

Volume 19 | Issue 5 | September/October 2022

# *the* Maronite **Voice**



*Holy Jonah the Prophet*

Feast Day 23 September



# the Maronite Voice

## BISHOP'S MESSAGE

**4** **The Medicine of Life**  
*by Bishop A. Elias Zaidan*

**6** **Bishops Schedules**

**8** **Jonah: A Reluctant Prophet**  
*The Repentance of the Ninevites |  
Feast Day 23 September*  
*by Fr. Aaron J. Sandbothe*

**11** **A Reflection On A Pilgrimage 2022**  
*by Chorbishop Anthony Spinosa*

## WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY ABOUT

**12** **What does the Church teach about Confession?**  
*by Rev. Timothy V. Vaverek*

## SAINTS BE PRAISED

**14** **Saints in the Maronite Calendar**  
*by Fr. Claude W. Franklin, Jr., SEOL*

## WORKER IN THE VINEYARD

**16** **Downward Spiral to Renewed Faith**  
*by Brandon Shulleeta*

Submissions for the November-December edition of  
*The Maronite Voice* due on 15 October 2022.



## LIVING CHURCH

**18 St. Maron Church in Cleveland, Ohio**  
*by Chet Wade*

**20 Ordinations**

**21 Beatification of Lebanese Capuchins:  
Blessed Leonard Melki and  
Blessed Thomas Saleh**  
*by James Salamy*

**24 MYA | Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon**

**26 Friendship with God: A Foundation for  
Vocation Discernment**  
*by Sr. Therese Touma*

**27 Parish News**

**34 Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn  
2021 Audited Financial report**

## GOING DEEPER INTO THE SPIRITUAL LIFE...

**38 Catechists – Passing on the Faith**  
*by Sister Marla Marie Lucas, MSCL*

**39 From the Editor**



### THE MARONITE VOICE

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

#### Publishers

Most Reverend Gregory John Mansour  
Most Reverend A. Elias Zaidan

#### Editor

Chorbishop John D. Faris

#### Managing Editor

Rev. Aaron Sandbothe

#### Art and Design Director

Ms. Glory Rasi

#### Production Coordinator

Subdeacon Michael Maynes

#### Parish News Editors

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

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

#### Feature Writers

Brandon Shulleeta  
Chet Wade

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

• Subscription rates are \$25.00/year.

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

#### Contact Us

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

#### Office Hours

Monday - Friday | 9 am - 1 pm

Printed in Richmond, Virginia

# The Medicine of Life

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” (JOHN 6:51)



Ever since the sin of Adam and Eve that broke our original relationship with God, we have been trying to restore it. The sacrificial offering of animals was not sufficient; our human intellect was not sufficient; our human piety was not sufficient. The bridge to the awesomeness and hiddenness of God was blocked to us. We were unable to cross into the Kingdom of God. In the fullness of time, the Father sent His Son to open the bridge to enable us to have access to eternal life once again.

At the Last Supper, Christ anticipating his own death on the Cross, celebrated the Passover with his Apostles. He tied this Passover meal to his own death as written in Scripture: “Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’” (LUKE 22: 19-20). The Lord said, “Do this in remembrance of me” and the Church has been doing this from that moment on.

This Eucharist offered by the Church is not just an event whereby we remember Christ. Above all, it is the memorial of the sacrifice of Christ that is for our redemption. This Eucharistic Sacrifice is the center and crown of our faith. The Eucharistic Liturgy pulls together Christ's mystery of salvation and foreshadows or anticipates our own salvation as well. The Lord Himself tells us, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink." (JOHN 6:53-54)

All of the Churches of Apostolic origin, Catholic and Orthodox, believe that what we receive is truly the Body and Blood of Christ. The holy Fathers of the Church, St. Ephrem and St. Ignatius of Antioch, described the Eucharist with words such as "The Medicine of Life" and "The Medicine of Immortality." Our Maronite Divine Liturgy is very clear about this, "Make us worthy, O Lord God, so that our bodies may be sanctified by your holy Body and our souls purified by your forgiving Blood. May our communion be for the forgiveness of our sins and for new life ..." (Invitation to Communion).

It is estimated that a large percentage of the Catholic faithful have somehow lost an understanding of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Perhaps they see it as a symbol or representation of something else. The Eucharist does not represent anything — it represents nothing. It is not like a painting or a photograph of someone — a representation of that person. The Eucharist does not represent a person; the Eucharist is a Person. The Eucharist is Christ. If we, as Maronites, are losing that understanding of the Eucharist as Christ's real Body and Blood,

we have to recapture it. We have to see in the Eucharist the presence of Christ in our midst. We have to understand that our reception of Communion is our participation in the heavenly Jerusalem ... a foretaste of heaven itself.

There is a need today to revive our faith in and through the Eucharist. We need to spend time in prayer in the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. How lovely it will be if we come to the Church earlier before Divine Liturgy and spend a few minutes in preparation and spend a few minutes after to thank God for the gift of the Eucharist. We need to ensure that we are properly prepared to receive Him in the Eucharist. We need to participate and engage in the Divine Liturgy in such a way that it captures us — captures all our senses. We need to receive Him with reverence. With the eyes of faith, we need to see Christ in the Eucharist. After all, it is for the life and salvation of our souls.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has launched a great initiative of the Eucharistic Revival which will take place over the next three years. It is an invitation to return to the source of our faith, "Our world is hurting. We all need healing, yet many of us are separated from the very source of our strength. Jesus Christ invites us to return to the source and summit of our faith: his Real Presence in the Eucharist" (National Eucharistic Revival). Each year is marked by a special mission: 19 June 2022-11 June 2023 is the Year of Diocesan Revival, 11 June 2023-17 July 2024 is the Year of Parish Revival, and 21 July 2024-Pentecost 2025 is the Year of Going Out On Mission. Mark your calendars for the National Eucharistic Congress taking place in July 2024 in Indianapolis, Indiana. Let us personally and collectively take part in this Revival. ■

*Bishop A. Elias Zaidan*



## Schedule **BISHOP A. ELIAS ZAIDAN**

- 23-25 SEPTEMBER** Clinton Township, MI | St. Sharbel Church | Pastoral Visit
- 26-27 SEPTEMBER** St. Louis, MO | Hosting Bishop Joseph Mouawad of Zahle, Pastoral Center
- 30 SEP - 2 OCTOBER** Castle Rock, WA | Dedication of Sacred Heart Monastery | Presbyteral Ordination of Monks, Deacons Daniel and Raphael
- 3 OCTOBER** Seattle, WA | Visit with Archbishop Paul Etienne, Archdiocese of Seattle
- 5-6 OCTOBER** Washington, DC | USCCB | Committee of International Justice and Peace
- 8 OCTOBER** Orange, CA | St. John Maron Church | Pastoral Visit
- 9-10 OCTOBER** Meetings | Board of Maronite Catholic Foundation
- 12 OCTOBER** North Hollywood, CA | Attendance at the Ordination of Melkite Bishop Francois Beyrouti at St. Anne Co-Cathedral
- 13-17 OCTOBER** North Jackson, OH | Our Lady of Lebanon Shrine | Eparchial Deacon and Subdeacon Retreat
- 23 OCTOBER** Detroit, MI | St. Maron Church | Capital Campaign Event
- 25-26 OCTOBER** Virtual Presbyteral Council Meeting
- 29-30 OCTOBER** Youngstown, OH | St. Maron Church | Capital Campaign Event
- 12 NOVEMBER** Baltimore, MD | USCCB | Administrative Committee Meetings
- 14-17 NOVEMBER** Baltimore, MD | USCCB | General Meeting
- 20 NOVEMBER** St. Louis, MO | St. Raymond Cathedral | Patronal Feast and Periodeutal Ordination of Father John Nahal
- 24 NOVEMBER** Happy Thanksgiving
- 26-27 NOVEMBER** Lewisville, TX | Our Lady of Lebanon Church | Pastoral Visit and Subdiaconal Ordination of Joe Marincell

---

### LEGACY GIVING

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

*Plan for the future today*

For more information, please contact:

Stewardship Director  
John F. Kurey, Esq., MBA  
718-237-9913  
saintmaroneyahoo.com

---

## Schedule **BISHOP GREGORY J. MANSOUR**

- 23-24 SEPTEMBER** Lawrence, MA | St. Anthony Church | Diaconal Ordination of James Demers and Christian Hbaiter
- 29 SEPTEMBER** Brooklyn, NY | Welcome of Bishop Hanna Rahme
- 1 OCTOBER** Somerset, NJ | St. Sharbel Church | Evening Liturgy
- 2 OCTOBER** Brooklyn, NY | Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral
- 4 OCTOBER** Brooklyn, NY | Visit to Church Aid Agencies with Bishop Rahme
- 6 OCTOBER** Manhattan, NY | Eparchial Benefit Dinner
- 8 OCTOBER** New Bedford, MA | Our Lady of Purgatory Church | Evening Liturgy
- 9 OCTOBER** Fall River, MA | St. Anthony Church | 50th Anniversary of Priestly Ordination for Chorbishop Joseph Kaddo
- 11-13 OCTOBER** Brooklyn, NY | Visit of Bishop Joseph Mouawad
- 15 OCTOBER** Somerset, NJ | St. Sharbel Church | Pastoral Visit
- 16 OCTOBER** Philadelphia, PA | St. Maron Church | Pastoral Visit
- 17 OCTOBER** Brooklyn, NY | The Chancery | On-Site Child Protection Audit
- 21-23 OCTOBER** Washington, DC | Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary | Eparchial Deacon and Subdeacon Retreat
- 28-30 OCTOBER** Tampa, FL | MYA Retreat
- 1 NOVEMBER** Torrington, CT | St. Maron Church | Pastoral Visit
- 4-6 NOVEMBER** Miami, FL | Our Lady of Lebanon Church | Pastoral Visit
- 10-12 NOVEMBER** Baltimore, MD | USCCB | Catechetical Meetings
- 13 NOVEMBER** Washington, DC | Our Lady of Lebanon Church and Seminary | Visit
- 14-17 NOVEMBER** Baltimore, MD | USCCB | General Meeting
- 26-27 NOVEMBER** Olean, NY | St. Joseph Church | 25th Anniversary of Priestly Ordination for Father Claude Franklin



