

the **Voice** Maronite



*Fill us, Holy Spirit, with true love and hope.
Strengthen us in faith.*

— Entrance Hymn for Pentecost Sunday



the Maronite Voice

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THE MARONITE VOICE

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The Value of Time

We usually count our money, check our bank statements, and look into our assets. However, we rarely look into measuring our time (unless we are working by the hour, and we are getting paid accordingly). In fact, the gift of time is universal: All of us are equal in that perspective whether we are rich or poor, white collar or blue collar, men or women, young or young at heart, Christian or other. Whatever we make of our time is personal.

In the Greek language, there are two words that refer to time, but they imply different things. *Chronos* refers to hours, minutes, and seconds; it is a quantitative measure. *Kairos* refers to an opportune time, a due season; it is a qualitative statement. For example, when Christ tells Mary at the wedding of Cana, “My hour has not yet come” (JOHN 2:4), and when he declares “the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified” (JOHN 12:23) he talks about the *Kairos*. When the Bible relates the story of finding Jesus in the temple at the age of 12 (LUKE 2:41-49), it is the *Chronos* concept.

During the pandemic (over a year already), we have been locked and limited in our activities. All of us were affected in one way or another and started looking at the time when we can go back and resume our normal life (*Kairos*) while counting the days and hours (*Chronos*). There is a beautiful text from the Book of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 that I invite you to read and reflect upon:

“There is a time for everything, and a reason for every activity under the heavens
A time to be born, a time to die;
A time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
A time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
A time to love, and a time to hate;
A time for war, and a time for peace.”

From a psychological point of view, our experience of time also takes different emotions: time is fast when we are having fun; time is long when we are anticipating something or someone; time feels heavy when we are facing troubles and difficulties; time is short when we have a lot of work to do...It depends upon our personal experience and attitude.





Time, along with space, are phenomena that limit us, that define our physical existence. While eternity is liberation from the concepts of time and space, we live in the hope that one day we will enjoy the presence of our loving God. Our time on earth is precious but limited. We must remember that our time on earth is nothing compared to our time in God's house for eternity. Therefore, God invites us to use our time here on earth (*Chronos*) as a way of preparation for the *Kairos* in heaven.

Therefore, I invite you to make the best use of your time since you can never recover any lost time. Successful people are those who use their time appropriately for important endeavors. Sainly people use a good part of their time for prayer and doing corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Use your *Chronos* to get to the *Kairos*. It is an opportune time to do good and to be at your best.

There are 148 hours of available time per week. We need so many hours to sleep, to eat, to work, to watch TV, to talk on the phone, to read, to answer emails, to relax (*Chronos* activities)... Is there any time left for God, family and friends (*Kairos* time)? Often, we get so busy that we neglect the essentials.

For a proper use of time, I would like to recommend the following:

- a) Make time for God and attend Sunday Mass. While the past year previously limited our ability to attend in-person Masses, the vaccination rate and the pandemic's waning lends renewed opportunities to celebrate the Divine Liturgy as a community.
- b) Take 10-15 minutes each day for prayer. Our personal connection with God is essential.
- c) Spend quality time with family members, communicate lovingly with each other. It is a great investment, and you reap tremendous benefits.
- d) Maintain ties with friends and support each other.
- e) Reach out to your fellow parishioners who live on the outskirts of society. No one should be left out and/or feel strange.
- f) Visit or talk to a sick individual or someone who is mourning a loss. We need to support each other in our most difficult moments.

Time is precious, and we must treat it as such. Time is a gift from God, let us be grateful and use it to the best of our abilities. Enjoy and live to the fullest every moment of your life.

God Bless! ■

Bishop A. Elias Zaidan

Schedule **BISHOP A. ELIAS ZAIDAN**

- 9-19 JUNE** Bkerke, Lebanon | Synod of Maronite Bishops
- 26-27 JUNE** Virtual | National Maronite Youth Organization Workshop
- 27 JUNE** Simi Valley, CA | Sts. Peter and Paul Mission | Pastoral Visit
- 28-29 JUNE** South Bend, IN | Notre Dame Law School Religious Liberty Summit
- 2-5 JULY** Houston, TX | Our Lady of the Cedars Church | Pastoral Visit
- 14 JULY** Virtual | Order of Saint Sharbel Meeting
- 13-15 JULY** Washington, DC | International Religious Freedom Conference
- 16-18 JULY** Clinton Township, MI | St. Sharbel Church | Pastoral Visit
- 21 JULY** Virtual | Lecture of Roger Akhrass on St. Jacob of Serugh
- 23-25 JULY** Austin, TX | Our Lady's Parish | Pastoral Visit
- 29 JULY** Virtual | In Defense of Christians Religious Advisory Board Meeting
- 12-15 AUGUST** North Jackson, OH | Our Lady of Lebanon Shrine | Assumption Pilgrimage
- 18 AUGUST** Virtual | Lecture of Kelli Bryant Gibson on St. Jacob of Serugh



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Schedule **BISHOP GREGORY J. MANSOUR**

- 2-23 JUNE** Bkerke, Lebanon | Synod of Maronite Bishops
 - 26-27 JUNE** Virtual | National Maronite Youth Organization Workshop
 - 27 JUNE** Brooklyn, NY | Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral
 - 4 JULY** Philadelphia, PA | St. Maron Church | Pastoral Visit
 - 7-12 JULY** Miami, FL | Family Visit
 - 14 JULY** Virtual | Order of Saint Sharbel Meeting
 - 13-15 JULY** Washington, DC | International Religious Freedom Conference
 - 17 JULY** Brooklyn, NY | Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral | Presbyteral Ordination of Deacon Peter Frangie
 - 18 JULY** Brooklyn, NY | Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral
 - 20 JULY** Virtual | Humanae Vitae Conference with Maronite Sisters
 - 25 JULY** Newtown Square, PA | St. Sharbel Church | Pastoral Visit
 - 1 AUGUST** Brooklyn, NY | Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral
 - 2-9 AUGUST** Silent Retreat
 - 12 AUGUST** Conway, PA | St. Theresa of Calcutta Mission | Pastoral Visit
 - 13-15 AUGUST** North Jackson, OH | Our Lady of Lebanon Shrine | Assumption Pilgrimage
-



Save the Date
Thursday, October 7, 2021

Join us for the
*Twelfth Annual Benefit Event for
The Eparchy of Saint Maron*

Details to follow

Seminarian Formation in a Pandemic

by The Maronite Voice Staff


A landscaper grumbled that he was not able to work from home during the pandemic. There are certain things that must be done in person. While the seminarians (men who are being prepared to be priests) could take their courses online, Monsignor Peter Azar was of the mind that the formation of the seminarians required the personal presence of the seminarian in community at 7164 Alaska Avenue, NW in Washington, D.C. For the past 60 years, Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary has conducted a formation program for men who hope to serve as priests in the two Maronite eparchies of the United States.

This year, there were nine seminarians in formation. They received most of their academic formation at The Catholic University of America, supplemented by specialized courses in Maronite history and spirituality by former rector, Chorbishop Seely Beggiani. This year, the courses were online, in the classroom, and hybrid.

Father Armando Elkhoury, the vice rector, took advantage of the opportunity to arrange for experts to give an online seminar on James of Serough.

Seminary formation is much more than academics. First of all, it involves the spiritual formation of the seminarian in the Divine Liturgy, common prayer, personal prayer and spiritual direction. And then there is human formation. The pandemic offered a real challenge to the nine seminarians and two faculty members to live together—sometimes in lockdowns.

Despite the challenges, it was a good year. The seminarians now go to their summer assignments to serve in Maronite parishes all over the United States—and this year— Mexico. We hope this feature can serve as an introduction for all of them. Thanks Christian Hbaiter for organizing these reflections. If you want to keep in touch with Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary, visit

 @maroniteseminary
 @maroniteseminary



SEMINARIAN

Antoine J. Dagher



EPARCHY

Our Lady of Lebanon Los Angeles



HOME PARISH

Our Lady of Mount of Lebanon
St. Peter Cathedral
Los Angeles CA



HOMETOWN

Damour, Lebanon



YEAR IN SEMINARY

First Year (Pre-Theology)



FUN FACT

In my first semester at the seminary, I learned how to make french baguette from scratch with the help of Fr. Armando.



SEMINARIAN

Paul Clovis Ghafari



EPARCHY

Our Lady of Lebanon Los Angeles



HOME PARISH

Saint Rafka
Livonia MI



HOMETOWN

Ottawa, Ontario Canada



YEAR IN SEMINARY

First Year (Pre-Theology)



FUN FACT

I love and eat zaatar almost every single day!



Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary is a true blessing. Our home here in Washington, D.C., provides tranquility and clarity in an erratic and fuzzy world. It is where we learn how to celebrate liturgy with excellence to glorify the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. It is where we learn how to pray and study. It is where men, from all walks of life, come together seeking the Way, the Truth and the Life. Our seminary is a house of studies where we discern whether we are being called for priesthood and religious life. We are enveloped with the Grace of the church as we grow spiritually and academically. We are blessed with top tier accommodations and lack nothing.

