

# *the* Maronite **Voice**



*"This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!"*

(LUKE 9;15)



# the Maronite **Voice**

## BISHOP'S MESSAGE

**5** **God's Plan for Us**  
*by Bishop Gregory J. Mansour*

**6** **Bishops Schedules**

**8** **Transfiguration in the Plan of Love**  
*by Rev. Michael Shami*

## WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY ABOUT

**10** **The Transfiguration of Jesus**  
*by Rev. Timothy V. Vaverek*

## SAINTS BE PRAISED

**12** **Saints in the Maronite Calendar**  
*by Rev. Claude W. Franklin, Jr.*

## WORKER IN THE VINEYARD

**14** **Chorbishop Spinosa  
Forty Years as a Priest—Firm on Faith  
and Tradition**  
*by Brandon Shulleeta*

---

Submissions for the September/October edition of  
*The Maronite Voice* due on 1 September 2023.

## LIVING CHURCH

**16 Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral  
The Mother Church of the Eparchy**  
*by Chet Wade*

**18 Ordinations**

**20 First Holy Communion 2023**

**28 Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon  
2022 Financial Reports**

**33 Parish News**

## GOING DEEPER INTO THE SPIRITUAL LIFE...

**38 Meditating on the Word of God**  
*by James Salamy*

**39 From the Editor**

### THE MARONITE VOICE

A bi-monthly publication of Saint Maron Publications under the auspices of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn and Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles.  
ISSN 1080-9880

#### Publishers

Most Reverend Gregory John Mansour  
Most Reverend A. Elias Zaidan

#### Editor

Chorbishop John D. Faris

#### Managing Editor

Rev. Aaron Sandbothe

#### Art and Design Director

Ms. Glory Rasi

#### Production Coordinator

Subdeacon Michael Maynes

#### Parish News Editors

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

Rev. Pierre Bassil  
(Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon)  
maronitevoicewest@gmail.com

#### Feature Writers

Brandon Shulleeta  
Chet Wade

• In order to be considered for publication, all submissions must be in electronic format and signed by the author with contact information. Images must be of high resolution and quality (minimal 300 dpi, jpg format).

• Subscription rates are \$25.00/year.

• Paid Advertising  
\$150 - Quarter page full color  
\$250 - Half page full color  
\$400 - Full page full color  
Additional discounts for six editions (one year).  
All ads must be submitted electronically. High resolution jpg or PDF with embedded fonts required. No bleeds. Contact TheMaroniteVoice@gmail.com

#### Contact Us

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

#### Office Hours

Monday - Friday | 9 am - 1 pm

Printed in Richmond, Virginia



Church Law includes an official known as a vicar general who is the closest collaborator with the bishop in the governance of the eparchy. During the 2023 clergy convocation, three vicars general came together for a photograph, reflecting service in the Eparchy of Saint Maron that goes back to the 1980's.

**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT,  
CHORBISHOP JOHN D. FARIS,  
CHORBISHOP MICHAEL G. THOMAS,  
AND CHORBISHOP JOSEPH KADDO.**



## The Order of Saint Sharbel New Members

### ANNUAL

**FR. DAVID ABERNETHY** | *Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine* | Duquesne, PA

**HABIB CHAMOUN-FARAH** | *Our Lady of the Cedars* | Houston, TX

**PAUL MAROON** | *Our Lady of Lebanon* | Miami, FL

### PERPETUAL

**MARK BETTERS** | *Saint Teresa of Calcutta* | Conway, PA

**ANNE LEWIS** | *Saint Louis Gonzaga* | Utica, NY

**KENNETH (KJ) NARD** | *St. Maron* | Youngstown, OH

**GEORGE SEMAAN** | *Our Lady of Lebanon* | Lewisville, TX

**GEORGEANN THOMAS** | *Saint George* | Cranston, RI

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](http://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

## Eternal rest grant to her, O Lord.

Bishop A. Elias Zaidan announced the passing of Genevieve Maroun, the mother of Chorbishop Sharbel Maroun, on Friday, 7 July, at the age of 98.

She is survived by her children: Nassif Maroun (Nawal), Lebnan Maroun (Guitta), Reverend Chorbishop Sharbel Maroun, Maroun Maroun (Helene), Violette Abou Jaoude, and Juliette (George) El Kassis, her grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Condolences may be sent to Chorbishop Sharbel Maroun at St. Maron Church, 600 University Ave NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413.

## PASSING OF GENEVIEVE MAROUN

The Funeral Liturgy was held on Monday, 10 July St. Sharbel Church in Somerset, NJ, followed by the burial at Resurrection Cemetery in Piscataway.

In lieu of flowers, the family has asked for donations to be made to St. Sharbel Church or Noursat TV in her memory.

Now, as her heart has stopped beating on earth, it is time for Genevieve to enjoy everlasting life in the Father's home.



# God's Plan for Us

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Outside the home of Muzyad Yakhoob, who later became the most famous Maronite in the United States, taking the name of his two brothers, Danny and Thomas, I remember seeing a plaque that read, "Blessed is he who knows why he was born." Danny Thomas will certainly be remembered, not only for his many television appearances and his wonderful sense of humor, but also for gathering Lebanese, Syrians, and anyone with good will that would help him to establish a "shrine" for Saint Jude. This was from a promise he made when he was young, and in need of a week's salary to raise his family. That "shrine" became known as Saint Jude's Children's Hospital, the most unique hospital for children in the world, where "no child should die in the dawn of life."

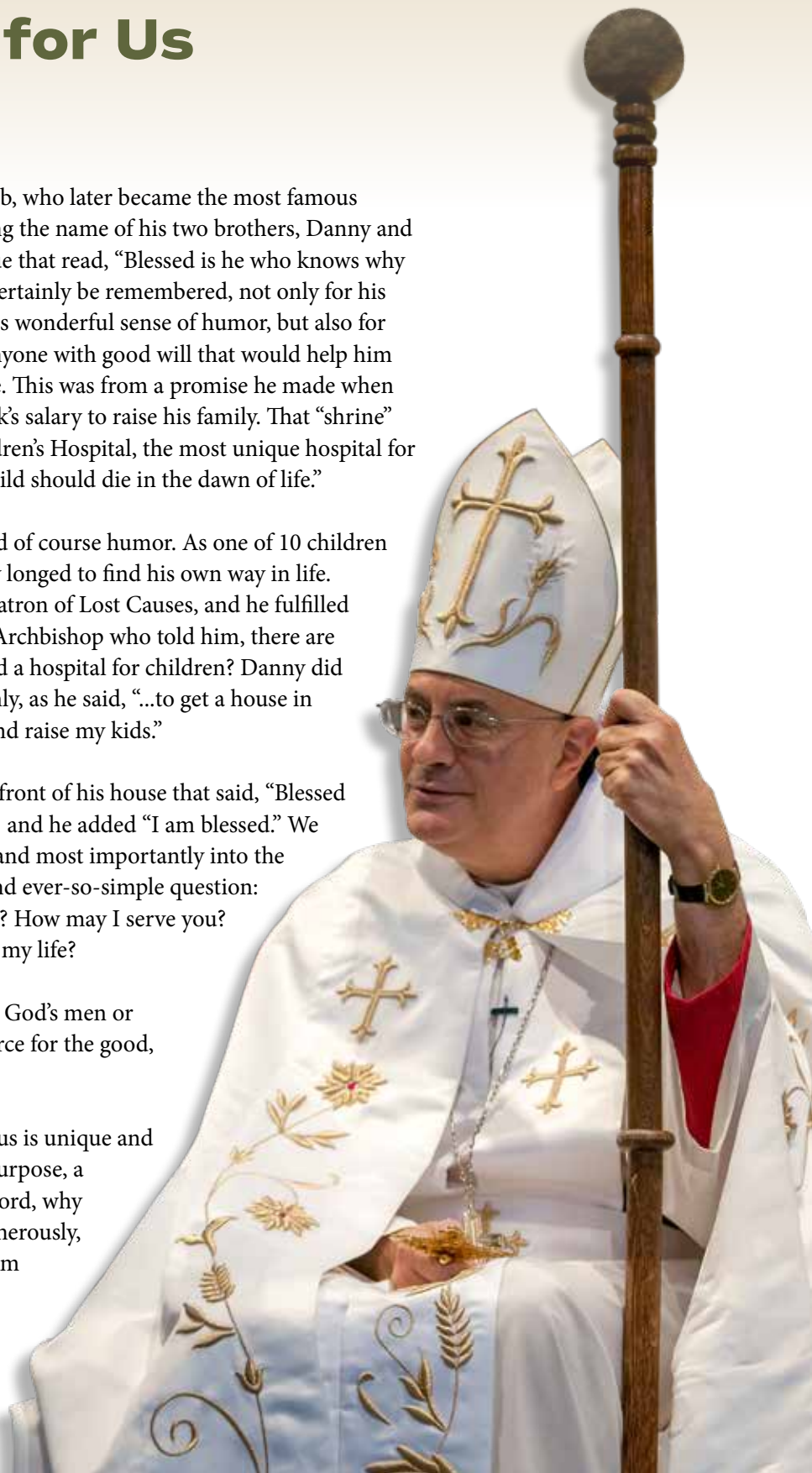
Danny understood family, faith, and of course humor. As one of 10 children growing up in Toledo, Ohio, Danny longed to find his own way in life. He made a promise to Saint Jude, Patron of Lost Causes, and he fulfilled that promise with the advice of an Archbishop who told him, there are already many shrines, why not build a hospital for children? Danny did not pray for fame or fortune, but only, as he said, "...to get a house in the country, buy a station wagon, and raise my kids."

Danny was proud of that plaque in front of his house that said, "Blessed is he who knows why he is born" ... and he added "I am blessed." We too need to search into our hearts, and most importantly into the heart of God, and ask the sincere and ever-so-simple question: Lord, what would you like from me? How may I serve you? How may I accomplish your will in my life?

The essence of our vocation is to be God's men or women in the world, to be God's force for the good, his instruments.

