

the **Maronite Voice**



The Return of the Prodigal Son

Fourth Sunday of Lent



the Maronite Voice

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“When will I ever get that apology I’m looking for?”

Somehow, I knew this title would invite you to read this brief reflection, because I think it is a desire of each of us to have those who have hurt us acknowledge that. Sometimes even the slightest hint of someone’s acknowledgement, and/or sorrow, is all we need to feel a little better. However, in all honesty, most of us can count on one hand the amount of times that one who has offended us has acknowledged it or asked forgiveness, and we can count on all toes and fingers the times we’ve been hurt!

Nonetheless, and I say this with full disclosure, I myself have not done my fair share of asking for forgiveness, so how can I expect someone else to say to me, “I am sorry.” My admission of guilt, may by chance, resonate with a few of you. Nonetheless, back to my question, there are many times in which others have “trespassed against” us, when will we ever get that long-awaited apology?

Dear brother, dear sister, I wish I could answer that, but, after all, this is Lent, and our Maronite Church urges us — especially in the prayers of Holy Saturday — to forgive, even when the offending party has not asked, nor even hinted of any awareness, or any sorrow.

In the Bo’oto Prayer of Holy Saturday, we pray:

“O hearts full of anger, take heed
Go make peace with your foes
and embrace them with love
and compassion.

Engrave on your souls Jesus Christ
As he humbled himself,
you should humble yourselves
and grant pardon.”

*...“take heed, O heart full of anger,”
“make peace with your foes” before it’s
too late, and pray that God may have
mercy on us all.*

After praying a prayer like this, can we afford to wait for that acknowledgement, or for that “I’m sorry” from the one who has “trespassed against” us? Although, it was consoling while it lasted, the hope that one day our hurt would be acknowledged, is only that, a hope, which, in fact, is best left as a hope that may or may not ever be fulfilled in this world, or in the next.

However, as we wait for that apology, or sense of sorrow, I think it best we wait for the next world, and in the meantime, “take heed, O heart full of anger,” “make peace with your foes” before it’s too late, and pray that God may have mercy on us all.



Happy Lent.

+ Gregory



Schedule BISHOP GREGORY J. MANSOUR

- 18-19 MARCH** Lawrence, MA | St. Anthony Church | Diaconal Ordination of Michael Charchaflian
- 25-27 MARCH** Boston, MA | Our Lady of Cedars Church | MYA Retreat and Pastoral Visit
- 28-31 MARCH** St. Louis, MO | Pastoral Center | Eastern Catholic Bishops Meeting
- 1 APRIL** Watervliet, NY | St. Ann Church | Friday in Lent
- 3 APRIL** Sleepy Hollow, NY | St. John Paul II Church | Pastoral Visit
- 5 APRIL** Brooklyn, NY | Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral | Consecration of Myron and Holy Oils
- 7 APRIL** Fall River, MA | St. Anthony Church | Lenten Liturgy and Retreat
- 10 APRIL** Brooklyn, NY | Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral | Hosanna Sunday and Visit of Seminarians
- 11 APRIL** Somerset, NY | St. Sharbel Church | Great Monday
- 12 APRIL** Brooklyn, NY | Co-Cathedral of St. Joseph | Great Tuesday | Chrism Mass
- 13 APRIL** Wilkes Barre, PA | St. Anthony St. George Church | Great Wednesday | Rite of the Lamp
- 14 APRIL** Scranton, PA | St. Ann Church | Thursday of the Mysteries | Washing of the Feet
- 15 APRIL** Easton, PA | Our Lady of Lebanon Church | Rite of the Chalice
- 17-19 APRIL** Brooklyn, NY | Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral | Passion Week Rites and Liturgies
- 26-28 APRIL** Washington, DC | Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary | Clergy Enrichment Days
- 30 APRIL-1 MAY** Atlanta, GA | St. Joseph Church | Dedication of New Church
- 3 MAY** Brooklyn, NY | Eparchial Finance Council via Zoom
- 4 MAY** Brooklyn, NY | Presbyteral Council via Zoom
- 8 MAY** Brooklyn, NY | Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral
- 11 MAY** Washington, DC | American Task Force for Lebanon



Schedule BISHOP A. ELIAS ZAIDAN

- 18-20 MARCH** Phoenix, AZ | St. Joseph Church | Pastoral Visit
- 19 MARCH** Feast of St. Joseph
- 21-25 MARCH** Phoenix, AZ | Annual Eparchial Clergy Retreat
- 25-27 MARCH** Phoenix, AZ | Eparchial Married Men Formation Retreat
- 29-31 MARCH** St. Louis, MO | Pastoral Center | Eastern Catholic Bishops Meeting
- 2-3 APRIL** Wheeling, WV | Our Lady of Lebanon Church | Pastoral Visit
- 10 APRIL** St. Louis, MO | St. Raymond Cathedral | Hosanna Sunday
- 11 APRIL** St. Louis, MO | St. Raymond Cathedral | Consecration of Myron and Holy Oils
- 12-16 APRIL** Houston, TX | Our Lady of the Cedars Church | Passion Week Mission
- 17 APRIL** St. Louis, MO | St. Raymond Cathedral | Easter Celebration
- 23-24 APRIL** San Antonio, TX | St. George Church | Pastoral Visit
- 26-28 APRIL** Washington, DC | Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary | Clergy Enrichment Days
- 30 APRIL-1 MAY** Birmingham, AL | St. Elias Church | Pastoral Visit
- 1 MAY** Simi Valley, CA | Sts. Peter and Paul Church | Liturgy and Banquet
- 3-4 MAY** Virtual | USCCB International Justice and Peace Committee Meeting
- 6-8 MAY** Lakewood, CO | St. Rafka Church | Pastoral Visit
- 14 MAY** West Covina, CA | St. Jude Church | First Communion Celebration



Eternal rest grant to her, O Lord.

LINDA GEMAYEL SEBAALI

Linda Gemayel Sebaali, the mother of Msgr. George Sebaali, Pastor of Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Washington, D.C., passed away in Lebanon on 19 January 2022. The Divine Liturgy took place on January 20. Linda was predeceased by her husband, Milad in 1995. In addition to Msgr. George, she is survived by her four daughters and three sons; eight grandchildren and four great grandchildren; one brother and numerous nephews and nieces and their families.

Bishop Gregory joins the clergy, religious and faithful in offering condolences to Msgr. George and his family. May God grant His handmaid, Linda, eternal peace.



Arriving at the Harbor of Our Salvation

by Rev. David A. Fisher

O Lord, bless..., that we may reach the harbor of salvation, which is the glorious feast of your Resurrection.”

PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS: THE MIRACLE AT CANA IN GALILEE

In the Maronite liturgical tradition, Holy Week is an independent season of the liturgical year. The rite known as Coming to the Harbor, in many ways sums up in its title what the Church has been doing through the Season of Great Lent, and will be doing during Holy Week, that is, journeying to the harbor of salvation.

Naheero or Coming to the Harbor was traditionally celebrated on the evening of Hosanna Sunday. Now commonly celebrated during Holy Week, the faithful remember that like the Wise Virgins who kept their lamps burning, the Church is a holy ship that keeps the flame of faith alive, as it approaches the harbor of salvation.

In prayers, Scripture and hymnology, images of Coming to the Harbor and Holy Week speak of our enduring hope and faith in the Lord's actions of redemption and salvation:

*O Harbor of safety and salvation,
through this incense we now offer You,
be a Support and a Savior to all those who came,
in true faith,
to the harbor of Your holy Church.*

—ETRO. RITE OF COMING TO THE HARBOR

Jesus Christ is the harbor of salvation; the Church offers him incense, which is the sweet perfume of our prayers. The burning of incense and prayers that accompany it recall his burial, his opening of the gates of Sheol, which was the abode of the righteous who died before him, and his Glorious Resurrection from the dead.

The Harbor of Light

*The Harbor of Light: That night the light covered
earthly beings and heavenly ones;
they all praised the Son of Light, the Maker of light;
in the world, He brings safety to the harbor.*

—QOLO. THE LITURGY OF COMING TO THE HARBOR

During the era of the Church Fathers, distinctive theological themes and language emerged in the major cultural/linguistic regions of the Church. Regarding the central acts of salvation, the Latin Fathers tended to emphasize the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus; the Byzantine Fathers on the Resurrection, and the Syriac Fathers on the Light (Life) that dispels the darkness (sin and death) that emerges from the *Great Saturday of the Light*. The early Syriac Father, Aphrahat writes:

*And when Jesus, the slayer of Death, came, and
clothed Himself in a Body from the seed of Adam,
and was crucified in His Body, and tasted death;*

...the dead saw light in the darkness, they lifted up their heads from the bondage of death, and looked forth, and saw the splendor of the King Messiah.

—DEMONSTRATION XXII

In the vast darkness of the sea, a harbor is only recognized by its light. The righteous dead recognize Jesus as the harbor of safety and salvation was recognized by his light that overshadowed and destroyed the darkness of the sea of death.

The poetic theology of Saint Ephrem is the greatest example of patristic Syriac thought on the theme of Light.

The Light of the Just and the Joy of the upright is Christ Jesus our Lord. ...He came to rescue us from darkness and to fill us with the radiance of His Light. ...His glory shines upon the world and enlightens the very depths of the abyss. Death is annihilated, night has vanished, and the gates of Sheol are broken.