I am grateful for our rector Monsignor Azar and vice rector Fr. Armando for their tremendous dedication, professionalism and genuine care for all the seminarians. I am thankful for all my brothers, for their friendship and support. We are a big happy family. Our in-house orientation and formation sharpen our skills and expand our spiritual, psychological and linguistic abilities. The Catholic University of America enriches our minds academically. Managing to sit at the feet of the Lord on a regular basis and be still, could be sometimes challenging due to the highly demanding academic aspect of our formation. Nevertheless, it has been a beautiful journey and words cannot describe the gratitude I have in my heart for our Maronite Church.

So, "While it is said, today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation." I say to all the provokers, rebels and misfits out there, old and young, rich and poor, pious and disgraced, to all who are searching for meaning and purpose, harden not your hearts if you hear the voice of the Lord. Come join us at the Maronite National Seminary in discerning the voice of God.

As many of you know, the Covid-19 Pandemic is still affecting our ways of life. Some of us had to make many major adjustments, especially in regards to our physical and mental wellness. Some of us had to cancel our gym memberships and find a new way to live healthy, Holy lifestyles. Fortunately, and before my arrival to the seminary, some of the guys last semester took the time to remodel and construct our own gym space in the basement! Thanks be to God and a few generous donors, we were able to install tile/floor paddings, purchase a couple pieces of equipment, and restore some of our previous weights and machinery using WD40, spray paint, and disinfectant spray.

I believe a priest should be strong in spirit, mind, and in body. This semester, many of us exercised together, helped train each other, and have strengthened our friendships over this experience. From hiking, to biking, or lifting weights—you name it—we do our best to stay physically active!

SEMINARIAN

Elias Hazkial



EPARCHY
Our Lady of Lebanon Los Angeles



HOME PARISH
St. Maron
Detroit MI



HOMETOWN
Clinton Township, MI



YEAR IN SEMINARY
First Year (Pre-Theology)



FUN FACT
I ride a motorcycle — Honda VTX 1300C.



SEMINARIAN

Christian Hbaiter



EPARCHY
St. Maron of Brooklyn



HOME PARISH
St. Anthony Maronite Church
Lawrence, MA



HOMETOWN
Methuen, MA



YEAR IN SEMINARY
Second Year (Theology)



FUN FACT
I've travelled to five of the seven continents!



Seminary formation — the education and training process of becoming a priest — is categorized into four main pillars. The first three pillars immediately come to mind when people think of seminary education: (1) Spiritual (2) Academic (3) Pastoral formation. Men go to seminary to pray, to study theology, and to learn how to care for others. The fourth pillar is not as obvious, but is equally important. We call it human formation, which is learning how to care for yourself.

To overcome the challenges of remaining active and positive in the Seminary during the COVID shutdowns, I was intentional about planning and encouraging social and leisure activities for the group of us. We sat around the fire on some Saturday nights, we cooked dinners on other Sundays, and we sang karaoke from time to time. An especially memorable occasion was when we made maamoul Easter cookies. Doing so, made the Seminary feel more like home for the holiday. Human formation as seminarians reminds us how to keep smiling, keep calm, and keep carrying on for ourselves, so that we may do so for others as future pastors.

This past year of Seminary formation and studies has definitely been one for the books! The pandemic impacted all our lives, even us at the Seminary, but we made it through with very little interruption to our coursework and ongoing formation. Classes were held virtually, and we attended much of our formation sessions through Zoom, even meeting with our Spiritual Directors through virtual platforms as well. Being quarantined within the Seminary walls with little physical contact to other houses of formation and our classmates was tough, but my brother Seminarians and I made the most of it. In an effort to keep our sanity and avoid 'cabin-fever', throughout the semester we planned various events and outings, which not only helped us break out of the routine but fostered a lot of opportunities for bonding and fraternity.

This past semester, I helped plan a day-retreat at the Seminary on Great Friday, since this was the first time in history that all the Maronite Seminarians spent Passion Week and Resurrection Sunday together. Normally, we would all have been sent to parish assignments. Also, a brother Seminarian and I had the opportunity to plan a lavish wine & cheese night for the Seminarians, which included some memorable karaoke performances.

SEMINARIAN

Alejandro Landin



EPARCHY

Our Lady of Lebanon Los Angeles



HOME PARISH

Our Lady's Maronite Catholic Church
Austin, TX



HOMETOWN

Corpus Christi, TX



YEAR IN SEMINARY

Second Year (Theology)



FUN FACT

I played the trombone in junior high.



SEMINARIAN

Vincent Michael



EPARCHY

St. Maron of Brooklyn



HOME PARISH

St. Teresa of Calcutta
Conway, PA



HOMETOWN

Aliquippa, PA



YEAR IN SEMINARY

Second Year (Theology)



FUN FACT

I am neither fun nor factual.



The most difficult part of the past year was the time I spent without being able to go to liturgy or to a chapel in person. However, in a certain sense it strengthened my relationship with God because I learned to feel His presence in different ways. One of these ways is through music. To sing to someone you love is a very romantic and intimate thing. It feels sort of strange to talk about God in romantic terms, but if we think about what the Liturgy teaches us, that Christ is the Bridegroom and the Church is His bride, then it actually makes sense! We sing to God in the liturgy everyday, but sometimes routine can desensitize us to certain things. Through the pandemic, I really tried to focus on bettering my singing and musical ability. This is something special I wanted to do just for God. It is not that much different than how a man or woman would want to do something special for someone they love - maybe they would want to serenade them with a song or express their love to them through poetry. For me, singing and playing piano was a new hobby that I took up, and it became that special thing I wanted to do to offer to God to show Him I love Him. Now, whether or not I actually sound good is up for debate! But, I like to think it is the thought that counts. Furthermore, I think it would make for a better liturgical experience the more I practice now. Also, I like to think when I practice, it is kind of like another form of prayer.

We do not have much to say when it comes to the circumstances we happen to be in, but by the grace of God, whatever they are, whether good or ill, they can in some way be made fruitful; as the Anaphora of St. Sixtus says, "O Lord, hasten to transform all that is harmful and detrimental into that which will help and benefit us, that we may raise glory to you." While certainly not welcome, the slowing pace due to the pandemic, together with the great privilege and blessing of being raised to the order of lector, gave me the chance and impetus to look at myself and see where I needed to improve as a seminarian and a follower of Christ, and to dedicate myself more fully to my vocation.

In addition, in order to keep myself from wasting the time that had been given to me, I was able to use it as an opportunity for human growth through reading and writing along with working on art projects of mine. Of utmost importance through it all was prayer; without it, I would not have been able to bear any good. Looking towards the summer, I look forward to my summer assignment, giving me an opportunity to go out and better serve our Lord's Church through his aid. May God bring forth good out of the evils of our days so that nothing may hinder us in being made perfect in all things in him!

SEMINARIAN

Vincent Paul Mowad



EPARCHY
Our Lady of Lebanon Los Angeles



HOME PARISH
Saint Sharbel
Newtown Square, PA



HOMETOWN
Reading, PA



YEAR IN SEMINARY
First Year (Pre-Theology)



FUN FACT
My car license plate is the city that I am from in Lebanon.



SEMINARIAN

Chris Nahra



EPARCHY
Our Lady of Lebanon Los Angeles



HOME PARISH
St. Maron
Cleveland, OH



HOMETOWN
Cleveland, OH



YEAR IN SEMINARY
Fourth Year (Theology)



FUN FACT
I thrive on coffee and Jesus!!



Entering the Maronite Seminary during the COVID pandemic has been a unique experience, to say the least. On one side, I was able to establish a good friendship with the Maronite Seminarists. While on the contrary, I was not able to attend in-person classes, as our classes were conducted via Zoom. Considering that the classes were virtual, I was able to adjust to the Seminary schedule relatively quickly. During my free time, I assisted in the effort to organize the Basement Library and Bishop Stephen Hector Doueiri's Library. This allowed me to become familiar with the academic resources we have available that can be used in our Theology papers. As I complete my first year as a Maronite Seminarist, I have seen myself grow spiritually and intellectually through the academic and spiritual formation provided within the Maronite Seminary. During this Summer, I will be taking a Latin class that will assist with my studies. Following the Latin course, I look forward to my summer assignment at Our Lady Star of the East in Pleasantville, NJ!

During the initial COVID outbreak, I spent my time at the Maronite parish in Cleveland, OH. It was a strange time but certainly blessed. I'm grateful for the opportunity to have served God's people during such difficult times. Fr. Elias and I ran all the liturgical services, including Passion Week and Resurrection Sunday, on Facebook Live. Additionally, the Cleveland MYO Advisors and I planned two virtual youth group meetings per week to keep the MYO engaged and hopeful during those trying times. The MYO competed in game shows, prayed in community (virtually), and remained connected to their faith and the Church during the pandemic.

In the summer, I was ordained to the Order of Subdeacon after my assignment to St. Maron's parish in Youngstown. Thereafter, I returned to the seminary for my fourth year of theology. This summer, I'll be taking some language courses and looking forward to the upcoming year at the seminary. Please continue to pray for us at the Maronite Seminary!