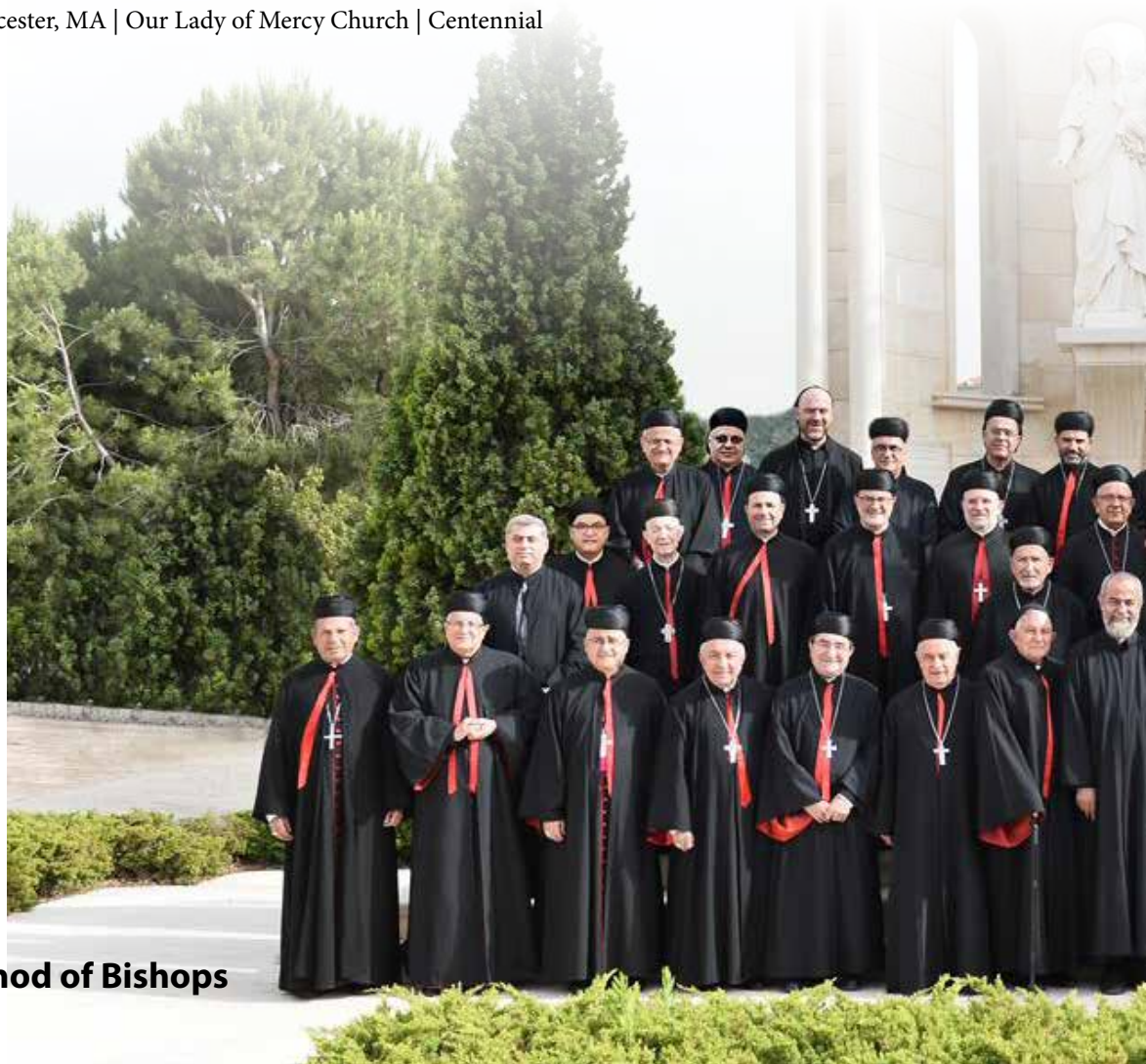
We are not here by chance, each of us is unique and unrepeatable, and we each have a purpose, a mission in life. Let us ask boldly, "Lord, why was I born?" And let us respond generously, as did the prophets of old, "Here I am Lord!" ■

+ Gregory



## Schedule BISHOP GREGORY J. MANSOUR

- 4-5 AUGUST** Brooklyn, NY | Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral
- 11 AUGUST** Baden, PA | St. Theresa of Calcutta Mission | Pastoral Visit
- 12 AUGUST** New Castle, PA | St. John the Baptist Church | Pastoral Visit
- 13 AUGUST** Pittsburgh, PA | Our Lady of Victory Church | Pastoral Visit
- 13-15 AUGUST** North Jackson, OH | Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon | Assumption Pilgrimage
- 20 AUGUST** Brooklyn, NY | Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral
- 24-27 AUGUST** Flint, Michigan | Home Visit | 50th Class Reunion
- 3 SEPTEMBER** Brooklyn, NY | Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral
- 7 SEPTEMBER** Fall River, MA | St. Anthony of the Desert Church | First Vows of Mary Lattouf
- 9-10 SEPTEMBER** Brockton, MA | St. Theresa Church | Pastoral Visit
- 12 SEPTEMBER** Virtual | Eparchial Finance Council Meeting
- 16 SEPTEMBER** Lawrence, MA | St. Anthony Church | Presbyteral Ordination of Deacon Christian Hbaiter
- 17-25 SEPTEMBER** Sydney, Australia | Meeting of the Maronite Bishops of the Expansion
- 30 SEP-1 OCT** Fayetteville, NC | St. Michael the Archangel Church | 50th Anniversary
- 3 OCTOBER** Virtual | Presbyteral Council Meeting
- 5 OCTOBER** Manhattan, NY | Eparchial Benefit Dinner
- 7-8 OCTOBER** Worcester, MA | Our Lady of Mercy Church | Centennial



**2023 Synod of Bishops**

## Schedule BISHOP A. ELIAS ZAIDAN

- 6 AUGUST** St. Louis, MO | St. Raymond Cathedral
- 12-15 AUGUST** North Jackson, OH | Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon | Assumption Pilgrimage
- 19-20 AUGUST** Minneapolis, MN | St. Maron Church | Pastoral Visit
- 27 AUGUST** Los Angeles, CA | Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon-St. Peter Cathedral
- 28 AUG-7 SEP** Pilgrimage
- 9-10 SEPTEMBER** Austin, TX | Our Lady's Parish | Pastoral Visit
- 11-13 SEPTEMBER** USCCB Administrative Committee Meetings
- 17 SEPTEMBER** Riverside, CA | St. Joseph Mission | Pastoral Visit
- 18-28 SEPTEMBER** Sydney, Australia | Meeting of the Maronite Bishops of the Expansion
- 3 OCTOBER** Washington, DC | USCCB Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development
- 4 OCTOBER** WASHINGTON, DC | USCCB Committee on International Justice and Peace
- 6 OCTOBER** Simi Valley, CA | Sts. Peter and Paul Church | Annual Banquet
- 7 OCTOBER** North Jackson, OH | Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon | Deacons and Subdeacons Retreat
- 8 OCTOBER** Fairlawn, OH | Our Lady of the Cedars of Lebano | Pastoral Visit and Ordination to the Subdiaconate of Charles Abraham
- 8 OCTOBER** Cleveland, OH | Maronite Catholic Foundation Board Meeting



# Transfiguration in the Plan of Love

by Rev. Michael Shami

“Your Lordship does not need our praise nor do you become greater by our thanks.” This is our prayer to God according to the Syriac version of the Anaphora of John Chrysostom.

God existed perfectly before us. So what possible motivation could an all-powerful, all-knowing God have to create humanity in his likeness and place it in Paradise? And then, after the fall from Paradise, what could move him to send thousands of years of prophets, the Law, and eventually come himself to restore humanity to their lost Paradise even at the cost of his own humiliation and agonizing crucifixion? The Syriac Fathers resound with the only answer that would make sense: love.

Rather than remain totally hidden and inaccessible, our God is known as “God-with-us” (ISAIAH 7:14) because he continually makes himself present throughout time in his love for humanity so that the same love could be known and shared by us. He does so with a great humility because love can only be voluntary — in a way, the Great One makes himself vulnerable to us, who can reject, ignore, and disrespect him. But God does so happily to make himself present among us. For this reason, the Incarnation, God becoming man, is the greatest completion and summary of all revelation: God comes down in his love that we might know and love him too.

In the Syriac tradition, each moment of the Incarnation not only helps us to know God’s love in a particular way, but also changes the very fabric of reality, lifting it up to him. In the liturgical feasts, we remember these events. For example, on Christmas, we celebrate God born as man, when the ancient and unseen God became flesh and walked among us, uniting his divinity to our humanity. On Epiphany, we celebrate the All-Pure

One’s entrance into the Jordan’s waters for baptism, not because he needs to be cleansed but to give us a humble example that we might clothe ourselves in him through baptism (GAL. 3:27). On Easter, we celebrate the Immortal One’s resurrection from Sheol, and his destruction of sin and death for us who follow him. On 6 August, we celebrate a lesser-known feast of the Transfiguration, which deserves the question: what event of the life of Christ does it celebrate? Why did Christ do it? How does it relate to the love of God?

The Gospels of Matthew (16), Mark (8) and Luke (9) precede the Transfiguration by Jesus telling his friends and disciples, who have grown to love him over the course of his public ministry, that he would be killed. Matthew and Mark recount how after this revelation, Peter scolds Jesus, refusing to accept the prediction that his dear teacher and friend would be taken from them. Peter did not understand yet what it meant — Jesus was not speaking morbidly, but in love:

The love of the Father surrendered His Son to be a sacrifice for sinners and that all of creation should be forgiven by Him.

The love of the Son led Him to death and crucifixion; because of love He accepted to bear the suffering of the whole world.

Because of His love, He embraced the column like a guilty man, and accepted to be spat upon and slapped by the wicked.

Sarug, *On the Transfiguration*

But the salvific nature of the life of Christ was not yet clear — even to Peter, who just professed that Jesus is the Messiah, before rebuking Jesus for predicting his own death.





We know now that Jesus being crucified was not just the sad execution of an innocent man, but the self-sacrifice of God for the forgiveness of the sins of the world. Jesus wished to make this clear to his disciples before his death as well:

For the sake of His love, He willed to show His love on the mountain [of Tabor] that He should fill His disciples with wonder, and then He would suffer.

Regarding the fact that our Lord showed His glory on the mountain, the word stirs in me with great love to speak.