**Celebrating Forty Years  
of  
Priesthood and Service  
to the  
Eparchy Of Saint Maron  
and Continued Aid  
to the  
Vulnerable Of Lebanon**

**13<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit Dinner**  
  
**October 6, 2022**  
  
**The Water Club, New York City**

# Jonah: A Reluctant Prophet

*The Repentance of the Ninevites |*

*Feast Day 23 September*

*by Fr. Aaron J. Sandbothe*

*As much as you are irritated, Jonah, rejoice that of all the prophets your medicines are most triumphant.*

(EPHREM, HYMNS ON VIRGINITY 49)

*“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before me.”*

(JONAH 1:2)

**S**elf-preservation, pride, hatred, and fear: these are not typical attributes we associate with a prophet. The Prophet Jonah, when called by the Lord God to preach judgment and repentance to the wicked people of Nineveh, responded to God’s call by running to the ends of the earth — as far from Nineveh as possible.

## **The Assyrians and Israel**

*Moses who sweetened the water with wood — his congregation was made bitter by the molten calf. And you, who by your flight made the sea bitter, sweetened Nineveh by the sound of your trumpet.*  
(EPHREM, VIRGINITY 44)

Jonah, motivated by instinct, chose to preserve his life rather than proclaim judgment upon the Ninevites. The Assyrian Empire had a storied and complicated relationship with the Israelites. Repeated invasions, wars, and eventual exile littered the histories of Assyrian-Israelite relations.

Understandably, Jonah had no love for the Assyrians — in fact, he rejoiced in the thought of their destruction. At worst, the Assyrians would murder him upon hearing his preaching. At best, these loathed enemies of God’s People would repent — and be spared to wage war against his kin another day. Jonah chose to run from God than suffer the Ninevites’ displeasure.

## **Jonah’s Flight**

*He sent him to land; He fled to sea. He sent him to Nineveh; He boarded a ship. To Nineveh he sent him to awaken the peoples. He slept on the ship; The peoples awakened him!* (EPHREM, VIRGINITY 45)

The Book of Jonah chronicles the flight of Jonah from Jerusalem to the port of Jaffa where he embarked on a westward journey across the Mediterranean Sea to Tarshish — the opposite direction from Assyrian Nineveh, and “away from the presence of the Lord.” If Jonah would not prophecy, the seas would! A great storm developed causing the pagan sailors to grow fearful. The ship’s crew interrogated Jonah and when they learned that he was fleeing from his God, Jonah asked them to





cast him into the sea so that they might be saved from the tempest. God was not finished with Jonah, however, and appointed a leviathan, a great fish, to devour him and preserve him from death in the sea. Finally realizing that God will not abandon him — or the Ninevites, for that matter — to death, Jonah repents with his great prayer of repentance: “I called to the Lord, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice.” The reluctant prophet, who would rather his enemies perish than be given the opportunity to repent and receive God’s mercy, himself repented of his selfishness and stubbornness. The sea beast vomited up Jonah on dry land, and he immediately began his journey to Nineveh, to save them not from the mouth of a sea beast, but from the grip of sin and death.

### **The Repentance of the Ninevites...and of Jonah**

*Nineveh had become a ship. Anger shook it; pity steadied it. Every sailor rescues his ship. Jonah expected to sink his ship. They threw him into the sea so he would learn not to overthrow the city on land.*  
(EPHREM, VIRGINITY 47)

Much to Jonah’s surprise, after his long journey and three days of his preaching, “yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown,” the Ninevites received his words earnestly. Rather than beating him in the streets, or throwing him from the gates of the city, the people of Nineveh gathered to listen to his preaching. Rather than ordering his execution, the king ordered not only his people, but their animals as well, to keep a fast, to clothe themselves in sackcloth and ashes, and to pray to the God of Jonah for mercy. These wicked, sinful, foreign, and pagan Assyrians did what Jonah’s own people repeatedly failed to do — they heeded the words of God’s messenger and obeyed the Lord’s statutes. In response to the repentance of the Ninevites, God averted His wrath and spared the great city of Nineveh from utter destruction. Jonah, reminded of his original motivations for fleeing across the sea, and mortified that the Ninevites were spared a just destruction for their sins against God and His People, begs God to strike him down rather than see his enemies exalted. God reproves Jonah and provides a tree for shade so that Jonah might be spared the harsh Mesopotamian heat as he surveys the results of his prophetic mission. Needing one

## “Jonah: A Reluctant Prophet”

Continued from page 9

more lesson, the following day, God sends a worm to destroy the tree and causes a harsh east wind to rise up and blow against Jonah leading him once again to beg God for death. However, the Book of Jonah concludes with the Lord’s final message to Jonah: *“You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night, and perished in a night. And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?”* Despite all he had experienced, Jonah still required a display of God’s might to see that the Lord does not withhold His mercy from His creation, no matter how far they had strayed from Him, be they Ninevite or reluctant prophet.

### Conclusion

*Since our freedom ceases not to break through, Majesty wearies not to repair. Your grace accompanies our evil — the spring of peace for a raging fire. Since wherever the fire kindles its flame, the light of Your mercy presses hard to extinguish it.*  
(EPHREM, VIRGINITY 48)

Jonah’s refusal to heed God’s prophetic call led the seas, the earth, beasts, and the pagan people of Nineveh, in turn, to prophecy by example to the reluctant prophet, dragging him kicking and screaming to his destiny. God can work wonders through imperfect and flawed instruments, and Jonah’s journey, with its dramatic detours and displays of wonder, demonstrates that patience that God has with us. The prophetic obedience to God shown by the pagan sailors, the beast from the abyss, the tree in the night, the worm of the earth, the east wind, and most of all the people of Nineveh, showed Jonah that the Lord’s mercy abounds despite our recalcitrance and pride. God seeks to heal the brokenness in all of us if we repent. Jonah, despite his stubbornness and ignorance, was able to save one of the great cities of ancient civilization from utter ruin. If we, as stubborn and fallen sinners, overcome our own pride and listen to God’s call, we can rise up from the abyss of sin, escape the jaws of Death, and stand triumphant against the might of the mightiest powers of evil — but, only through repentance and tears. ■

*Fr. Aaron J. Sandbothe is a priest of the Eparchy of St. Maron, pastor of St. George Church in Uniontown, PA, and Managing Editor of The Maronite Voice.*

**“God can work wonders through imperfect and flawed instruments, and Jonah’s journey, with its dramatic detours and displays of wonder, demonstrates that patience that God has with us.”**

# A Reflection On A Pilgrimage 2022

The annual Assumption Pilgrimage is always a great event for Maronites and our many visitors.

The intense preparations can be stressful and challenging and this year was one in which several major difficulties had to be addressed, even to the very last moment and during the Pilgrimage.

My ongoing reaction was one of irritation, anger, frustration and discouragement because the difficulties were piling up on the Shrine, staff and volunteers. It seemed to be getting worse rather than better. My feeling was that God must be upset with me as things are not going well. It was an impending disaster.

But suddenly a moment of grace entered as it did at the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee. The bride and groom were in a difficult situation, but Mary entered and asked her Son to make all things better and he responded to her request.

Mary did it once again, this time for Her Shrine as She asked Her Son to make things better.

This consoling change took place in the way in which the many Pilgrims responded and participated in the Liturgies and devotions over the three days.

Many new visitors experienced the comfort of the Lord through the intercession of the Virgin Mary. First time visitors from Lebanon and other countries offered to me their personal thanks and gratitude for what they were able to experience in a profound spiritual manner. Some offered their thanks in Arabic, of which I am woefully deficient, but what I was able to understand came from their hearts and I could feel their deep emotion and appreciation. The compliments were countless for the staff and volunteers who assisted them in so many ways.

The difficulties we faced were significant, but they became insignificant when we heard of the joy and gratitude in the hearts of the many visitors.

The Assumption Pilgrimage became a second Wedding Feast. So much was going badly, but Our Lady, once again, asked Our Lord to make it better and He did.



BASILICA & NATIONAL SHRINE  
*of Our Lady of Lebanon*

NORTH JACKSON, OHIO



Sincere thanks from the Shrine staff and volunteers to all the visitors and pilgrims who helped in making things better.

God bless you and Mary keep you.

*Chorbishop Anthony Spinosa*



## What does the Church teach about Confession?

by Rev. Timothy V. Vaverek

To appreciate the Sacrament of Penance, we need to understand the new life and salvation God offers us in Christ. Often, Christians describe salvation as Jesus dying to forgive our sins and to save us from Hell. That's true, but it's not the heart of the Gospel. Christ said he went to the Cross in order to "draw everyone" to himself, send the Holy Spirit, and come to dwell in us (JN 12:32, 16:7, 14:23). Our new life and salvation, then, are based on being united to Jesus.