SEMINARIAN

Jakob Wyder



EPARCHY
St. Maron of Brooklyn



HOME PARISH
St. Joseph Maronite Catholic Church
Waterville, ME



HOMETOWN
New Vineyard, ME



YEAR IN SEMINARY
First Year (Pre-Theology)



FUN FACT
I can split an apple in half ... with my bare hands



I would like to nominate "silver linings" as the phrase of the year. Of course, the past 14 months have brought their fair share of pain and challenges to us here at the seminary, as they have to many. But even greater than these difficulties are the lights which Providence has allowed to shine in the darkness. The greatest of these lights was the opportunity to celebrate Passion Week and the Resurrection here at the seminary, all together.

This was the first time in the entire 60-year history of Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary that all the seminarians, the rector, and the vice-rector were together both in spirit and in body for the celebration of the Resurrection. In normal times, each seminarian spends Holy Thursday through Easter Sunday at a parish, a great opportunity to experience the richness of the Paschal Liturgies and learn about parish life. Although we missed out on the normal opportunity, the providential opportunity to be all together was truly a blessing.

We spent Great Friday on a silent retreat here at the seminary, a deeply prayerful day in which we grew as spiritual brothers and prepared for the Glorious Resurrection. After a beautiful Liturgy on Resurrection Sunday, we enjoyed a wonderful meal and spent the afternoon working off the kibbee and chocolate with some high-spirited games of volleyball. To celebrate the greatest feast of the Liturgical Year together with all the brother seminarians, rector, and vice-rector, was a very special opportunity for spiritual and fraternal growth. This was an experience that we will remember forever. This summer, the adventure continues, and I look forward to spending the month of June at Our Lady of Lebanon in Easton, PA.

Appointments

EPARCHY OF OUR LADY OF LEBANON

The Most Reverend A. Elias Zaidan has made the following appointments for the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon:

EFFECTIVE 1 JUNE 2021

- **Msgr. William Bonczewski** was granted retirement as Pastor of Our Lady of the Cedars of Lebanon Church, Fairlawn, Ohio.
- **Father Ronald Eid** was appointed Pastor of Our Lady of the Cedars of Lebanon Church, Fairlawn, Ohio.
- **Father Mikhael Jalkh** was appointed Administrator of St. Sharbel Mission, El Paso, Texas.

EFFECTIVE 1 AUGUST 2021

- **Father Alex Harb** was appointed Pastor of Saint Sharbel Mission in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- **Father John Paul El Khoury** was appointed Administrator of St. Ignatius of Antioch Church in Dayton, Ohio, and Administrator of Our Lady of Lebanon Mission in Columbus, Ohio.

EPARCHY OF SAINT MARON

The Most Reverend Gregory John Mansour has renewed the appointment of **Rev. Vincent Farhat** as President of Our Lady of Lebanon Alumni Association for a three-year term, effective 28 April 2021. Father Vincent will serve with **Rev. George El Hajj**, appointed by Bishop Elias Zaidan as Vice President, **Monsignor Peter Azar**, appointed by me as Treasurer, and **Father Chris Fabre**, appointed by Bishop Elias Zaidan as Secretary.

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More Information!

Out of Egypt: A Tale of Two Josephs

by Rev. David A. Fisher

Moses also took Joseph's bones with him, for Joseph had made the Israelites take a solemn oath, saying, "God will surely take care of you, and you must bring my bones up with you from here." — EXODUS 13:19

Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, "Out of Egypt I called my son." — MATTHEW 2:14-15

Two Dreamers

The name *Joseph* is derived from the Hebrew verb *yasaf*, meaning "to increase." As a name, *Yosef* means, "He will add."

Both the Patriarch Joseph, the son of Jacob, and Saint Joseph the Protector of the Holy Family were righteous men who found themselves unexpectedly in the land

of Egypt. Known as the Gift of the Nile, Egypt was a proud and powerful kingdom in the ancient world, but known for not always welcoming outsiders or other cultures. Nevertheless, both men found Egypt a place of acceptance and safety from the turmoil they were facing in their homeland. Joseph the Patriarch and Joseph the husband of Mary; both men of dreams in which God revealed his will to them.

Righteous Joseph the Patriarch

The bones of Joseph, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried in Shechem in the plot of ground Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor, father of Shechem, for a hundred pieces of money. This was a heritage of the descendants of Joseph. — JOSHUA 24:32

Joseph was the son of Jacob and Rachel, and being the son of Jacob's old age, his favorite son. Eventually, his remains that were taken *out of Egypt* by Moses, were enshrined in Shechem, and he became known as the father of the northern tribes of Israel (as contrasted to the southern tribes of Judah).

The brothers of Joseph were jealous of him because of his many dreams that showed his favor. He had dreamt that the bundles of wheat, that of his brothers, bowed to his sheaf of wheat (GENESIS 37:6), and that the sun, the moon, and the stars had bowed to him (GENESIS 37:9). When his father had earlier given him a special coat to wear, it was for them the last straw.

[Jacob] loved Joseph best of all his sons, for he was the child of his old age; and he had made him a long ornamented tunic. When his brothers saw that their father loved him best of all his brothers,



they hated him so much that they could not say a kind word to him. — GENESIS 37:3-4

His brothers sold him to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt. Eventually, Joseph was sold to Potiphar, an official of the Pharaoh. After years of ups and downs, it was dreams that brought Joseph to the favor of the Pharaoh. While all Pharaoh's wise men could not interpret his dreams, Joseph was able to inform the Pharaoh that his dreams meant seven years of abundance and seven years of famine, alerting the Egyptians to store enough grain to see them through the famine. In return for his interpretation,

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Look, I put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt." With that, Pharaoh took off his signet ring and put it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. He then had him ride in his second chariot, and they shouted "Abrek!" before him. — GENESIS 41:41-43

During this same famine, Joseph's brothers went to Egypt in search of grain, which eventually resulted in reconciliation among the brothers, and there they are reconciled with their brother. Their offspring will go out of Egypt, the Hebrew tribes of Judah and the tribes of Jacob, also called Israel.

Saint Joseph the Protector of the Holy Family
Matthew and Luke provide us with most of the scriptural information about Joseph, the spouse of Mary. His life too was informed by dreams that allowed him to protect Mary and Jesus. When he discovered his betrothed was with child, he did not want to expose her to the harsh penalties of the Mosaic Law, when...

behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." — MATTHEW 1:20-21

When learning of Herod's plans of slaughter, Joseph was visited by an angel in a dream.

...the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to



destroy him." Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. — MATTHEW 2:13-14

After Herod had died, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said to leave Egypt and return to Israel.

"Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." He rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go back there. And because he had been warned in a dream, he departed for the region of Galilee. — MATTHEW 2:20-22

The words of the prophets were fulfilled: "Out of Egypt I called my son" (HOSEA 11:1).

Conclusion

Jesus opened the minds and hearts of his disciples on the road to Emmaus that the Scriptures were about him, that Moses had spoken about him. His life was "according to the Scriptures." Two Josephs, both dreamers, separated by millennia, were to bring salvation to Israel out of Egypt. Both are a double narrative of revelation culminating with Jesus Christ, the image of the invisible God and the image of the new Adam.

"For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory" (COLOSSIANS 3:3-4). ■

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

WORKER IN THE VINEYARD

“Priests should encourage the discouraged.” *by Brandon Shulleeta*

Father Kevin Beaton, the pastor of Saint Elias Maronite Catholic Church in Roanoke, VA, reflected that the pandemic has been difficult for many, including some of his own parishioners and their loved ones. Some have expressed to him fears of what's to come. Father Kevin said the pandemic has presented an opportunity for priests to fulfill a vital role in communities: encouraging the discouraged.

“This is exactly what a priest should be doing, following the example of the great High Priest,” Beaton said. “You think of how many times you look in the gospels where Jesus is telling his own apostles — the first priests, the first bishops — ‘do not be afraid.’”

Father Kevin has been a priest for 34 years. While his responsibilities are many, he says making connections with parishioners is among the most important. Even when priests aren't able to say much (such as when there are many parishioners to greet after Liturgy), Beaton said bonds can be built with words as simple as: “Nice to talk to you. Good to see you.”

“What I've learned over the years is that it's important to listen to what people have to say, and then sometimes you discover ... in between the lines, there might be something significant going on,” Beaton said.





The long-time priest said he appreciates seeing people who are happy and enjoys watching young parishioners grow into adulthood. He also finds it important to be present for those who are struggling with life events. Being able to detect when people are discouraged sometimes requires “an open ear,” he said.

Beaton has served several parishes. “I went from Ohio, where I was ordained ... to Southern California; Southern California to Western Pennsylvania; Western to Northeastern Pennsylvania; back to Western Pennsylvania; and then to Roanoke,” Beaton said. “That’s seven assignments I’ve had over the years.”

“For most of the priests, the transfer is probably one of the most demanding things that we go through,” Beaton said, adding that it can be tough to leave parishioners after bonds have formed.

However, he said that within those numerous churches he’s served, he’s been able to connect with a lot of Maronite Catholics — as far as opposite ends of the country, and he continues to talk with former parishioners.

He’s seen over the decades how people sometimes have differences based on regions and lifestyles. Yet, regardless of the makeup of a community, he said it’s important for priests to help stabilize parishes. As people have evolved through the pandemic, he said he’s happy to see more optimism, including within his own parish.