—Sarug, *On the Transfiguration*

Mount Tabor is where Jesus led Peter, James and John, and shone in dazzling light, having a conversation with the ancient prophets Moses and Elijah. Seeing Christ speak with Moses and Elijah like two old friends showed the disciples that Christ was on the level of the greatest prophets who conveyed the Law and defended the faith of God — in fact, Christ is the God who gave Moses the Law and sent Elijah to bring Israel back to faith in God. Seeing how broken his friends were by the news of his death, Jesus transfigured in bright light

and prophetic conversation so that “They were lit afire by the love of the light which they saw there lest the sadness of the crucifixion consume them” Sarug, *On the Transfiguration*.

The God who triumphed in ages past, over all the enemies of his people, leading the Hebrews from Egypt and preserving them through the ages was the same Christ with them at that moment. As Jacob of Sarug imagines Peter saying “Unless [Christ] willed it, the Cross would not have carried the great pillar of fire, which just appeared to us.” Moses was led in the desert and defended from the Egyptians by a pillar of fire; Elijah’s sacrifice, in his showdown with the priests of Baal, was consumed by a pillar of fire. Now Jesus appeared in a pillar of fire on Tabor to show he would not die in vain but for love of the world. And just like in the time of Moses and Elijah when he did not abandon his people to be destroyed by their enemies, Jesus would not abandon his beloved friends and disciples to the final enemy: death. Rather, he showed on Tabor that his love would transform even the worst of situations into the glory of the Kingdom for those who follow him. ■

*Fr. Michael Shami, a priest of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, is a doctoral student at Notre Dame University*

## The Transfiguration of Jesus

by Rev. Timothy V. Vaverek

“Jesus took Peter, John, and James and went up a mountain to pray. While he was praying, his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white. [...] Moses and Elijah appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem.” Thus, St. Luke begins his account of the Transfiguration, an event which revealed Jesus’ identity and mission to the Apostles but which they understood only after his Resurrection. Our celebration of this feast on 6 August invites us to ponder its meaning.

Jesus takes his three closest Apostles with him to pray. This calls to mind his actions during his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. They are leaders among the twelve—especially so with Peter. Christ wants them to share these intimate moments of prayer and to be his

witnesses. He knows they will not grasp the meaning until later. That’s often how it is with our encounters with God. They take place, we perceive that something important has happened, and only with time do we begin to understand what God has done.

Jesus is transfigured before them. As the son of Mary, he is truly human. As God the Son, he is truly divine. While the Apostles look on, the glory of Christ’s divinity radiates through his body and soul, transforming his appearance (even that of his clothing). This is the glory Isaiah briefly glimpsed in his vision of the heavenly throne when the angelic hosts cried out “Holy, Holy, Holy.” It’s the glory that Moses saw in the Tent of Meeting and that left its reflection on his own face after he spoke to God as one



friend to another. It's the glory that would soon radiate from the crucified and risen body of our Savior when he took his place eternally at the right hand of the Father. Perhaps the Apostles recall these events, but most likely they're simply overcome with awe at the beauty and majesty of the transfigured Christ.

Then Moses and Elijah, too, appear in glory. Moses, of course, was the leader God chose to lead his people from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. It was through Moses that God established the Old Covenant at Sinai and gave the Law. Elijah was the great prophet sent by God to call his wayward people back to Himself. In order to overthrow the false worship of the pagan god Baal, Elijah had offered in the presence of the people the sacrifice which God received by sending down fire from heaven.

Moses had died and was buried before the people entered the Promised Land, but a tradition held that his body was taken up by God. At the end of Elijah's ministry, he was taken up in the Chariot of Fire. Standing in the glory of the transfigured Christ, they begin to converse with Him.

They speak about his "exodus" which is soon to be accomplished in Jerusalem. This exodus will be a New Passover, leading by way of a New Covenant from slavery to sin and death to the new life of the Promised Land of Heaven.

The Old Passover began with the sacrifice of the Passover ("Paschal") Lamb whose blood protected the Jews' lives and whose flesh, together with unleavened bread, became their nourishment as they were liberated from Egypt. Jesus would soon be revealed as the true Paschal Lamb whose body and blood is offered for us as a sacrifice of love on the Cross and given to us so that we might share his divine life here on Earth as we journey to Heaven.

The Old Covenant was established by sacrifice at Sinai and expressed in the Law. Through the prophets, God had promised to do something new that would create a New Covenant. He would give us new hearts, pour out his Spirit, write his Law within our hearts, and wed his people to Himself in lasting fidelity. God offers us this New Covenant through our union in body and soul with Christ. Jesus' loving sacrifice offered on the Cross established that Covenant and remains forever the source of our life and salvation. Making his "Passover" by way of the Cross and grave, Christ ascended to glory and sent the Holy Spirit so that we might be united to him as members of his Body and Bride, the Church. Because God now dwells in us and we in Him, we are able to love even as he has loved us. That is the New Law of the Eternal Covenant.

These are the wonderful realities that Moses, Elijah, and Jesus were discussing; realities whose beauty even now far exceeds our ability to fully perceive or appreciate. What an immeasurable gift for those long-departed, faithful servants. All they had lived and labored for in life and all they had prayed for in the afterlife was about to be fulfilled. And Jesus allowed Peter, John, and James to be present as witnesses to this moment in preparation for the harrowing events that awaited them all. Understandably, they were overwhelmed and didn't know what to make of it.

In his mercy, God left the Apostles with the one message they could understand: "This is my beloved Son, listen to Him." They had experienced more than they knew; they would have much more to experience and to learn as the years passed. The same is true for us all. How could it be otherwise given the greatness and beauty of God and the love he has for us? But in his mercy, we know him and love him enough to listen to Him. One day, we'll be overwhelmed with the joy of seeing him and learning what it all means. ■

*Fr. Timothy V. Vaverek is the author of the recently published book, As I Have Loved You: Rediscovering our Salvation in Christ*

## Saints in the Maronite Calendar

by Rev. Claude W. Franklin, Jr.

### July – Holy Martyr Nohra

On 22 July, the Maronite Church commemorates the *Holy Martyr Nohra*, whose name in Syriac means “Light” (*Lucius* in Latin and *Phocas* in Greek). In consideration to his name and one of the acts from his life, he is considered in Lebanon as the patron saint for “Healing of the Eyes.”

Saint Nohra came from the city of Manhur in Persia (though some accounts indicate his origins are in Damanhur, Egypt). Nohra was born into a pagan family and had a brother named Qanun and a sister named Teqla. Nohra had a love of knowledge, so his parents prepared him to be a teacher of philosophy. In this role Nohra began to ask questions about the pagan gods and idols, such as: “Why do they not move? Why do they not respond? etc.”



The accounts which place Nohra in Egypt speak of an Alexandrian Christian who taught him about Christianity. Soon after, Christ Himself appeared to Nohra, revealing Himself as the giver of true wisdom and mercy, and the Lord of the Resurrection of the living and the dead. Nohra understood that his conversion required self-denial and abandonment of family and that he had to take up a cross that might end in martyrdom. Jesus promised that Nohra would destroy idolatry with his gift of wisdom. Nohra, having come to belief in Christ, converted his family, and after they were all baptized, he bid them farewell.

Nohra began preaching in Alexandria, and through his persuasive arguments, converted the people of the city. The governor allowed the Christians to build churches and celebrate their church services. Soon after Emperor Diocletian appointed Duqianus as ruler of the East and began a persecution of the Christians, so Nohra decided to meet with Duqianus. Along the way, Nohra passed through Gaza, Ashkelon, Ramleh, Acre, and then Tyre in Lebanon, baptized thousands, and built a Church dedicated to the Virgin Mary in Tyre.

The king of Byblos heard of Nohra and summoned him. Nohra preached to the king, who was baptized, along with many of the king’s men. Duqianus heard that Nohra was there and had him questioned. Learning that Nohra was intent on destroying the idols, Duqianus had him tortured in Samar Jbeil. In response, Nohra made the sign of the cross over a pagan temple and all the statues fell to the ground.

Duqianus had Nohra tortured again, including having his eyes gouged out, but our Lord healed Nohra. There was a blind and crippled man whom Nohra healed, and those present became Christians. Finally, Duqianus had Nohra beheaded on 22 July 503. There are 24 churches dedicated to Nohra in Lebanon, and especially in Samar Jbeil, traditional place of Nohra’s martyrdom. May his prayers be with us!

## August - Maccabean Martyrs

On 1 August, the Maronite Church commemorates the Maccabean Martyrs, known in the Maronite Church as *Saint Shmouni and Her Seven Sons*, which is also the beginning of the “Fast of the Dormition” (1-15 August).

At the end of Chapter 6 of the *Second Book of Maccabees*, a Jewish Elder, Eleazar refused to eat pork and was martyred, for his Jewish faith, by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The account also mentions a woman with her seven sons, “It also happened that seven brothers with their mother were arrested and tortured with whips and scourges by the king to force them to eat pork in violation of God’s law.” (7:1) Like Eleazar before them, they refused to eat the pork and each of them were tortured and eventually martyred for their faith, beginning with the eldest son to the youngest son, their mother watching on and encouraging them in their steadfast faith. Finally, the mother herself was martyred. (2 MACC. 7: 1-42)

Other versions of this account exist in non-canonical works, such as *IV Maccabees* and *Josippon*, which give some additional details, but the basic account is the same.

The deaths of Eleazar, the unnamed woman and her sons, became an inspiration for Jewish faithful to be willing to suffer torture and martyrdom for their Jewish Faith. The early Church also sought inspiration from them and saw them as “Pre-Christian Martyrs.”

While the woman and her seven sons are not named in any canonical account, other sources and traditions have set out to “name the nameless.” In the *Lamentations Rabbah* (a Jewish writing), she is known as “Miriam.” In Greek Tradition, she is known as “Solomonina.” *Josippon* names her “Hannah.” The Syriac Tradition (and Armenian Tradition via the Syriac Tradition) named her “Shmouni.”

There are various theories as to the meaning of the name “Shmouni,” none of

them certain. Its earliest appearance in Syriac tradition is in Aphrahat’s *Fifth Demonstration*, where in describing a prophecy of the Prophet Daniel, Aphrahat states: “It was fulfilled at that time, when the old and aged Eleazar and the Blessed Shmouni’s Sons, who were seven in number, were put to death.” Likewise, Saint Ephrem wrote a *Madrosho* entitled simply: “On the Sons of Shmouni.”

