “Sweet 15” parties.

“St. Maron’s is home to many, many people in the Minneapolis area, not just our parishioners,” Abouna sharbel said.

The Cedars Hall and grounds also get plenty of other use by the parish. A major event is scheduled almost every month. Among the highlights are the Lebanese Festival in September, which traditionally marks the end of the warm-weather festival season in Minneapolis-St. Paul, and a “Taste of Lebanon” dinner in April, besides the marvelous Bake Sale and Annual Saint Maron’s Hafli.

The church also has an added reason to celebrate Epiphany on January 6. That is the same day as Abouna Sharbel’s birthday and the day he was ordained a priest, was elevated to monsignor, and became Chorbishop.



Beyond the church grounds, St. Maron Church is a regular partner with the Archdiocese of Minneapolis and St. Paul and other local churches. This includes raising support for Syrian war refugees. The church collaborated on the installation of the Icon of Hope of Saint Paul by Saint Ananias in Damascus at the Cathedral of St. Paul in Minneapolis. And, there is an annual Eucharistic procession to seven churches, including those with parishioners primarily of Polish, Slovak, Ecuadorian, German and Ukrainian descent.

But while it is engaging with others, Abouna Sharbel said the people of St. Maron’s have not forgotten to reach out to their fellow Maronites.

St. Maron Church has been fortunate to have been visited by the Maronite Patriarch twice. In 2001, Patriarch Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir dedicated two mosaics at the church as part of his visit. In 2014, Patriarch Bechara Boutros al-Rahi also visited the church as part of his tour of the United States.

And this year, St. Maron Church is hosting the Annual Maronite Convention. The NAM convention will be held 13-17 July at the Radisson Blu, Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota — about a 20-minute drive from the church. This will be the second time St. Maron’s has hosted the NAM convention in the last 20 years.

Abouna Sharbel said the parishioners look forward to meeting fellow Maronites and showing them what the Twin Cities has to offer. “It has been a lot of work for all the parishioners. But things have come together and we look forward to welcoming everyone with open arms.” ■



MYA Eparchial Conference

Boston MA

"Arise and Walk"

(MARK 2:11)

The first MYA Eparchial Conference on 25-26 March brought together over 100 participants to Our Lady of the Cedars in Boston, MA. The MYA Eparchial board planned a weekend of fellowship, spiritual talks, music, liturgies, breakout sessions, panel discussions, and other engaging activities inspired by our Lenten theme — *"Arise and Walk"* (MARK 2:11). It was a remarkable success!

The program began with introductions by Bishop Gregory Mansour, Sister Therese Maria Touma, Eparchial Director of Youth and Young Adults, and Maya Khoury, Eparchial MYA President. After dinner and adoration in the Church on Friday night, the young adults continued to have fun together and enjoy some bowling and karaoke at a local spot which soon became a great place to *dabke*.

Saturday was a full day beginning with Liturgy, breakfast, conference, regional breakout sessions, small group discussion, panel discussions, confession, and an evening hafli at Byblos Restaurant.

Some highlights from this day included opportunities to mingle and connect with other young adults from across the Eparchy and presentations by guest





speaker, Lauren Gentry. She challenged attendees to “Arise and Walk” and allow Jesus’ gaze and healing love to set us free, as He freed the paralytic who was brought in on a stretcher by his friends.

The Sunday Liturgy was followed by a lunch hosted by Our Lady of the Cedars Church.

We look forward to our next MYA Eparchial Conference tentatively

scheduled for November — more details to follow. Stay tuned!

Follow our MYA activities on Instagram @mya.eparchystmaron



57th Annual Maronite Convention

MINNEAPOLIS, MN | Jul 13-17, 2022

Sponsored by the National Apostolate of Maronites

Radisson Blu
Mall of America
(MOA) Hotel



Saint Maron Church,
Minneapolis

Hosted by
St. Maron Maronite Catholic Church

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For reservations call 1-800-333-3333 and use Code: NAM Convention.
Rate valid till Wednesday, June 22, 2022.

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www.namnews.org
914-964-3070

ENTERTAINMENT

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT
OPENING CELEBRATION**



**JOHN
KHOURY**

**THURSDAY NIGHT
EVANGELICAL CONCERT**



**DORIS
FARHAT**

**FRIDAY NIGHT
NORTH STAR HAFLI**



**RAMI BADR
&
DORIS FARHAT**

**SATURDAY NIGHT
GRAND BANQUET**



**FIDEL
FAYAD**

**WEDNESDAY THROUGH
SATURDAY**



**DJ DUO
DJ UB
DJ ROUKOS**

WORKSHOPS

Thursday, July 14
Family Faith Formation



Fr. Anthony Salim, a retired Maronite priest who has been serving our Eparchies for close to five decades and author of Captivated by Your Teachings.

Friday, July 15
On the Footsteps of Jesus in Lebanon



Jeff Cavins is a nationally known television host, famous author, Holy Land pilgrimage leader and a dynamic Bible teacher.

Saturday, July 16
National Eucharist Revival
"My Flesh for the Life of the World"



Bishop Andrew Cozzens, Bishop of Crookston, MN and USCCB Chairman on Evangelization and Catechesis.

Saturday, July 16
Commission on Lebanon



Open discussion on the great challenges Lebanon faces and the efforts that have been made in the US to support a free, sovereign, and democratic Lebanon.

Please join us!
24-Hour Eucharistic Adoration
Thursday 12:30 pm through
Friday 11:30 am

The block features a photograph of a monstrance, a golden vessel used for the display of the Eucharist, set against a dark blue background.



57th National Maronite Convention
 Sponsored by the National Apostolate of Maronites

REGISTRATION FORM

Pre-registration deadline: Monday, June 13, 2022

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

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

First Name _____	Last Name _____	Please check all that apply:		
Address _____	_____			<input type="checkbox"/> NAM Member
City _____	State _____	Zip Code _____	<input type="checkbox"/> NAM Board	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth (12-18)
Phone _____	Email _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> NAM Delegate	<input type="checkbox"/> Young Adult (18-35)
Parish _____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Convention Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian
Package/ Program Purchased _____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Order of St. Sharbel	

PACKAGES ONLY—Enter number of packages desired and make sure to fill in Totals and Grand Totals. Daily Workshops are included with any purchase. NAM members whose 2022 dues have been paid will receive \$15 off the full adult package and \$10 off all other packages. This discount is void after the pre-registration deadline of June 13, 2022. If you wish to pay for your member dues with this registration: please send a check payable to NAM. All Excursions are additional and not included in packages. Saturday Banquet seating is chosen for you unless you contact NAM office or request on-line. **The "Covenant of Behavior" MUST be completed for all child and youth registrants if not accompanied by a parent. See forms at www.namnews.org.**
****YOUTH:** If you are 18 and did not graduate from high school by summer; **YOUNG ADULT:** If you are over 18 and a high school graduate and younger than 35.