—HYMN OF LIGHT

Ephrem proclaims that Jesus is the Light of the Just, therefore, the light of the Church, and the Church of the Just are the righteous who lived before his coming. The Fathers of the Church often saw the Just of old as the righteous of ancient Israel and the holy pagans; these departed are united with those who live now by faith in the Church, made light to the nations in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who dispels the darkness.

Recalling the Syriac theology of *Holy Saturday* as the *Saturday of the Light*, Ephrem points to the effects of the *Light*, which is the annihilation of death and the breaking of the gates of Sheol, the place of the dead. The *Light* is victorious, the *Light of the Harbor*, which is Jesus Christ, has destroyed the darkness that has held humanity captive.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

The Gospel of Matthew's parable of the Ten Virgins proclaims that wisdom is rooted in the choice to care for the light, the light of salvation:

Then the kingdom of heaven will be like 10 virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ...the bridegroom came and those who were ready went into the wedding feast with him. Then the door was locked. Afterwards the other virgins came and said, 'Lord, Lord, open the door for us!' But he said in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, I do not know you.' Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

—MATTHEW 25:1-2, 10-12

The disciplines and liturgies of Great Lent, Holy Week, all leading to the celebration of the *Glorious Resurrection of the Lord*, teach us that the faithful must be vigilant in their care of the faith given by Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The lamps of light that brought the faithful to the harbor of salvation are given to the Church to be kept burning bright. While both the wise and the foolish virgins rested and slept, it was the wise virgins who were prepared for the coming of the bridegroom. So that if they were asleep or awake, the wise were ready to enter into the wedding feast.

The Hebrew Scriptures or Old Testament had also spoken of this kind of wisdom in the context of a wedding celebration:

*Her I loved and sought after from my youth;
I sought to take her for my bride
and was enamored of her beauty.*

—WISDOM 8:2

The wise seek the Light, which is the Lord; the wise never lose sight of the beauty of salvation.

In *Holy Week*, the Church enters the *Harbor of Salvation*, the *Light of Christ*. This light is entrusted to the Church to keep it burning bright, and to share with the world. ■

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



Notes from Lebanon

Elections Draw Near

Parliamentary elections are three months away in Lebanon, one of the region's few democratic nations. There are 128 seats — 64 for Christians and 64 for Muslims — in Lebanon's Parliament, split into 15 different districts.

Lebanon's diaspora has the chance to have a say in the country's future. Those registered will cast their ballots the weekend of 7 May. The elections in Lebanon will be held the following weekend.

Much attention will be paid to the diaspora, which was allowed to vote for the first time in history during the 2018 elections. More than double the 93,000 who registered to vote last time around have signed up to vote this year. International elections observers are pushing for the votes to be counted abroad at embassies before being sent back to Lebanon. Previously, the votes were counted in Lebanon only. But with suspicions and reports of inaccurate ballot counting, some sides hope to have the expat votes tallied outside the country.

Opinion polls suggest there will not be a complete overhaul of the ruling class and the main political parties will maintain their grip on the majority; however, new faces could make a difference.

Brain Drain

A professor recently tweeted that she was finding it "very, very difficult to teach," while seeing the "despair and disillusionment in the eyes of students."

Thousands of the country's brightest are fleeing in record numbers. An estimated 79,000 Lebanese migrated from the country last year compared to around 17,000 in 2020. And no signs of improvement appear on the horizon.

Low-Cost Diplomacy

Lebanon's foreign ministry told its embassies abroad that they needed to cut costs and search for donors to fund their missions. One Lebanese diplomat told me that the foreign ministry told embassies they could no longer purchase office supplies. Speaking on the condition of anonymity, the diplomat criticized the ruling class for prioritizing their re-election bids over solving the economic situation.

Meanwhile, security forces foiled three separate suicide attacks in recent weeks.

Several Lebanese men were reported to have been killed in Iraq during a raid on a terrorist group in January. ISIS and other terrorist groups are taking advantage of the economic catastrophe in Lebanon and recruiting young men, specifically from the north, to join their ranks.

Help Politically

The diaspora (specifically in the US) has the ability to make Lebanese voices heard.

The White House, State Department and Pentagon continue to provide much-needed aid to the Lebanese people and the Lebanese Armed Forces. Keeping senators and members of Congress informed of the situation will ensure that Lebanon remains a foreign policy priority. Doing so will help Lebanon's leading universities, including the American University of Beirut and Lebanese American University, to be on the U.S. government's list of foreign aid recipients.

Help Financially

The economic and financial collapse continues with 80% of the population below the poverty line. Aiding charities and remittances will go a long way in helping to put food on the table. The road to recovery will undoubtedly be a long one.

Some Good News

To end on a bright note, Lebanon's national basketball team won the Arab Basketball Championship for the first time in history. The team's point guard declared on national TV that the trophy was dedicated to "every Lebanese person sitting in their house without electricity and for every Lebanese person struggling every day."

Joseph Haboush is Washington correspondent for Al Arabiy English. Follow him on Twitter @jhaboush.



FATTET LABAN: A LEBANESE LENTEN RECIPE*

One 32 oz. container of plain whole milk yogurt
Cheesecloth
One bunch of fresh mint finely chopped
One teaspoon of dry mint
Two garlic cloves crushed
Two 16 oz. cans of chickpeas
Pita bread
Two tablespoons of olive oil

Place a colander into a bowl, and line it with cheesecloth. Place the yogurt in the cheesecloth. Cover and refrigerate. Allow the yogurt to drain for a few hours or overnight.

Combine the drained yogurt, fresh and dry mint, and crushed garlic in a bowl. In a pan, heat the chickpeas in their liquid until warm. Drain the chickpeas, and set them aside. Toast the pita bread in the oven until golden in color. Break apart some of the pita bread, and place pieces in a large bowl with the chickpeas. Add the yogurt mixture. Garnish with fresh mint, and drizzle olive oil over the top. Serve the yogurt with the remaining pita bread.

Makes 6 servings

*LENTEN LEBANESE RECIPE FROM CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES —
CRS RICE BOWL'S GLOBAL KITCHEN

Father Pierre Bassil: Christ brings you peace *by Brandon Shulleeta*

“**B**e like Christ, less than the world.”

That’s the philosophy that Father Pierre Bassil lives by — and a message he spreads to others. “That’s my whole focus,” he said.

Father Bassil, 55, a priest at Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church in Flint, Michigan, has been a priest for nearly 24 years.

Born and raised in Lebanon in a devout Maronite Catholic family, he wanted to be a priest at a very young age. He recalls being about 12 years old and asked by relatives what he planned to do when he grew up. He always gave the same answer: “I’m going

to be a priest.” And he didn’t want to wait long to begin that journey. He joined the seminary when he was 14.

While his parents were a major influence on him spiritually, so were his three aunts — one of whom took him to seminary school.

He remembers her telling him: “If you can’t be a holy priest, don’t go. You have to be holy, to make the people holy.”

It’s a message he’s held onto more than 40 years later. And he’s tried to lead a holy life with a simple code:



“When you’re honest and you have the peace of Christ in your heart, that’s enough to be a good priest,” Bassil said.

“What makes a good priest is to be honest with yourself and be a humble and simple person ... and be who you are,” Bassil said.

Bassil said it’s an approach others can live by as well. He said living a simple life is one that is focused more on living like Christ ... and less on worldly things and luxurious lifestyles.

Bassil had been a monk for eight years as part of the order of Saint Sharbel, and he said that helped him become a better, simpler person.

He’s been a pastor for numerous churches, including St. Ignatius of Antioch Maronite Catholic Church of Dayton, Ohio, for 12 years. And he’s been the pastor of Our Lady of Lebanon since 2013.



He said his own philosophy for priesthood is something that we all can live by, to have a happier, more fulfilling life: “When we don’t have Christ, we don’t know peace,” he said. “When we have Christ, we know peace.” ■

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



What is an Eastern Church? *by TMV Staff*



Eastern Roman Empire

What is meant by the term Eastern Church? To begin, the term no longer has any geographic reference. There are Western (Latin) Catholics are spread all over the world and Eastern Catholics are in the west. Instead, the term refers to the origins of these churches in the Eastern Roman Empire.

Christianity arose in one of the largest political entities in history, the Roman Empire (a territory that covered approximately 40 modern nations). At the end of the fourth century, the Roman Empire was divided into the Western Roman Empire (whose capital was the ancient and formerly pagan Rome) and the Eastern Roman Empire (whose capital was the newly-established Christian Constantinople). The Western

Roman Empire collapsed with the abdication of the last emperor Romulus Augustus in 476. This Eastern Roman Empire (sometimes referred to Byzantium) was to last for almost another 1,000 years.

Expansion and Disintegration

The true beauty of the Gospel of Jesus is that it could be “transplanted” from its original home in Jerusalem and take root and flourish in a variety of cultures. At first, the Apostles went to prominent imperial cities, which became centers of evangelization. In the West, Rome, which witnessed the martyrdom of Saints Peter and Paul, evangelized Western Europe and the lands colonized by them. In the East, three major cities in the Eastern Roman Empire were centers of Christian evangelization:

Alexandria (in modern Egypt), Antioch (in modern Turkey) and Constantinople (known as Istanbul in modern Turkey). Not confining itself to the Roman imperial boundaries, Christianity spread as far as India and Mongolia by the sixth century.