In later Greek and Syriac traditions, each of the “Seven Sons” is given a name and are found first in *VI Maccabees* (12th-13th century), which is an anonymous Syriac narrative poem (*Memro*) on the “Martyrdom of Eleazar and the Woman with Seven Sons”. It gives the names of the sons as: *Gadai, Maqbai, Tarsai, Hebron, Hebson, Bakhous and Yonadab*.

Likewise in the Maronite tradition, we find in the *Maronite Fenqitho of Lilyo* for the “Feast of Saint Shmouni and her Seven Sons”:

“These are the names of the Seven Martyrs, the Sons of Shmouni: first among them, his name is *Habroun*, the most illustrious martyr; second, his name is *Hebsoun*; third, the holy *Bakhous*; fourth, the illustrious martyr *Adai*; fifth, *Tarsai*; sixth, *Maqbai*; and seventh, *Yawnothon*; Alleluia and Alleluia, may their prayers be with us! ■

*Fr. Claude W. Franklin, Jr., is pastor of Saint Joseph in Olean, NY.*



## Chorbishop Spinosa Forty Years as a Priest—Firm on Faith and Tradition *by Brandon Shulleeta*



For Chorbishop Anthony Spinosa, “things were very traditional” when he grew up in Boston, Massachusetts.

He was part of a tight-knit family of Catholic, Italian-Americans. And in his world, priests and nuns were admired, and they had a lot of influence on him.

“Like a lot of younger kids, I thought, ‘Geez, this would be something wonderful to do.’ Never thought it would happen because you have to be real smart, they say, to be a priest. I’m not so sure that’s completely true. But it was one of those things where you wanted to emulate the clergy but you never felt that you could do that,” Chorbishop Spinosa said.

In his youth, he imagined having some sort of role in the Catholic Church, figuring at times that maybe he’d become a Franciscan.

In his late-20s, the lifelong Catholic was working in accounting when he met a group of Maronite Catholic priests. He hadn’t been particularly familiar with the Maronite Rite before meeting those men, but it didn’t take him long to feel connected.

“I found, well, you know, there isn’t a whole lot of difference between the Italians and the Lebanese,” he said.

The priests suggested he talk with a bishop in June 1978, and by the time that conversation was over, the

bishop told him he needed to listen to the calling from the Blessed Mother and start seminary in just a few months, in September. Chorbishop Spinosa did exactly that, and it's now been 40 years since he was ordained a priest.

For Chorbishop Spinosa, his role is fitting as the pastor for the Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in North Jackson, Ohio.

He's articulate, deliberate with his words, humble and patient — though he says that patience has come with age. He also holds firm on a belief that the Catholic Church must not bend with the whims of the modern secular world. He said the people who attend liturgy at the Basilica are serious about religion and appreciate the traditional approach, “especially with all of the crazy stuff going on in the world.”

“You have people who are proposing things that are contrary to the faith because they think the Church needs to adapt to the world, the secular world,” Chorbishop Spinosa said.

“We don't introduce novelties into the liturgy. We don't make it entertaining. We're here to worship God, and people who come here appreciate that,” Chorbishop Spinosa said. “People who come to the shrine do not want to see that arm waving stuff. They want to be able to worship God, and they want to do it with a certain dignity, and our liturgy allows them to do that.”

Chorbishop Spinosa, who just recently celebrated his 40th anniversary of priesthood, said the Basilica isn't a traditional parish church. Instead, there are some churchgoers who are longtime regulars, but there are also many people who are visitors.

On Sundays, Chorbishop Spinosa leads two liturgies with the morning liturgy typically attracting about 50

to 100 people. Daily liturgy brings in about 20 to 50 people usually, said Chorbishop Spinosa, adding that the smaller crowds create a more participatory feeling.

He's been the pastor of the Basilica for 21 years. Before that, he was the priest at Our Lady of Lebanon in Flint, Michigan, for 15 years. And he had been the priest at St. Jude Maronite Catholic Church outside of Salt Lake City, Utah, for over four years.

“The people make a good priest. They help a great deal,” he said, noting great relationships he's had with faithful churchgoers, some of whom he called more religious than himself.

He added that to be a good priest, the priest has to “pray well.” “If the priest does not pray well, the people will not pray well ... because he becomes the leader, and they take their example from him,” he said.

Even as the world and the Church face difficulties nowadays, he urges Catholics to hold onto their faith.

“Well, I think we have to realize first of all that the world is hostile to the Church. The world is hostile to faith. Always has been,” he said. “They were hostile to Jesus, and they were hostile to the apostles. So, there is always going to be a time of difficulty for the Church, but we don't let that get us down.”

Chorbishop Spinosa said there have been 2,000 years of ups and downs within the Catholic Church, but Catholics must persevere. “I just think we have to be able to encourage people. Yes, times are difficult, and there are people who would like to destroy the Church. Well, they haven't done it in 2,000 years, and Christ is not going to allow that to happen now.” ■

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

# Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral

## The Mother Church of the Eparchy

by Chet Wade



he unusual is the usual for the parishioners of Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Cathedral in Brooklyn, N.Y.

The cathedral serves as the “seat” of the eparchy. The parishioners get to see and hear regularly from Bishop Gregory Mansour, who is their pastor as well as the leader of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn. When he is not traveling to the eparchy’s 45 other parishes and missions in the eastern United States for other duties, Bishop Gregory presides over liturgies at the cathedral.

“It’s almost a matter of fact,” Salma Vahdat, a lifelong parishioner, said of having Bishop Gregory present. “He mixes very well with everybody. They love him to death.”

Our Lady of Lebanon also gets more than its share of well-known visitors. They include the Maronite patriarch, bishops and archbishops from the Latin Catholic Church, and leaders of other Christian and non-Christian faiths. The patriarch of the Armenian Catholic Church in September will celebrate the wedding of his nephew, a Maronite Catholic, at the cathedral.

But for parishioner Marian Ciaccia, what matters most are the people of Our Lady of Lebanon. She remembers how other parishioners helped her overcome the death of her husband.

“It is my home,” she said. “It is a very warm parish. The parishioners are always there to help you.”

Bishop Gregory agrees. “What is special about the cathedral is the people,” he said. “The people we have here are great. We priests come and go, but the people make it special. I am quite fond of them. They have a deep spirituality, a deep sense of family.”

Cathedral Rector, Father Dominique Hanna, says being a part of a parish that is also a cathedral is not that different. “At the end of the day, it’s another parish but it’s the parish of the bishop,” he said.

Maronites trace their roots in New York City to 1890 and soon after established St. Joseph Maronite Church in Lower Manhattan. While St. Joseph’s remained in Manhattan, Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Church was founded across the East River in Brooklyn in 1903 to serve the growing Maronite population there. It was started in a large brownstone building at 295-297 Hicks Street by Father Khairallah Stephen.

As Maronites in Manhattan moved to Brooklyn, St. Joseph’s was sold to the Archdiocese of New York.

Maronites from the Middle East continued to gravitate to the Atlantic Avenue neighborhood of Brooklyn in the 1930s, making it a thriving community. The church outgrew the original location and found a new, larger home when it purchased the former Church of the Pilgrims (Congregational) in Brooklyn Heights in 1944.

The church became a cathedral in 1977 when the Eparchial See of the Diocese of St. Maron – USA was transferred from Detroit. It remained a cathedral when the Diocese of St. Maron was divided in two, the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles and the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn.

Parishioners are proud of the cathedral. Completed in 1846, it was designed by prominent architect Richard Upjohn. After the purchase, renovations were undertaken. The bronze main entrance doors came from the famed French luxury liner *Normandie*. Stained glass windows were also installed and then updated.





Bishop Gregory describes himself as “more of a grandfather than a father” for the parish. He leaves the day-to-day operations and decisions to the cathedral rector, Father Dominique and the assistant rector, Father Chuck VanHeusen. They are assisted by Subdeacon Norbert Vogl and Subdeacon Adonis El-Asmar.

Additional rounds of migration and the traditional New York challenges of traffic and parking have impacted the parish.

“The population of the church, the community of the church, was starting to wane some years back because my generation and our children’s generation were moving away from this area, going to the suburbs and other states,” Salma said.

“And then the (Lebanese) Civil War (beginning in 1975) came and suddenly there was a boom. People were escaping the war and coming to New York. And what was the first thing they did? They looked to see where is my community, where is my church. So, they came here.” With no dedicated parking, street parking is at a premium, it puts a strain on parishioners who must drive to the cathedral, Ciaccia said. Past efforts to build a parking deck and to acquire a parcel next door were rebuffed. There is no room for an annual food and culture festival, she said.

An annual St. Maron’s Day gala is held at the church, but many of the parish events must be held elsewhere. For

example, the Knights of St. Maron are sponsoring a parish picnic in September on Staten Island.

Ciaccia said many parishioners also try to attend the Eparchy of St. Maron Annual Benefit Dinner in Manhattan in the Fall.

Other parish organizations include the Pastoral Council, Financial Council, Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception, the Maronite Youth Organization, the Maronite Young Adults, Maronite Catholic Formation, and choir.

Parish membership totals about 500 families but the traffic and parking challenges limit attendance. About 150 families are active on a weekly basis, Father Dominique said.

But that does not prevent more than 1,000 parishioners from packing the cathedral in reuniting for the Palm Sunday and Great Friday services. As Salma puts it, “You couldn’t even fit in a gnat.” ■

*Chet Wade has worked for more than 45 years in mass communications. He and his wife Mary Lou recently returned to his hometown of Pittsburgh and Our Lady of Victory Church.*



# Ordinations

## Fr. Peter Raad and Fr. George Elandary

On Sunday, 7 May 2023, Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Lewisville, TX, which began officially as a mission in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, in 1990, rejoiced as two of her sons, Deacons George Elandary and Peter Raad, were ordained to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ at the hands of Bishop A. Elias Zaidan. Over 30 years had passed since then-Father Zaidan would make the long monthly journey from San Antonio to celebrate the Divine Liturgy and support the Maronite community in the Dallas area that included the Elandary and Raad families! This sense of history and the powerful work of the Holy Spirit in the development of the parish was palpable as over 500 members of the community and their guests filled the Church and the narthex to mark the occasion of offering two married men to the Priesthood of the Maronite Church.

Joining Bishop Zaidan were Father Assaad ElBasha, MLM, Pastor of Our Lady of Lebanon in Lewisville, who for several years had been accompanying Father George and Father Peter and preparing them for their priestly vocation. Also concelebrating were Father Elias Sleiman, MLM, Father Milad Yaghi, MLM, Father Gilbert Walker, CM, Father Mark Garrett, and Father Abbot Peter Verhalen, O. Cist.