PACKAGE OPTIONS AND PRICING

Package Options <small>DOES NOT INCLUDE HOTEL ROOMS</small>	Adult and Young Adult 18+		Youth 12-18 years		Child 5 to 11 years		Entertainment Only <small>(no meals included; entry after 10 pm)</small>	
	Before 6/13	After 6/13	Before 6/13	After 6/13	Before 6/13	After 6/13	Before 6/13	After 6/13
Full: Wed-Sun or Thurs-Sun	# _____ @ \$375	# _____ @ \$405	# _____ @ \$365	# _____ @ \$395	# _____ @ \$185	# _____ @ \$215	# _____ @ \$160	# _____ @ \$190
Weekend: Friday-Sunday	# _____ @ \$375	# _____ @ \$405	# _____ @ \$365	# _____ @ \$395	# _____ @ \$185	# _____ @ \$215	# _____ @ \$160	# _____ @ \$190
Saturday & Sunday	# _____ @ \$240	# _____ @ \$270	# _____ @ \$225	# _____ @ \$255	# _____ @ \$120	# _____ @ \$150	n/a	n/a
Thursday Only	# _____ @ \$65	# _____ @ \$95	# _____ @ \$55	# _____ @ \$85	# _____ @ \$30	# _____ @ \$60	# _____ @ \$45	# _____ @ \$75
Friday Only	# _____ @ \$150	# _____ @ \$180	# _____ @ \$140	# _____ @ \$170	# _____ @ \$75	# _____ @ \$105	# _____ @ \$75	# _____ @ \$105
Saturday Only	# _____ @ \$175	# _____ @ \$205	# _____ @ \$160	# _____ @ \$190	# _____ @ \$75	# _____ @ \$105	# _____ @ \$85	# _____ @ \$115
Sunday Only	# _____ @ \$75	# _____ @ \$105	# _____ @ \$65	# _____ @ \$95	# _____ @ \$45	# _____ @ \$75	n/a	n/a
TOTAL	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____

EXCURSIONS AND PRICING (due to COVID-19 guidelines, excursions subject to change)

Date	Excursion	Time	Attendees	Price
Thursday, July 14	Mall of America Crayola Experience	10:00 am – 12:00 pm	Children 5-11	# _____ @ \$20
	Mississippi Boat Cruise with stop at Holy Family Maronite Church, box lunch included	1:30 pm – 4:30 pm	Everyone	# _____ @ \$35
	Lebanon Hills BBQ	1:00 pm – 4:30 pm	Young Adults 18-35 Only	# _____ @ \$25
	Minnesota Science Museum and Omni Theatre, box lunch included	1:00 pm – 4:30 pm	Youth 12-18	# _____ @ \$35
Friday, July 15	Como Zoo, box lunch included	10:00 am – 12:00 pm	Children 5-11	# _____ @ \$20
	Tour of St. Mary's Basilica, Cathedral of St. Paul, St. Maron Church, box lunch included	1:00 pm – 4:30 pm	Everyone	# _____ @ \$10
	Wisdom on Tap with the Bishops at a Brewery	1:30 pm – 4:30 pm	Young Adults 18-35 Only	# _____ @ \$25
Saturday, July 16	Mall of America Sea Life/Underwater Ocean Tunnel	2:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Youth 12-18	# _____ @ \$20
	Mall of America Lego Imagination Center	10:00 am – 12:00 pm	Children 5-11	# _____ @ \$20
	Lake Minnetonka Voyager Boat Cruise, lunch included	1:00 pm – 4:30 pm	Young Adults 18-35 Only	# _____ @ \$50
	Mall of America Nickelodeon Indoor Theme Park	1:30 pm – 4:00 pm	Youth 12-18	# _____ @ \$20

TOTAL \$ _____

GRAND TOTAL \$ _____

Please make checks payable to "NAM Convention" and mail to NAM, 2110 Redwood Pl • Canfield, OH 44406

Do not send cash. If using a CREDIT CARD register online or call: 914-964-3070

Hotel rate is \$186 + tax per night single/double. Blu Radisson offers free airport shuttle service from 5:00 am to 11:00 pm. Call 952-314-5116 to arrange for pick up.

For reservations call 1-800-333-3333 and ask for the National Maronite Convention Room Block.

Hotel reservations must be made no later than **Wednesday, June 22, 2022**. Any reservations after this date are subject to availability and at prevailing room rate.



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- H. Solid Heavy Rope Chain
- I. Camel
- J. Gents Cedar Tree Ring
- K. Cedar Tree Cuff Links
- L. Small Circle Cedar
- M. Large Cedar Tree
- N. Serpent Bracelet
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CNEWA - Catholic Near East Welfare Association

The Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) is an agency of the Vatican that provides the Eastern Churches and religious orders with financial assistance for their necessary work in clinics, schools, orphanages and other shrines and churches. The CNEWA President, Msgr. Vaccari invited all Eastern Catholic Bishops across the United States and Canada to appoint one young professional from each of their parishes to serve on the CNEWA Board. Sandy Risha (Parishioner of St. George Church in Uniontown, PA) was asked to represent the Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn. Diana Ayoub (Parishioner of Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Los Angeles, CA) was appointed to represent the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles.

In 2020, CNEWA formed an associate board of North American Eastern Catholic young professionals. Board members were involved in projects that supported the Eastern Catholic Churches and affirmed that those in need were receiving help. Consider this reflection: (JAMES 2:14-17) — “What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed, but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if not accompanied by action, is dead.”

CNEWA participants are spiritually and physically spreading faith to those in need with prayer and vital resources throughout their mission “to help and love thy neighbors.”

If any young adult professionals are interested in joining CNEWA to help others, please email Msgr. Vaccari (CNEWA President) for details: pvaccari@cnewa.org. ■

(PICTURED): Sandy Risha,
Representative of the Eparchy of St.
Maron of Brooklyn, NY



MYO

We all remember the fateful days of mid-March 2020, when the reality of COVID-19 truly began to set in all around us. Everything was shutting down, schools were closing, and we were isolating from each other. We were scared and confused, learning to live with social distancing. While socially distancing from one another, it was also easy to social distance from *ourselves* — forgetting our identity, who and what makes me... well... me.