Regrettably, the history of Christianity was not one only of expansion; divisions also began to arise. The first divisions arose during the fifth century disputes over the nature of Christ. The drifting apart of the Western and Eastern Empires culminated with the Great Schism of 1054. The Western Roman sector referred to itself as the Catholic Church and the Eastern Roman sector referred to itself as the Orthodox Church. The Catholic Church of the West was to suffer further upheaval and division because of the Reformation.

We thank Anna Salloum for her contributions to the Living Church feature of *The Maronite Voice*. Anna will now be focusing on her son, Joseph, who was recently baptized at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn. Anna and her family will continue to be in our hearts and prayers.

We welcome Chet Wade as a feature writer. Chet has worked for more than 45 years in mass communications as a journalist, public relations executive, communications consultant and adjunct college professor. He recently returned to his hometown of Pittsburgh and Our Lady of Victory Maronite Catholic Church after being a member of St. Anthony Maronite Catholic Church in Glen Allen, VA, for 19 years.



Eastern Catholic Churches

With the very few exceptions of the Maronites and the Italo-Greeks and some Chaldeans, Eastern Catholic Churches no longer existed. There were short-lived reunions of the Eastern and Western Churches at the ecumenical councils of Lyon II (1272-74) and Florence (1431-45). The missionary efforts of the Franciscans, Dominicans and Jesuits in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa resulted in partial reunions, that is, various groups of Orthodox reunited with the Bishop of Rome and the Catholic Church. These are the Eastern Catholic Churches. These groups wanted to follow their own traditions and not be forced to adapt themselves to Latin Christianity in order to be Catholic. (The Orthodox resented the entire movement as proselytizing and regarded these new Eastern Catholics as traitors.) In order to accommodate their desires, Rome established Eastern Catholic bishoprics and patriarchates to serve them.

Today there are 23 Eastern Catholic Churches, with a total population of approximately 15 million faithful—a

very small minority group in the Catholic Church with its population of 1.2 billion faithful.

The Eastern Catholic churches can govern themselves in any matters not reserved to the supreme authority. However, the Eastern Catholic Churches are not equal in their self-governing power. The Eastern Catholic patriarchal churches enjoy the highest degree of autonomy: they can elect their own leadership for positions inside their territory, pass their own laws again in their own territory and operate their own courts. The major archiepiscopal churches employ a governance system that is quasi-patriarchal; the significant difference is that the election of the major archbishop must be confirmed by the Roman Pontiff. The metropolitan and other churches have significantly reduced autonomy, so we shall restrict our focus to the patriarchal and major archiepiscopal churches.

Synodal Governance

The governance systems of the Latin and Eastern Churches differ significantly. The standard form of

governance for Eastern Churches is a patriarchal / synodal structure.

The Second Vatican Council in its 1965 decree on the Eastern Churches (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*) succinctly articulates the governance systems of the Eastern Catholic Churches: “The patriarchs with their synods are the highest authority for all business of the patriarchate . . .” (n. 9) The synod comprises all the bishops of the patriarchal church. The statement significantly is silent regarding the superiority of either the patriarch or the synod. Rather, canon law allocates responsibilities to each, creating a balance between the authority of an individual (the patriarch) and the authority of a group (the synod). Generally, the patriarch exercises administrative authority while the synod of bishops exercises legislative and juridical authority.

There are six Eastern Catholic patriarchal churches: the Armenian Church, the Chaldean Church, the Coptic Church, the Maronite Church, the Melkite Church, and the Syrian Church. The major archiepiscopal churches: the

What is an Eastern Church?

Continued from page 15

Ukrainian Church, the Syro-Malabar Church, the Romanian Church and the Syro-Malankara Church are for the most part canonically equated with the patriarchal churches. There are also four metropolitan churches: Ruthenian Church, Slovak Church, the Ethiopian Church and the Eritrean Church.

Eastern Catholics in the New World

For the past 150 years, emigration has been one of the greatest challenges facing these Eastern Catholic Churches. Generally speaking, emigration from Eastern Europe and the Middle East began in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The two world wars (with the collapse of the Russian, Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires), the creation of the state of Israel with subsequent Arab-Israeli wars and conflicts, the 1975-90 civil war in Lebanon, the Iraqi war, the rise of Islamist groups, and most recently, the “Arab spring” gave occasion for the Eastern Christians to abandon their homelands and build their lives elsewhere. The crisis of how to provide pastoral care for these emigrants arose.

The Second Vatican Council tackled the issue. In its decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches, the

Council Fathers urged, “Means should be taken therefore in every part of the world for the protection and advancement of all the individual Churches and, to this end, there should be established parishes and a special hierarchy where the spiritual good of the faithful demands it.” (n. 4) As a consequence of this mandate, bishops of the Maronite and Melkite Greek Catholic faithful were appointed to the United States in 1966. Succeeding decades witnessed the appointment of bishops from the Armenian, Chaldean, Romanian, Syrian, Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara churches for North America.

But a very thorny problem remained. What was the connection between these churches of the “expansion” with their respective churches in the homeland to be? The Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, the law governing the Eastern Catholic Churches issued by Pope John Paul II in 1990, articulates the arrangement that Eastern Catholic bishops, clergy, religious and laity outside the territory of the patriarchal / major archiepiscopal churches are under the direct jurisdiction of the pope, who manages their affairs through the Congregation for the Eastern Churches.



This is not to say that all bonds between the churches outside and inside the patriarchal territory are broken. For the appointment of bishops outside the territory, the patriarch with the synod of bishops proposes three candidates to the Roman Pontiff, who makes the appointment. These bishops have the right and obligation to participate in the synod of bishops. All liturgical laws passed by the synod of bishops enjoy the force of law for all the faithful and institutions of the respective church inside and outside the territory. Other laws of a disciplinary nature can acquire the force of law inside and outside the patriarchal territory if the local bishop decides to do so and it is within his competence or if the Apostolic See approves the law.

The pain involved in migration initially disposes us to regard the entire matter negatively, but we must consider that Divine Providence has brought about an expansion of Eastern forms of Christianity handed down from the Apostles. The Church of Christ is enriched and its unity can be strengthened by this diversity. ■

Synod on Synodality 2023

What is your role in it?

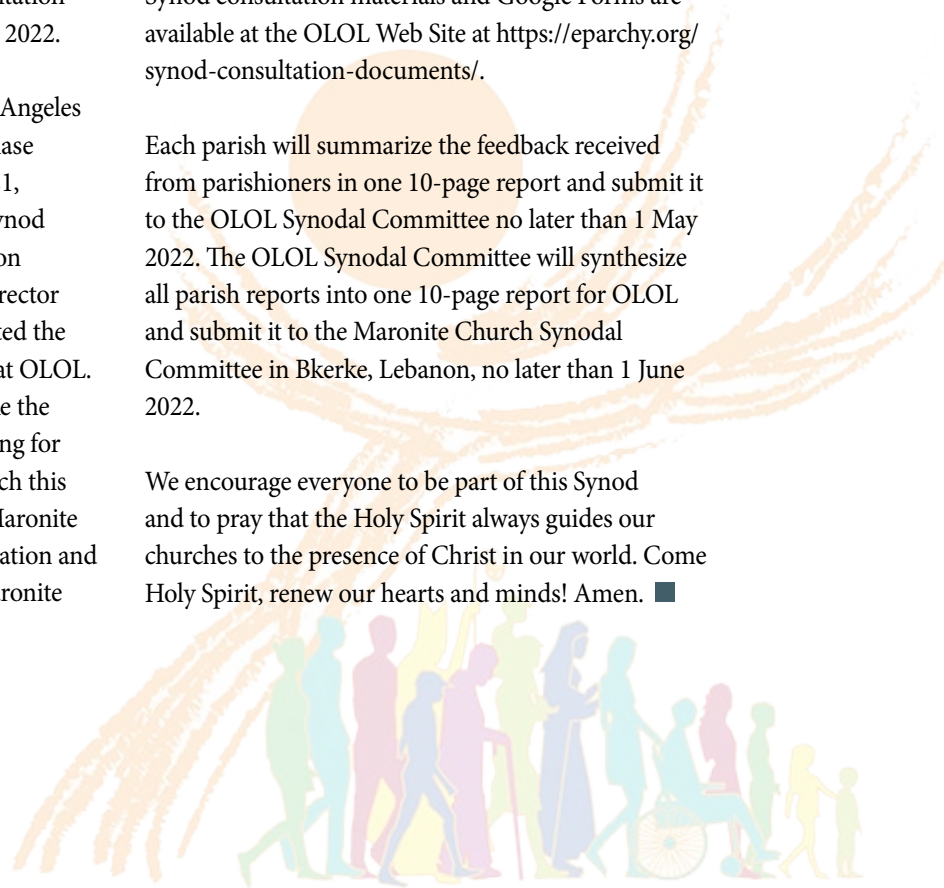
In preparation for the 16th Synod of Bishops, titled Synod on Synodality, that will take place in the Vatican in October 2023, Pope Francis has invited all Catholics around the world to offer their opinions regarding how the Church should journey together in its mission of evangelization in the future. The Synod's central theme of "*journeying together in our mission of evangelization*" is part of a renewal of the Church as we focus on our mission of witnessing to Christ in the third millennium. This is the first time in Church history that lay people of all ages are given the opportunity to offer their opinions about how the church should work more closely together. We should all take this invitation from Pope Francis very seriously and do our part in the initial consultation phase of the Synod which will end in August 2022.

The Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles (OLOL) launched the Synod consultation phase during a virtual meeting on 7 November 2021, in which Bishop Zaidan and the Eparchial Synod Committee (Fr. Roby Zibara, Pastor, St. Maron Church, Detroit, and Alberto Tohmé, Co-Director of the Office of Family Life Ministry) presented the framework of the Synod consultation phase at OLOL. The main goal of this framework was to make the consultation phase easy, simple and welcoming for all participants. Bishop Zaidan chose to launch this Synodal phase at the beginning of the new Maronite Liturgical year on the Sunday of the Consecration and Renewal of the Church, in union with all Maronite Bishops worldwide.

Everyone at OLOL will have the opportunity to offer feedback in the next three months, through the end of March 2022. Feedback will be collected at the local parish level for 10 topics that Pope Francis selected, which are all related to the central theme of "*journeying together in our mission of evangelization*." Everyone can offer feedback in two ways. First, feedback can be offered at Synod consultation events which will be organized and facilitated by Synodal leaders at each parish. These events will offer everyone the opportunity to reflect on the topics and offer their feedback in a small group setting. Second, everyone can provide their feedback electronically through Google Forms that will be available for each topic. Synod consultation materials and Google Forms are available at the OLOL Web Site at <https://eparchy.org/synod-consultation-documents/>.

Each parish will summarize the feedback received from parishioners in one 10-page report and submit it to the OLOL Synodal Committee no later than 1 May 2022. The OLOL Synodal Committee will synthesize all parish reports into one 10-page report for OLOL and submit it to the Maronite Church Synodal Committee in Bkerke, Lebanon, no later than 1 June 2022.

We encourage everyone to be part of this Synod and to pray that the Holy Spirit always guides our churches to the presence of Christ in our world. Come Holy Spirit, renew our hearts and minds! Amen. ■



Hosted by:



July 13-17, 2022



57th National Maronite Convention

Sponsored by the National Apostolate of Maronites

MINNEAPOLIS TO HOST THE 57TH NAM CONVENTION

The National Apostolate of Maronites (NAM), St. Maron Maronite Church of Minneapolis, and the 2022 NAM Convention Team, are looking forward to welcoming you from July 13-17 to the 57th NAM Convention in the Land of 10,000 Lakes of Minnesota.

The convention will be held at the Radisson Blu Mall of America Hotel (only \$186/night) which is connected to the Mall of America and only one mile from the Minneapolis-St. Paul (MSP) airport.

This convention will have specially-designed workshops, entertainment and excursions being planned to enrich our Maronite spiritual life and provide outstanding cultural experiences.

Come and immerse yourself in all this convention will have to offer:

- Spiritual Workshops
- Daily Divine Liturgy
- Eucharistic Adoration
- Evangelical & Classical Concert
- Hospitality Room
- Activities And Excursions for All Ages – Children to Seniors
- Nightly Entertainment
- Silent Auction
- Raffle with Cash Prizes
- Shopping at the World Famous Mall of America that's only steps away from the convention. (No Tax on Clothing)
- Free Hotel/Airport Shuttle and Parking

Workshops:

Thursday: Fr. Anthony Salim, author of the Captivated by Your Teachings, will enrich us with our rich Maronite roots as he nourishes our minds and hearts to the importance of family and adult faith formation in our spiritual faith journeys as Maronites.

Friday: Jeff Cavins, a well renowned bible expert will walk us with some of the journeys that Jesus and his disciples made to Lebanon. Lebanon, part of the Holy Land is mentioned 72 times in the Holy Bible. Jesus visited it many times, especially Tyre and Sidon. The Virgin Mary and the Apostles walked with him on its soil.

Saturday: As the Eucharist is the heart and summit of the Catholic faith, Bishop Andrew Cozzens will stir up the spirit

and shed light on this great truth of our faith. (Studies show that only one-third of Catholics believe Catholic teaching about the Eucharist, that it is the true body and blood of Jesus Christ.)

Saturday: The Commission for Lebanon Workshop will brief us on the complicated situation in Lebanon and the efforts that have been made in the US to support a free, sovereign, and democratic Lebanon.

Excursions and Activities

Tours of Cathedral of St. Paul/ Basilica of St. Mary/St. Maron Church. See impressive houses of worship on this great tour of the Cathedral of St. Paul, third largest Catholic Cathedral in the United States, and co-cathedral, The Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis, the first established basilica in the United States. Last but not least, our own St. Maron Church in Minneapolis. While at St. Maron's make sure to visit the Shrine of St. Sharbel and receive many blessings.

Mississippi Boat Cruise with stop at Holy Family Maronite Church. Discover the beauty of the Mighty Mississippi River! Explore the Mississippi River—a cultural treasure of America! Spot bald eagles, herons, egrets, and falcons as you travel back in time from St. Paul's bustling downtown harbor through the Mississippi National Great River Park. A stop will be made at our sister parish Holy Family Maronite Church in St. Paul.

Wisdom on Tap w/Bishops at a Brewery. MYA meet with Bishop Mansour and Bishop Zaidan in a fun relaxing atmosphere at one of Minnesota's artisanal breweries. Bring your questions on life and religion for a lively afternoon of discussion and receive great wisdom from our beloved spiritual leaders.

Minnetonka Boat Cruise. MYA come aboard for an exciting 2-hour cruise on Lake Minnetonka, a great way to explore one of our biggest 10,000 lakes and enjoy wonderful views.

Lebanon Hills BBQ. MYA come and enjoy BBQ and games in Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Canoes, kayaks, and paddleboats are available as well as access to a sandy beach.

Mall of America • Sea Life/Underwater Ocean Tunnel. MYO come see Minnesota's Only Underwater Tunnel and Largest Aquarium. Voyage into jaw-dropping underwater worlds only in SEA LIFE at Mall of America. Escape into a 300ft-long underwater tunnel with four breathtaking

areas, come face to fin with sharks and rescued sea turtles, touch a sticky anemone, and explore over 11 breathtaking exhibits. No flippers required.

Science Museum and Omni Theatre. MYO will explore science on our 90-foot giant domed screen in the 3rd IMAX Digital Laser Dome theatre in the world. Then, discover the latest in science, technology and more in 8.5 acres of exhibits and activities to make it a very memorable day.

Mall of America • Lego Imagination Center. Children visit the LEGO Store for a giant, pick-a-brick wall with 180 different LEGO elements to choose from. Plus, there are play tables to inspire creativity and eight larger-than-life models, including a LEGO robot towering over 34 feet tall!

Mall of America • Nickelodeon Indoor Theme Park. Children will enjoy Nickelodeon Universe®, the nation's first indoor Nickelodeon theme park, is home to seven acres of unique attractions, entertainment, and dining options.

Mall of America • Crayola Experience. Children will experience hands-on, creative fun! Crayola Experience is the only place in the world where the magic of Crayola comes to life. Boasting 25 hands-on attractions, Crayola Experience is where color, chemistry and technology magically combine to create a fun-filled, colorful adventure for a kid's imagination.

Como Zoo. Children will see a wide variety of animals, from monkeys, bison, wolves, polar bears, penguins, lions, tigers, zebras, giraffes and more. Take advantage of this great opportunity for kids to observe amazing animals and have fun!

Fun Crafts for Children (onsite). Enjoying fun activities, creative craft-making, and games will keep kids happy and active.

Tarneeb Tournament for Seniors. Come Play and Win a Trophy.

One Faith: Chilling with Abouna. MYO will come to this activity to have a casual time together with Abouna Edward and board members. It is an open Q&A about struggles to live in our faith as youth/disciples in today's world.

One Heritage: Maronites Then and Now. MYO will learn how to cherish our heritage as Maronites through interactive activities. We will open the door to our past – the History of the Maronite Faith – and look towards the important role of our youth within our Maronite Churches.

One Family: MYO Meet and Greet. Youth will gather to meet each other and to discover through icebreaker games and different activities that we are all one family.

Entertainment

Wednesday Night – Opening Celebration. John Khoury, local favorite singer, and musician will kick off our celebration.



Thursday Night – Evangelical Concert. Doris Farhat, Chicago's Star Singer and Vocalist, and other praising voices, will treat us to an uplifting and inspirational performance.



Wednesday through Saturday our own Renowned Minnesota Native DJ Duo DJ UB & DJ Roukos will provide nonstop dancing until the early morning.



Friday Night – North Star Hafli. Get ready for a Double Header party featuring Doris Farhat and Lebanese Superstar Rami Badr who will keep your stomping dabke feet going all night.

Saturday Night – Grand Banquet. With His Golden Voice, Lebanese Superstar Fidel Fayad will delight us with soulful songs and traditional dances.



AND.....Live Sing Alongs, a traditional convention favorite.



For more information or to register, please visit

www.namnews.org

or call 914-964-3070





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

REGISTRATION FORM

Pre-registration deadline: Monday, June 13, 2022
 Please complete all information or register online: www.namnews.org
 Incomplete forms will not be processed. Please PRINT legibly. You will receive a confirmation via email or mail.