We're united to Christ and begin to share his divine life through baptism. Jesus, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, comes to dwell in us. In this rebirth as God's "adopted children," he gives us the gifts we need to live his divine love and share that love with others.

The goal of this new life is to be united to God and neighbor in Christ here on earth, helping others do the same by our life and witness so that we can share God's love and joy together forever in heaven. That's salvation; it's why God created us.

The trouble, of course, is that we don't always want to share in his life and love. Like a two year old, we want what we want, when we want it, the way we want it. We sometimes actually *prefer* to sin. Inwardly, our selfishness so restricts our heart and mind that sharing God's love seems too narrow and hard a path.

Jesus knows our problem. That's why he called his disciple to *metanoia* as the path to enter his

kingdom (MK 1:15). *Metanoia* is translated as "penance," "repentance," or "conversion," but it basically means a lifelong turning toward God and others by turning away from selfishness and sin. Christ described *metanoia* as a daily life of prayer, self-sacrifice ("fasting"), and works of mercy ("almsgiving," see MT 6). By walking this path with Jesus, we enter more deeply into his life and love.

Christ established the seven sacraments as ways for him to nourish this new life in us. That's why the sacraments actually have "power" to change us. Jesus is at work, acting in and through the words and gestures of the priest.

The Sacrament of "Penance" (which means *metanoia*) can be understood as created by Jesus to foster our life of *metanoia* by restoring, increasing, and purifying our daily sharing in his life and love in the face of sinfulness. Certainly, the sacrament brings forgiveness, but that's simply part of Jesus' far greater purpose: to unite us more perfectly to himself.

Once we understand Confession in this way, it's easier to appreciate its role. We strive to live with Jesus each day in all that we think, say, and do as we give ourselves in loving service to God, our loved ones, and those we meet. That's expressed in our prayer, self-sacrifice, and works of mercy. At the end of each day, we should take time to thank God for the good we've done with Jesus and to ask pardon and express contrition for the sins we committed.



When we examine our conscience, we're aware of our need for drawing closer to Jesus not only by avoiding sin but by loving him and others better. We should ask him each day to increase our love and our life of conversion (*metanoia*), a desire expressed in the Act of Contrition.

Jesus died and rose again in order to share his life with us, including through the Sacrament of Penance. Our response should be one of love, by which we desire to draw ever-closer to him. That love, coupled with an awareness of our sins, should bring us regularly to receive forgiveness, healing, and strength from him in Confession (at least every month or two).

Confession is especially important if we've committed a grave (or mortal) sin. Every sin is a failure to love, but some are so grave that in committing them we turn away from God so that he no longer dwells in us. He still loves us, but we've left him and so are spiritually dead. Through the sacrament, he comes to dwell in us again and strengthens us to share his life more faithfully.

Sometimes, people ask, "Why do Catholics confess to a priest rather than to Jesus?" Actually, in going to Confession we *are* confessing to Jesus. They don't understand that Christ himself gave us the sacrament, authorized the Apostles to pardon sin, and promised he would forgive sins through their ministry (Mk 2:7-10; Jn 20:23). They probably don't know that when we examine our conscience

privately, we ask God for pardon and, if we've committed mortal sin, we promise to come to him in the sacrament to be restored to sharing his life.

If we understood what Jesus does for us in the sacrament, we'd go to Confession regularly, like we go to Holy Communion. We meet Christ in both cases, but we procrastinate with Confession because we're put off by having to face sin. Still, we can't grow in love for him if we ignore sins, are too ashamed to admit them to ourselves, or are afraid of coming before God as sinners.

When struggling with sin and Confession, it's helpful to remember Peter. When he recognized Jesus' holiness, he said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man" and Jesus replied, "Do not be afraid" (Lk 5:8-10). So, too, when Peter was sinking he cried out, "Lord, save me!" and Jesus rescued him (Mt. 14:30-31). Of course, Peter also denied Jesus three times. Yet Peter became a saint by struggling to share life with Christ each day, whatever the cost.

Despite our sins, we, too, can be saints if we respond to Jesus' love with love. He will perfect us through the life he shares with us. Confession strengthens us in that life and love, so let's come to him with confidence. ■

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

## Saints in the Maronite Calendar

by Fr. Claude W. Franklin, Jr., SEOL

### September

On 1 September, the Maronite Calendar commemorates Saint Simeon the Stylite. The word “Stylite” comes from the Greek word *stylos*, meaning “a pillar.” He is often known as “Simeon the Stylite, the Elder” to distinguish him from three other “stylites” by the same name who followed his example (e.g., *Saint Simeon the Stylite, the Younger* — 24 May).

Simeon was born in Sis, a town in Cappadocia, and tended his family’s flock of sheep from age 13 until age 18 when he received monastic tonsure. He was devoted to very strict ascetic practices and fasting, and was asked by the abbot of the monastery to either moderate his practices or leave the monastery, and so Simeon withdrew from the monastery living in an empty well in the mountains nearby, and eventually he settled in a cave, where he spent the entire 40 days of the Great Fast without eating or drinking anything, not even bread and water; a practice he continued all of his life.

Simeon’s fame spread and people began to come to his place, which disturbed his solitude, and so Simeon decided to establish a new form of asceticism by living atop a pillar about eight feet high, in which he built a

platform with a little cell. Simeon would pray atop the pillar with his arms outstretched in the form of a Cross or stooped over with his head touching his feet. Word of his new practices reached the ears of some elders living in the desert, who decided to test if Simeon was doing this out of humility or pride. They sent some messengers asking Simeon out of obedience to descend his pillar and come to them. If he refused, then he was acting out of pride; if he agreed, they were to tell him to remain. Simeon was completely obedient, and the messengers told him to remain on his pillar.

Over the years, throngs of people would come to ask his spiritual assistance and advice, which began to interfere once again with Simeon’s solitude and ascetic practices, and over the years, he established taller and taller pillars; his final pillar, established near Aleppo, Syria, was said to have been 80 feet in height, with a double wall built to keep the unruly crowds from disturbing his concentration during prayers. Those who wanted to speak with him were required to climb a ladder to the top, but women were never permitted, not even his own mother, Saint Martha, saying: “If we are worthy, we shall see one another in the life to come.” His mother agreed to this and lived a life of silence and fasting at the foot of his pillar until she passed. Simeon asked that her coffin be brought to him, and he bid his mother a fond farewell, and it is said that a joyful smile appeared on her face.

Simeon spent over 80 years practicing fasting and asceticism, 47 of which were upon his pillar. When he did not appear for three days in a row, his disciple, Anthony, climbed up to the top of the pillar and found Simeon’s dead body stooped over in prayer. Patriarch Martyrius of Antioch celebrated Simeon’s funeral and he was buried near his pillar in the year 459. The remains of his pillar existed until recent years, when on 12 May 2016, during the War in Syria, it was hit by a Russian missile and destroyed.





## October

On 20 October, the Maronite Calendar commemorates the **Holy Great Martyr Shalita (Artemius)**, who was martyred in the mid-fourth century, under Emperor Julian the Apostate (361-363). The Great Martyr Artemius is known in the Syriac world as Shalita, a Syriac word meaning: “prefect, ruler, governor, magistrate, etc.,” a descriptive title that later became his name.

Artemius was a distinguished military leader during the reigns of Emperors Constantine the Great and his son, Constantius. Under Constantius, he was tasked with bringing the relics of the Apostle Andrew, Saint Luke and Saint Timothy to Constantinople. Upon completion of this task, Constantius awarded Artemius by making him the ruler (*shalita* or *dux Aegypti*) over Roman Egypt.

Constantius was succeeded by the Emperor Julian, the Apostate, who was determined to restore paganism to the Roman Empire. Julian had two priests in Antioch tortured for their unwillingness to deny Christianity. Artemius, having heard of this, arrived in Antioch and publicly denounced Julian, which enraged him, and he had Artemius thrown into prison, after having him severely tortured. While he was recovering from his wounds, Christ Himself appeared to Artemius telling him to remain steadfast, and that for his refusal to deny Him, Artemius would soon receive the Crown of Glory which was prepared for him.

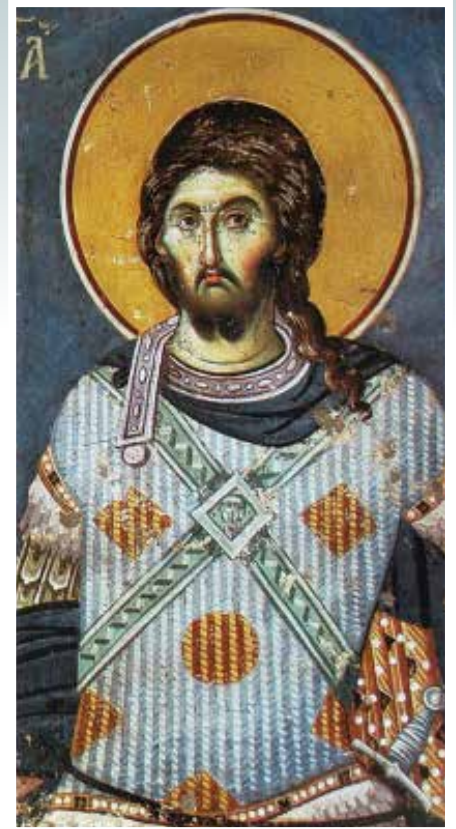
The next day, Julian once again demanded that Artemius worship the pagan gods and deny his Christian Faith. He again refused and was again tortured, all without uttering even a single moan. He told Julian that he would soon suffer the consequences for his persecution of Christians. Julian ordered even more severe tortures, which did not break the will of Artemius. Finally, Artemius received the grace of

martyrdom by being beheaded. Christians buried his relics in Antioch.