“It’s great to see people letting go of the fear and not being as apprehensive and not being as discouraged,” he said. “They’re looking at things in a different way.” ■

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



St. Ignatius of Antioch Maronite Catholic Church: Young Energy Meets Tradition

by Anna Salloum

When Catholics all around the world pray for an increase in vocations, it is not in vain. God listens and the Holy Spirit inspires young men to heed the call to Holy Orders. St. Ignatius of Antioch, a Maronite parish in Ohio, is blessed to have one of these young men serving as its leader. Father Alex Harb, hailing from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and a priest for all of five years, has been at the parish for almost four years. He is a young “thirty-something” American born priest, raised in the Maronite tradition, so St. Ignatius truly has the best of both worlds in one package.

Imagine being able to hang out with your parish priest under the stars, by an evening campfire. This is just one of the fun things that parishioners of all ages enjoy doing at St. Ignatius of Antioch, especially people who work late shifts. They get off of work, and it’s nice to be able to head to church, to relax with fellow parishioners while singing songs, and munching on barbecued goodies. Some parishioners have even slept overnight and prepared breakfast together the next day. It’s a fun social event, and one that brings parishioners together. It’s reminiscent of the days of the early

apostles—they broke bread together, and were a family of believers.

According to Father Alex, Ohio never had very strict restrictions during the pandemic. However, he did follow the lead of the Latin churches, closing for a few months, which proved to be difficult. Once the church opened back up, liturgies were offered both indoors and outdoors. I visited Ohio in the summer of 2005 and remember how beautiful and green everything was, so I asked Father Alex if the outdoor liturgies were only offered seasonally. Much to my surprise, he explained that the season didn’t matter. As a matter of fact, some of them even endured rain and snow, and said outdoor liturgies have been consistently busier than indoor services!

Sometimes we question bad situations, such as this pandemic, but we must also, as Catholics, ask ourselves to dig a little deeper and search for the good. Ironically, the pandemic brought new life and new families to St. Ignatius of Antioch. There are just over 100 families in the parish and almost half are Maronite, the rest being Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Eastern Catholic. Another sign of new life is that a few baptisms have taken place





since the pandemic. As in most other parishes, some weddings have been postponed, but that hasn't stopped parishioners from being involved with their church.

The daily liturgies have become popular and more and more locals are attending. The surrounding neighborhood is under development and there will soon be housing for approximately 20,000 new families. What's more, St. Ignatius is now serving parishioners out of a new church that was acquired recently, and will be able to serve these new families. It's only 15 minutes away from the old church. Father Alex has called this new space "a real blessing." He added, "It's nice to have a new church, it's just been an issue because of Covid—we haven't been able to use it." Father Alex described the new church as being in great condition. Prior to the acquisition, it was a Lutheran church, with stained glass, and a pipe organ from 1964. The actual structure is from the 1990s.

Ministries at St. Ignatius of Antioch are strong and alive, with Father Alex and parishioners helping one another in figuring out creative ways to serve charitable organizations as well as individuals in need. Covid has not stopped the parishioners from feeding the hungry of St.

Vincent de Paul once a month. This has actually been going on for the last four years. Drive-through dinners have become increasingly popular as well. Two of them have been 100% for charity and others have benefited the church. The festival, held every year, was a drive-through this year, and did almost as well as prior years, in light of the situation.

Young adults have been active in nourishing their spiritual lives by attending Theology on Tap once a week and other adults have followed suit by attending retreats. This past Lent, there were two retreats; one for men, and another for women. The retreats were each about half-a-day long, and included Mass, and both national and international speakers. Attendance was about a dozen people for each retreat, thus making it an intimate and memorable experience. Plans for future retreats are currently in play.

With things going back to normal, and still lots of work left to do in the new church, Father Alex has his hands full. But when he does have a little bit of free time, he enjoys playing card-based board games such as Splendor and Dominion. He also enjoys playing Just One, a game where mystery words are discovered. I wonder if "mabrouk" is one of the



mystery words—we congratulate Father Alex on bringing young energy to the Maronite Tradition in Dayton, Ohio! ■

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



Pentecost, the Focus of Part II of Luke's Gospel *by Rev. Anthony J. Salim*

Pentecost in the *Acts of the Apostles*. As we commemorate this Season of the Feast of the Glorious Pentecost, we see at the beginning of the season a liturgical celebration found in a wider and important text of the New Testament by the Evangelist Luke, namely, the *Acts of the Apostles*. Only when we see Pentecost in the context of *Acts* do we realize the gift Luke gives us in his reflection on the beginnings of the Church and its meaning in our lives today. Let us consider some background.

The Four Gospels. We rightly consider the stories about the Lord Jesus in the writings of the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (in this order listed in current versions of the New Testament). They addressed different audiences in various places and at different

times as the needs of the readers required, the earliest and shortest being the Gospel of Mark and the latest being the Gospel of John. Seen together, they present to us four portraits of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah.

Luke's Two-Part Gospel. Luke, however, desired to take believers beyond the Resurrection and Ascension and to show them the beginnings of the Church, especially as he saw it in the lives and works of the two chief apostles, Peter and Paul. Bible scholars often describe the *Acts of the Apostles* as the second half of the Gospel of Luke. In fact, Luke himself tells us this at the very beginning of the work. Writing to a certain Theophilus, Luke says, "In the first book, I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught until the day he was taken up, after giving instructions

through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.”

An apostle is one who is called and sent. An apostle is someone sent forth to preach a certain message. The word *apostle* comes from the Greek word “to send.” As we can read from the end of Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus appears to his eleven apostles in Galilee; and in what is known as the “Great Commission,” he sends them forth to all the known world to tell people that Christ is risen and to baptize in the Name of the Holy Trinity. Thus, the Apostles were (as we are) sent on a mission of proclaiming and evangelizing, by our words and our godly lives.

The New Israel. It is interesting to note that it is not accidental that the first “official” group of Apostles numbered 12. As Jesus formed the New Israel, he patterned the number of Apostles on the 12 tribes of the Old Israel. Even after Judas Iscariot is recorded as committing suicide, the remaining 11 choose Matthias to replace him and again to complete the number 12.

The Apostle Peter. In *Acts*, Peter is seen as the apostle to the Jewish Community of Jesus, his mother Mary and the first disciples. We recall that Peter is frequently portrayed in the Gospels as the spokesman for the other apostles. We also recall the meeting of Peter with the risen Jesus in which Peter clearly tells of his love for the Lord, and Jesus’ command to “tend my lambs” and “feed my sheep.”

The Apostle Paul. Paul of Tarsus regarded himself as an apostle equal to the Twelve (for example, ACTS 14:4; 1 COR 9:1-3; GAL 1:1.) Luke presents Paul as the Apostle to the Gentiles, that is, to those not born as Jews. This is extraordinary in that Paul was not only himself a Jew, but an intensely devout Pharisee and fierce defender of the Law of Moses. Yet, before his conversion to the risen Lord on the road to Damascus, he traveled with followers of the new “Way” of the young Church.

Pentecost, a defining moment in the Church. *Acts* tells us that 50 days after the Resurrection, the Apostles gathered together in Jerusalem at an annual Jewish festival, Pentecost (a term based in the Greek word for “fifty”). The Jewish feast of Pentecost (Hebrew: *Shavuot*) was primarily a thanksgiving for the first fruits of the

wheat harvest, but it was later associated with a remembrance of the Law given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. Jews from all over the Mediterranean world were celebrating in Jerusalem. Luke describes how the Holy Spirit overshadows the Apostles, appearing as flames over their heads, as the Spirit overshadowed Mary at the Annunciation and over Jesus at his baptism by John in the Jordan. This is a beautiful and effective symbol by which God’s Wisdom and courage-for-evangelizing is seen. Many writers describe this Pentecost as the “Birthday of the Church.” It is also interesting to note that although not explicitly stated in *Acts*, traditional icons of the Pentecost regularly depict the Mother of Jesus with the Apostles on Pentecost. This should not be surprising in that Luke thinks of Mary as Mother of the Church.

Our personal Pentecost. In many ways, our sacramental Initiation—Baptism-Chrismation—may be seen as our personal Pentecost. By Baptism, we are incorporated into the very life of God, as we receive a share in the grace of the Spirit. By our Chrismation we are granted a deeper share in the life of the Trinity, with the Spirit’s Indwelling, Gifts, and Fruits (see 1 COR 12:4).

Rite of Kneeling on Pentecost Sunday. Our Maronite Liturgy celebrates the Feast of the Glorious Pentecost with the Rite of Kneeling, a ritual that honors the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. As we bend the knees and worship, we see the fullness of the Almighty One active in our Pentecost-inspired life. As the rite concludes, the Celebrant prays:

This is the day when heaven rejoiced and earth was glad, the cherubim sung, the seraphim cried out and the apostles exulted for having received the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete. On this day, the divine unction, taken away from Adam our father because of his disobedience, was restored to us. With it the disciples were anointed, people were forgiven, and all nations were granted salvation. O Lord, our God, to you be glory forever. ■

Father Anthony Salim is a retired priest of the Eparchy of Saint Maron and a frequent contributor.

Keeping Up with the National MYA

The National MYA Zoom Event with Bishop Gregory Mansour, in March, was about the “seven pillars” of St. Joseph as described in the recent letter from Pope Francis. St. Joseph is the beloved foster father of Jesus Christ. When he received messages from the Archangel Gabriel in a dream, he obeyed without question. He nurtured Jesus’ humanity to the best of his ability. This took courage! Regardless of the temptations and struggles he and the Holy Family faced, St. Joseph was the knight and protector. May he continue to hear our intercessions to him, especially this year!