First Name _____	Last Name _____	Please check all that apply:	
Address _____		NAM Member	Child (5-11)
City _____	State _____ Zip Code _____	NAM Board	Youth (12-18)
Phone _____	Email _____	NAM Delegate	Young Adult (18-35)
Parish _____		Convention Committee	Vegetarian
Package/ Program Purchased _____		Order of St. Sharbel	

PACKAGES ONLY –Enter number of packages desired and make sure to fill in Totals and Grand Totals. Daily Workshops are included with any purchase.
 NAM members whose 2022 dues have been paid will receive \$15 off the full adult package and \$10 off all other packages. This discount is void after the pre-registration deadline of June 13, 2022. If you wish to pay for your member dues with this registration: please send a check payable to NAM.
 Child, Youth, Young Adult, and Excursions are additional and not included in packages. Saturday Banquet seating is chosen for you unless you contact NAM office or request on-line. ****YOUTH:** If you are 18 and did not graduate from high school by summer; **YOUNG ADULT:** If you are over 18 and a high school graduate and younger than 35.

PACKAGE OPTIONS AND PRICING

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

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

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

TOTAL \$ _____

GRAND TOTAL \$ _____

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

Do not send cash. If using a CREDIT CARD register online or call: [914-964-3070](tel:914-964-3070)

Hotel rate is \$186 + tax per night single/double.
 For reservations call [1-800-333-3333](tel:1-800-333-3333) and ask for the National Maronite Convention Room Block.
 Hotel reservations must be made no later than **Wednesday, June 22, 2022**. Any reservations after this date are subject to availability and at prevailing room rate.



Presents

The 30th Annual Spring Raffle – 2022

Only 450 Tickets are available!
Donation: \$100 per ticket

This just may be the year your lucky number is chosen!!!!

Cash Prizes

1st \$10,000

2nd \$3,000

3rd \$2,000

4th \$1,500

5th \$1,000

This year's drawing will be held virtually at St Maron Church, Youngstown, OH; time to be determined on **May 1st, 2022.**

Thank you for your support in previous years for this raffle fund-raiser, as it is an important part of the NAM annual budget. We are counting on your generosity once again, to support our community projects, especially considering a very trying past 2 financial years. To purchase a personal ticket(s) or to help us in selling tickets please contact the national office.

All requests and payments must be received by

April 24, 2022

Rose Sahyoun, Interim Executive Director
2110 Redwood PL, Canfield, OH 44406
914-964-3070
info@namnews.org | www.namnews.org

You can purchase your tickets online using a credit card, or request it to be mailed to you or request it from your NAM Delegate.

The Order of Saint Sharbel New Members

ANNUAL

ERNEST KARAM | *St. George* | San Antonio, TX

JOHN SALLINGER | *Mary, Mother of the Light* | Tequesta, FL

TERESE STOCKING | *Mary, Mother of the Light* | Tequesta, FL

PERPETUAL

JOHN & MARY BOLUS | *St. Elias* | Birmingham, AL

HANA CHEMALY | *St. Anthony* | Cincinnati, OH

JOE COURY | *St. Maron* | Minneapolis, MN

MARILYN NASIFF | *St. Anthony of the Desert* | Fall River, MA

JOHN & MARY CATHERINE SIMECEK | *Our Lady's Parish* | Austin, TX

BETHANY SIMOES | *St. Anthony of the Desert* | Fall River, MA

JUDGE DIANNE YAMIN | *St. Anthony* | Danbury, CT

IN MEMORY OF JEE HAN PARK BY JOSEPH SOWMA | *St. Anthony* | Cincinnati, OH



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



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Humanitarian and educational ministries as well as its elderly care facility.
The Monastery will hold a monthly prayer service for the intentions of all its benefactors and their families.



Lenten Observances 2022

The Most Reverend Bishops Gregory J. Mansour and A. Elias Zaidan have issued the following Lenten guidelines for the Maronites of the United States.

Fasting and Abstinence

- + All Maronites who are physically capable are to **abstain** from meat on **Ash Monday** (28 February 2022) and all **Fridays of Lent**. This year an exception is made for Friday, 25 March, the Feast of the Annunciation. Meat may be eaten on this feast.
- + **Ash Monday** and **Great Friday of the Crucifixion** (15 April 2022) are also days of fasting. Fasting in the Maronite Church involves **eating and drinking nothing** at all (except water and medicine) from **midnight until noon**. The rest of the day normal meals can be taken, but without meat. All Maronites who are physically capable should fast on these two days.

Distribution of Ashes

All parish priests are to bless and distribute ashes on **Ash Monday** during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy as indicated in our liturgical books. This ceremony may not be celebrated on the vigil of Ash Monday (Cana Sunday). For the convenience of some faithful of the Latin Church who may come to Mass at a Maronite Church on their Ash Wednesday, ashes that were blessed on Monday may be given to them after the Mass. However, ashes are **not** to be blessed again on this day.

Lenten Services

All parish priests are to celebrate the **Benediction with the Cross** every **Friday of Lent** except for Great Friday of the Crucifixion. This service may be preceded by **Evening Prayer (Ramsho)**, **Stations of the Cross**, or even the **Divine Liturgy**. Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament should not take place on the Fridays of Lent.

Traditional Fasting Discipline

Clergy, religious and laity who wish to observe the more **traditional** Maronite practice of fasting and abstinence are **encouraged** to do so. That practice is summarized in the following, taken from **current Maronite Particular Law**:

Every weekday of Lent (Monday through Friday) is a day of fasting and abstinence from meat and dairy products (eggs, butter, milk, etc.). Fasting involves eating and drinking nothing at all (except water and medicine) from midnight until noon. The rest of the day normal meals can be taken, but without meat or dairy products. Dairy products are excluded because they are animal byproducts. Saturdays and Sundays are exempt from fasting and abstaining, as are the following feast days: St. Joseph (19 March) and the Annunciation (25 March). ■

MYA March For Life *by George Matta from Boston, MA*

On 21 January, Maronite young adults from across the United States braved the cold and united in Washington, D.C., for the 49th March for Life. Our Maronite brothers and sisters joined the demonstration to be part of the pro-life generation that brings hope to the injustices occurring in the womb and open the hearts of the nation.

The Maronite Young Adults (MYA) within the Eparchy of St. Maron hosted a weekend of spiritual and social activities. The bishops kicked off the weekend with a Vigil Mass for Life at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate

Conception. Afterwards, Bishop Gregory Mansour spoke to the youth in the Basilica's Maronite Chapel.

On 22 January, the group attended Liturgy at the Basilica before gathering along with fellow Maronite clergy, seminarians, and families of all ages at the pre-march rally whose theme for this year was "Equality Begins in the Womb." The rally included powerful messages from Members of Congress. It also included speakers Katie Shaw, a pro-life advocate who has Down Syndrome, and Father Mike Schmitz, reminding us that we are all deserving of love.

Following the rally, the March for Life began with prayer, hymns, and the spreading of love to everyone we encountered. It was a truly moving experience being surrounded by these witnesses of life who are living and breathing examples of the precarious position of the unborn. It was inspiring seeing so many families resulting from mothers choosing life. Despite the freezing temperatures, the crowd was united and warmed by the moving of hearts. It was a life-saving and life-changing event. You could sense the passion with every encounter, and the presence of the Holy Spirit was truly among us. We rejoiced at the





Capitol as record-breaking crowds gathered for this demonstration. We ended the day with a celebration and gathered for dinner and discussion.

Throughout the weekend, the young adults bonded over social and spiritual activities organized by the MYA. Bishop Gregory hosted a “Theology on Tap” session, which was an open discussion on the faith with the young adults and Maronite seminarians, followed by a fun day of axe-throwing competitions at a venue in the city. Other highlights from the day included a bottomless brunch and a Lebanese Night with

food, live singing, and dancing. Our weekend concluded with Liturgy at Our Lady of Lebanon Church and a trip downtown to tour the monuments. It was a remarkable and inspiring weekend for all those that were able to attend! ■



Saints in the Maronite Calendar

by Rev. Claude Franklin

March

On 9 March, the Maronite Church commemorates the **40 Martyrs of Sebaste**. These martyrs were victims of the persecutions of Roman Emperor Licinius around the year 316. The earliest account of their martyrdom is found in a homily that St. Basil of Caesarea (370-379) gave on their feast day.

As Licinius was preparing for battle against Emperor Constantine, he decided to remove any Christian soldiers from his troops, lest they revolt against him. He ordered his loyal military commander Agricola to round up the Christian soldiers, which he did, and they numbered 40.

Initially, they were locked up in prison and asked to renounce their Christian faith, which they refused. Seven days later, they were put on trial. Again, they were asked to renounce their Christian faith, to which they responded: "Take not only our military insignia, but also our lives, since nothing is more precious to us than Christ God." In response, the judge ordered the soldiers to stone the 40 Christian soldiers. However, the stones missed and returned to hit those who had thrown them. They then threw a stone, which hit Agricola, the military commander, breaking his teeth.

The next day, the judge ordered that the 40 Christian soldiers be thrown into a lake near the city, which had frozen over. Guards were set to watch them overnight to prevent them from coming out of the water unless they renounced their Christian Faith. In an effort to tempt them further, the judge had a warm bath-house set up on the shore. This temptation worked. In the middle of the night, one of the soldiers ran for the bath-house, but as soon as he crossed the threshold, he fell down dead.