Look no further, it is time to reconnect with yourself, as the National Maronite Youth Organization presents 'Introducing Me.' After two years, the 2022 MYO National Conference will be held *IN PERSON* at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, PA, 23-27 June 2022! As we come together, we encourage our youth between the ages of 12-18 in the Eparchies of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles and Saint Maron of Brooklyn to join us as we dive deeper into our identity and ask ourselves, "Who Am I?"



Registration is \$350 until 1 May, and \$375 after that, closing on 22 May — register at www.maroniteyouth.org. Join us for a week of excitement, reconnecting, and spiritually enriching and fulfilling talks and discussions. You will not want to miss this!

Follow us on Social Media

National MYO: Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, and TikTok! @maroniteyouth

Eparchy of OLOL MYO: Facebook, @ololeparchy.myo and Instagram @olol_myo.

Eparchy of St. Maron Office of Youth and Young Adults: Facebook and Instagram: @myya_stmaronbrooklyn ■

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Maronite Chapel at Ave Maria University

by Elizabeth Rau

Why would a Roman Catholic university, one that already has a 24-hour adoration chapel and chapels in each of its residence halls, add a Maronite chapel to its campus? The answer is Tom Monaghan.

A devout Catholic philanthropist and entrepreneur, in 1998, Monaghan founded what would become Ave Maria College in Ann Arbor, Michigan. In 2003, the educational mission was moved to Florida upon the establishment of Ave Maria University. From the earliest days, when the school was in the planning stages in Michigan, he articulated that he wanted to have a chapel in every building as well as free-standing chapels throughout the campus.

“We wanted *‘the Chapels of Ave Maria’* to be something the school would be known for. We saw it as a way to emphasize how important our Catholic spirituality is to us,” said Monaghan.

But why build a Maronite chapel? This is a Roman Catholic university, after all.

Monaghan explained the origins: “When I still owned Domino’s Pizza, we were able to establish a Chapel in our World Headquarters at Domino’s Farms, so that employees and those in the area would have the opportunity to attend daily Mass and go to confession. So I built a chapel at

Domino’s Farms and soon after was introduced to an order of Maronite monks who were willing to send priests to Ann Arbor. That was more than 25 years ago... Today, they say four Masses a day for us, as well as hearing hundreds of confessions per month.”

Over the years, Monaghan says he grew close to the Maronite monks and learned much about the Eastern Catholics from them. In addition, he met and became friends with many Eastern Rite Catholics, particularly Maronite Catholics. He was particularly impressed by a dimension in these new friends that he hadn’t seen elsewhere. “I found the Maronites

“We hope this chapel will not only be a home away from home for our Maronite students, but also an opportunity for all of our (Latin Catholic) students to grow in their appreciation of the rich and varied traditions within the Church.”

— TOM MONAGHAN

I met to be extremely devout, faithful to the magisterium, hardworking, entrepreneurial and very devoted to their families... more so than most Latin Catholics I knew.”

Simultaneously, as Ave Maria University continued to grow, Monaghan made another discovery: no other Catholic college in the U.S. reaches out specifically to Eastern Catholics. Reasoning that devout, faithful Eastern Catholics would prefer that their children attend a university that provides a faithful Catholic education (AMU is only one of 15 residential colleges endorsed by the Cardinal Newman Society), Mr. Monaghan thought that AMU, with its strong emphasis on Catholic identity, its excellence in academics and its vibrant student life, would be an attractive option for such Catholics.

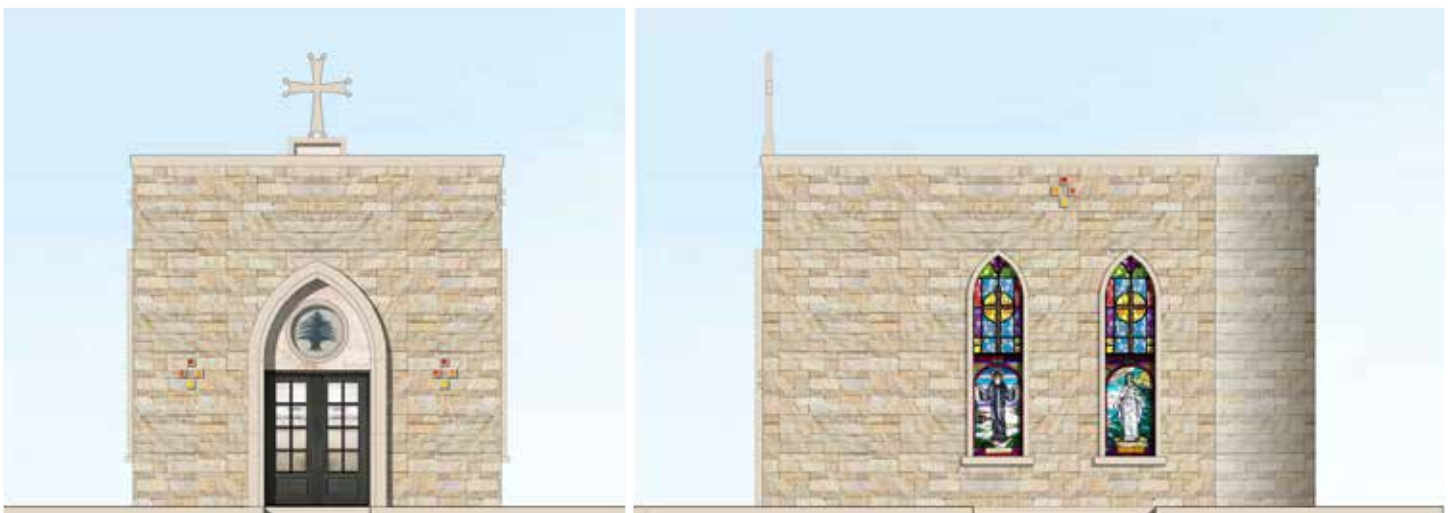
To make AMU even more affordable and show that it is serious about recruiting Eastern Catholics, Monaghan established the *Brilliant Jewel Scholarship*, which is available exclusively to Eastern Catholic students. This scholarship provides \$7,000 a year (in addition to the university’s already generous financial aid) for four years. Eleven students at AMU have already been awarded the *Brilliant Jewel Scholarship*.

The Maronite chapel is simply one more way to make Eastern Catholic students feel welcome. “I thought if we built a Maronite Chapel, not only would our Maronite students feel more at home at the university, but other Eastern Catholics would as well,” Monaghan said.

He continued: “We hope this chapel will not only be a home away from home for our Maronite students, but also an opportunity for all of our (Latin Catholic) students to grow in their appreciation of the rich and varied traditions within the Church.”