The people's prayers and the choir's chants continued throughout the Liturgy, and once Father George and Father Peter were vested and presented, the Church erupted in lively clapping and even the traditional ringing 't'alghoota' (joyful trilling). The smell of incense accompanied the solemn procession in which Father George and Father Peter, led respectively by Father ElBasha and Abbot Verhalen, carried the Eucharist in their respective veiled chalices over their heads. Bishop Zaidan had earlier reminded the newly ordained priests and the community that by carrying the Holy Eucharist on his head, the priest is reminded that he is ordained as the servant of Christ's Sacraments in order to minister to the people whom God entrusts to him.



After the Liturgy, Father George and his wife Cosette and Father Peter and his wife Jocelyne stood in Narthex to receive the warm wishes of family, friends, and parishioners. Many asked for and received a first blessing from the new priests. Afterwards, Father George and Father Peter joined the community in an overflowing and beautifully decorated hall where the ladies of Our Lady of Lebanon Church had prepared a sumptuous banquet of traditional Lebanese hot dishes and finger foods.

Both newly ordained priests are professionals who have worked for decades in the Dallas area. Father George is a practicing chiropractor and nutritionist while Father Peter is a professor of mechanical engineering at SMU. Father George and his wife Cosette are immigrants from Lebanon, and have been blessed with three beautiful children, and have been members of Our Lady of Lebanon in Lewisville for many years. Father George's family lineage goes back to the Massabki Brothers! Father Peter and his wife Jocelyne are also immigrants from Lebanon where they were married in 1982. They have four grown children whom they raised in the Catholic faith while serving in various ministries in the Diocese of Dallas. They are the proud grandparents of one grandson and are praying for many more.

Praise be to the Lord of the Harvest Who blesses us with His graces and ordains for us priests who give us His Sacraments. Our Patroness, Mary Mother of God, pray for us! ■

## Deacon Alejandro Landin

As Our Lady's Maronite Parish in Austin, TX, celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, Sunday 28 May marked yet another milestone in the church's rich history of vocations to ministry. Alejandro Landin, one of its own parishioners, was ordained to the Order of Deacons by the imposition of hands of Bishop Elias Zaidan. Alejandro was joined by his parents, Alolfo and Dianna, family members along with many seminarians who came to share with him this special day. Father Jim Olnhausen and Father Jim Garcia served along with Chorbishop Don Sawyer as sponsors in Deacon Alejandro's ordination.



When talking about his calling to the priesthood, Deacon Alejandro recalls "a conversation with a Latin seminarian who asked him if he had ever considered becoming a priest. It was a conversation that changed his life."

While discerning his vocation at the Latin Church to which he belonged, Deacon Alejandro mentioned that "his attraction to the rich Maronite heritage would make him go twice on Sundays to church so he won't miss the Maronite Liturgy. The typology which the Maronite Church is known for, the music in the Maronite Liturgy and the people at Our Lady's Parish have stolen his heart and after much thinking, he chose to serve the Maronite Church and its people."

Deacon Alejandro Landin, may Our Lord and God guide your steps as you embark in this spiritual journey. ■

## Fr. Christopher Nahra

On 3 June 2023, Deacon Christopher Nahra was ordained to the Order of Priests at St. Maron Church in Cleveland, OH. Through the imposition of hands by Bishop Elias Zaidan, the whole Church gathered for this incredible occasion. Along with Bishop Edward Malesic of the Diocese of Cleveland, over 40 priests, deacons, subdeacons, and servers attended the ordination. Msgr. Peter Azar from the Maronite Seminary in Washington, D.C., presented Deacon Christopher, while Father George Hajj was his sponsor. In addition to all the clergy in attendance, over 300 youth/young adults came from across the country. The young adult choir was led by David Farah and Evan Massoud who did a phenomenal job using hymns belonging to St. Maron Parish from over 50 years ago.

After the ordination, the community attended a beautiful reception for Father Chris with speakers from throughout his journey to the priesthood including Rosa Calabria (Youngstown) and George Habbouche (Michigan). The next day, Father Chris celebrated his first Divine Liturgy with the whole community at St. Maron Church. Many thanks to the pastor of St. Maron Parish in Cleveland, Father Elias Yazbeck, who coordinated the ordination as well as the seminarians from Washington, D.C., who helped with the preparations. Father Elias highlighted one of the factors that made Father Chris' ordination so special by saying, "It was a blessing to have so many of the youth/young adult groups that Father Chris had worked with over the years to come to the ordination for the whole weekend. We wish Father Chris the best in his future ministry – may the Lord watch over him always." ■



# FIRST HOLY *Communion* 2023



## **ST. SHARBEL CHURCH | EL PASO, TX**

Alex Adrian Rodriguez Nieto, Axel Enrique Rodriguez Nieto, Danily Montoyo, Lucas Francesco Veytia Rodriguez, Mia Victoria Flores, Priscila Royo Juarez, Valentina Gonzalez



## **OUR LADY'S PARISH | AUSTIN, TX**

Chorbishop Don Sawyer, Luca Wehbe, Lara Farraj, George Kubelka, Elinor Bihnam, Louie Kubelka, Emma Dubon, Luciano Haddad, Joelle Marawi, and Emma Yaqo



## **HEART OF JESUS CHURCH | FORT LAUDERDALE, FL**

Luke Harb, Ian Ventura, Adele Costa, Josephine Parsons, Elia Rigobello, Kai Ventura, Jacob Ghazal, Carmelo Maggiore, Chorbishop Michael G. Thomas, and Ms. Mayra Molina



**ST. SHARBEL CHURCH | CLINTON TOWNSHIP, MI**

Rebekah Abboud, Lucas Zakar, Noelle Abi-Younes, Vincent Soyad, Lucas Frangie, Lucia Achkar, Christina Agini, Anthony Fares, Gisele Mehanna, Sammy Haddad, Daniel Yousif, Lucas Nasr, Elli Zakar, Maria Harfouch, Sharbel Habchi, Leli Jamil, Natali Jamil, Roselle Nasr, Najoi Sleiman, Jeanette Fakhory, John Paul Srour, Priscilla Almass, Jacob Soyad, Claudia Twal, Raphael Essi, Lilian Frangie, Carson Bittner, Noha Agini, Gianna Neubacher, Deacon Mike Magyar, Chorbishop Alfred Badawi, Deacon Chris Nahra



**ST. ANTHONY CHURCH | CINCINNATI, OH**

Mia Mastori, Matilda May, Asher Smith, Benjamin Smith, Ferris Smith, Serena Francis, Claritta Hajjar, Lea Makoul, Michael Krusling, Cecilia Krusling, Fr. George Hajj, Merryl Smith, Mina Ghazal



**OUR LADY OF LEBANON CATHEDRAL | BROOKLYN, NY**



**ST. STEPHEN CHURCH | CHARLOTTE, NC**

Cole Laurenti, Tiger Mokbel, Luca Casaceli, and Father Rodolph Wakim



# FIRST HOLY Communion 2023



## ST. EPHREM CHURCH | EL CAJON, CA

Allan Alsayegh, Blake Baillargeon, Joseph Battikha, Joseph JD Farrage, Mateo Frangieh, Antoine Barrera-Farris, Isabella Gergy, Noah Kabban, Lazar Matthews, Toni Rahi, Elene Salloum, Merna Salloum, Natalee Yaqoob, Mathew Yakub, Rev. Toufic Nasr, Mrs. Liliane Massery



## ST. ANTHONY | GLEN ALLEN, VA

Francine Maynes, Subdeacon Mike Maynes, Chorbishop John D. Faris, Teddy Snarr, Jacob Walton, Nicholas Edwards, George ChouEIFati, Christian Funk, Asher Mclvor, Andie Yazbeck, Emma Carlson, Emma Atallah



## OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS CHURCH | HOUSTON, TX

Abi Salloum Joelle, Abi Salloum Yeva, Akle Alexander, Basir Nadia, Chehade Michael, Chini Nabil, Dagher Kate Marie, Daher Tatyana, Daher Liana, El-Beaini Felix, Fadel Lauren, Freiha Angela, Ghafari Nicole, Hadshiti Karol, Hanna Keven, Hughes Amyah Noor, Kai Michael, Karzoun Kate, Khreiche George, Magariki Morris, Shaar Vivian, Velasquez Vincent





**ST. RAFKA CHURCH | LIVONIA MI**

Katalia Alamat, Yousif Al-Durzi, Majdi Aleassa, Fadi Ayoub, Gabriel Geara, Alex Haddad, Jewel Hallis, Matyas Hamad, Sleiman Hamati, Stella Hanna, Natalia Ramiz, Dimitry Sarkis, Rev. Dr. Rodrigue Constantin, Alice Bodagh, Rita Richa, and Ritta Sayah



**ST. LOUIS GONZAGA CHURCH | UTICA, NY**

Ryan Vanderzell, Paisely Hanifin, Fr. Boutros El Hachem, Madeline Ionta, Daniel Darjany



**ST. MARON CHURCH | JACKSONVILLE, FL**

Fr. Raymond Khallouf, Antoun Liksa, Bernard Liksa, Emma Antoun, Kate Antoun, Julian Abou Zeid, Laura AlHayek, Elizabeth Zeaiter, Yara Akl, and Madyson El-shabab





# FIRST HOLY *Communion* 2023



**HOLY FAMILY CHURCH | ST. PAUL, MN**  
Mason Brooks, Joey Miller, Miriam Eichstaedt, Cecilia Abbott  
and Gianna Abbott



**ST. GEORGE CHURCH | SAN ANTONIO, TX**  
Felicity Guajardo, Lynn Chahine, Sophia Rocha, Christopher Chalhoub,  
Antoine Wazir, Andrea Wazir, Fr. Charles Khachan,  
Fr. Mhanna Joseph Kallas, Melissa Martinez



**ST. MARON CHURCH | YOUNGSTOWN, OH**  
Sadie Alexander, Aubrey Bako, Anthony Chamoun, Delaney Dohar,  
Anna Godsen, Veronica Hallett, Ethan Reeves, Andrew Scrocco