While the other guards were sleeping, one of the guards, Aglaius, saw 39 crowns appear in the sky, one above each of the Christian Soldiers in the frozen lake. With courage, he woke up the other guards,



took off his clothes, jumped into the frozen lake and proclaimed: "I too am a Christian!" at which a crown appeared above his head, thus bringing the number of the holy martyrs to 40.

In the morning they were still alive, the judge had the Holy 40 Martyrs burned alive on a cart and their charred bones thrown into a river to prevent the Christians from gathering them up. However, three days later, Peter, the bishop of Sebaste, had a vision of where their remains were and was told to bury them with honor, which he did.

April

On 12 April, the Maronite Church commemorates **Saints Mennas, Hermogenes and EUGRAPHUS**. They are three martyrs who were tortured and put to death for their faith in Christ under the Emperor Maximian (305-313).

Saint Mennas, who was a soldier in the imperial army, was sent by Emperor Maximian from Athens to Alexandria to help suppress some riots between the Christians and pagans. Rather than quiet the riots by the sword, Mennas, who had a gift of eloquent speech, decided to confess that he was a Christian and began to preach the Christian faith and convert the pagans. When word of Mennas' actions reached Maximian, he sent Hermogenes to torture Mennas and to put him on trial. Hermogenes was also ordered to purge Alexandria of all Christians.

Hermogenes was a pagan but he had a reverent spirit about him. After witnessing how Mennas endured the cruel tortures he was submitted to, and having



been miraculously healed of any wounds, Hermogenes became a believer in Christ.

Upon hearing of Hermogenes' conversion, Emperor Maximian was enraged and arrested Mennas secretary, Eugraphus. The emperor personally stabbed him after Eugraphus also declared himself to be a Christian upon witnessing the endurance of Mennas and Hermogenes. After having stabbed Eugraphus to death, Emperor Maximian ordered Mennas and Hermogenes to be beheaded.

To prevent the Christians of Alexandria from gathering their remains, Maximian ordered that their relics be placed into an iron chest and cast into the sea. However, in the ninth century under the reign of Emperor Basil the Macedonian (867-886), the relics were found by the Commander Marcian, after Saint Mennas appeared in a dream to a pious man revealing their location.

The relics were transferred to Constantinople where Emperor Justinian built a church in honor of the Holy Martyr Mennas of Alexandria. The Byzantine Church commemorates the discovery of the relics of the Holy Martyrs Mennas, Hermogenes and Eugraphus on 17 February. ■



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

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NATIONAL APOSTOLATE OF MARONITES

You are cordially invited to a Lenten retreat of prayer and fellowship in the Syriac Maronite Tradition - Inspiring Educational Presentations – Time for Reflection and Meditation

Saturday, April 2nd, 2022

Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon, North Jackson, Ohio

Retreat Theme: Easter and the Gift of God

Retreat Master: Father Jacques Kik

Schedule - Saturday, April 2nd, 2022

- 9:30 AM Safro
- 10:00 AM Continental Breakfast
- 10:30 AM Presentation I
- 11:30 AM Attendees Group Session
- 12:00 PM Divine Liturgy
- 1:15 PM Lunch
- 2:30 PM Presentation II
- 4:00 PM Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Quiet Time, Confession
- 5:00 PM Ramsho
- 5:30 PM Dinner and Social Time with the Antonine Sisters

Please register for the retreat and pay online at:

www.namnews.org Retreat Fee: \$75.00 all meals inclusive

Reservation deadline: March 26th, 2022

You may also register by mail, please send a check payable to NAM and mail it to:
 NAM – 2110 Redwood Place, Canfield, OH 44406

For travelers, a group rate is set up under the name:

NAM National Apostolate /\$104.00 per room

Hampton Inn, 880 N Canfield Niles Rd, Youngstown, Ohio.

Call (330) 544 - 0660 for Hotel Reservation. **Deadline for hotel reservations March 1, 2022**

For further information, please contact NAM Board Member & Retreat coordinator:

Mrs. Vera Maalouf @ vmaalouf@gmail.com

Parish News

UTICA, NEW YORK

Cana Sunday

Cana Sunday, 27 February, was celebrated in a very special way at Saint Louis Gonzaga Church in Utica, New York. Father Boutros El Hachem and the deacons invited the four couples married at Saint Louis in 2021 to receive a special blessing at the Divine Liturgy. The couples sat in the front of the Church and were recognized by everyone present. Father Boutros blessed each couple and presented them with a small gift basket of holy water, wine, and blessed oil from Saint Sharbel. As is customary at Saint Louis, everyone was invited to the George Sfeir Parish Hall for coffee and fried dough after the Divine Liturgy. ■

Pictured with Fr. Boutros from L to R: Zachary and Aricca Lewis, Michael and Kristen Hayduk, and David and Brandi Lloyd. Not pictured: Andrew and Caitlin Rahme



GLEN ALLEN, VIRGINIA

Pastoral Visit

Bishop Gregory John Mansour celebrated the Feast of Saint Maron on 18-20 February 2022, at Saint Anthony Church in Glen Allen, VA. Chorbishop John D. Faris and Father Peter Frangie welcomed their shepherd in the midst of a loving flock of faithful.

On Saturday, Bishop Gregory celebrated the Divine Liturgy for the MYA and MYO and then had a lively discussion and breakfast with these young people. Mrs. Cathy George and Mrs. Melanie Meadows shared the insights they took from the synodal discussions. On Saturday evening, the parishioners who served in leadership roles had dinner and discussion with the Bishop.

The high point of the visit was on Sunday morning when Bishop Gregory conferred the patriarchal medal of Saint Maron on four



parishioners for their outstanding service to the Church. The honorees were Mrs. Nazira Chaoul Haboush, Mrs. Barbara Simon Joseph, Mr. Harry Shaia, Jr., and Mr. Anthony Shibley. The Divine Liturgy was followed by a reception in Saint Anthony Hall. ■

Parish News

CLINTON TOWNSHIP,
MICHIGAN

Christmas Concert

On Saturday, 11 December 2021, St. Sharbel Church Choir in Clinton Township, Michigan, held a Christmas Concert at 7:00 pm. Since September, the choir practiced and their performance showed their dedication and skill. The choir performed hymns in Arabic, English, and Syriac, and sang beautiful medleys, weaving different songs into a unique piece of music. Additionally, three voice harmonies gave depth to Christmas songs we have known since childhood. We are especially grateful to the Lord to be able to perform during the COVID-19 pandemic despite its difficulties. A sincere thanks to Aziz Charabaty, Music Director, Jessy Srour, Piano Accompanist, Christiane Yasso Bousho, Assistant Music Director, Elie Bassil, Coordinator, and Najee Mondalek, Visual and Art Designer. As St. Augustine of Hippo said, "To sing is to pray twice."



Children's Nativity Play

On 18-19 December 2021, the children of St. Sharbel Church in Clinton Township, Michigan, performed their very own Nativity Play. These beautiful performances took place after the 4:00 pm Saturday, and 9:30 am and 11:30 am Sunday liturgies. After practicing throughout autumn, the performers' dedication and talents showed as we saw the birth of Jesus unfold in this wonderful narrative. A thank you to all the children who participated in such a faith-filled, yet engaging endeavor. Finally, a big thank you to George and Rita Srour Fares, the playwrights and director, for using their God-given talents to support the community, and to all the supportive parents who aided them in making the play a success. Although the Christmas season has officially come to an end, may we always delight in the hopeful coming of our Savior that changed humanity forever.



Great thanks to Chorbishop Alfred Badawi, pastor, and Deacon Michael Magyar, for their support in allowing these events to come to fruition. ■

DARTMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS

Giving Generously

by Sister Emily Mary, MSCL

"The Almighty has done great things for me." (Luke 1:49).

One of the greatest things God did was to guide me into entering the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light (MSCL) as a novitiate. Since my sophomore year in high school, I have received many blessings and graces from the Sisters. They helped support my vocation and provided me with opportunities to grow in my faith.



Attending retreats hosted by the Maronite Sisters was a blessing to me. At age 15, I attended my first retreat with the MSCL. I was taught how to pray with scripture and truly listen to the Holy Spirit. It was a life-changing experience, because I felt that God gave me the gift of faith to share with others. That spiritual message was difficult for a timid student in public school, but I used what I learned from the sisters about praying scripture and listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit. One encounter was my friend who had fallen away from Catholicism and professed atheism. By the grace of God, he returned to the faith in our senior year of high school. Experiencing this conversion and the joy of sharing my faith inspired me to think seriously about a religious vocation.

As I transitioned from high school to a secular university, the sisters continued to foster my faith and vocation. At the state university, it was difficult to witness displays of hostility or indifference toward my Catholic faith. When I felt my faith might waver, the sisters helped me to stay grounded. Their faithfulness to Christ reassured me that Jesus is our Lord and Savior. The sisters introduced me to a variety of religious resources including: YOUCAT, Archbishop Fulton Sheen, Bishop Robert Barron, and the Discerning Hearts App. The more I learned about Jesus, the more I fell in love with Him, my Catholic faith, and a future religious life.