Not long after, Julian left Antioch for a campaign against the Persians. An elderly Persian promised to betray his countrymen and to guide Julian’s army, but he deceived Julian, leading him and his men into the desert, where there was no food or water. When the Persians attacked, fully refreshed, against Julian’s hungry and thirsty forces, they were wiped out. Julian himself was mortally wounded during the battle, as the hagiographies say: “by an unseen hand and an unknown weapon,” and Julian was recorded to have said: “You have conquered, Galilean!” Following the death of Julian, the Apostate, the relics of the Megalomartyr Artemius (*Shalita*) were transferred from Antioch to Constantinople.

In the Greek Church, Artemius is invoked for those suffering from hernias and male infirmities. In the Maronite Church, *Shalita* is commemorated as the patron saint for animals, though this is most likely due to a confusion between Artemius (*Shalita*) and *Shalita*, an Egyptian Monk (2 August — *Old Maronite Calendar*), who lived in the early fifth century and was known to have healed a wounded lion’s paw. ■

*Father Claude Franklin, Jr., SEOL, is pastor of Saint Joseph in Olean, NY*



## Downward Spiral to Renewed Faith

by Brandon Shulleeta

At some point, many of us feel like we're in a downward spiral. For Deacon Enzo DiGiacomo, there was no doubt.

DiGiacomo, a surgeon in the Air Force, was practicing some tricky plane maneuvers when he was about 40 years old. But he miscalculated and started spiraling downward. He remembers looking straight below at the fast-approaching earth, certain he would soon die. "And the only words I said were, 'Oh my God,'" DiGiacomo recalls.

The plane pulled itself out of the spin. DiGiacomo, a lifelong Catholic, said he had not practiced his faith as devoutly in his 20s and 30s. But after his life was on the line, he came to a realization. "When it's all said and done, who do you really turn to when it's time — when you *really* have a problem?" DiGiacomo asked, answering: "God. And that's the truth."

Di Giacomo, who was raised Roman Catholic, married Mary Louise Saba, a Maronite Lebanese woman in 1976. The DiGiacomos have a son, daughter, and five granddaughters. They went to a Maronite church, and one day, their beloved priest, Father Edward Nedder, told DiGiacomo that he needed his help at the altar.



DiGiacomo was reluctant, because he didn't know what to do, but Father Nedder told him he would guide him. DiGiacomo served on the altar many times since and eventually was ordained a subdeacon in 2000, and then a deacon in 2004, at St. Anthony Maronite Catholic Church in Springfield, Massachusetts.

A highpoint as a deacon came in 2014, when a first-class relic of St. Anthony of Padua was displayed at his church. The pastor asked him to oversee the unprecedented event — displaying the relic for nine days at the church.

Deacon Enzo at first refused to spearhead the plans for the event and what would undoubtedly attract thousands of faithful visitors from all over the country and require extensive security. He asked to see the letter indicating that the Italian church planned to make the relic available. The rector who signed the letter shared his first name, Enzo. "When I saw the first name of the rector, I said 'Oh, God, he's telling me something upstairs,'" DiGiacomo said, "So, I did it."

After two years of preparation, the first-class relic was displayed at the Springfield church. A first-class relic is an actual part of a saint, such as flesh, bone or blood. St. Anthony was known partly for being a great speaker. The tongue of St. Anthony was discovered incorrupt long after his death, which was recognized as a miracle by the Catholic Church.

Deacon Enzo estimates 10,000 to 15,000 people came to St. Anthony's Maronite Catholic Church in Springfield, to see the relic. The church was open daily from 7 a.m. to midnight, and three daily masses were celebrated during the nine-day period.

Many of the visitors sought healing. DiGiacomo said there were several miracles documented.

As deacon, he gives a homily one weekend per month, but his ministry is much more than that.

DiGiacomo said becoming a deacon gave him a better understanding of the direction God wants us to go and how to serve others.

He said being a deacon is synonymous with service, and deacons are called upon to serve the church however it's needed, which could be anything from the menial task of cleaning a toilet to the high responsibility of serving communion. ■

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

## The Order of Saint Sharbel New Members

### ANNUAL

**ALLISON CRATE** | *St. Joseph* | Waterville, ME  
**ANNE LEWIS** | *St. Louis Gonzaga* | Utica, NY  
**PAUL KHOURISADER** | *St. Sharbel* | Peoria, IL  
**MARC & NADINE PARMELEE** | *Our Lady's Parish* | Austin, TX  
**FRANK SALEM** | *St. Anthony of Padua* | Cincinnati, OH

### PERPETUAL

**SAADA ABOUD** | *Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon* | Los Angeles, CA  
**FR. JAMES DORAN** | *St. Joseph* | Waterville, ME  
**KENNETH "KJ" NARD, JR.** | *St. Jude* | Orlando, FL  
**DEACON RICHARD STONE, JR.** | *St. John the Baptist* | New Castle, PA

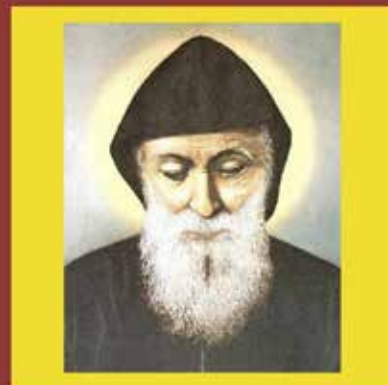


The Order of Saint Sharbel is an organization of lay people and clergy who have pledged their spiritual strength and financial support for Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary and the retired Maronite clergy of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA.

For more information about the Order ask your Pastor, visit [www.orderstsharbel.org](http://www.orderstsharbel.org) or write to:

EPARCHY OF SAINT MARON | 109 Remsen Street | Brooklyn, NY 11201  
or  
EPARCHY OF OUR LADY OF LEBANON | 1021 South 10th Street | St. Louis, MO 63104

## ORDER OF SAINT SHARBEL SUNDAY OCTOBER 9 2022



All Maronite Parishes in the United States will promote the Order on October 9, 2022.

ENROLL AT [WWW.ORDERSTSHARBEL.ORG](http://WWW.ORDERSTSHARBEL.ORG)



## St. Maron Church in Cleveland, Ohio

by Chet Wade

Like many Maronite churches in the United States, St. Maron Maronite Catholic Church in Cleveland has seen an influx of new members from the Middle East in recent years. The war in Syria and the economic and political crisis in Lebanon have caused many people to leave their homelands to study or resettle in the United States.

Maronite immigrants are especially attracted to Cleveland because many have family in the region and because there is an established Arabic community. They also come to study and work at the region's world-renowned medical and education facilities. Making these new parishioners feel welcome and helping them settle into their new lives has become a special part of the mission at St. Maron.

"We have many newcomers here, especially after the crises in Syria and Lebanon," said Father Elias Yazbeck, parish pastor. "At the parish, we try to make activities that will introduce

the newcomers to other people, to the rest of the community."

Father Yazbeck believes it is important to foster spiritual and social bonds and to share the traditions of the old country and the new.

Carrying on the religious traditions from the Middle East, St. Maron's recently added two shrines dedicated to Saint Rafka and St. Nimatullah Hardini to join the St. Sharbel shrine that already exists. They are in the process of adding a fourth to celebrate St. Maron.

"People come and pray as they go and pray at the shrines in Lebanon," Father Elias said. For those who have arrived recently from the Middle East, "we try to make it feel like when they are here, they don't feel they are far from home."

But Father Elias said it also is important to have many opportunities for newcomers to

connect socially with the community.

"The social part plays a big role in introducing the new people and connecting them with the people who are already in Cleveland," he said. "It establishes friendships and other things such as marriages."

There is a weekly get-together open to all parishioners after Sunday liturgy. The women of the Immaculate Conception Sodality (ICS) invite newcomers to share spiritual and community connections, including Middle Eastern cooking traditions. Other groups such as the Sons of Mary men's club, Maronite Young Children, Maronite Youth Organization and Maronite Young Adults all reach out. So do the Maronite Mothers Club, 50+ Social Club, Book & Cine Club and Rosary Prayer Group.

Father Elias credited the parish members over the years with establishing a strong social network.



“We have a lot of groups in the church,” Father Elias said. “Each group focuses on a different aspect of the parish and can contribute to parish life in a different way.”

Another opportunity to unite parishioners is the annual church festival. Held every August, it invites the community to enjoy Middle Eastern food and “celebrate the beautiful aspects of Lebanese, Syrian and American culture together in one place.”

“We get the community together and let the community work together as one,” Father Elias said.

Father Elias said the parish works to be inclusive. It welcomes new members — no matter where they are from — while recognizing the contributions and traditions of long-time members whose families have been involved at St. Maron for generations.

Uniting everyone in the Maronite faith is the cornerstone of that effort, he said.

“We focus more on the Maronite identity,” he said. “Being a Maronite, you don’t have to be Lebanese or Syrian or American. You can be whatever and be Maronite.”

St. Maron Church is one of the oldest and largest Maronite parishes in the United States. It traces its roots to the first Maronite immigrants who arrived in Cleveland in the late-1890s and it opened its first church in 1915 in a former apartment building.