**ST. ANTHONY CHURCH | SPRINGFIELD, MA**  
Fr. Bassam Saade, Louie Stevens, Alex Stevens, Anthony  
Hannoush, and Joseph Stevens







**ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL CHURCH | FAYETTEVILLE, NC**

Lachlan Dunlop, Joey Ducote, Fr. Paul Damien, and Fr. Jack Morrison



**ST. MARON CHURCH | MINNEAPOLIS, MN**

Lincoln Omelianchuk, Micah Jacob, Talia Al Ahmar, Sama Nachar, Joseph Khoury, Peter Boutros, Chorbishop Sharbel Maroun, Charbel Khoury, Gabriel Gubash, Mrs. Harriett Abdo



**ST. SHARBEL CHURCH | SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY**

Ava Antoinette Roldan, Minerva Tosi, Luke Mansour, Kate Raphael, Jaden Chibli, Yara Hojibane, Lamia Tosi, Nolan O'Brien, Eliana Antonios, Eliza Antoniso, Daniel El Haj, Ivy Alam, Steven Abboud, Peter Lahage, Ashley Machalany, Christine Zeinoun, Deacon Joseph Chibli, Fr. Simon ElHajj, Jason Chedid, Angelo Bechaalany, Daniel Choudair, Clarisse Khater, Kristen Abboud, Jozefano Jacobs, Lucas Noufaily



# FIRST HOLY *Communion* 2023



## **ST. JOSEPH CHURCH | SANDY SPRINGS, GA**

Jake Maalouf, Jude Maalouf, Avagrace Khoury-Mansour, Noah Shamata, Mark Hanna, Sofia Keith, Michael Bourjelli, Subdeacon David Nasser, Fr. Tony Akoury, Masami Uemoto, Deacon Robert Calabrese



## **ST. GEORGE CHURCH | UNIONTOWN, PA**

Bradley George, Brantley Rogers, Kelly Toth, Matthew Schwertfeger, Fr. Aaron Sandbothe, Subdeacon Charles Machesky, Joshua Reed



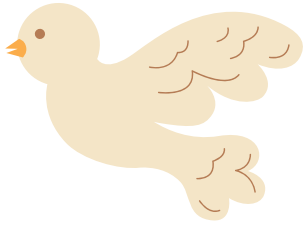
## **OUR LADY OF MERCY CHURCH | WORCESTER, MA**

Joseph Daou, Kate Daou, Chloe Hamad, Ivy Hamad, Juliana Morroe, Liam Zoghbi, and Michael Daou



## **ST. MARON CHURCH | PHILADELPHIA, PA**

Peter Abi Rached, Isabel Neshewait, Nicolai Sudano, Fr. Andrewos El Tabchi, Mateo Ziade, John Paul Chaaya



**ST. RAFKA CHURCH | GREER, SC**  
Jake Saldarriaga, Brave Valitchka, Jacob Oakley, and Jessica Dagher Allen



**ST. JOHN MARON CHURCH | WILLIAMSVILLE, NY**  
Julian Chayban, Edmond Boctor, Sadie Habib, Aminamaria Boulos, Leonardo Khoury, and Aiden Khoury



**ST. JUDE CHURCH | WEST COVINA, CA**  
Subdeacon George Haddad, Fr. Ramsine Hage Moussa, Subdeacon Tony Klaib, Giselle Saab, Houda Jreige Khalil, Marc Yaccoub, Ralph Abdelki, Elias Bahdi, Issa Bitar, Bryan Nader, Jacob Azar, Rita Klaib, Damien Armale, Emily Bahdi, Sasha Maksoud, Joey Assaf



**EPARCHY OF OUR LADY OF LEBANON**  
**Statement of Activity**  
 January - December 2022

		Total
Revenue		
40000 Restricted Income		179,975.00
40100 Bequest		
Total 40100 Bequest	\$	49,268.46
40500 Parish Assessments		585,750.00
40700 Eparchial Appeals		
40702 Lenten Appeal		243,307.50
40705 Christmas Appeal		53,749.75
Total 40700 Eparchial Appeals	\$	297,057.25
41000 Second Collection		
41055 Eparchial Charity		11,255.00
Total 41000 Second Collection	\$	11,255.00
42000 Donation Income		
42100 Individuals		43,470.00
Giving Tuesday		3,695.00
Total 42100 Individuals	\$	47,165.00
42300 Organizations		500.00
Total 42000 Donation Income	\$	47,665.00
44000 Grants Income		
44100 Catholic Extension Grant		5,035.58
44105 Missions		15,000.00
44110 Vocations		5,000.00
44115 Youth Office		5,000.00
44120 Stewardship Office		25,000.00
44125 Fiscal Management		20,000.00
44130 Stipends		11,565.00
44150 Seminarians		46,000.00
44170 Communications Office		20,000.00
Total 44100 Catholic Extension Grant	\$	152,600.58
44200 Bob Baker Foundation		500,000.00
44400 Koch Foundation		10,000.00
44500 Dan Murphy Foundation		
Total 44500 Dan Murphy Foundation	\$	50,000.00
44600 CHM Grant		110,000.00
44950 44950 Zyne Family Foundation		90,000.00
Total 44000 Grants Income	\$	912,600.58
45000 Maronite Voice		651.00
45500 Retreat Income		33,700.00
47500 Religious Articles		725.00
49000 Miscellaneous Income		3,168.00
51000 Eparchial Publications & Media		

51900 Vocation	4,788.15
<b>Total 51000 Eparchial Publications &amp; Media</b>	<b>\$ 4,788.15</b>
52000 Maronite Foundation	
<b>Total 52000 Maronite Foundation</b>	<b>\$ 60,078.50</b>
Life insurance	25,080.00
Mass Stipends	2,000.00
Sacramento Loan Reimbursement	16,500.00
Salary Collected	1,114,897.80
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 3,345,159.74</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>\$ 3,345,159.74</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>	
(R) Restricted Expenses	35,551.81
61000 Grants	
61100 Catholic Extension	1,000.00
61105 Missions	15,000.00
61110 Vocations	25,800.00
61130 Stipends	11,565.00
<b>Total 61100 Catholic Extension</b>	<b>\$ 53,365.00</b>
61300 Dan Murphy Foundation	
<b>Total 61300 Dan Murphy Foundation</b>	<b>\$ 37,500.00</b>
61400 Bob Baker	500.00
<b>Total 61000 Grants</b>	<b>\$ 91,365.00</b>
62000 Eparchial Appeal Disbursements	23,750.00
62100 Missions	4,092.00
62300 Eparchial Offices	
62315 Priestly Vocations	2,849.27
<b>Total 62300 Eparchial Offices</b>	<b>\$ 2,849.27</b>
62400 Brochure Package Printing	31,038.92
62500 Postage	4,687.78
<b>Total 62000 Eparchial Appeal Disbursements</b>	<b>\$ 66,417.97</b>
63000 Charity Expense	
63200 Seminarians	10,000.00
63300 specific purpose	129,133.37
<b>Total 63000 Charity Expense</b>	<b>\$ 139,133.37</b>
<b>Total (R) Restricted Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 332,468.15</b>
(U) Operating Expenses	
72000 Salaries	
72100 Bishop	40,200.00
72300 Chancellor	36,600.00
72500 Administrative Assistant	41,299.96
72550 Fiscal Officer	65,999.96
72575 Director of Communication	59,800.00
72600 Housekeeper/Janitor	16,380.00
72700 Bishop Assistant	14,400.00
72800 Archivist Scanner	8,792.00
<b>Total 72000 Salaries</b>	<b>\$ 283,471.92</b>
73000 Payroll Expenses	49,102.16

<b>74000 Benefits</b>	
74100 Health Insurance	34,135.05
74200 Retirement	120,600.00
74300 Medical Expenses	9,006.98
<b>Total 74000 Benefits</b>	<b>\$ 163,742.03</b>
<b>75000 Building</b>	
75100 Utilities	25,307.97
75200 Telephone & Fax	4,925.11
75300 Maintenance & Repairs	34,929.34
<b>Total 75000 Building</b>	<b>\$ 65,162.42</b>
<b>7600 Insurance</b>	
76100 Liability/Multi-Peril	23,768.00
76200 Volunteer Accident	2,475.00
76400 workers compensation	2,614.00
<b>Total 7600 Insurance</b>	<b>\$ 28,857.00</b>
<b>77000 Office Expense</b>	
77100 Supplies	2,094.01
77200 Office Equipment	3,096.91
77210 Copier Lease	71.48
77215 Postage Meter	2,204.38
77220 Repairs & Maintenance	59.68
<b>Total 77200 Office Equipment</b>	<b>\$ 5,432.45</b>
77300 Subscriptions	37,802.18
<b>Total 77000 Office Expense</b>	<b>\$ 50,113.40</b>
<b>79000 Professional Fees</b>	
79100 Legal Fees	8,097.09
79200 Accounting	24,898.45
79400 Stewardship Office	42,000.00
79600 Archivist	7,950.00
79700 Membership Dues	9,566.00
79800 Other	1,337.78
<b>Total 79000 Professional Fees</b>	<b>\$ 93,849.32</b>
<b>80000 Diocesan Office</b>	
80100 Archivist	2,590.00
80500 Immigration	67,600.00
80600 Ministry	
80620 MYO	2,826.86
80630 MYA	0.00
<b>Total 80600 Ministry</b>	<b>\$ 2,826.86</b>
80700 Office of Protection of Minors	15,320.00
80710 Background Checks	4,647.50
<b>Total 80700 Office of Protection of Minors</b>	<b>\$ 19,967.50</b>
<b>Total 80000 Diocesan Office</b>	<b>\$ 92,984.36</b>
<b>81000 Automobile Expense</b>	
81100 Insurance	7,852.28
81200 Registration/Title	204.00
81300 Maintenance	1,649.03