In 2019, I began my religious life with the support of the Maronite Sisters. The sisters continue to teach me how to love with Christ's love. Through their example, I am learning about "Giving Generously" for the greater glory of God and love of neighbor. ■

LEWISVILLE, TEXAS

"Be Not Afraid"

by Sue Marincel & Sara Kumar

Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Lewisville, TX, was once again blessed to welcome Fr. Mitch Pacwa, S.J., the well-renowned Catholic theologian and EWTN host, to our parish to celebrate Christmas. We advertised our Christmas celebrations on Guadalupe Radio, the Catholic news station and on the calendars for the Diocese of Dallas and Fort Worth. Our Christmas and Easter events have truly put our Maronite church on the map in the Diocese of Dallas and Fort Worth!

On the Thursday before Christmas, Fr. Mitch gave an inspiring lecture to over 100 people, in which he addressed the causes of increased fear in our current society. After showing how the recent rise of relativism (the denial of any objective truth) has led to many bad consequences, Fr. Mitch offered the remedy: be more committed to God and ask for an increase in the theological virtues. Faith will conquer relativism as we put our trust in God's revealed laws and the plan of salvation. Hope will overcome anxiety as we walk through very confusing times, and "Perfect Love casts out fear." Fr. Mitch also stated how the involvement and example of fathers is a proven predictor of their children's success and whether they will keep their Catholic faith. When asked what an average person can do to help build up families in our culture, Fr. Mitch recommended building personal friendships and building trust, then watching patiently for those opportunities that the Holy Spirit may open to plant a small seed of evangelization.

We were happy to celebrate Christmas Liturgies with Fr. Mitch. The parish welcomed over 500 parishioners at the Christmas Eve, Christmas Midnight, and Christmas Day liturgies. Fr. Mitch reminded us of the importance of keeping Christ in Christmas and encouraged us to always sing hymns to the Lord during this holy and joyous season. Fr. Mitch's visit continues to bring many new parishioners to our church who also discover the beauty of our Maronite tradition during the Christmas and Easter seasons. We very much look forward to welcoming Fr. Mitch back for our Passion Week Mission in the spring. ■



Parish News

UNIONTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

'Tis the Season

by Dr. Mabel George Howard

The children of the Maronite Christian Formation (MCF) program participated in holiday festivities at St. George Church in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. On 19 December 2021, the Ladies Guild sponsored a free breakfast and Christmas Party for the children held in the church hall. Santa Claus made an exciting appearance, and lots of gifts and treats were distributed to the youth.

The Ladies Guild and the Altar & Rosary Society organized a holiday gathering in the parish hall. The women enjoyed a delicious meal and the camaraderie among family and friends at this joyous and festive annual Christmas event.

During the Christmas Season, the faithful of St. George honored their loved ones (deceased and/or living) by donating Christmas poinsettia flowers that adorned the sanctuary. Special intentions and prayers were offered for their loved ones. The star shaped poinsettia flower was found in the wilderness of southern Mexico. The plant was introduced to the United States in 1828 by Dr. Joel Poinsett, physician, botanist, diplomat, and first United States Ambassador to Mexico.

The Christmas legend of the poinsettia was inspired by a poor little Mexican girl named Pepita who had no beautiful present to offer Baby Jesus at the Christmas Eve service. Her cousin, Pedro, suggested that even the smallest gift would be enough for Jesus. Pepita picked some weeds growing near the church and gathered them into a bouquet. She humbly placed the weeds at the foot of the creche. Suddenly, the bouquet of weeds transformed into a bright red poinsettia flower. The congregation had truly witnessed a Christmas miracle of God's love and blessings. ■



FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

A Dedicated Mission to Help Others

The parishioners of Saint Michael the Archangel Church in Fayetteville, North Carolina, support nonprofits and missions to serve others. Yearly, the congregation engages in projects to assist local groups including Catholic Charities, Operation *InAsMuch*, Agape Pregnancy Support Center, Falcon Children's Home, and Myrover-Reese Fellowship Home. Before the Super Bowl, the parishioners raise money through the "Souper Bowl" sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. Parishioners are asked to donate their loose change for Operation *InAsMuch* to help feed the homeless. Culminating the "Souper Bowl," a second collection is made on Super Bowl Sunday, and hats, gloves, coats, and undergarments are also purchased for distribution to the homeless.

During Great Lent, the parish sponsors a Baby Bottle Drive to raise money for the Agape Pregnancy Support Center. For almsgiving, parishioners were asked to fill baby bottles with money to support the mission. During the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, the Knights collected money to purchase food cards for families in need. Yearly, they raise enough money to purchase 25 to 35 food cards for Catholic Charities. At Christmastime, parishioners celebrate the holiday at the Falcon Children's Home, a home for children who are currently unable to live with their parents. A Christmas party for the Falcon Home children was organized in the church hall with toys, presents, games, activities, crafts, a movie, and a visit from Santa. St. Michael Church supports children in foster care through the Christmas Angel Tree, which was decorated with name tags for each foster child. Parishioners generously bought a "wish list" of gifts for their chosen child. St. Michael Church, known as the PB&J parish, collected jars of peanut butter and jelly for Catholic Charities. Approximately 1,000 lbs. of peanut butter and jelly are donated yearly.

Finally, to raise money for any worthy cause in the parish, St. Michael Church has been sponsoring a "Good Stuff" yard sale for over a decade. When cleaning out closets, attics, and garages, parishioners bring any usable items to sale. The unsold items are donated to Myrover-Reese Thrift Store that supports the Myrover-Reese Fellowship Home, a halfway house for recovering alcoholics in North Carolina. ■



Parish News

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

St. Maron Banquet

St. Elias Church held its 67th Annual St. Maron Banquet on Saturday, 12 February 2022. Expertly emceed by Anthony Bolus — who peppered the evening with “Love Quizzes” in honor of the upcoming St. Valentine’s Day — the evening was one of love, fellowship and pride in our Maronite faith and St. Elias parish. The menu included a salad, filet (cooked by our very own grill masters), mixed vegetables, au gratin potatoes, a roll and chocolate cake. A huge thank-you to all the people who made the banquet such a success by doing all the necessary background work.

During the evening, we remembered those we have lost since the last St. Maron’s Feast Day: Regina Boackle Azar, Antoinette Graffeo Boackle, Joyce Atchley Mizerany, Diane Wehby Carlisle, Marlo Mayra Sanburn, Georgia Inez Shalhoop, Raymond Martin Garnem, Norma Lee Shamy, Leslie Alison Freeman Abdo, and Jeanette Nasser Acton. May their souls rest in peace.

We then honored couples in the parish celebrating 25 or 50 years of marriage, including:

- 25 Years: Louis & Misti Boackle; David & Judy Elkourie; and Alan and Brenda Welborn
- 50 Years: John and Kathe Boohaker

Dr. Edward Chandler, Latin Teacher at John Carroll Catholic High School, delivered a wonderful speech about his journey to Catholicism by using

the prayer of St. Ephrem and the Syriac Fathers of the Church. It was a very moving and inspiring speech, and we were honored to have him and his wife, Victoria, with us.

Then, LaVonne Williamson received the Silver Massabki Award and Maggie Boohaker was named the Parishioner of the Year. Both fine ladies deserve recognition for all they do for St. Elias and her people.



Before the conclusion of our celebration, the church presented Chorbishop Richard Saad with a special cake to celebrate his 50 years of priesthood. We have been blessed to have him here at St. Elias for most of those 50 years. Congratulations, Chorbishop Richard! Finally, everyone had a chance to mingle and talk to friends, old and new, before leaving for home. ■



LAWRENCE, MASSACHUSETTS

Act of Giving

On Valentine’s Day, the Knights of Mary at St. Anthony Church in Lawrence, Massachusetts, worked with their advisors on an activity to benefit their community. The children assembled baskets filled with hygiene items that were delivered to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Nursing Home. This act of kindness taught the children to give back to the community without expecting anything in return. These service projects and programs build connections in the community that make positive impacts on others. Kindness is one of the greatest gifts you can bestow upon another. If someone is in need, lend a helping hand. ■



ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

Trim the Cedar: Ornaments for Lebanon: How a Small MYO Group in Minnesota Made a Big Impact.

It all started when a parishioner of Holy Family Church (St. Paul, MN) traveled to Lebanon to visit family. The MYO took care of her yard while she was away and

upon her return, she told the group about the dire circumstances that she saw in Lebanon. She was also concerned that many of the villages were not getting assistance from the usual relief agencies.



Early in 2021, the MYO focused on Matthew 25:31-46 and wanted to put Jesus' words into action.

The group thought, "What can we do to help?" They brainstormed and decided to make clay ornaments to sell, but there were a couple of twists. The ornaments all had a Lebanese theme – a Cedar, an outline of Lebanon, an Antiochene cross, and a Maronite cross.

They also decided that the buyer would be able to choose the village where their donation would go. Most importantly, 100% of the proceeds went to Lebanon, as the MYO donated all the materials and labor. They sold the ornaments for \$15 each, or a set of 4 for \$50. With the help of some parishioners and our Pastor, Fr. Emanuel Nakhle, they were able to reach out directly to nine different towns/parishes and wire the money directly to them.