At this time, Ave Maria University is working with its architect on construction drawings for the Maronite Chapel and is busy raising the needed funds to construct and outfit the chapel. While there is no date set yet for a groundbreaking, it is hoped that it will be soon.

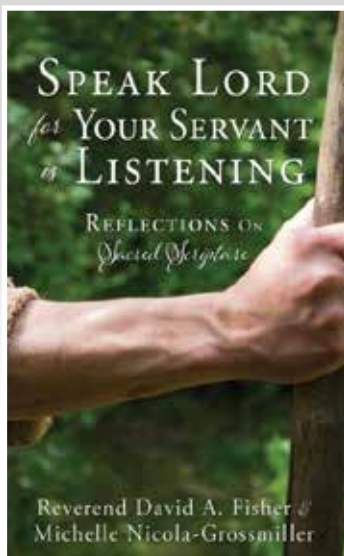
For more information about the chapel or Ave Maria College, contact Tim Dockery at tim.dockery@avemaria.edu or 239-280-1695. ■





Eastern Catholic Bishops Meeting 2022

The Eastern Catholic Bishops met 30-31 March 2022, in person for the first time in two years at the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles Chancery Office in St. Louis, Missouri, for the Annual Eastern Catholics Association meeting. This is an important time for the Eastern Catholic Bishops to gather together and discuss important matters regarding the Eastern Catholic faithful in the United States.



Speak Lord for Your Servant is Listening: Reflections on Sacred Scripture by David A. Fisher and Michelle Nicola-Grossmiller. Salem, MO: Salem Publishing Solutions, 2021.

The authors wrote *Speak Lord for your Servant is Listening* during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is devotional literature, condensed and intended for meditation by those who wish to answer God's call to abide in Him. The writers compile scholarly works with the viewpoints of renowned thinkers like C.S. Lewis, Martin Luther King, Jr., saints, popes, and Catholic doctrine. It draws attention to scripture passages from the New American Bible Revised

Edition that comfort, encourage and promise God's love. This book directs believers to see the light and image of God in themselves in a well-researched and thoughtful manner.

The readers of *The Maronite Voice* will find it to be an important reference that gives insights from the greatest authors inspired by God to help them to appreciate the lessons they teach for living obediently. Slow down and use this book to focus on the most important will of God. He has messages inside for you.

Alison Mazloom

Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn Policy on Child and Youth Protection

The Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn publishes its reviewed and revised Policy on Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons. The same policy is also available online at <http://www.stmaron.org>. The Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon has its own policy and it is also available online at eparchy.org

As Catholics and Maronites, we consider the welfare and protection of our children a sacred responsibility. We hereby promulgate the following Eparchial norms as an implementation of Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons approved by the Congregation for Bishops on December 8, 2002.

Definitions

Sexual Abuse of a minor includes sexual molestation or sexual exploitation of a minor; the acquisition, possession or distribution of pornographic images of a minor; and other behavior by which an adult uses a minor as an object of sexual gratification.

For purposes of this policy, a minor shall be construed to include anyone who has not attained the age of eighteen (18) years as well as anyone who lacks the use of reason regardless of his or her actual chronological age.

Response

The healing of victims, their families and their community from the effects of sexual abuse by church leaders begins when the allegations of such abuses are received. When victims decide to disclose the abuse, it is important that the response they receive be compassionate and non-judgmental.

Anyone receiving an allegation of abuse will respond in a pastoral, supportive manner, leaving investigative concerns to those who serve in that role.

An allegation will be received without initial judgment as to the truth of the complaint. No intimation of blame will be made by the initial recipient of information. Individuals making allegations will be supported positively in their decision to disclose.

The Eparchial Bishop will designate a competent person to coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who claim to have been sexually abused when they were minors by priests or deacons. This Victim Assistance Coordinator will assess and respond to the immediate and long-term needs of the alleged victim and family, the alleged offender, parish communities and others that are affected by the disclosure of sex abuse.

The Victim Assistance Coordinator will serve as a consultant to the Eparchial Bishop and the Review Board.

Any individual wishing to report a claim of sexual abuse is encouraged to contact the Victim Assistance Coordinator, Rosanne Solomon, at:

Eparchy of Saint Maron | 109 Remsen St. | Brooklyn, New York 11201
Tel: (617) 327-1317 | (718) 237-9913

Review Board

The Review Board is a predominantly lay board composed of a variety of professionals duly appointed to assist the Eparchial Bishop in a strictly confidential and consultative capacity. It will have no final decision-making authority, which authority will continue to reside exclusively with the Eparchial Bishop.

Board Functions

- To advise the Eparchial Bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of suitability for ministry;
- To review Eparchial policies for dealing with sexual abuse of minors;
- To offer advice on all aspects of sexual abuse cases, whether retrospectively or prospectively.

Membership

The Review Board, established by the Eparchial Bishop, will be composed of five members of outstanding integrity and good judgment in full communion with the Church. The majority of the board will be lay persons not in the employ of the Eparchy. These will include:

- A parent
- A parish pastor/administrator
- An attorney
- An individual with investigative experience

The Eparchial Bishop may deem it desirable that the Promoter of Justice participate in the meetings of the Review Board. The Vicar General and Eparchial Attorney participate in the annual meeting of the Review Board but are not considered members of the Board.

Appointment

Members appointed by the Eparchial Bishop will serve a five (5) year term.

All Review Board members will adhere to the rules of strict confidentiality with regard to all deliberations and information received.

Reporting

In all cases of alleged or suspected or known child abuse committed by a priest or deacon, the Eparchy will comply with all applicable civil laws in respect to reporting the allegations and will cooperate with civil authorities in the investigation.

Any priest or deacon, who knows from the external forum that a minor has been sexually abused, is required to report that knowledge or suspicion to the Eparchial Bishop in accordance with the norms of canon law and to the civil authorities.

Investigation

When an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a priest or deacon is received, a preliminary investigation in accordance with canon law will be initiated and conducted promptly and objectively (Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches [CCEO], c. 1468). The purpose of the Eparchial investigation is to ensure that the Eparchial Bishop has a complete, thorough, and accurate report of the alleged incident. The investigation will be conducted by an investigator appointed by the Review Board. The investigator will report his findings in writing to the Eparchial bishop and to the Review Board.

The accused will immediately be called by the Eparchial Bishop or his delegate and be made aware of the allegation against him and the identity of the accuser. The accused will remain in his position until the initial investigation is completed, which is to be done as expeditiously as possible.

All appropriate steps shall be taken to protect the reputation of the accused and the accuser during the investigation. The accused will be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel and will be promptly notified of the results of the investigation.