81400 Fuel	8,677.73
<b>Total 81000 Automobile Expense</b>	<b>\$ 23,183.04</b>
82000 Religious Supplies	10,688.96
83000 Table Expense	36,625.65
83100 Household Expense	7,901.56
84000 Maronite Voice	27,500.00
86000 Real Estate Taxes	13,141.29
86500 Travel/Conference	869.40
86510 Airlines	37,804.29
86520 Accomodations	20,308.22
86530 Fees	5,338.90
<b>Total 86500 Travel/Conference</b>	<b>\$ 64,320.81</b>
86600 Honorariums/gifts	43,130.22
86700 Bank Service Charges	12,669.56
86800 Retreat Expense	
86810 Priests	28,912.71
86820 Deacon/Subdeacon	5,160.52
<b>Total 86800 Retreat Expense</b>	<b>\$ 34,073.23</b>
88000 Seminarian Expenses	
88100 Assistance	42,000.00
88300 Health Ins & Medical Expense	1,567.85
88400 Room & Board and Books	83,683.17
88500 Tuition & Fees	247,509.72
88600 Travel Expense	2,152.28
88700 Miscellaneous	26,418.82
Priests Education	106,860.13
<b>Total 88000 Seminarian Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 510,191.97</b>
90100 Miscellaneous Expense	31,004.90
<b>Total (U) Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,641,713.80</b>
63100 Maronite Patriarcat obligations	
63110 Bishops Retirement Fund-Lebanon	21,000.00
63120 Aid to institutions	10,000.00
<b>Total 63100 Maronite Patriarcat obligations</b>	<b>\$ 31,000.00</b>
65000 Restricted Maronite Foundation	
65100 Maronite Foundation 10% Charity	3,000.00
<b>Total 65000 Restricted Maronite Foundation</b>	<b>\$ 3,000.00</b>
98050 Loan Interest - Knights of Columbus	39,393.48
Payroll Expenses	
Wages	1,225,850.00
<b>Total Payroll Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,225,850.00</b>
Raleigh Home Expenses	20,424.55
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 3,293,849.98</b>
<b>Net Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 51,309.76</b>
Other Revenue	
98150 Dividend Income	15,445.47
<b>Total Other Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 15,445.47</b>
Other Expenditures	

99000 Investment Fees	9,986.60
Mass Stipends Expenses	2,000.00
Transfer to Other Funds	64,776.88
<b>Total Other Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 76,763.48</b>
<b>Net Other Revenue</b>	<b>-\$ 61,318.01</b>
<b>Net Revenue</b>	<b>-\$ 10,008.25</b>

## Maronite Catholic Foundation

### Profit and Loss

January - December 2022

	TOTAL
Income	
42000 Donations	
42100 Individuals	769,757.16
42200 Businesses	13,500.00
42300 Organizations	169,833.00
<b>Total 42000 Donations</b>	<b>953,090.16</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$953,090.16</b>
GROSS PROFIT	<b>\$953,090.16</b>
Expenses	
65000 Bank Charges	7,095.75
66000 Campaign Fees	5,628.59
66500 Disbursement to Eparchy	
Administrative Service	16,065.00
Dividends & Interest Reimbursement	36,639.53
Financial Audit	5,734.77
Travel	1,639.20
<b>Total 66500 Disbursement to Eparchy</b>	<b>60,078.50</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$72,802.84</b>
NET OPERATING INCOME	<b>\$880,287.32</b>
Other Income	
98000 Other Revenue	
98150 Dividend Income	50,273.64
98200 Investment Gains/Losses	14,970.76
<b>Total 98000 Other Revenue</b>	<b>65,244.40</b>
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>\$65,244.40</b>
Other Expenses	
99000 Other Expenditures	
99100 Investment Fees	20,759.42
<b>Total 99000 Other Expenditures</b>	<b>20,759.42</b>
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>\$20,759.42</b>
NET OTHER INCOME	<b>\$44,484.98</b>
NET INCOME	<b>\$924,772.30</b>

## Order of St. Sharbel Trust

### Profit and Loss

January - December 2022

	TOTAL
<b>Income</b>	
Annual Membership	59,656.75
Dividend	73,084.83
Interest Income	5,356.10
OSS Donation	1,825.00
Perpetual Membership	115,500.00
Realized Gain/Loss on Investments	11,960.11
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$267,382.79</b>
<b>GROSS PROFIT</b>	
<b>\$267,382.79</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>	
Bank Charges & Fees	1,683.81
Investment Fees	36,686.53
Medals & Pins	16,272.00
NAM Convention OSS events	3,509.62
Printing & Mailing	1,843.33
Seminarians Expenses	73,782.61
Dividends and Interests reimbursement to Eparchy	81,217.39
<b>Total Seminarians Expenses</b>	<b>155,000.00</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$214,995.29</b>
<b>NET OPERATING INCOME</b>	<b>\$52,387.50</b>
<b>Other Income</b>	
Transfer from Other Funds	64,776.88
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>\$64,776.88</b>
<b>NET OTHER INCOME</b>	<b>\$64,776.88</b>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>\$117,164.38</b>



# Maronite Jewelry

## As unique as it is Beautiful!

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

All available in Gold & Silver

Due to the fluctuation in gold & silver  
please call for daily pricing

Available only at

[cappiellojewelers.com](http://cappiellojewelers.com)

**CAPPIELLO**   
Jewelers

REGISTER *for* OUR  
**MYA Fall  
Conference**

**Richmond, VA  
Oct 13–15, 2023**

**Navigating Relationships:  
God's Plan for Love**



*myaeparchyofstmaron.org/events*  
Hosted by The Eparchy of St. Maron



## Ordinations and Appointments

### Father Peter Raad

**ORDAINED** | 7 May 2023 | Our Lady of Lebanon  
Church | Lewisville, TX

**APPOINTED** | 12 May 2023 | Associate Pastor |  
Our Lady of Lebanon | Lewisville, TX

### Father George Elandary

**ORDAINED** | 7 May 2023 | Our Lady of Lebanon  
Church | Lewisville, TX

**APPOINTED** | 12 May 2023 | Associate Pastor |  
Our Lady of Lebanon | Lewisville, TX

### Father Christopher Nahra

**ORDAINED** | 3 June 2023 | St. Maron Church |  
Cleveland, OH

**APPOINTED** | 5 June 2023 | Associate Pastor |  
St. Sharbel Church | Clinton Township, MI

SAVE THE DATE

OCTOBER 5, 2023



## *Eparchy of Saint Maron*

*14<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit Dinner in New York*

*Honoring Marian Sahadi Ciaccia, Edward Shiner  
and Charbel Tagher*

*The Union League Club  
38 East 37th Street, New York City*

*Details to follow*



# Parish News

## FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA Parish Activities

The May Crowning was held on 7 May 2023, at St. Michael the Archangel Church in Fayetteville, NC. Two young parishioners, Elizabeth Blalock and Cameron Van Wy, were excited to share the honor of crowning the image of the Mother of God. After liturgy on the Feast of Our Lady of Lebanon, the congregation processed in prayer to the Mary Garden for the crowning.

On 20 May, in honor of Mother's Day, the MYO and MYO Juniors spent hours outside the parish social hall detailing vehicles for the mothers. Moms were treated to a delightful brunch while the children washed minivans, passenger cars, and sedans. As a special touch, their vehicles were adorned with amethyst and rosaries were placed on their rear-view mirrors.

A party was held on 16 June to celebrate Father's Day. Parishioners prepared food and organized games for an enjoyable and memorable family event. The men were recognized for dedicating their lives to protecting and guiding their loved ones. Also, a congratulations is extended to Alexander Carswell, a long time parishioner at St. Michael Church.



On several occasions, many parishioners can be seen in front of their local Planned Parenthood establishment in support of Pro-Life. With rosaries in hand, the parishioners and the Knights of Columbus members pray to end abortion and defend the dignity of life.

Finally, a sad farewell, best wishes and prayers are sent to the St. Michael military families located near Ft. Liberty (formerly Ft. Bragg). A special thanks to Nicole Andres, and the Kornbluth, Ducote, Dunlop, and Nelson families for their time and involvement in the Ladies Guild, Knights of Columbus, and Religious Education. ■



## UNIONTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA Ladies Guild Memorial

On 22 May 2023, the St. George Church Ladies Guild in Uniontown, PA, celebrated their annual Memorial Liturgy honoring the deceased members of the Guild. Prior to the liturgy, the ladies recited the rosary and litany offering prayers and thanks for the spiritual, cultural, and supportive contributions of their deceased loved ones. Fr. Aaron Sandbothe blessed the ladies and commented that the Ladies Guild was a strong, powerful, and spiritual force in the church. Following liturgy, the ladies were invited to the church hall for a beautiful candle lighting ceremony for the deceased members of the Guild. A wonderful brunch was provided as the ladies shared conversation and camaraderie. ■

# Parish News

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

## Mother's Day

Fr. Rodolph Wakim and the parishioners of St. Stephen Church in Charlotte, NC, celebrated Mother's Day on 14 May 2023. The Divine Liturgy was offered to honor the women who hold the most important life role as loving, supportive, and compassionate mothers to their children and families. At the conclusion of the liturgy, Fr. Rodolph invited all mothers to gather in front of the altar where he bestowed a special blessing upon them. The mothers were presented with a bouquet of flowers, a Mother's Day Mug, and a Rosary. The mothers appreciated being recognized by their families, Fr. Rodolph, and the congregation. ■



UTICA, NEW YORK

## Parish Feast Day



On 21 June 2023, the congregation of Saint Louis Gonzaga Church in Utica, New York, celebrated the Feast of Saint Louis Gonzaga. The Divine Liturgy was dedicated to honoring the patron saint of the church, Saint Louis Gonzaga, and the first pastor, Father Louis Lotaif. Following liturgy, Fr. Boutros El Hachem and a delegation of parishioners visited the Calvary Cemetery in Utica to offer prayers at Fr. Lotaif's gravesite. Father Lotaif, originally from Lebanon, came to Utica in 1907 to serve the Maronite community. In 1910, the Maronite parish in Utica was established, and Father Lotaif was appointed its first pastor. He oversaw the construction of the first church building, and the parish was named in honor of his patron saint, Saint Louis Gonzaga. Fr. Lotaif faithfully served Utica's Maronite community for 22 years, and the parish flourished under his spiritual leadership. He passed away on 3 May 1929. He was 51 years old. ■

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA  
**Lebanese Festival**

During the weekend of 2-4 June 2023, the streets surrounding St. Maron Church in Philadelphia, PA, were closed to accommodate the parish's annual Lebanese Festival. All parish families were represented, as they worked cooperatively to contribute to this extremely successful event. The parishioners prepared a large variety of home cooked Middle Eastern foods including: grape leaves, hummus, kibbee, beef & chicken kabobs, chicken shawarma, baba ganoush, tabbouli, etc. Sweet treats of baklava, maamoul, aish el saraya, namura, and much more were sold. There were activities and entertainment for everyone such as: 50/50 money raffle, face painting, music, and dancing. The MYA and CCD groups performed the dabke in costume, and the MYO sold popcorn, lemonade, and cotton candy. A highlight of the festival was music and singing by Eddie Osama and Band. Fr. Andrawos El Tabchi, pastor, was overwhelmed with pride as the parishioners and community members worked together for the common good of the church. ■



PORTLAND, OREGON  
**Parish Events and Hafli**



For the first time, The Cedars of St. Sharbel (MYO) Church in Portland, OR, performed a dabke routine delighting their families and the congregation. After their performance, the youth thanked their teacher, Gennifer Karam, and shared words of their gratitude for the learning and social experiences that the youth group provided for them this year. The Cedars of St. Sharbel provides a safe environment where teens learn what it means to be a Maronite and how to defend their Catholic faith in various social environments. Other topics discussed included identity, Sacred Scripture, the four types of love found in the Bible, and the Theology of the Body. Fr. Christopher Fabre, pastor of St. Sharbel, was a "surprise guest" who answered the teens' questions regarding comparisons between the Old and New Testaments. A Catholic mental health counselor was also invited to discuss good mental health habits with the young people. In addition to these discussions and guest speakers, parents assisted in a laser tag outing and in teaching the youth a basic, yet unique dabke routine. Without teens' initiatives and parents being involved, we wouldn't have a MYO.