Today, the parish has two locations. The church, which was acquired in



1939, is in downtown Cleveland. A chapel, parish center and administrative offices are located on 22 acres the parish acquired in 2007 in the suburb of Independence, Ohio, about 12 miles south of the church. Liturgies are held each weekend at both locations.

The parish has nearly 900 registered families with about 600 families regularly participating in parish life.

Father Elias has been pastor at St. Maron since 2019. He was appointed to lead the parish after the previous pastor, Monsignor Peter Karam, was elected bishop as well as Patriarchal Vicar and Titular Bishop of Acre of Phoenicia of the Maronites in Lebanon.

Born and raised in Beirut, Father Elias said he knew since his childhood that he wanted to be a priest. He studied in Lebanon, Rome and Los Angeles and served his diaconate at St. Maron Maronite Catholic Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, under Chorbishop Sharbel Maroun.

He was ordained in 2018 in Lebanon by Bishop A. Elias Zaidan, who traveled from the United States for the occasion. Bishop Elias then assigned Father Elias as associate pastor in Cleveland, and he became pastor just one year later.



Father Elias credits God and the people of St. Maron’s with helping him to succeed.

“I have great, great help in this community,” he said. “Everybody wants to work. Everybody wants to help.”

In addition to Father Elias, four subdeacons serve the parish: Georges Faddoul, Ghazi Faddoul, Lattouf Lattouf, and Yamen Saada. The ordination of a fifth subdeacon, Mario Ghosn, was scheduled for September.

Earlier this year, the parish suffered a significant loss with the passing of Deacon George Khoury, who was a lifelong member of St. Maron. Deacon George, a retired educator for Cleveland City Schools, was known and loved by many. His 40-day liturgy was celebrated in July by Bishop Elias. ■

# Ordinations

## Presbyteral Ordination of Father Tony Sharbel Karam



On Saturday, 27 August 2022, in Portland, Oregon, Father Tony Sharbel Karam was ordained to the sacred priesthood by Bishop A. Elias Zaidan. Fr. Tony's wife, Emelin, his children, Noel and Karam, and his grandson, Anthony, presented the vestments to the new priest of Jesus Christ.

Fr. Tony Sharbel Karam's life has prepared him for the priesthood. He is described by many as a humble, generous, and self-giving person. He is the oldest of four children of Karam (deceased) and Nadia Karam. In 1977, Fr. Tony's father was tragically killed by a bomb in Lebanon on the feast of Saint Maron. At just 20 years old, Fr. Tony sacrificed his own plans to take the place of his father and care for his mother and his three younger siblings, ages 11, 10, and 5. After 10 years and establishing a successful business in Lebanon, Fr. Tony decided to move his mother and siblings to America. In 1990, he married Emelin, and they together began serving the greater Portland area authentic Lebanese food in several of their family run restaurants. After 32 years of marriage, Emelin said "Yes" again to God for the spiritual journey that brought them to this great day of ordination when both willingly accepted the joys and sacrifices.

On 28 August 2022, Fr. Tony Sharbel celebrated his first Divine Liturgy at St. Sharbel Maronite Church, where he has served the altar as a subdeacon and deacon for almost 17 years. The following Saturday, 3 September 2022, Fr. Tony celebrated the Holy Mysteries of Marriage for his son and daughter-in-law, Elise Chukri, at the same church.

Soon Fr. Tony will be leaving Portland, Oregon to shepherd a Maronite mission in Seattle, Washington. We pray God gives him the strength and grace to nourish God's people with His Word and the Eucharist. ■

## Ordination of Deacon Anthony G. Simon



On Sunday, 7 August 2022, Bishop A. Elias Zaidan ordained to the Order of the Diaconate, Anthony Gerard Simon, at St. Raymond Maronite Cathedral in St. Louis, MO.

It was a beautiful occasion for the Simon family, friends, and parishioners to witness another calling to the field of the Lord. The parish prepared a reception and luncheon afterward at the Cedars Banquet Hall.

Deacon Anthony is married with five children, two of which are married. He is an engineer and attorney at Law. He is a Business Litigation & Intellectual Property Lawyer. As the founding attorney of the Intellectual Property Group at The Simon Law Firm, Deacon Anthony spearheads patent and business litigation as well as intellectual property cases.

Deacon Anthony is continuing his education and formation as a married man in the Priesthood Program at the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles. We pray that he will soon be ordained a priest after receiving the blessing of God and our bishop A. Elias Zaidan. ■



## Beatification of Lebanese Capuchins: Blessed Leonard Melki and Blessed Thomas Saleh *by James Salamy*

On 4 June, the evening before Pentecost Sunday, in the courtyard of the convent and psychiatric hospital of the Franciscan Sisters of the Cross in Jal El Dib, Lebanon, His Eminence, Marcello Cardinal Semeraro, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, representing Pope Francis, celebrated the beatification of the Lebanese Capuchin missionary priests, Leonard Melki and Thomas Saleh.

Leonard, a Maronite Catholic, was born Youssef Houais Melki on 4 October 1881 in the village of Baabdat, Lebanon. He was the seventh of 11 children. Thomas, also a Maronite Catholic, was born Géries Saleh, in the same village, on 3 May 1879, the fifth of six sons. On 28 April 1895, they entered the minor seminary of Saint Stephen near Constantinople. They received the Capuchin habit four years later on 2 July 1899. They were ordained priests on 4 December 1904 and assigned to serve the Catholic faithful in what is now southern Turkey, near the border with Syria. For approximately 10 years, they dedicated themselves to hearing confessions, preaching, teaching, administering schools, guiding the youth, and shepherding the Franciscan Third Order.



On 5 June 1915, following several military raids of the Capuchin Church in Mardin, Turkey, and acts of violence and harassment against the missionaries, Father Leonard Melki was arrested and savagely tortured for six days, in an attempt to make him renounce his faith in Christ and convert to Islam. On the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that year, he, along with over 400 other men, including now Blessed Ignace Maloyan, then the Armenian Catholic Archbishop of Mardin, were martyred during a death march for refusing to renounce their faith in Jesus Christ.

On 22 December 1914, Father Thomas Saleh, another Franciscan brother, and several nuns were expelled from their mission in Diyarbakir, Turkey. They took refuge in Urfa, Turkey. For two years, Father Saleh bravely faced police harassment and survived two waves of Christian massacres in Urfa. He was arrested on 4 January 1917 with his Franciscan brethren on charges of hiding an Armenian priest. These charges resulted in his death sentence. He was dragged from place to place, suffered violence and mistreatment, and as a result fell ill with typhus. He died on 18 January 1917, repeating with courage: “I have full trust in God. I am not afraid of death.”

May the lives and deaths of Blessed Leonard Melki and Blessed Thomas Saleh be an example and an inspiration for us to follow their courageous witness of living and dying for Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. ■

*James Salamy, JCL, is a member of St. Louis Gonzaga Church in Utica, NY and The Maronite Voice Editorial Board*



## Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord.

### PASSING OF ALBERT NASRI BADAWI

Bishop A. Elias Zaidan announced the passing of Mr. Albert Nasri Badawi, Father of Chorbishop Alfred Badawi on 29 June in Dowar, Lebanon.

Mr. Badawi was preceded in death by his wife, Mona Badawi, and is survived by his children, Chorbishop Alfred Badawi, Wajih (Leila Rayes), Ernest (Salma Rayes), Joseph (Abir Richany), Wahib, Bahjat (Rima Khalil) and 10 grandchildren.

Condolences can be sent to:  
Chorbishop Alfred Badawi  
Saint Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church  
43888 Hayes Rd  
Clinton Twp, MI 48038

Now that his heart has stopped beating on earth, it is time for Mr. Albert Badawi to enjoy everlasting life. Bishop Zaidan offers sincere condolences to Chorbishop Alfred and his family. May Albert rest in peace.



### SLEIMAN FANDY ABOU ZEID PASSES INTO ETERNAL LIFE

Bishop A. Elias Zaidan announced the passing into eternal life of Mr. Sleiman Fandy Abou Zeid on 14 August in Lebanon. Sleiman was the father of Reverend Father Nadim Abou Zeid, M.L.M., and grandfather of Reverend Father Rami Razouk.

Sleiman was preceded in death by his wife, Mariam Semaan Abou Zeid, and his son, Rachid, and is survived by his sons, Father Nadim, Fandy and Antoine and his daughters Mona, Noha, Najat and Saide, and their families. Funeral Services took place in Lebanon on 16 August.

Condolences may be sent to Father Nadim Abou Zeid, M.L.M. at:

Saint Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church  
10325 Rancho Destino Road  
Las Vegas, NV 89183

And to Father Rami Razouk at:  
Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church  
600 El Camino Real  
Millbrae, CA 94030

On behalf of the Clergy, Religious and Laity of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles, Bishop Zaidan offers sincere condolences and prayers to the family of Mr. Sleiman Fandi Abou Zeid. May he rest in peace.



## FATHER ABDALLAH RAMY PASSES AWAY

Bishop Gregory John Mansour announced the passing of Father Abdallah H. Ramy at the age of 97. Surrounded by his family, Father Abdallah Habib Ramy passed away on 1 August.

Born in Terbol, Lebanon, Father Ramy was ordained a priest in 1961 and served in Lebanon and in the United States at Lawrence, Brockton, Fall River and Springfield, MA, and in Dover, NH.