The parish has been very supportive. So far, the group has sent a total of \$4,500 to different towns in Lebanon with hopes to send more. The MYO is now offering this concept to be used across all the Maronite churches in the U.S. They would like to challenge other MYO groups to come up with similar ideas to raise funds for Lebanon. They would also like to challenge other parishes to purchase a pack of 10 sets of ornaments. In return, they can choose two village churches to send the proceeds. Local groups can then sell the ornaments to individuals.

"This group has been unstoppable," says Fr. Emanuel Nakhle. "Even throughout the pandemic, they found a way to do a food drive, summer camp, and raise money for Lebanon."

For more information, contact Abouna Emanuel Nakhle @ 612.481.0543 or John Corey @ 612.232.6377. ■

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Parish Projects

by Suzanne Tavani

Despite the challenges posed by the Covid pandemic during the past two years, St. Maron Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, has united in fellowship to overcome many challenges. The words of Kahlil Gibran, "your friend is your needs answered," seemed to give meaning to tackling these challenges.

In need of a new roof for the church, parishioners joined in a collaborative effort to raise funds for this project. Father Andrawos El-Tabchi, pastor, consulted with the Parish Council, Finance Committee, and parishioners experienced in construction and roofing, to provide the necessary information for materials and work proposals. In an initial quick-start Capital Campaign, the congregation raised over \$50,000 in only five weeks. Also, due to Covid restrictions, the St. Maron's Feast Day Hafli was postponed. Parishioners quickly organized their first "2022 Take-Out Food Sale" featuring falafel, kibbeh, and grape leaves. Fr. Andrawos commented, "The parishioners of St. Maron Church have demonstrated over and over that they value community and friendship. They are friends who are your needs answered." ■



Parish News

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

St. George Church

by Lisa Delgado

In March 2020, St. George MYO planned to kick off a service project for our teens to visit our homebound and senior community as we work to bridge the gap between generations. Like many aspects of ministry, COVID brought things to a halt. After almost two years, in January 2022, the MYO sponsored an afternoon of games and

fellowship for the seniors in our community. MYO members learned to play bingo, while our senior community learned some hilarious “senior” text messaging acronyms. Lunch did not disappoint as we all enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared by our own celebrity chef and pastor, Fr. Charles Khachan. Our seniors also had an opportunity to share some words of wisdom with our youth. One senior, Regina Aune, says it best on a Facebook comment, “It was a delightful day! It was so much fun but even more, it was a day filled with delight, joy and grace!” ■



HOUSTON, TEXAS

Maronite Young Adults of OLC

by George Elmessan

This past year, the MYA had one of its most productive and blessed years since the beginning of the pandemic. Our membership grew larger and our connections to the faith grew stronger. We were able to host a camping trip for over 60 MYA members for a weekend where we enjoyed the natural Texas beauty as well as participated

in an outdoor liturgy and studied scripture. At the beginning of 2021's winter season, we set out to produce a cookbook from our own parish, and with the help of the Cook Book Committee, the board was able to begin selling it in January 2022. Although the MYA worked hard on producing and distributing the cookbooks, we cannot thank our parish enough for their contributions of delicious recipes and continued support of our MYA. Looking back on the year's growth, we are excited for the upcoming year and the many blessings that hopefully come with it! ■



A Prayer Like No Other by Vivian M. Akel LCSW Certified Spiritual Director

As Catholics, we believe that it is through prayer that we communicate with God and seek His comfort, forgiveness and grace. As Maronite Catholics, we also communicate with God through all our senses. Our eyes view the beauty of the Eastern iconography, sanctuaries and liturgical vestments. We experience the incensing of the people and the altar through our sense of smell. We listen to the Liturgy of the Word. We raise our voices as we hear and participate in the beautiful hymns and chants throughout our Divine Liturgy while praising and honoring our Lord Jesus and His Mother Mary. Finally, we partake in the intinction of the Body and Blood of Christ through our sense of taste. What beautiful, prayerful traditions!

There is also another approach to prayer known to Catholics throughout the world, which seeks to engage our emotional life. It was taught in the sixteenth century by Saint Ignatius of Loyola and is every bit as

powerful today as it was then and is known simply as *The Examen*. Though often confused with and mistaken for the “Examination of Conscience” taught in Catholic elementary school, *The Examen* is different.

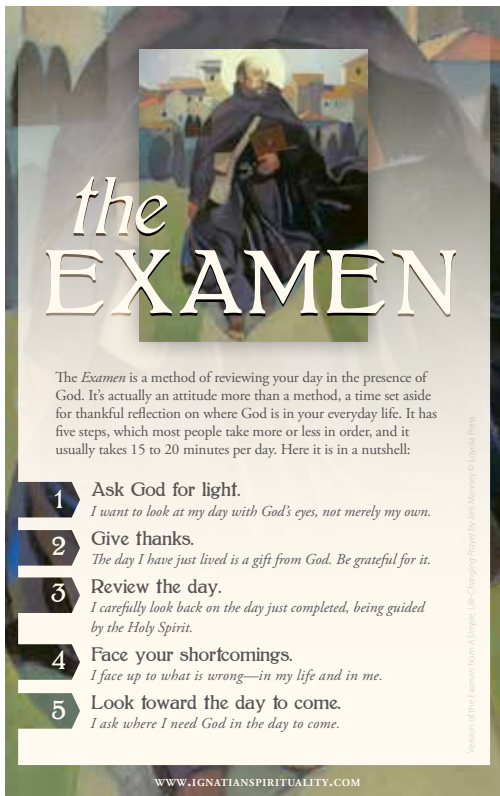
Saint Ignatius was not always a prayerful man. In his youth he described himself as a warrior and as one chasing after illusions. That changed when a war injury forced him to spend many months in recovery with only

a Bible and “The Lives of the Saints.” During that time, he experienced a conversion that led him to a deep faith and constant awareness of God’s presence through the emotions of his heart. He was able to do this by learning the spiritual importance of his emotions and connecting these to his prayer. Ignatius was not instantly successful in this new awareness. He prayed for light along his journey and eventually developed a pattern of prayer in which he hoped to truly find God. That pattern of prayer done mostly towards the end of the day became known as *The Examen*.

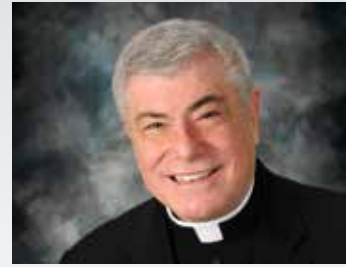
Much has been written about Saint Ignatius and his prayer life. In his book *A Simple Life Changing Prayer*, Jim Manney describes *The Examen* as “a way to find God in all things” and describes relationships with others as the place where one can find both the greatest joy and the deepest pain. Saint Ignatius encouraged people to pray using the steps of *The Examen* because he believed it had great benefits in revealing God’s presence in our daily lives and especially in our relationships. Jim Manney describes these steps simply and clearly and suggests putting aside time each day to review the movements of one’s heart.

- 1. Pray for light.** Begin by asking God for the grace to pray, to see, and to understand.
- 2. Give thanks.** Look at your day in a spirit of gratitude. Everything is a gift from God.
- 3. Review the day.** Guided by the Holy Spirit, look back on your day. Pay attention to your emotional experiences. Look for God in them.
- 4. Look at what’s wrong.** Face up to failures and shortcomings. Ask forgiveness for your faults. Ask God to show you ways to improve.
- 5. Resolve what to do in the day to come.** Where do you need God today? What can you do today?

To learn more broadly about *The Examen* and Ignatian Spirituality, go to IgnatianSpirituality.com where you can find resources on the *Spiritual Exercises*, prayer, discernment and virtual retreats. ■



From the Editor



She darted from the picnic table to the pool. This seven year old was definitely having a great day. She saw me, waved, and before jumping into the pool shouted, “My *jiddee* (grandfather) made this for me!” I wanted to tell her—it was too late, she was splashing in the pool—that her grandfather had also cleared the fields and built the beautiful church in which she was baptized, received her First Communion and may some day be married. It was the church in which the funeral of her *jiddee* took place.

It is good to know that she appreciated what had been done for her. Her parents were wise enough to share the stories of how her grandparents had worked to build Saint Anthony Church in Glen Allen. All over the country, we Maronites share in the same story. (Okay, not every parish has a pool. Msgr. Salwan was a very smart man to build a magnet attraction.)

Immigration from Lebanon to the United States began around the turn of the twentieth century. Those who came struggled to put a roof over their heads, food on the table and clothes on their backs. Despite the many hardships, they sacrificed to build Maronite churches, often small and basic, but still a place where they could worship according to the traditions they brought with them on the ships. Being a Maronite Catholic meant something to them.

This is the story that needs to be shared with today’s younger generation so that they can appreciate the sacrifices made for them. (My *jiddee* built this for me!)

Sharing the stories means more than telling the stories. It is our role to cherish the patrimony of faith that we have inherited, work to nurture it and pass on something better. It means participating in the life of the parish family. It means worshipping together. Sure, it is easier to go to Mass at a local parish—even easier to sleep in or play golf. “After all it’s my only day off.”

What does this say of our appreciation for the sacrifices of grandparents and parents? They deserve our gratitude and respect for what they considered to be important.

Jiddee and *Sittee* understood that there was no choice. It was a job that had to be done. We face the same reality because being a Maronite Catholic means something! ■

John D. Faris
Chorbishop John D. Faris

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