After a 3-year hiatus due to the pandemic, St. Sharbel's traditional Mother's Day Hafli returned on 6 May, to celebrate our community and the Month of Mary. With great food and dancing, our beloved community enjoyed singing performances from our youth, as well as live music with a professional singer. Twenty percent of the proceeds from the sold out hafli was donated to victims of the Middle East Earthquake.

Our parish community is looking forward to its annual family picnic planned for the Feast of St. Sharbel in July. ■

# Parish News

GLEN ALLEN, VIRGINIA

## Saint Anthony Church



The children of Saint Anthony Church enjoyed a week of Bible Camp this June. The theme “Mighty Fortress, in Jesus the Victory is won” had the children hearing stories of battles, kings, and fortresses, but most importantly the victory over sin that was won by Jesus.

The Maronite Christian Formation Center was transformed into a castle. Through songs, art, games, and Bible stories the children had a lot of fun as they built friendships with each other and learned more about their faith in Jesus. Under the direction of Amanda Shulleeta Walton, the week was a great success due to all the volunteers from parishioners, parents and grandparents as well as the older kids helping with the younger kids. ■

SIMI VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

## Parish Festival

Saints Peter and Paul Church celebrated its Third Annual Festival on 17 June 2023. The festival was a great success attracting over 700 guests from surrounding counties. Our parishioners successfully collaborated and produced an all-encompassing festival filled with joyful and memorable moments, reminding our close-knit community of the importance of collaboration through our faith in the Lord.

The festival featured a kid’s program with entertainment including a clown performance, games and many prizes for the participating children. The parishioners came together to provide the food for the festival, which included shawarma sandwiches, falafel sandwiches, saj, mezze and a delicious fruit cocktail for dessert. The adults enjoyed a DJ and a live performance from Star Nidal Nasr.



We would like to give a special thanks to all the participants who have allowed this festival to triple in size. The hard work of the parishioners was evident in the execution of a successful festival. Our hearts are warmed with the love and support we continue to receive as we expand every year. We welcome you all to our festival and hope to see you there next year! ■

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

### Patronal Feast Day



The weekend of 22-23 April was a festive weekend for the parishioners of St. George in San Antonio, TX, as the parish celebrated its patronal feast day of St. George. The Divine Liturgy on Saturday was followed by a family night and dinner with music and singing in the Maronite Community Center.

The Sunday 11:00 am Divine Liturgy honoring St. George was concelebrated by Fr. Charles Khachan, MLM, pastor, and Fr. Mhanna Joseph Kallas, MLM, associate pastor. Following the liturgy, Fr. Charles and Fr. Mhanna presented the annual awards to the 2023 recipients. Elyse and Ernest Karam received the Silver Massabki Award, Ilya Noujeim received the Faith of the Mountain Award, Veronica Sanchez received the St. George Appreciation Award, Zenaida Sanchez received the Altar Server Award, and Frank Rizzo received the Bishop’s Award. All the awards honored the recipients for their selfless service to the parish and the continuous giving of their time and talents to support the parish and the larger community of Maronites. ■

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

### Patronal Feast

Heart of Jesus Church in Fort Lauderdale celebrated its patronal feast with a celebration of the Divine Liturgy and a Eucharistic Procession and Benediction on 16 June 2023. Chorbishop Michael Thomas, Fr. Jorge Perales, and Fr. Michael Charchaflian celebrated the Divine Liturgy and the Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus with parishioners. A luncheon followed the feast day celebrations. ■



**Giving Juice**  
 Parishioners at Mary Mother of the Light

*Giving back with every sip to families with sick children and those in need*

[www.givingjuice.org](http://www.givingjuice.org)

Harris Teeter | H-E-B | FOOD LION | Lowes' foods | good for you. | Giant | ingles | Publix | WHOLE FOODS MARKET

## Meditating on the Word of God

by James Salamy

The Gospel of John refers to Jesus as the Word of God (1:1 and 14) and portrays John the Baptist referring to Jesus as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (1:29). Jesus is both the Lamb of God, sacrificed for us, present in the Holy Eucharist, who feeds us, and the Word of God, present in the Sacred Scripture, who speaks to us.

Jesus identifies himself as “... the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world. ... The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life” (6:51 and 63). The disciples who remained with Jesus, when some left, and believed this difficult teaching, acknowledged that Jesus has “the words of eternal life” (6:86). These passages show the link between Jesus as the Word of God and the Bread of Life, the Holy Eucharist. Several of our Maronite hymns for Holy Communion are based on the words of Jesus in chapter six of the Gospel of John.

The passages quoted above are summed up beautifully in the first verse of the hymn from the Maronite Christmas Novena, *Shoobho lhaow qolo*. “Glory to the Word, the Word made flesh, who has come to earth to dwell with us. We have heard and seen and touched our Lord; our mouths have received his flesh and blood.”

The first part of the Maronite Divine Liturgy is built around the Word of God, specifically the Gospel passage, chosen for that Sunday or feast. The Old

Testament reading and the Epistle from the New Testament are chosen because of their relationship to the Gospel. The prayers and the hymns of the Liturgy, up until the Gospel, refer to the Gospel.

Because of the link between the Word of the God and the Eucharist and the importance of the Word of God in the Maronite Liturgy, it is important for us as Maronite Catholics to meditate on the Word of God in preparation for the Sunday and feast day Divine Liturgies. If we read the readings in advance, we will understand the prayers more fully and recognize the references to the Gospel. We will be more focused and attentive during the Liturgy. We will also understand the Old Testament reading and the Epistle, because we will recognize their connection to the Gospel and know why they were chosen to be read with the Gospel.

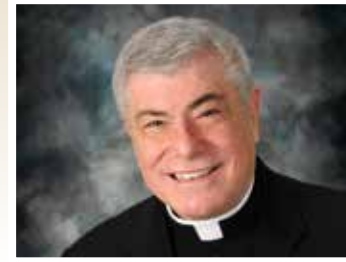
We will also have a greater and deeper appreciation for the Word of God because we will have spent time meditating on it. Through meditating on the Word of God, we come to know Jesus better and listen to Him speaking to us through the words of Sacred Scripture.

Each week, in preparation for the Sunday Liturgy, let us read the Scripture readings in advance, starting with the Gospel, so that we can meditate on the Word of God throughout the week, and pray the Divine Liturgy with more awareness and attention. ■

*James Salamy is a parishioner of Saint Louis Gonzaga Church in Utica, New York*



## From the Editor



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Have you ever wondered what it means “to show our true colors”?

The phrase “show true colors” originated from naval warfare and dates back to the 18th century. During naval battles, ships would hoist flags—or “colors”—to identify themselves to their friends and enemies.

But not all ships hoisted their true colors. Flying a false flag was a common practice among pirates, allowing them to approach ships without raising suspicion until it was too late for the targeted vessel to defend itself effectively. They would hoist the flag of a friendly or neutral country to lull their targets into a false sense of security, making it easier to get close to the ship and launch an attack.

**What flags do we hoist?** Do we fly colors to hide our identity and our values? Do we want to send the message that we are something different than we are? Perhaps more powerful, more brave, richer, smart, more influential? Perhaps we fly colors that will make people trust us, to befriend us, or even to marry us. Perhaps we fly false colors out of malicious deceit, but I think that some of us fly false colors because we are afraid of how people would react if they really knew us.

We are ashamed of our true colors and presume that we are not worthy of the love and respect of others. **This is not true.** “I praise you, because I am wonderfully made; wonderful are your works! My very self you know.” (PSALM 139:14)

**Let’s fly our true colors.** Let’s not be afraid to let people know who we are. If we are honest or gentle, let’s fly colors of an honest or gentle person. If we are not so bright, our colors do not need to be those of a scholar. If we have accomplished something for which we can be proud, let’s fly our colors in a modest way. If our background is shady, perhaps our colors are torn and tattered. Show them anyway. If life has beat us up, a faded flag is appropriate. Allow others to fly their true colors. If people show colors that reveal weakness, let’s not attack. If they have signs of accomplishment, we need not respond with jealousy. We may not always like the colors that they fly, but we must always love them.

On Mount Tabor, flanked by Moses and Elijah, **Jesus showed his true colors** to his close friends, revealing his identity to them. As the Passion drew near, he knew that it was time to show his true colors, to let them know his identity and his mission. They needed to know that he was submitting himself to the passion out of his love for them and his ultimate desire to share life with them.

We have been blessed to see the Lord’s true colors. We are God’s saved creation and need not fear to show our own. ■

Devotedly yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John D. Faris". The script is cursive and fluid.

Chorbishop John D. Faris

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

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT NO. 1370  
GLEN ALLEN, VIRGINIA

---

## LEGACY GIVING

*Legacy Giving is a creative way to support the Church by naming your Eparchy as a beneficiary in your will, insurance policy, or retirement assets.*

*Plan for the future today*

For more information, please contact:

Stewardship Director  
John F. Kurey, Esq., MBA  
718-237-9913  
saintmaron@yahoo.com

---