Fr. Ramy was preceded in death by his wife Khourieh Wadad. He leaves behind his six children and their spouses: Daoud and Adriana (Escobar) Ramy, of Salem, NH; Sleiman and Hala (Melhem) Ramy of Methuen, MA; Mounir and Zeze (Moussa) Ramy of Houston, TX; Mournira and Nabil Daher of Salem, NH; Therese and Joseph Ramy of Dover, NH, and Marie and Wahib Charabati of Salem, NH. He is also survived by his brother, Moussa, and his wife, Najat Ramy, of Terbol, Lebanon. Two sisters, Nazli Sarkis (wife of the late Samir Sarkis), and Daad Cherabie of Lawrence, MA.

Funeral rites for this priest of the altar took place on 7 and 8 August at Saint Anthony Maronite Catholic Church, Lawrence, MA.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Saint Anthony Maronite Catholic Church. To leave on-line condolences, please visit [www.farahfunerals.com](http://www.farahfunerals.com)

On behalf of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, Clergy, Religious, and Laity, Bishop Gregory extends to the family and friends of Father Abdallah Ramy, our heart-felt condolences and prayers.

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

## PASSING OF ROUHANA ROUHANA

Bishop Gregory John Mansour received the sad news of the passing of Mr. Rouhana Rouhana, the father of Father Fadi Rouhana, during the week of our Clergy Conference and NAM Conference. His funeral was 15 July at Our Lady of Amchit, in Amchit, Lebanon.

Father Fadi was not able to go to the funeral but was home the month before his father passed away and was able to spend time with his parents and family.

Rouhana was a good husband and father and is survived by his wife, Jeanne d'Arc, and his children, Gus, Jamal, Fadia, Father Fadi, and Chady. Rouhana, a fisherman by trade, came from a family of eight; having two sisters and five brothers. He was 83 years old.

On behalf of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, clergy, religious and laity, Bishop Gregory extends our condolences to Father Fadi and his family.

Condolences may be sent to:  
Rev. Fadi Rouhana  
Saints Peter and Paul Mission  
6201 Sheldon Road  
Tampa, FL 33615

## DEACON LOUIS PETERS PASSES AWAY

Bishop A. Elias Zaidan shared the sad news of the passing of Deacon Louis Peters, 74, former Chancellor of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon on 11 September.

After serving in the United States Air Force, and after acquiring a Master's Degree in Theology and a Doctorate in Education, Deacon embarked on a journey of service to the Church for the next forty years. He served in the Archdiocese of St. Louis in the Department of Catholic Schools and was principal of Chaminade High School.

In the Maronite Church, he was always a faithful member of St. Raymond Cathedral. He was ordained a Subdeacon in 1977 and a Deacon in 2005. In the Eparchy he served in many areas including Director of the Office of Ministry in 2005, Director of the Office of Religious Education, and Chancellor of the Eparchy from 2013 until his retirement in 2020. Even after retiring, Deacon Lou continued to assist our Eparchy in many different ways and would always offer his insight and wisdom.

He is survived by his cousins, Rochelle and her husband Jack, Bill Peters, and Bill "Will" Peters and his wife Martha.

The Divine Liturgy and Funeral was celebrated on 22 September at St. Raymond Cathedral. Deacon Lou spent his life in service of the Church. He was respected by all for his dedication and known for his kind and generous heart.

Bishop Elias expressed sincere condolences to his family, friends, and fellow parishioners. May the soul Deacon Lou rest in peace.





## Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon

This year, the MYA has been very active in the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon. During the season of Lent, three regional conferences were hosted in California, Texas, and Ohio with the theme of incorporating prayer in a busy life. Joe Farris presented for all three regional conferences and shared how he incorporates prayer into his life of being a husband, father, and Catholic speaker and how we can make our life and the way we live active prayer to God. Over 100 young adults from California,

Nevada, Arizona, and other states, gathered in San Diego at Camp Surf to participate in the conference which was hosted by St. Ephrem Church. In Texas, the gathering took place at Camp Tejas outside of Austin which brought together over 50 young adults from Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. The third regional conference was held at St. Maron Church in Youngstown, Ohio, where 35 young adults attended the conference from Ohio and Michigan.

These conferences were a great catalyst for the young adults of the Eparchy to connect and reinvigorate their faith and identity as a community. This excitement carried over and helped to propel a great young adult presence at the NAM Convention in July, hosted by St. Maron Church in Minneapolis, MN. Over 80 young adults from both eparchies attended the convention this year and were present for prayers, Liturgies, presentations, and MYA events. One of the highlights of the convention for the MYA was their time with Bishops Elias and Gregory, enjoying lunch together, having a discussion, and question and answer session about relevant and pressing topics in the Church and particularly the role of the Church in accompanying young adults on their faith journey.

This fall the MYA is preparing to host regional events once again. The dates of the Great Lakes Regional Meet-Up are 16-18 September, hosted by St. Maron Church in Detroit, Michigan. There will also be regional events in the South and West later in the fall. Those dates have yet to be determined so be on the lookout for those announcements once they are finalized! Our MYA Eparchial Board has been working hard in their regions with local MYA groups throughout the eparchy to engage and connect with young adults. Please help us promote these events as best you can by attending or encouraging friends or family to attend and join the local MYA groups. The MYA is not only the future of our Maronite Church, they are the present!







*Greetings from*

*Tampa, FL*

## MYA TAMPA CONFERENCE

TAMPA MARRIOTT WATER ST.  
 SAVE THE DATE  
 OCT 28-30, 2022  
 FAITH, FELLOWSHIP, FUN

Save the Dates!

The Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn presents

**2022 - 2023 MYO Regional Retreats**

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p>New England Region Lock-in<br/>         St. Anthony Parish<br/>         Lawrence, MA<br/>         Oct. 8-9, 2022</p> | <p>Mid-Atlantic Region<br/>         Christian Blue Mountain<br/>         Retreat Center<br/>         New Ringgold, PA<br/>         Nov. 11-13, 2022</p> | <p>Far South Region<br/>         Pine Lake<br/>         Retreat Center<br/>         Groveland, FL<br/>         Jan. 13 - 15, 2023</p> |
|---|---|---|

For God did not give us a spirit of fear but rather of power and love and self-control. (2 Tim 1:7)

# SET FREE

2023 Eparchy of OLOL MYO Regional Retreats

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Southwest<br/>         January 27-29<br/>         Running Springs, CA</p> | <p>South<br/>         February 24-26<br/>         Giddings, TX</p> |
| <p>Midwest<br/>         February 17-19<br/>         Centerburg, OH</p>       |  |

# Friendship with God: A Foundation for Vocation Discernment

by Sr. Therese Maria

“God works all things for good for those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.” (ROMANS 8:28)

How do you fall in love with someone you don't know? How do you begin or deepen a friendship with someone you can't see? A divine Someone? The foundation of any good vocation discernment is relationship. It's carving out intentional time to be with and to get to know God in prayer, and in particular in His life-giving word.



prayerfully considering God's vocation (calling) for my life.

Some helpful questions I was asking God in my prayer time:

- How have you made my heart to love? (As a wife, mother, religious sister?)
- What are my deepest desires? What makes me truly happy?
- Where am I going to be most fully alive in making a gift of myself in love?

Do you have a relationship with God? Do you spend time with Him regularly? Do you know He loves you? Not only that He is Love, but that He loves you. You, personally. God is gazing on you with loving tenderness as you read this. He sees you. He knows you and loves you intimately. Let this beautiful truth sink in.

Growing in your relationship with God is never time wasted. It's from this place of love and personal relationship that your vocation will come. God is a relentless Lover! If He is pursuing you and drawing you to lay down your life in love as a religious sister, then the attraction within will grow over time. It's important to take time away from the busyness to listen to the desires of your heart and invite Christ into those desires and attractions.

In my discernment journey of deepening my friendship with God, I found going to Eucharistic Adoration, reading Scripture daily, volunteering, journaling and attending Divine Liturgy and confession regularly, helpful in strengthening my love and friendship with God. Along with these practices, I was blessed to have good spiritual directors along the way that I could walk with as I was

Be bold and ask God: how are you calling me to serve you; to make a total gift of myself to belong totally to you; to be your bride and spiritual mother of your people? If you feel attracted to religious life or curious to learn more, take a leap of faith and visit sisters. “Come and See” weekends are a great opportunity for you to visit and ask sisters questions that you might have on your heart regarding religious life. Also, I recommend a book, *Discerning Religious Life* by Sister Clare Matthias.

In June, the Maronite Servants had a “Come and See” weekend for women to pray and visit with us. It was a fruitful time of prayer, learning and joyful fellowship. They experienced our charism as spiritual mothers, in imitation of Mary, radiating the Light of Christ in our contemplative prayer, asceticism, and parish mission. Please pray for the women actively discerning their vocation with our community.