When there is sufficient evidence that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred, the Eparchial Bishop will notify the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The Eparchial Bishop shall then apply the precautionary measures mentioned in CCEO, c. 1473 that is, remove the accused from the sacred ministry or from any ecclesiastical office or function. The Eparchial Bishop may impose or prohibit residence in a given place or territory, and prohibit the public participation in the Most Holy Eucharist pending the outcome of the process.

In every case involving canonical penalties, the processes provided for in canon law will be observed, and the various provisions of canon law will be considered.¹ Unless the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, having been notified, calls the case to itself because of special circumstances, the Eparchial Bishop will follow the directions of the Congregation on how to proceed.² If the case would otherwise be barred by prescription, because sexual abuse of a minor is a grave offense, the Eparchial Bishop shall apply to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for a dispensation from the prescription, while indicating appropriate pastoral reasons.

For the sake of due process, the accused is encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel. When necessary, the Eparchy will supply canonical counsel to the cleric.

The Eparchy will conduct a judicial process of the case according to the appropriate canons and practice of the Church. The accused may be requested to seek, and may be urged voluntarily to comply with, an appropriate medical and psychological evaluation at a facility mutually acceptable to the Eparchy and the accused.

In every instance, the Eparchy will advise and support a person's right to make a report to public authorities.

Ministry/Service

No priest or deacon removed from an Eparchial position for allegations of sexual abuse of a minor will return to ministry or service before their case is assessed and fitness is determined by the Eparchial Bishop in consultation with the Review Board. The safety of children is the paramount consideration governing the formation of recommendations regarding the future ministry of one accused of abuse.

An allegation of sexual abuse of a minor made against a priest or deacon will be deemed established if, with due respect for the provisions of canon law:

- The accused individual admits to conduct defined by this policy as sexual abuse
- A civil court of criminal law finds the accused guilty of a crime that consists of conduct defined by this policy as sexual abuse, or the accused pleads guilty or no contest to a crime that consists of conduct defined by this policy as sexual abuse.
- The appropriate ecclesiastical tribunal finds the accused guilty of the crime.

When an act of sexual abuse by a priest or deacon is admitted or is established after an appropriate process in accord with canon law, the offending priest or deacon will be removed from ecclesiastical ministry, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state, if the case so warrants.

At all times, the Eparchial Bishop has the executive power of governance, through an Administrative act, to remove an offending priest or deacon from office, to remove or restrict his faculties, and to limit the exercise of his ministry. For the sake of the common good and observing the provisions of canon law, the Eparchial Bishop shall exercise this power of governance to ensure that any Priest or Deacon who has committed an act of sexual abuse of a minor as described above shall not continue in the active ministry.

The priest or deacon may at any time request a dispensation from the obligations of the clerical state. In exceptional cases, the Eparchial Bishop may

¹Cf. *Canonical Delicts Involving Sexual Misconduct and Dismissal from the Clerical State*, 1995; Letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, May 18, 2001.

²Article 16, of the 2010 Revised Procedural Norms for the *Moto proprio Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*.

request of the Holy Father the dismissal of the priest or deacon from the clerical state *ex officio*, even without the consent of the priest or deacon.

Care will always be taken to protect the rights of all parties involved, particularly those of the person claiming to have been sexually abused and the person against whom the charge has been made. When an accusation has proved to be unfounded, every step possible will be taken by the Eparchial Bishop to restore the good name of the priest or deacon falsely accused.

No priest or deacon who has committed an act of sexual abuse of a minor will be transferred for ministerial assignment to another eparchy/diocese or religious province.

Before a priest or deacon is transferred for residence to another eparchy/diocese or religious province, the Eparchial Bishop shall forward, in a confidential manner, to the local bishop or religious superior of the proposed place of residence any and all information concerning any act of sexual abuse of a minor

and any other information indicating that he has been or may be a danger to children or young people.

The Eparchial Bishop will not consider receiving a priest or deacon into the Eparchy from another jurisdiction without previously obtaining the necessary information regarding the moral and civil record of the priest or deacon in question.

Prevention

The Eparchy of Saint Maron has promulgated a Code of Ethics and Integrity in Ministry to be adhered to all persons in positions of trust in the Eparchy.

All Eparchial programs designed to certify clerics, eparchial employees, and volunteers who serve children on a regular basis will include segments that address child sexual abuse. The training curriculum will include information concerning: signs and symptoms, dynamics of child abuse, impact of child abuse, intervention strategies, reporting requirements and community resources. ■

Internet and Social Media Guidelines for the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

The following are a list of general guidelines to cover the use of the Internet websites and other social media sites. These guidelines, along with the recently issued United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Social Media Guidelines <http://www.usccb.org/comm/socialmediaguidelines.shtml>, should cover most situations faced by any Pastor Administrator.

- The use of official parish websites and other social media platforms are entrusted to the confidence of the Pastor/Administrator and the Bishop. It is important to remember that once something is placed on the Internet, there are no deletions; it will remain forever in cyberspace. Thus, the Pastor/Administrator or his delegate should keep close watch over all postings to ensure that none of them is harmful, embarrassing, dangerous, or illegal.
- Any unofficial websites associated with the parish must carry a disclaimer reflecting that postings are not the expressed opinion of the Parish, Eparchy or the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.

- The official website of the parish must reflect the dignity of the Church, thus web-hosting companies, paid for by advertising, should be avoided. The Church has no control over the advertising that could, at a minimum, reflect badly on the dignity of the Church.
- Due to privacy concerns, only business (not personal) accounts may be established on all social media platforms. That is because business accounts do not have an open wall and only allow for posting by the administrator. The Pastor/Administrator or a designated responsible adult should be the only administrator and the account should carry a disclaimer.
- No photos of children taken in a private setting should be posted on a parish or personal website or on other social media sites. Photos of children taken in public settings should be posted according to the desires of the parents.
- Church personnel are not to use Church computers for personal social media sites.

These sites raise numerous security and privacy concerns for the Church. The Pastor/Administrator is to make sure there are enough filters in place to prevent access to improper and unwanted material.