The National MYA Board members dedicated a Rosary to St. Joseph live on Zoom remembering the intentions of young adults here and abroad. We hope that we can follow St. Joseph’s example and become leaders of our faith wherever we are. A lovely night of prayer led by the Worship Team for the Year of St. Joseph.



The Worship Team led a Consecration to St. Joseph ending on the feast of Our Lady of Fatima, 13 May, in honor of the Year of St. Joseph. The group was guided through this journey with Fr. Donald H. Calloway’s book, *Consecration To St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father*. We learned about St. Joseph through the testimonies of other saints and witnesses, as well as shedding light on his titles in the Litany of St. Joseph.

The National MYA Zoom Event in April was with Bishop A. Elias Zaidan. He prepared a presentation on the hot topic of Cancel Culture, specifically answering the question: To Cancel or To Forgive? Bishop Elias described five approaches that we as a society have when we approach Christ and Cancel Culture.

Some key takeaways:

- No one should ever be “canceled” or completely removed from one’s life.
- The least we can do for someone, regardless of the role they have in your life, is to pray for them.
- Forgiveness is not passive, as Bishop Elias said, “We are citizens of this world but destined to be citizens of Heaven.”

You can find the recordings of our Zoom events on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/NationalMYA>. Also, check out our updated website calendar feature to find event details, zoom links, and more at maroniteyoungadults.org! Our social media team primarily sends reminders via Instagram, while regional representatives also send event info in text chats with local representatives in their region. Thank you to our board members for their voluntary hard work and dedication, to the board directors for their guidance and leadership, and to the many young adults and clergy who continue to attend and support our mission. ■



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Rollin' Stones: The 2021 MYO National Easter Event

"There's a fire starting in my heart, reaching a fever pitch and it's bringing me out of the dark."

You may be wondering, are these not the lyrics to "Rollin' in the Deep" by Adele? Indeed, they are, and indeed they are a perfect representation of the National Maronite Youth Organization's Easter Event, "Rollin' Stones," that took place on Friday, 9 April 2021 over Zoom. We were joined by many of our youth from the Eparchies of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles and St. Maron of Brooklyn, along with our beloved Bishops A. Elias Zaidan and Gregory John Mansour as we joined together to celebrate the victory of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ!



After a welcome from our directors, Fr. Edward Hanna and Sister Therese Maria Touma, we introduced our theme and song, "Still Rollin' Stones," by Lauren Daigle. The message behind this song highlights the hope that comes with Christ conquering Death, showing us that He truly is our saving grace. After a quick icebreaker, we joined together in Praise & Worship led by Jennifer Jesser from Our Lady of the Cedars in Akron, Ohio, and Board Member Tamara Alchoufete. Fr. Rudy Wakim moved our youth with a powerful testimony of the power that the Resurrection holds, encouraging us to "rise with Jesus, rise from helplessness and sadness, but most importantly, rise from sin."

During the program, our National MYO Board led our youth in a small group lectio divina, where questions guided us in praying, listening, and speaking to God. This powerful spiritual practice required discipline and focus as it helped facilitate an encounter with the Word of God and the Father's love for us. After an exciting game of "Chubby Bunny" where board members competed to see who could fit the most marshmallows in their mouths, our virtual event took us to St. Sharbel Church in Clinton Township, Michigan, where a beautiful Adoration service was hosted by their Maronite Youth Organization members. Here, we reflected on the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus dying to save us. Yet, we also reflected on the ultimate hope of the Risen Lord, showing us that Death has no power over Him, after which we concluded our event.

So, when you start losing that fire in your heart, when you start to feel like you're going back into the dark, remember that our Lord rolled the stone away for us (and He still does!). Jesus is risen, and He conquered Death. That is something to be joyful about!

Mark your calendars for ... **Our National Maronite Youth Days, taking place virtually 26-27 June 2021! More info to come!**

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 ■



Ordination

Ordination to the Order of Cantor, Lector and Subdeacon of Subdeacon Tony Saad

On 21 March 2021, Tony Saad was ordained to the Minor Orders of Cantor, Lector, and Subdeacon at St. Anthony Church in Glen Allen, VA, through the imposition of the hands of Chorbishop John D. Faris, as delegated by Bishop Gregory Mansour.

Tony's ordination journey started in Lebanon at age 12, when he began his monastic studies. Throughout his teen years, he believed he was called to be a monk. However, the Holy Spirit had different plans for him.

Subdeacon Tony traveled to Richmond, VA, and was assigned to St. Anthony Church to continue his education and discernment for the priesthood. This is where he met his future wife, Angela. Angela and Tony, now married for 31 years, have three adult children: Joseph (27), Lyla (25), and John (24). Despite COVID restrictions, Tony's entire family, much of his extended family, friends, and parishioners joined him at this special Liturgy.



Assisting Chorbishop Faris in serving the Ordination Liturgy were Deacon Peter Frangie and Subdeacon Michael Maynes, the brother-in-law of Subdeacon Tony. Father Elie Kharouz, Subdeacon Tony's best friend since childhood and spiritual brother from the time they left Lebanon together to come to America, was unable to join the celebration due to illness. However, he accompanied Tony in spirit throughout the special day.

During Chorbishop Faris' homily, he reminded Tony that when he made the tough decision to pursue his vocation of being a husband and father, he was not ending his

spiritual journey, but rather following a new path on his way to answering the call of Jesus.

For now, that call includes being a subdeacon and serving as the sacristan for St. Anthony Church. Chorbishop Faris reassured Tony of his new role by saying, "With our ordination, we accept from God that we are his tools. He is going to use us how and when He wants. We really do not have much say, but rest assured that the Lord is going to do very good work with us."

After this advice, Chorbishop John continued, "I want to give you this assurance. We are the tools of Jesus, the carpenter. And a good carpenter always takes good care of his tools." ■

Pray for Vocations

by Sr. Marla Marie Lucas, MSCL,
Maronite Servants of Christ the Light

I know that the prayers of my grandmother were one of the graces of my vocation. Although she passed away four years before I was born, my dad once shared with me in my early years, in the convent, that Sitto had wanted a vocation in the family. That remark was an insight for helping me to realize that each vocation is a fruit of the prayers and sacrifices of many in the family of God. I attribute the graces of saying “yes” to my vocation to the prayers of my grandmother, and most likely many others who I will not know until heaven.

The Maronite Servants of Christ the Light pray and sacrifice daily for an increase in vocations to our Church, and for the women who are discerning with our community. These women are planning to visit us for a “Come & See” during the week of May 1-8, 2021.

Praying for vocations and encouraging our youth to reflect on their God-given call and purpose is foundational for the growth and flourishing of our Church. **Would you join us in praying and sacrificing for this important intention of vocations?** Your spiritual works are probably, like my Sitto’s, the grace for someone’s calling. Also, help us to spread the word about our mission and invite women to consider a vocation.

As consecrated religious, the Maronite Servants serve the Church as spiritual mothers in imitation of Mary, radiating the Light of Christ in our life of contemplative prayer, asceticism, and apostolic mission to children, youth, young adults, families, the sick, dying, and grieving. Our contemplative life of prayer draws us to the heart of our spouse, Christ the Light, through daily Divine Liturgy, Divine Praises (Maronite Office), Eucharistic Adoration, rosary, meditation on Scripture and other spiritual exercises.

In our charism, we serve alongside our priests in pastoral ministry reaching out with a maternal touch to the many needs of the parish family and the Eparchy. To learn more, visit our website for videos, links to our social media platforms and YouTube channel: maroniteservants.org. Contact the sisters with your prayer requests and for resources on vocational discernment.



A prayer for vocations:

Gather us, Good Shepherd, into your holy Church, your sheep fold, and send us shepherds and pastors who will model their lives on yours, and who lead us to graze in your Spirit. Place in the hearts of young men and women your call to serve your house, spread your gospel and save the poor. Call your people to care for the sick, feed those who are hungry, teach your children, and offer your spiritual worship, so that your kingdom may be perfected. We shall praise and glorify you, forever. Amen. (Hoosoyo of the Divine Praises in the Easter season) ■

The Order of Saint Sharbel New Members

PERPETUAL

CATHERINE MANDEL | St. Joseph Church | Waterville, ME
SCOTT & NOELLE MCKENZIE | St. Elias Church |
Birmingham, AL

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

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

GREER, SOUTH CAROLINA

Saint Rafka Parish Mission

Saint Rafka Mission in Greer, SC, hosted a Parish Mission with Father Rudolph Wakim as the speaker. The mission was held on 24-28 March, culminating with Shaneenee Sunday. Fr. Rudy gave his talks in English and Arabic to accommodate the diversity of the parishioners of the mission. The general theme of the Lenten Mission was celebrating Passion Week and Easter. Everyone enjoyed the talks that were easy to understand and included a good bit of humor. Fr. Rudy was the main celebrant of the Divine Liturgy, and the community had a potluck luncheon after the liturgy, the first in over a year. The prayers and talks of the mission were a great way to come back to church after the long COVID-19 pandemic. Fr. Rudy is the administrator of St. Stephen Mission in Charlotte, NC, our closest Maronite neighbors. ■



FLINT, MICHIGAN

The Spirit of Christmas of 2020

by Renate Bueche



Even a pandemic cannot come between the church and her dedicated people of Our Lady of Lebanon in Flint, Michigan! The Christmas spirit of the Ladies Altar Society and Parishioners is found in love for their church and keeps them connected through various activities, not only during fundraisers but also in showing solidarity, harmony, dedication, and love amongst the ladies.