For more information about discernment please contact Sr. Therese Maria, Vocation Directress at [sister@maroniteservants.org](mailto:sister@maroniteservants.org) or call 508-996-1753. ■



# Parish News

LAWRENCE, MASSACHUSETTS

## Light of Light Bible Camp

by Colette Sadek

The second annual *Light of Light Bible Camp* at Saint Anthony Church in Lawrence, Massachusetts, was hosted by the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light from 25-27 July 2022. Their main topic was the Holy Eucharist, and the bible school volunteers were thankful for the Maronite Servants' involvement in the program. The Sisters emphasized the importance of humbly preparing for Holy Communion. The children also enjoyed participating in several physical and knowledge-based activities including: learning to make and bake bread, crafts, outdoor water games, and faith-based discussions. Father Nemtallah, a visiting priest from Lebanon, led a spiritual presentation for the Knights of Mary and the MYO. He stressed that a "good" Christian should treat others with kindness and respect. The directors of the Light of Light Bible Camp appreciated the time and dedication



of the volunteers and parents who entrusted their children to the camp organizers, and a special recognition to the children for their commitment to the program. A special "thanks" was extended to Father Elie Mikhael for offering this religious formation opportunity to the parish. ■

YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO

## Saadi Receives Lebanon's Highest Honor

During a visit in August to Lebanon's presidential palace, Attorney Edward Saadi, received quite a surprise. In a brief ceremony unannounced even to Saadi, Lebanese President Michel Aoun decorated Saadi with Lebanon's Order of Merit, the highest honor the Lebanese Republic can bestow on a civilian who is not a head of state.

During the ceremony, Aoun praised Saadi's "self-will, determination, and steadfastness," and described him as a lawyer who "revolted throughout his life against oppressors" and stood "against all kinds of occupation, especially in Lebanon." The Lebanese President was referring to the efforts of Edward Saadi in lobbying the United States Congress to restore full sovereignty to Lebanon.

The medal is Lebanon's equivalent of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. It was instituted in 1922 and is awarded for extraordinary services to Lebanon. ■



# Parish News

FALL RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS

## Outreach Services & Scholarships

Members of the Blessed Mother's Guild of St. Anthony of the Desert Church in Fall River, Massachusetts, were joined by The Lebanese American Ladies Auxiliary and the local Calvary United Presbyterian Church to help Lebanese families and community members in need. The three organizations meet several times annually to aid the Greater Fall River Area Outreach Programs, the Veterans Drop-off Center and other beneficial causes. Group members collected and distributed hats and gloves, personal hygiene items, food from local soup kitchens and other necessities. To culminate the year's efforts, the three organizations held a catered dinner on 20 June 2022 in St. Anthony of the Desert Parish Hall.



On Sunday, 26 June 2022, St. Anthony of the Desert Church members held their Scholarship Award Ceremony following the Divine Liturgy. The college students pursuing their studies in Special Needs were honored with the Mark Bassaly Memorial Scholarship. The recipients were: Alexis Dutra, Bethany Mello and Andrea Nasiff. Students entering their first year of college were honored with the Dr. Mouded/St. Anthony of the Desert Scholarship. The recipients were: Andro Al Khawande, Julia Rappold and Madison Frank. Monsignor James Root blessed the scholarship awardees and wished them continued success. ■

NORMAN, OKLAHOMA

## Visit from Archbishop Coakley

by Pascale Abou-Nassar

On 24 July, Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Norman, Oklahoma, celebrated the Feast of Saint Sharbel. We were blessed to have Archbishop Coakley celebrate this great feast with the community. Many Catholics and non-Catholics came together on that day to share in the teachings and healing power of Saint Sharbel. One of those parishioners is the original founder and matriarch of our parish, Mantoura Khoury. She has been here from the beginning and has never missed a Sunday or daily liturgy. Khoury is a true beacon of devotion of what we, as Catholics, should strive to be with our time on earth. On this great feast day, we were blessed to be led by Archbishop Coakley and Mantoura Khoury. ■





MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

## NAM 57th Convention Recap

by Joan Moses

Faith, Family and Heritage, the theme and focus of the 57th National Apostolate of Maronites (NAM) Convention, was noted in every activity of the six-day event. Archbishop Hebda, of St. Paul, Bishops Elias Zaidan and Gregory Mansour, with Bishop Maroun Ammar from Sidon, Lebanon, and more than 100 clergy celebrated Divine Liturgy at Saint Maron Church, Minneapolis, host of the convention, on Monday 11 July 2022. The clergy were joined afterward by the NAM Board and committee members for fellowship and a delicious Lebanese dinner prepared and served by parishioners. The clergy commenced their annual conference for three days in a spirit of brotherhood. Lay participants arrived mid-week to enjoy workshops, Liturgies, and excursions. The convention schedule was planned so that all attendees were able to participate in all three activities each day.

Numerous workshops were held, including the following highlights:

- Rev. Anthony Salim discussed the dire need of "Adult Faith Formation" in the Church.
- Jeff Cavins impressed us with the story and impact of the first gentile followers of Christ during Jesus' lifetime; they were led by a Syro-Phoenician woman in Lebanon. "On the Footsteps of Jesus in Lebanon."
- Bishop Andrew Cozzens stressed the relevance of the coming National Eucharistic Revival and the importance of participation by each of us, "My Flesh for the Life of the World."

The Order of Saint Sharbel (OSS) and NAM held their annual meetings. Both groups were impressive with their dedication and continuing commitment to uniting Maronites spiritually, financially and socially throughout America. Dr. Danny Sayad was elected President of NAM and Jim Abdo continued his leadership of OSS. In closing, during the Pontifical Divine Liturgy on Sunday, chairpeople Lisa Gleason and Elena El Khory presented the official NAM banner to Lila and Joe Camara, chairpeople of next year's NAM convention to be hosted by Saint Anthony of the Desert Church, Fall River, MA, and Msgr. James Root, 6-9 July 2023.

We Maronites reconnected at the first post-pandemic convention gathering, a family-reunion of sorts, as together we revitalized NAM's efforts to Unite and Preserve ourselves socially, spiritually, and culturally while serving as anchors for our bishops, clergy, new missions, and parishes. Despite the challenges of Covid, inflation, and gas and airline difficulties, this 57th NAM Convention was deemed a success in all areas.

"Keep the flame burning!"

May God protect our Faith, Family and Heritage. ■



# Maronite Jewelry

## As unique as it is Beautiful!

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

All available in Gold & Silver

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

Available only at

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

**CAPPIELLO**   
Jewelers



# Parish News

OLEAN, NEW YORK

## Chrismation, First Holy Communion

On 26 June 2022, the Saint Joseph Maronite Church congregation of Olean, New York, celebrated a momentous event: First Holy Communion of one child and Chrismation of five children. In the past year, four Roman Catholic families joined St. Joseph's parish. Since the Latin Rite does not have Chrismation (Confirmation) at the time of Baptism, Fr. Claude Franklin, pastor, administered the Mystery of Chrismation. The Chrismation recipients, accompanied by their sponsors, included (Left to Right): Isaac LaValley, Marek Oszwaldowski, Fr. Claude, Silence Karl, Daria Cavallo, and Dominic Cavallo. The First Holy Communion recipient was Beata Oszwaldowska. A parish covered dish dinner followed the ceremony. ■



SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

## First Communion



ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

## First Communion

On Sunday, 1 May, nine of our children (Rita AbuAlzulof, Laith AbuAlzulof, Gabrielly da Silva, Emma Enamorado, Lucy Herdler, Collin Parker, Tatiana Parra, Cecilia Rask and Amelia Yaacoub) received their First Holy Communion. We thank our Religious Education teachers, especially Pamela Olimpio and Julie Hojarvi for their continuous ministry and hard work to form our children in the Christian Dogma. The classes were held at St. Raymond-St. Elizabeth Maronite Catholic Church. ■



CLINTON TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

## First Communion

On 30 April 2022, at St Sharbel Church in Clinton Township, MI, Chorbishop Badawi and Deacon Mike Magyar celebrated a special 1st Holy Communion Liturgy for 19 Communicants. The children were active participants in the liturgy through assisting in scripture readings, intercessions, and a ceremony of dressing the altar. Congratulations to the 1st Communion Class of 2022! ■



UNIONTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

## Lebanese Festival & VBS

by Dr. Mabel George Howard

Lines of patrons waited patiently to enjoy a variety of Lebanese ethnic foods, music entertainment, water slides, and games at the annual **Saint George Church Lebanese Food Festival** held on 7 August 2022, in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Parish families, community members, and 'out-of-towners' gathered to celebrate Uniontown's Middle Eastern heritage. The Saint George Ladies Guild, Altar & Rosary Society and volunteers worked cooperatively to organize equipment and prepare traditional delicacies including: grape leaves, kibbee, falafel wraps, tabbouli, lamb shish kabobs, chicken shish taouk, lubia, hummus, laban, rice pilaf, zalabia, baklava and pita. Also, featured at the festival were basket raffles, a bake sale, cash prize winnings, food truck treats, water slides and wine displays. Strengthening spiritual and social bonds among family, friends and parishioners, and celebrating our Lebanese culture and ancestry is truly a beautiful reflection of our Maronite faith.



**"Celebration of Family"** was the theme of Vacation Bible School (VBS) at Saint George Church in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Students learned that God created the family unit and that God's love is passed on to His children. Exploring Christian family values such as: patience, forgiveness, obedience, discipline and prayer were discussed about the family lives of St. Sharbel, Abraham and Sarah, Zechariah and Elizabeth, Jacob and sons and Noah. Additionally, the youths and their families participated in a "Selfie Scavenger Hunt" held inside and outside the parish. Families would hunt for items and take a selfie with each item such as: the bell tower, St. Rafka Grotto, statue of St. George, archives room, etc. This gave the families an opportunity to connect with the church, extended families and Maronite traditions. At the culmination of VBS, Fr. Aaron Sandbothe celebrated liturgy for the Feast of St. Sharbel, veneration of the icon of St. Sharbel, a blessing with the relics of the Lebanese saints, and anointing of the sick. This was followed by a potluck dinner in the church hall. ■

HOUSTON, TEXAS

## MYA Happenings

by Alex Abokhair



This summer, Houston MYA had two big events, Theology on Tap, and their summer kickoff event, Picnic at the Park. Theology on Tap was held at the end of May at a local brewery called Saint Arnold Brewing Company. The MYA met in the brewery's event space, which doubles as their production plant, so the members got to see all the equipment that is used for making the beer. In total, around 60 MYA members attended. The group came together, enjoyed locally crafted brews, and listened to a talk given by their priest Fr. Edward. Abouna Edward held a Q&A session where he handled tough questions like: "what is the point of life?" and "how do we know what God wants us to do?" The event ended with the MYA announcing their new board for the upcoming year.