- Use by Church personnel of a Church computer to access, view and/or download pornographic images of a person under the age of eighteen (18) years or of a person who lacks the use of reason regardless of his or her chronological age shall constitute grounds for dismissal. The Pastor/Administrator shall immediately report such conduct to the appropriate civil authority for investigation and/or prosecution, as well as to the Vicar General or Eparchial Bishop.
- Although the Eparchy cannot monitor or control personal accounts, in the context of one's use of social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.), priests, deacons, religious, employees and volunteers should be mindful that postings and other statements made in these forums can be seen as connected to both their professional role and the Church. ■

Parish News

NORMAN, OKLAHOMA

Book Signing

On 26 December 2021, at the end of liturgy at Our Lady of Lebanon in Norman, Oklahoma, Father Nabil Mouannes provided Mitchell Gray, an attorney and Iraq War veteran, an opportunity to tell parishioners about his new book about Lebanon: "Sons of Resistance: Bashir Gemayel and Ali Hassan Salameh in 'freewheeling and open' Lebanon"- What Shaped Modern Lebanon." After liturgy, Mr. Gray handed out and signed free copies of his book to parishioners. The book traces Lebanon's fascinating history from Mount Lebanon until the death of Bashir Gemayel. The book, through the speeches of Bashir, offers insight on contemporary issues in America and the West as well. ■



LAWRENCE, MASSACHUSETTS

Youth Basketball League



The middle school children (grades 6-8) at Saint Anthony Church in Lawrence, Massachusetts, participated in the Merrimack Valley Catholic Basketball Association during the 2021-2022 Season. Parish volunteers registered, organized and coached 35 children (two boys' teams and one girls' team) in the league. Their team jerseys were maroon colored symbolizing Saint Maron and the Maronite Faith. The enthusiastic youths completed the 10-week basketball season consisting of weekday practices and weekend games. Representing their teams and Saint Anthony Church, the players recited a prayer together before each game. The goal of this basketball program was to strengthen team bonding, faith and prayer. At the end of the season, Fr. Elie Mikhael, pastor, celebrated the Liturgy at Saint Anthony Church to recognize the team's successful basketball season and to offer blessings for all participants. This was followed by a parish breakfast honoring the players and coaches. Each team member was awarded a blessed medal. Saint Anthony's players and coaches enjoyed the season with this saying in mind: "A team that plays together, prays together." Let's Go Team!!! ■

LEWISVILLE, TEXAS

Our Favorite Things About The Maronite Liturgy



We, at Our Lady of Lebanon Church, are happy to say that we are a spiritual home for many Latin Catholics in the Dallas metroplex. Roman Catholics come from across the city because of the beauty of our Maronite liturgy and the welcoming family community. Many Catholics from the Latin Church have been parishioners for many years working in numerous ministries including the choir, lecturing, altar serving, religious education, Legion of Mary, and even our annual Lebanese Food Festival. One of our Latin families has three children who are especially fond of our Maronite Church and who serve as altar servers. Their oldest child wrote about the reasons why he loves the Maronite Catholic Church so much.

"My Favorite Things About Our Lady of Lebanon:

- The fragrance of the incense
- The reverence of the Liturgy
- The Aramaic language
- Communion by intinction
- Serving with my brothers as "altar boys"

We are so happy to bring the richness of our Maronite Church to Dallas/Fort Worth! ■

DETROIT, MICHIGAN
Lenten Activities

Family Prayer, Family Discussions, and Family Celebration!

That's how we resumed our activities at St. Maron Church in Detroit for Lent 2022. Lent is always a moment to renew our love to the One who is Love. As one family, we had a few events that characterized our Lent this year.

On Saturday 2 April, we held a spiritual retreat with Fr. Roger Chikri, OMM. Parishioners spent the day in prayer, meditation, and in confessions, concluding with Liturgy. Fr. Chikri gave two talks: on the faith of the apostles in the life of the church today and on three levels in the spiritual life.

Every Friday, after the Stations and Benediction of the Cross and dinner in the church hall, we discussed one topic of the Synod on "Synodality."

Our parish celebrated Hosanna Sunday where the entire family of St Maron participated in the Liturgy repeating together "Lord, save us!" beseeching Almighty God to bless our children, our families, and to bring peace to our world. After Liturgy, more than 300 people gathered in the hall of the church for lunch! ■



YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO
NAM Lenten Retreat

by Beverly Mike-Nard

Attendees were greeted by retreat master, Fr. Jacques Kik, Parochial Vicar of St. Maron Church, Youngstown, OH, Chorbishop Anthony Spinoza, rector of the Basilica Shrine, and Rose Sahyoun, President, and Executive Director of NAM.

This lovely retreat included Lenten prayers of the Syriac Maronite Church, inspiring educational presentations encompassing the Sundays of Lent as celebrated in the Maronite Church, and there was plenty of time for reflection, meditation, and fellowship.

Our wonderful retreat started with Saforo in the chapel of the Shrine followed by a continental breakfast of delicious Middle Eastern cuisine. Group sessions included engaging conversations between Fr Jacques Kik and the nearly 30 attendees as he spoke of the Sundays of Great Lent starting with the Miracle of Cana, followed by the healing of the Leper, healing of the Hemorrhaging Woman, the Parable of the Prodigal Son, the healing of the Paralytic, and finally the healing of the Blind Man. There was a particular focus on the relationship between mothers and sons as seen through the events at Cana between Mary and Jesus. With each gospel, Fr. Jacques drew parallels between the biblical text and modern examples.

After liturgy, lunch, and the second presentation by Fr. Jacques Kik, the attendees had time for prayer, confession, and meditation. The retreat concluded with Ramsho followed by a Lenten meal prepared by the Antonine Sisters and held at the Antonine Village. ■



Parish News

DANBURY, CONNECTICUT

Acts of Kindness

by Dianne Yamin & Natalie Shartouni

The Maronite Youth Organization (MYO) of St. Anthony Church in Danbury, Connecticut, is involved in several church and community "Acts of Kindness" projects that demonstrate their interest in helping others. Knowing parishioners with hearing deficiencies, the MYO members learned to perform "Silent Night" in sign language for the Christmas Eve liturgy. After months of practice under the direction of Robin Moravsky (sign language teacher at Immaculate High School in Danbury), the children felt that this was another way of communicating the Lord's word. This skill strengthened their self-esteem, sensitivity to disabilities, and their ability to tackle daily challenges.