Throughout COVID-19, we have had several successful take-out lunches and a sponsored Christmas Bake Sale and Bazaar. Even though the children could not come to us, this year Santa made home visits to the children and left behind big smiles and happy faces.

We are very proud of the unity and dedication within our parish family and the clergy, and thank God for all the blessings and joys he has gifted to us during the Christmas season and beyond. ■



Parish News

GLEN ALLEN, VIRGINIA

A Second Celebration of Easter

The Coptic Orthodox Church follows the ancient traditions that originated in Alexandria (Egypt). They take pride in the fact that Saint Mark, a disciple of Saint Peter, brought the Good News to northeast Africa. Since the Orthodox Church follows a different calendar, it sometimes celebrates Easter on a date different from the Catholic Church. This year, the Orthodox Easter celebration was 2 May. Father Moises' parish, St. Mary and St. Philobater Coptic Orthodox Church, consist of 46 families; but they did not have a church to celebrate their Easter.

The Orthodox Church representatives approached Chorbishop John Faris to ask if they could use St. Anthony Church in Glen Allen, Virginia, to celebrate their Easter on Holy Saturday. With the permission of Bishop Gregory Mansour, Chorbishop John welcomed the Orthodox members to St. Anthony's Church. They arrived with their necessities at 6pm and continued with the celebration of their Divine Liturgy until 11pm. Despite a few "glitches" with the sound system and air conditioning, they held a beautiful Easter celebration. St. Anthony Church was blessed to witness the celebration of Easter—twice this year! ■



LEWISVILLE, TEXAS

The Year of St. Joseph

by Michael Pollock



In 1870, Pope Pius IX officially declared St. Joseph the patron of the Universal Church by his decree *Quemadmodum Deus*. To celebrate the 150th anniversary of this decree, Pope Francis has declared 2021 as a year dedicated to St. Joseph. Other popes have written about St. Joseph, such as Pope Leo XIII and Pope St. John Paul II. May this year bring us a greater love of St. Joseph, remembering such beautiful devotions as the Chaste Heart of St. Joseph, St. Joseph's Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys, and the Chaplet of St. Joseph.

Fr. Assad ElBasha, MLM, our pastor at Our Lady of Lebanon in Dallas, Texas, decided to start a devotion for our parish to St. Joseph after the governor of Texas eased restrictions on COVID-19. Families of our parish will then be allowed, for a week at a time, to carry this image in their

homes, so they may receive the abundant blessings from St. Joseph. Naturally, the image will be sanitized before being given to the next family, so best COVID practices can be taken.

We hope that St. Joseph may bring protection from Satan and peace to each family that holds the image. Our pastor reminded us about St. Joseph, who lived His life in obedience to God, and as the patron of every man, father, and grandfather, he reminds men to live their lives in obedience to God. Our pastor also thought of giving each family a prayer sheet with prayers to St. Joseph and for fathers. The parishioners responded well to carrying this image in their homes. We only have three more spots available on our sign-up sheet; every other Sunday until the end of 2021 is full! ■

TEQUESTA, FLORIDA

Mary, Mother of the Light Academy School Activities & Events

Mary, Mother of the Light Academy in Tequesta, Florida, was forced to close its doors in March (2020) due to the pandemic. They began teaching their students through Facebook Live and Zoom, and they soon discovered that several staff members had special talents that could benefit the students. For example, a school aide served as the Creative Movement teacher of dance and exercise, and the Assistant Director became the best story reader for classroom story time.

During the Academy's three-week Summer Camp, everyone at school was instructed to wear masks, the building occupancy was limited to staff and students only, and massive cleaning protocols were practiced. The school year, beginning in August, was very challenging for everyone. When the county public schools delayed the start of school, Mary, Mother of the Light Academy Preschool had already planned and established safety policies in order to open on 10 August. In the midst of this confusion, the staff, students, and parents felt safe, and the Academy was able to open on time. Social distancing was difficult at times but living in warm weather Florida allowed the students to reasonably mingle outside year-round.

The preschoolers had an Easter Egg Hunt, and they helped to plant a flower bed, vegetable garden, and pumpkin patch to celebrate Earth Day. The annual Parent Day Performance was turned into an outdoor picnic. Throughout the (2020-2021) school year, they had successful Book Fairs, Thanksgiving feasts, Winter Festivals, Valentine parties, Easter lunches, and visits from the Fire Department, local dentist and Santa.



The Academy will soon host an outside Pre-K graduation ceremony and celebration for 30 students. The Academy feels very blessed to work with such wonderful people — staff, students, and parents. Sometimes change is good, but God is good all the time. ■

UTICA, NEW YORK

Holy Thursday Pastoral Visit

by Deacon Peter Hobaica

On 1 April 2021, Fr. Boutros El Hachem and the parishioners of St. Louis Gonzaga Church in Utica, New York, welcomed His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour on a Pastoral Visit to their parish. After his arrival, Sayedna shared lunch with Abouna Boutros and Deacons Paul Salamy and Peter Hobaica. Before the liturgy began, Bishop Gregory rang the refurbished tower bell recently discovered from the original church.



Crowds of parishioners attended the Holy Thursday Liturgy celebrated by Bishop Gregory and concelebrated by Fr. Boutros. Bishop Gregory



extended a special "Congratulations" to a parishioner, The Honorable Joseph Saba, a newly elected Utica City Court Judge.



Near the end of the day, Bishop Gregory and Fr. Boutros visited Fr. Saba Shofany, a Melkite priest serving St. Basil's Melkite Catholic Church in Utica. Sayedna offered blessings for healing to Fr. Saba and his family. The following morning, Bishop Gregory prayed the Divine Office with Fr. Boutros and concluded his Pastoral Visit with a parish blessing. It was a most appreciative visit full of graces and prayers for the church and the faithful. ■

Parish News

HOUSTON, TEXAS

Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

by Eliana Abou-Jaoude

On Holy Week, Our Lady of the Cedars opened her door for full capacity welcoming back her faithful parishioners. We thank Fr. Milad Yaghi and Fr. Edward Hanna who, given the prevalence of Church closures, have exhausted all efforts to prevent negative pastoral consequences. Despite the different and restricted gatherings, and the availability of online options, OLC parishioners attended, in person, the Divine Liturgies during the Holy Week. To the priests' joy, all pews were occupied. People were reunited under one Spirit, the Holy Spirit, to hear the Word of God taught by our beloved priests, and to resonate with our Risen Lord and with each other. Fr. Edward delivered an inspirational series of homilies entitled *Wake the world up: to commitment, to healing, to service, and to love.*

The Lord gave us the occasion of a few joyful events: during Saturday Easter Vigil Mass, Alex Bou Kheir, received the Sacraments of Initiation after a lengthy year of studying the Maronite Catholic Faith. We pray that he will develop a deeper understanding of his calling to Christ and His Church. We congratulate remarkable couples, Aline and Dib Dib, Nisrine and Fadi Droubi, Tera and Nabil Ghossoub, and Joumana and Pierre Merhi on being awarded the Silver Massabki Award. We greatly appreciate their generosity and service to OLC. OLC proudly acknowledged both Judy Eid, active member of the MYA organization and recipient of 2019 Faith of the Mountain award, and George (Gio) Elmessan, Houston MYA president, recipient of the 2020 award, for their effort, dedication, and good work.

The days of love and joy are upon our Church with the graces of the Resurrected Lord Who enables us to witness to Him and profess our faith as one Body under one Spirit. ■

Awards

by Marcella Georges

In mid-January, almost a year after we originally planned, two of our parish couples, Aline and Dib Dib, along with Nisrine and Fadi Droubi, were recognized for their dedication and involvement in the parish by being awarded the Silver Massabki Medal. These couples have the remarkable ability to take on any task asked of them. Their timeless acts of kindness go beyond participation in the church's regular activities.



Aline and Dib have recently taken the reins of the Family Retreat, and are credited with pioneering the *Remember Me in Your Kingdom* Liturgies which are held on the first Tuesday of every month. Aline is active with our CCE and Arabic programs, constantly volunteering to help with the MYO activities and she never shies away from any volunteer work we may have. Dib is an active member of the Knights of the Cedars and, without hesitation, always lends a hand in the kitchen and at events.

Nisrine can be found volunteering for, and can be credited with, being a staunch supporter of the formation of the MYKids program. Fadi is also no stranger to our parishioners. He is always ready to roll up his sleeves and take charge in preparing our amazing shawarma for our events and lending his restaurateur expertise and leadership skills behind the scenes anytime we have any events at church.