The MYO is active in numerous events and activities including:

- Helping with the church breakfast
- Conducting a Food Drive by collecting and donating nonperishable food items to local food pantries for the less fortunate
- Partnering with the Ladies Guild by decorating cars, distributing candy and collecting monetary donations at the Halloween Trunk or Treat to benefit the "Mission de Vie" charity in Lebanon.
- Participating in the Giving Tree event to provide Christmas gifts for the needy and those serviced by the Department of Children & Families and faith-based Jericho Partnership
- Designing MYO t-shirts with a quote from the young beatified Blessed Carlo Acutis — "To always be close to Jesus is my life's plan." ■

FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

MYO Activities

Co-located with the nation's largest military installation, Saint Michael the Archangel Parish in Fayetteville, North Carolina, has seen an increase of young families with children joining the parish. Father Paul Damien and longtime parishioners have welcomed the growing number of youth into active religious programs including the (MYO) Maronite Youth Organization. In March, four members attended an inspiring MYO Retreat held at Saint Anthony Church in Glen Allen, Virginia. The youth representatives brainstormed ideas for several youth activities to implement in their own churches. St. Michael's MYO participants organized a fundraiser for supplies to decorate and sell Palm Sunday candles. Also, the Ladies Guild and the MYO members planned an Easter Egg Hunt for the younger children. Through donations, they were able to fill and hide over 600 eggs with coins, toys, candy, etc. for the Egg Hunt after the Palm Sunday Liturgy. The Easter Egg Hunt was held on Palm Sunday, because as a military community, many families traveled out-of-town for the Easter holiday. Nearly 50 children were excited to participate in the hunt. St. Michael's parishioners are planning several summer activities for the MYO and younger children. ■



PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Holy Week

by Suzanne Tavani

“Let your light shine before others” is a simple phrase from the Gospel of St. Matthew that represents the 2022 Lenten Season at St. Maron Church in Philadelphia, PA. The Lenten Season revealed a series of community and liturgical events recognizing the talents of the parishioners, honored guests, and community members. Palm Sunday weekend began with St. Maron’s annual Bake Sale featuring fresh pastries baked by the parishioners for the benefit of the church.

Celebrating Hosanna Sunday, young girls and boys dressed in their Sunday outfits, carried candles and palms during the liturgy and in their traditional procession throughout the church neighborhood. Father David Fisher concelebrated the liturgies with Father Andrewos El-Tabchi (pastor) during Passion Week, and he offered insightful thoughts in each homily. He emphasized that Christ’s Cross and Resurrection is not only atonement for our sins, but it opens the gates and glory of God’s Kingdom for us. The weekend festivities concluded with a brunch prepared by the ladies and held in the church hall.

Also, two seminarians from the Maronite Seminary in Washington, D.C., (Subdeacon Christian Hbaiter and Nadim Khaled) were welcomed to participate in the Passion Week activities at St. Maron. Subdeacon Hbaiter assisted Fr. Andrewos and the altar servers as Seminarian Khaled sang beautifully for the services. Nadim also produced several multi-media segments for St. Maron’s social media channels highlighting the deep spiritual meaning of Passion Week. A Good Friday procession through the neighboring streets was followed by a Community Potluck Dinner. ■



SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY

Marfaa Dinner Celebration



The Knights of Saint Sharbel Church (Men’s Group) in Somerset, New Jersey, planned and sponsored the traditional *Marfaa* parish dinner on 26 February 2022. The *Marfaa* is the Arabic term for the last Sunday to eat meat before the beginning of Lent (Ash Monday). The Knights of St. Sharbel slaughtered and cooked three lambs including side dishes such as: kibbeh, grape leaves, and chicken shawarma.

Father Simon Elhadj, pastor, led a prayer of thanksgiving and blessed the food enjoyed by over 140 parishioners and friends gathered in the church hall. Members of the Men’s Group (especially Nassif Maroun, John and Milad Attal, and Maroun Maroun) worked cooperatively to prepare for the *Marfaa* Dinner and a special night of festivities.

Afterwards, the Season of Lent began, and delicious meatless dishes were prepared such as: tabbouleh, labneh, fattoush, spinach pies, majadara, and hummus. These traditions keep the faithful focused on God’s blessings. ■

Parish News

GLEN ALLEN, VIRGINIA

MYO Retreat

After a three-year COVID-induced break, St. Anthony Church, Glen Allen, VA, joyously resumed its annual Maronite Youth Organization (MYO) retreat. With a total of more than 60 MYO members from St. Anthony Church and other invited friends from Our Lady of Lebanon, Washington D.C.; St. Michael The Archangel, Fayetteville, NC; and St. Sharbel, Raleigh, NC; the youth enjoyed reconnecting with each other, meeting new friends and sharing in their Maronite faith.

The theme of the retreat, organized by Cathy George, Carmen Daily and Subdeacon Mike Maynes, was "True Colors of Discipleship." Attendees learned how they can use the strengths of their unique personalities to best serve and glorify our Lord.

Celine Aoun, an MYO member from St. Sharbel shared her excitement upon returning from the retreat by saying, "The retreat was amazing! One of our best experiences by far! We NEED to do this again!"



Chorbishop John D. Faris would like to thank the youth, chaperones, and brother priests Monsignor George Sebaali, Rev. Robert Farah, and Rev. Paul Damien, for making this such an uplifting and spiritually enriching retreat. ■

WASHINGTON, D.C.

'Come & See!'—Maronite Seminary Welcomes Those Discerning the Priesthood

After two years of cancellations, on 18-20 March, Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary welcomed seven young adult men from six parishes in both eparchies Eparchies to "come and see."

The weekend opened with the Divine Liturgy, concelebrated by Msgr. Peter Azar, Rector of the Seminary, Father Armando Elkhoury, Vice-Rector, and Father Dominique Hanna, Vocations Director for the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn.

The next day, a recent alumnus, Fr. Joseph Abisaad, was the principal celebrant and the homilist at the Liturgy. We then headed outdoors to enjoy the beautiful weather, to an illuminating talk by Fr. Dominique Hanna. Following lunch,

the seminarians took the discerning men for a tour of the National Shrine and Basilica of Immaculate Conception, The Catholic University of America (where the seminarians study) and the St. John Paul II Shrine.



The final day included another talk by Fr. Dominique, followed by liturgy at Our Lady of Lebanon Church. After brunch at the Seminary, the discerning men and seminarians visited the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land and the National Mall.

We pray for all those discerning a vocation to the Maronite Priesthood and ask God to continue calling young men willing to be a worker in His vineyard! ■

UNIONTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

Lenten Activities

by Dr. Mabel George Howard

On 24 February 2022, the Maronite Youth Organization (MYO) members of St. George Church in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, gathered for a cultural/ethnic cooking lesson. The children learned to make delicious Lebanese grape leaves. They also played a popular Middle Eastern fishing card game called Bastra. It was a fun and educational meeting.

Also, in February, a group of male parishioners celebrated the ladies of the church with an Appreciation Dinner for their years of hard work and dedication. The men prepared a delectable feast of hors d'oeuvres and main dishes. The church hall was beautifully decorated, and it was a wonderful evening of camaraderie among friends and family. Fathers Aaron Sandbothe (pastor) and El-Badaoui Habib, (former pastor of St. George), joined in the festivities.

The Ladies Guild and Altar & Rosary Society held their second annual "Lenten Fish Fry" every Friday during Lent for parishioners and community members. Take-out and eat-in lunch and dinner meals consisted of fish or shrimp platters with a variety of homemade side dishes. Uniontown's Herald Standard Newspaper recognized St. George Church for being voted "First Place as the Best Church Lenten Fish Fry in Fayette County" in 2021 and again this year in 2022. Following the Lenten dinners, Fr. Aaron heard confessions and celebrated Vespers and the Benediction of the Cross. ■



HOUSTON, TEXAS

The Blessings of Normalcy!

So far 2022 is looking promising and bright after such a difficult and long struggle that the world has faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have finally seen our parish flourish back to the vibrant and active community we so love! All of our groups are back in full swing, the MYKids, MYO, MYA, Dabke Group, Choir, Daughters of Mary, Knights of the Cedars, and our CCE program have not skipped a beat this year!

We have hosted Couples' Encounters, Bible Studies, Sports Tournaments, Outings, Camping Trips, a Fat Thursday Parish Dinner, Fish Fry, Adorations, and Stations of the Cross. Our most recent events—which were notably successful—were two Spiritual Talks, The Ladies' Luncheon supporting the Order of St. Sharbel, Family Retreat, and our Spring Banquet.

Our parish hosted a series of spiritual talks focusing on the transformative power of the Eucharist in our lives. These talks and dinners were attended by nearly 100 parishioners. The sold-out Ladies' Luncheon was the perfect opportunity for the ladies of our parish and their guests to enjoy good company, great food, and entertainment all while supporting the Order of St. Sharbel.

This March, the Family Retreat took place on the first weekend of Spring Break. There were 23 families, over 100 people, in attendance for this beautiful weekend filled with both spiritual and recreational activities. Finally, our Spring Banquet was also a huge success with around 320 people in attendance. During this banquet, Edmond and Aida Issa, along with John and Dr. Souad Massaad were presented with the Patriarchal Medal for their staunch dedication and support of Our Lady of the Cedars.

Our parish cannot wait to see what the rest of the year has in store for us! ■



Passing on the Faith as a Married Couple *by James and Reem Salamy*

In this series, we examine ways to go deeper in our spiritual life. And this year in particular, we are examining ways to pass on the faith. As a married couple, it is so important to grow in faith together and to pass on your faith to your children.

The Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches describes marriage as “a partnership of the whole life, [that] is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the generation and education of the offspring.” (Canon 776)

This beautiful description in our Eastern Catholic Canon Law is expanded upon in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC). Paragraph 2221 teaches that, the marital love between a man and woman does not end with their openness to children but must extend to the moral education and spiritual formation of their children. Paragraph 2223, teaches clearly that, “Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children.”

Paragraph 2225 of the Catechism teaches that, “Through the grace of the sacrament of marriage, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of *evangelizing their children*. Parents should initiate their children at an early age into the mysteries of the faith of which they are the ‘first heralds’ for their children.” This means that, from their birth, parents should bring their children to Church. The sound of children in the Church is a beautiful sound. It indicates that the church is alive and growing, with new life.

Paragraph 2226 of the Catechism continues that, “*Education in the faith* by the parents should begin in the child’s earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. ... Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God.”

How, practically speaking, are parents able to do this?

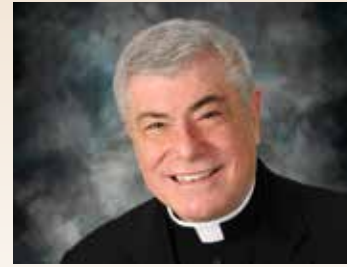
First, parents are to nurture and grow their own spiritual life, both as individuals and as a couple. They are to live and practice their faith daily. They are to attend the Divine Liturgy and the prayers of the Church, regularly and frequently. That is only the beginning, the first step, not the end. In addition, they are to pray, read the Scriptures, and learn the truths of the faith, both individually and together as a couple. This will bring them closer together as a couple and closer to God. God must be a part of their marriage, so that He walks with them every step of the way, each and every day.

Then, from their own life of prayer and knowledge of the faith, which has grown and deepened, parents can teach their faith to their children. Parents cannot give their children what they themselves do not have. Parents, both as individuals and as a couple, must develop their own spiritual lives first, if they want to pass on the faith to their children.

Parents are the first teachers of their children, but not the only. Paragraph 2226 of the Catechism teaches that, “Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. ... The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents.” Therefore, in addition to and after the parents, the Church, through the local parish community, also helps to educate both the parents and the children in the faith, so that all may continue to grow and deepen their faith. Both work together to teach the faith to their children. One cannot solely rely on the other to teach the faith to children.

To receive the gift of faith, children need their parents to plant the seed of faith in their heart and to nurture and support its growth with their own faith and the help of the Church. ■

From the Editor



*M*ay and June are the times of graduations with young people finishing one part of their lives and embarking on another. We need to tell them something.

There are occasions when someone says something much better than I do. (But of course, I want to add something to it.) What follows is a quotation from Admiral William H. McRaven, U.S. Navy Seal (Ret.). The quotes in italics are his; the rest of the text is mine.

***Want to change the world?
Start by making your bed every day.***

The bed represents our personal life, our life with God, our family life. How can we expect to achieve anything in our public or professional life if our personal life, our spiritual life and our family is in disorder? We must make an effort every day to bring order to the intimate aspects of our life. Each day is an occasion when chaos can overtake us.

If you make your bed every morning you will have accomplished the first task of the day. It will give you a small sense of pride and it will encourage you to do another task and another and another.

Making our bed means getting out of it on the right side — with a positive spin on the day, no matter what challenges we face. It means leaving home on a positive note, affirming them as they begin the challenges of their day.

By the end of the day, that one task completed will have turned into many tasks completed. Making your bed will also reinforce the fact that little things in life matter. If you can't do the little things right, you will never do the big things right.

Some of us find ourselves too busy to make our beds. We consider it unimportant — beneath us. We want to focus on the big picture, forgetting that the major accomplishments are simply a series of little accomplishments. Overlooking the little stuff does not mean that we automatically turn to the important matters.

And, if by chance you have a miserable day, you will come home to a bed that is made — that you made — and a made bed gives you encouragement that tomorrow will be better.

Yes, even with a made bed, things go wrong. If our day is filled with negativity, problems and chaos, we can go home to our personal life, represented by the made bed, which is in order, which allows the calm and rest we need to begin again tomorrow.

And to the graduates, it only looks like the end of something. It is actually the beginning of something better. Go with God — but first make your bed. ■

In the fellowship of Christ,



Chorbishop John D. Faris

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