Another notable award recipient is Judy Eid. She is the 2019 recipient of the "Faith of the Mountain Award". Judy served the MYA in a special way with her creative ideas, productive presence, and beautiful smile. She remained an active and completely dedicated member of the MYA Organization until moving from Houston to complete her studies as a Physicians Assistant. She was also recognized on 31 January for her exemplary youth leadership for the contribution of her time and talent within our parish and the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon.

Congratulations to all of the award recipients. They are well deserved! ■



MIAMI, FLORIDA

Silver Massabki Award

by Jeanne Lahoud

The parishioners of Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Miami, Florida, were blessed with a special visit from Bishop Gregory Mansour. Upon his arrival, Bishop Gregory celebrated the liturgy with Father Bassam Saade, pastor. During the liturgy, Fr. Bassam presented the Silver Massabki Award to Mr. and Mrs. George Mansour, Bishop Gregory's parents. George and Amal Mansour are longtime members of Our Lady of Lebanon parish; and they have touched many hearts in their generous works throughout the years. The congregation honored Mr. and Mrs. Mansour for their selfless service to the church and their continuous support in the community. Notably, George and Amal participate in all aspects of the annual church festival, and they cook and deliver meals weekly for the homeless in the area. A reception was held in the church hall to celebrate Mr. and Mrs. George Mansour's award and to receive a blessing from His Excellency, Bishop Gregory. ■



PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Take-Out Food Fundraisers

Due to the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic, Father Samir Chebli (former administrator of St. Maron Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) was unable to hold the church's annual Lebanese Festival. To help with church expenses, Food Take-Out Fundraisers were organized under the guidance of Fr. Samir. Eventually, Fr. Samir was transferred, and Father Andrawos Fadi El Tabchi was assigned as the new administrator of St. Maron Church. Fr. Andrawos and the congregation continued to conduct the Take-Out Middle Eastern Food Fundraisers.

After two fruitful events in 2020, parishioner volunteers representing all church groups sponsored three Take-Out Food and Bake Sales this year (Falafel, Marfaa, Desserts) during the months of February, March, and April. A variety of delicious choices for all to enjoy were featured including: kibbee, chicken and kafta kabobs,

hummus, falafel platters and sandwiches, baba ghanouj, maamoul (date, walnut, pistachio), and ghyrbe cookies. The Take-Out Food fundraisers were very successful. In fact, a fourth Take-Out Food Sale is being planned. Fr. Andrawos extends a "thank you" to all sponsors and volunteers who are committed to supporting St. Maron Church. ■



Parish News

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Colonel Regina Aune Receives Honors

The National Museum of the United States Air Force is located at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, and is the largest aviation museum in the world. It is a complex of hangars displaying the chronological history of both aviation and the development of the United States Air Force. On Friday, 5 March 2021, a ceremony was held to open the newest exhibit of the museum: *Women in the Air Force: From Yesterday into Tomorrow*. The event, held in conjunction with Women's History Month, honored all women who have served or now serve in the Air Force but particularly those women who were the first to achieve some milestone. Honored were the first 10 women to enter pilot training and become the first female Air Force pilots. Also honored were the women who were the first in history to become combat pilots, the first to become commanders of squadrons, groups and wings. Also honored were the flight nurses from World War II, Korea and Vietnam to the present.

One of those nurses so honored and recognized was retired Colonel Regina Aune who participated in Operation BABYLIFT in 1975. Operation BABYLIFT was a mission conducted over a period of two weeks to evacuate Vietnamese orphans to the United States, Canada, Australia and Europe. Unfortunately, the first mission on a C-5 Galaxy cargo plane crashed in the rice paddies two miles from Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) following a failure of the locking mechanism on aft cargo doors on 4 April 1975. Then First Lieutenant Regina Aune was the Medical Crew Director on board the aircraft. There were over 200 infants and children as well as some adult attendants on board the aircraft at the time of the crash. Although severely injured in the crash, Lt. Aune assisted in the rescue and evacuation efforts subsequent to the crash until she could no longer participate because of her injuries. She was the first woman to be awarded the Cheney Award, given by the Air Force for courage and valor in a humanitarian mission connected with an aircraft. To date, only two women have received the Cheney Award.

After serving in the Air Force for 28 years, Regina retired and lives in San Antonio, Texas, and is a member of St. George Church. As a member of the parish, she has served on the Pastoral Council, has been both vice-president and president of the Ladies' Altar Society, and currently serves as the parish archivist and as a delegate to NAM. ■



ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

A New Partnership For The Maronite Community Of St. Louis

On 1 July 2020, the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles took possession of a parish of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, in the St. Louis suburb of Crestwood, Missouri. It is now a parish in the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon re-named "St. Raymond – St. Elizabeth Maronite Catholic Church". It is located approximately 13 miles southwest of downtown St. Louis, where St. Raymond Maronite Co-Cathedral is now located. Currently, there are about 1,000 Catholics living within the boundaries of the former Archdiocesan parish.

The partnership was an agreement between Bishop A. Elias Zaidan and then Archbishop Robert Carlson of St. Louis. The purpose of the acquisition was to give the Maronites of the metropolitan St. Louis area an additional location for Maronite services, while at the same time, continuing to provide for the pastoral, sacramental and liturgical needs of the Latin-rite parishioners of the St. Elizabeth community. The Archdiocese did not ask for compensation for the facilities or property as long as the spiritual needs of the parishioners were being met.

St. Raymond Maronite Church was founded in 1911 in the area immediately to the south of downtown St. Louis. At the time, most of the "Syrian-Lebanese" Maronite community lived in that general area. With the passage of time and the improvement of the socio-economic status of the community, the majority of Maronites moved away from the location of the parish and eventually more than 80% of them moved outside the City of St. Louis.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary parish was founded in 1956 in a suburban area that was expanding rapidly at the time. It consists of a church with seating for 250, 14 classrooms, a gymnasium, school cafeteria, two homes (rectory and former convent) and athletic fields. The full-time parish school closed in 2004. The property is on 14 acres of land. Its location is close to the demographic center of the wide-spread Maronite community in the St. Louis Area. ... *Continued on page 38*



UNIONTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

Passion Week

by Dr. Mabel George Howard

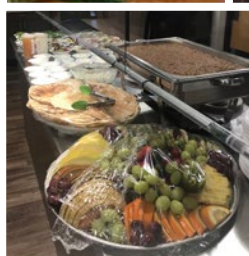
Prayer encompasses every aspect of Passion Week. This blessed time allows the faithful to participate in Maronite religious practices, traditions, and rituals. The altar at St. George Maronite Church in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, was adorned with white Easter lilies as Father Aaron Sandbothe and visiting priest, Father Michael Shami, led the parishioners in prayer. Passion Week began with the celebration of Hosanna Sunday followed by hours of prayer and sacred rites each day.

Prior to the liturgy on Great Friday, the congregation was invited to a traditional Middle Eastern dinner prepared by the ladies of the church. The parishioners gathered to share a meatless meal of mujadara, lentil soup, tabouli, luban, salad, bread and fruit. During dinner, Father Aaron and Father Michael chanted the Soogheetho (a dialogue hymn) between the Cherub and the Thief that was traditionally part of Compline of Great Saturday. The Good Thief was crucified next to Christ, and he said to Christ, "Remember me when you come into your Kingdom." Christ assured the Good Thief that because of his faith, he would go to Paradise. The Cherub in this hymn is the angel from the book of Genesis that guards the Garden of Eden from which Adam was exiled. With the death of Christ, the Cherub witnesses mankind's return to Paradise.

Following dinner, parishioners attended the Great Friday liturgy of the Adoration of the Cross. A black shroud, representing the Burial of Christ, was filled with fresh flowers. The shroud was carried in procession by four pall bearers as the faithful chanted hymns and recited prayers. Upon reentering the church, the shroud was held aloft to allow parishioners to pass underneath it before the cross was buried within the altar.

Following the festal liturgies of Easter, the children of the parish enjoyed an Easter Egg Hunt on church grounds. As an Easter surprise, parents and adults attending were served donuts and mimosas under the Church portico. The Holy Seasons of Great Lent and Easter are a time for prayer, faith, peaceful worship, personal healing, and embracing God's blessings and our Maronite faith.

Christ is Risen! He is truly Risen! ■



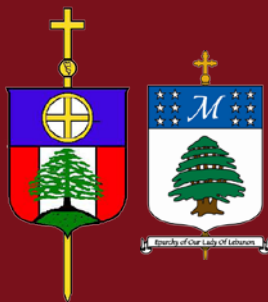
WATERVLIET, NEW YORK

May Crowning

by Betty Karrat

On 2 May 2021, Father Alaa Issa, accompanied by Deacon Richard Thornton, celebrated the May Crowning following Liturgy at St. Ann Maronite Church in Watervliet, New York. Previous First Communicants, Elizabeth Ryan and Mia Kassabian, escorted by altar boys, Gabriel Hannoush and George Nammour, offered gifts to the Mother of God. The altar boys lit the candles as Elizabeth and Mia presented the Crown and Veil to Fr. Alaa in honor of the Queen of Heaven. Following Fr. Alaa's homily about the importance of praying to the Mother of God, the congregation joined in singing "Hail, Holy Queen." The May Crowning was a beautiful tribute to Mary, the Mother of God. ■





Effective Ways You Can Help Your Eparchy!

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

Legacy Giving

This is a creative way to support the Church. Legacy Giving can involve contributing through your *will*, *insurance policy*, or *retirement assets*.

You can get a tax deduction today and provide yourself with a steady source of income in future years through a *charitable trust*.

How to Remember Your Church in Your Will

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

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

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

"I give and bequeath to the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles _____% of the residue of my estate [or: the sum of \$_____]."

Tax-Smart Giving of Appreciated Stock or other Assets

The gift of an asset such as *common stock* or *mutual fund shares* that have increased in value can be a smart way to make a contribution and receive maximum tax benefits based on the value of the asset.

Gifts of other *appreciated assets* such as land, antiques, and homes, can also be utilized as potential gifts with valuable tax benefits.

Gifts of these assets should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

For more information on any of these options,
please contact:

Stewardship Director
John F. Kurey, Esq., MBA
718-237-9913 or 314-231-1021
saintmaron@yahoo.com or
maroniteswest@yahoo.com



Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord.

MONSIGNOR SAMI HAYEK

Monsignor Sami Hayek, a retired priest of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, entered into eternal life in Lebanon on 1 May 2021. His funeral was held on 3 May 2021 in Lebanon. Monsignor Hayek was preceded in death by his parents, Youssef and Chafica, and his brother, Toufic. He is survived by his sister, Jeanette, and several nieces and nephews.

From 1964 to 2006 Monsignor Hayek served the parishes of Lawrence, MA; Danbury, CT; New Castle, PA; and Easton, PA. In each place he left a reputation of being a good and holy priest. He was gentle, soft spoken, always careful not to hurt anyone in his ministry as pastor and confessor. He was ever vigilant to do good and never to do harm.

He wanted to spend his retirement years in service to others and so he served for two

years the mission in Las Vegas, NV. In 2008, when the Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament in Lebanon offered him to live and serve as Chaplain, he was very happy.

He served there every day, where he offered Mass and the sacraments to the sisters as well cared for the youth and residents with his fatherly presence. In a sense he reminded them of their holy founder.

Bishop Gregory J. Mansour joins the entire Eparchy of Saint Maron, Clergy, Religious, and Laity, to extend to Monsignor Sami Hayek's family, friends and former parishioners, our condolences and prayers.

May God grant him eternal rest in his kingdom, and grant consolation and peace to his family.

MRS. THERESE ATALLAH

Mrs. Therese Atallah, mother of Deacon Camille Atallah, passed away on 12 April 2021; she was 85 years old.

Therese now joins her beloved husband Jean, her parents, her three brothers and one sister, and her two sons-in-law. She is survived by her six sons, four daughters, 31 grandchildren, and 23 great grandchildren.

The funeral arrangements will be held privately with immediate family due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Condolences may be sent to Deacon Camille Atallah in care of: Our Lady of Lebanon Church, 8 East Mountain Road, Waterbury, CT 06706.

Bishop Gregory J. Mansour joins with all the Clergy, Religious and Laity of the Eparchy of Saint Maron to extend our heartfelt sympathies and our prayerful support to Deacon Camille, and to his family. May Therese now rest in God's light and peace.



Witnessing to Christ

by Deacon Peter Frangie

We are called to love and serve God and each other through different vocations. We live out God's invitation to be holy either through married life, ordained or religious life, or single committed life. As a married deacon called to the priesthood, I realize that living faithfully my vocation and witnessing to Christ is a fruit of my marriage being centered on God. I hope that my marriage can make visible the love that Christ has for His Church and for all of humanity. After all, it takes three to get married (Christ, husband, wife) and to make marriage a life-long joyful commitment.



My journey of serving others has deepened since my wife, Marise, and I joined the Lay Associates of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal and later became professed members of the Secular Franciscan Order. The Friars' example of humility and service to others has inspired me to be more active in sharing Christ's love and joy with our loved ones and the less fortunate we meet on the streets of New York or at the Friars' shelter.

I continue to witness by being involved in different ministries such as visiting the sick, bringing Holy Communion to the shut-ins, preaching on Sundays, baptism and marriage preparation classes, giving talks about Our Lady as part of the First Saturday Devotion at Saint Anthony's Church in Glen Allen, VA, and praying in front of Planned Parenthood facilities with Saint Anthony's parishioners. In the past, I was involved in youth and adult catechesis at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral and serving meals at Saint Anthony's shelter in the Bronx.

To be a true and effective witness requires a consistent life of prayer and remaining close to the Sacraments, especially the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist. A deep relationship with the Lord will lead to an effective witnessing.

To conclude, I invite you to reflect on Saint Pope Paul VI words from *Evangelii Nuntiandi*: "Modern man no longer listens to teachers but to witnesses. If he listens to teachers, it is because they are first witnesses."

Christ is risen, truly risen, and we are His witnesses! ■

Deacon Peter serves at St. Anthony Church in Glen Allen, VA. He will be ordained to the priesthood on 17 July.



NAM UPDATES

NAM Spring Raffle Winners May 2, 2021

1ST PRIZE — \$10,000

Khalil Abou Jaoude

2ND PRIZE — \$3,000

Maria Miller-Larson

3RD PRIZE — \$2,000

Monique Gamoney

4TH PRIZE — \$1,500

Sue Abood

5TH PRIZE — \$1,000

Beverly Kimes

Vocation Essay & Poster Contest: Entries postmarked by August 28, 2021 to give children time to work on it through the summer.

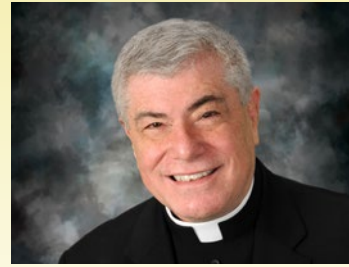
NAM Scholarship Application: Deadline is May 28, 2021

Annual NAM Convention in Philadelphia, July 2021 is CANCELLED!

PARISH NEWS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 34
"A New Partnership For The Maronite Community Of St. Louis"

Currently, the Maronite Liturgy is celebrated on Saturday evenings and some of the Maronite services for Passion Week were held in the new location. Rev. John Nahal, the Rector of St. Raymond Co-Cathedral is also the pastor of St. Raymond-St. Elizabeth Parish. The new Eparchial parish has a resident Maronite priest, Rev. Patrick Kassab. The Latin-rite deacon, Deacon William Meister, assigned to the parish continues to assist in the parish as well. Maronite Deacon Louis Peters, Subdeacon Anthony Simon and Subdeacon David Wahby also assist in both locations. ■

From the Editor



Have you ever seen a family house that is very clean and orderly? Even the bedrooms are perfectly arranged. The family room has all the toys and games neatly arranged on a shelf. You could eat off the floor of the garage. If you didn't know people lived there, you would swear it is a model home!

I worry about the children in such houses: Are they free to move around, to be creative, to play? Or, are they suffocated and confined? Perhaps it is not a good thing to try to make our homes too organized, too neat — **give me a house with a stack of sneakers and boots at the door and I will show you a happy family.**

The same is true for the Church. **In the 1950's, the Church was organized and neat.** The answers could be found in the *Baltimore Catechism* and if we could not find it there, well, we only had to ask Father or Sister. We knew our places and stayed in them. There was a lot of mortar and brick, but how much creativity and life? Was everybody included? Or were only those children who were "fit in" allowed at the table?

In the 1960's, the Church got messy. Cardinal Angelo Roncalli was elected to the Chair of Peter and took the name John. Pope John XXIII or "Good Pope John," always had a smile on his face. But he was also a reformer. Only four months after his election, Pope John announced that he was calling for an ecumenical council, a meeting of the Catholic bishops from all over the world. Some tried to convince him not to do it: He was 78 years old, an age when he was expected not to make changes. Those around the Pope told him that the Church was doing fine. But Pope John saw something different. He saw a world divided in a Cold War, filled with bombs that could destroy it 10 times over. He saw races that hated each other. He saw Christians divided against one another. New policies were not enough — **the Church needed the fire and wind of the Spirit!** Despite criticism from everyone around him, Pope John was convinced that this was what the Holy Spirit inspired him to do. He called for a council.

And a lot of messiness ensued, but, at the same time, new life and a lot of creativity: a re-discovery of the Bible, a renewal of our liturgical celebrations, a greater awareness of the Eastern Churches, great strides in the unity of the Catholic and Orthodox.

Just when the dust started to settle, we have Pope Francis, who tells us that Catholics must realize: **"We are not living in an era of change but a change of era."** As one would expect in the midst of such an upheaval, **the Church is again messy.** This may not be comfortable, but it is not bad.

The pope asserts that Church's true *reform* does not mean "the umpteenth plan to change Church structures" or the establishment of another committee. This is simply "tidying up." It involves our own conversion.

It means, instead, grafting yourself to and rooting yourself in Christ, leaving yourself to be guided by the Spirit — so that all will be possible with genius and creativity."

We are going to look at the Church, the People of God, in a different way. No longer is the focus on the Vatican or even the West, but Pope Francis is drawing our attention to the movements of the Spirit in the marginalized and the forgotten. Not always neat, clean, or pretty, but still very much loved by God, in need of our compassion and concern.

Sometimes we get tired of all the changes, of all the challenges and ask, **Where is all this going?**

The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit. (JOHN 3:18) ■

John D Faris

Chorbishop John D. Faris

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