The second event, Picnic at the Park, was held at Memorial Park near the Galleria. Around 50 Houston MYA members came and enjoyed a fun afternoon of playing games, grilling, and getting to spend time with friends. Local grill master, Anees Joubran, grilled up hot dogs and cheeseburgers and even had vegan burgers for those so inclined. After eating, the members played football and soccer and threw ice cubes at each other to cool off. The event ended with some delicious desserts provided by Houston MYA's very own Diana Nadira of Nadira Group Catering.

The Houston MYA also recently raised enough money to supply 12 kids from Parks Youth Ranch, a local charity, with school supplies for the upcoming school year. Overall, Houston MYA has had a great summer!



# Parish News

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

## End of Summer Events

by Father Andrawos El Tabchi & Dr. Mabel George Howard

On 14 August 2022, Father Andrawos El Tabchi of St. Maron Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, celebrated Liturgy for the Feast of the Assumption. Following the liturgy, the parishioners led a street procession displaying an icon of the Mother of God en route through neighboring streets. On their return to the church, Father Andrawos held the icon high above his head at the altar as he blessed the congregation.

There were other end of summer events that took place at St. Maron Church. On 28 August, an Appreciation Luncheon prepared by a group of parishioners was held in the church hall. This gathering was to thank all of the volunteers who worked tirelessly to make the Church Festival an overwhelming success. Also, in gratitude, a Blue Mass was offered for the First Responders of the community on 29 September that included: Police Officers, Firefighters, First Responder Medics, Armed Forces, and the Coast Guard. Following the liturgy, the First Responders were invited to a buffet of delicious foods generously donated by neighbors, parishioners, businesses, and friends of the parish. The parishioners expressed a sincere “thank you” to the First Responders for their pledge to keep their communities safe and secure. Finally, prior to winter church activities, parishioners and community members planned an October Street Block Party featuring food, music, entertainment, and the opportunity to share fellowship and camaraderie among family and friends. ■



UTICA, NEW YORK

## Taste of Lebanon Drive-Thru



Saint Louis Gonzaga Church in Utica, New York, hosted another very successful Taste of Lebanon Drive-Thru on the weekend of 22-23 July. Delicious foods were prepared in advance by the many parish volunteers who worked countless hours ahead of the festival. Homemade Lebanese pastries were a big hit and were sought out by many. Next year, the event is scheduled to take place back on the grounds of the Deerfield Firemen's Field. Many thanks to the chairpersons, committees, sponsors, many volunteers, and supporters of the event. ■



FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

## Summer Activities

The congregation of St. Michael the Archangel Church in Fayetteville, North Carolina, celebrated the 2022 summer with a series of activities. Father Paul Damien and Father Jack Morrison celebrated 25 years and 30 years respectively of priesthood. To show gratitude to these servants of God, the Ladies Guild, Knights of Columbus, and parish children joined in prayer and fellowship at their reception; thus, allowing parishioners to reflect upon the meaning and gift of the clergy.

During the Fayetteville Memorial Day Ceremony, the Knights of Columbus of the St. Maron Council 12640 placed a wreath on the Vietnam Memorial. Most parishioners at Saint Michael Church are currently serving or retired from the military. Fayetteville is the home of Fort Bragg, the epicenter of the 82nd Airborne and Special Operations.

In July, Saint Michael Church held their second annual Vacation Bible School (VBS). Volunteers and children participated in a five-day program "Exploring the Middle East with our Maronite Saints." Each day began with Divine Liturgy followed by lessons, group prayer, crafts, music, games, outdoor activities and ethnic foods from the countries explored. Local restaurants and the Ladies Guild prepared delicious Lebanese, Iraqi, and Syrian meals for the youth. Children learned about the lives of Maronite saints, their cultures, unique virtues, and love for Jesus. Vacation Bible School was the highlight of the summer and an overwhelming success. During VBS, several adult parishioners attended a summer mini-series delving into the life of St. Therese of Lisieux. They discussed "Story of Soul," a book describing the extraordinary life of St. Therese and her family. ■



SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY

## St. Sharbel Statue Dedication



On Saturday, 23 July 2022, parishioners of St. Sharbel Church in Somerset, New Jersey, celebrated a blessing of the new Saint Sharbel statue displayed at St. Cyril of Jerusalem Catholic Church in Jamison, Pennsylvania. Father Simon El Hajj concelebrated the Liturgy with Msgr. Robert Powell, followed by prayers and blessings of the St. Sharbel Shrine. This marble statue, donated by parishioners, Pierre and Blanche Machalany, represents a beautiful symbol of holiness for the "Miracle Monk of Lebanon."

The miracles of Saint Sharbel continue to heal the lives of both the faithful and people of good will. His devotion and love for God is gaining recognition throughout all corners of the globe. May this statue of Saint Sharbel act as a beacon of faith and hope for the Roman Catholic community of St. Cyril and to all those who commemorate this pious and humble Lebanese Saint. ■



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

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

August 18, 2022

Prot. No. 582/1/22  
Circ No. 22.63

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Attached please find a summary of the **2021 Audited Financial Report** for the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn. The full audited financial statements are available at the Chancery.

This past year we continued to invest in educating our five seminarians, we paid monthly pensions for our seventeen retired priests, assisted our youth and young adults, and reached out to support our brothers and sisters in Lebanon, Syria and the Middle East. At the same time, we sought to augment income by means of donations, grants, and our Annual Benefit Dinner in New York. Even with all this, the Eparchy showed again this year a net increase after expenses. Nonetheless, we still need all of your help, because we hope to do even more.

Our finances were audited by the independent accounting firm of Lehman Flynn Vollaro, CPA's PLLC. Likewise, all of our parishes and missions have been directed to have an independent accountant approve their annual financial report, have their parish finance council review their finances every quarter, and to publish their annual financial report in the parish bulletin.

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

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

Because of our careful stewardship over the years, our small eparchy is able to make ends meet, as well as help collect funds for Lebanon and Syria to assist our fellow Christians.

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

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *Gregory*  
+ Gregory J. Mansour

*Thankyou!*

Attachment (1 PDF)

Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn  
Statements of Financial Position  
December 31,

|   | 2021          | 2020          |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| <b>Assets</b>   |               |               |
| Cash and cash equivalents   | \$ 442,526    | \$ 614,781    |
| Pledges receivable  | -             | 230,458       |
| Loans receivable, current portion                                   | 137,907       | 144,990       |
| Other receivables   | 20,372        | 35,267        |
| Investments   | 5,849,884     | 5,041,739     |
| Assets whose use is limited   | 1,294,193     | 1,109,604     |
| Prepaid expenses  | 11,365        | 11,365        |
| Total current assets  | 7,756,247     | 7,188,204     |
| Loans receivable, long term, net                                    | 196,433       | 196,433       |
| Property and equipment, net   | 3,475,151     | 3,589,190     |
| Total assets  | \$ 11,427,831 | \$ 10,973,827 |
| <b>Liabilities and net assets</b>                                   |               |               |
| Accounts payable and accrued expenses                               | \$ 2,142      | \$ 130,959    |
| Funds held for others– second collections<br>and mideast assistance | 7,990         | 90,022        |
| Funds held for others– disability fund                              | 1,294,193     | 1,109,604     |
| Mortgage payable, current portion                                   | 76,829        | 65,400        |
| Total current liabilities   | 1,381,154     | 1,395,985     |
| Mortgage payable  | 486,952       | 572,223       |
| Total liabilities   | 1,868,106     | 1,968,208     |
| <b>Net assets</b>   |               |               |
| Without donor restrictions  | 9,479,708     | 8,725,126     |
| With donor restrictions   | 80,017        | 280,493       |
| Total net assets  | 9,559,725     | 9,005,619     |
| Total liabilities and net assets                                    | \$ 11,427,831 | \$ 10,973,827 |

See notes to financial statements

**LEHMAN FLYNN VOLLARO PLLC**  
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

3



Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn  
Statement of Activities  
Year Ended December 31, 2021

|  | Without Donor<br>Restrictions | With Donor<br>Restrictions | Total               | 2020<br>Total       |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Revenue, support and gains                             |                               |                            |                     |                     |
| Diocesan assessments                                   | \$ 506,000                    | \$ -                       | \$ 506,000          | \$ 411,440          |
| Contributions  | 237,372                       | 27,500                     | 264,872             | 268,886             |
| Grants   | 17,976                        | 359,717                    | 377,693             | 326,922             |
| Diocesan appeal  | 179,439                       | -                          | 179,439             | 178,489             |
| Contributed use of facilities                          | 120,000                       | -                          | 120,000             | 120,000             |
| Special events, net                                    | 142,930                       | -                          | 142,930             | 146,058             |
| Other  | 35,314                        | -                          | 35,314              | 16,794              |
| Net assets released from restrictions                  | 587,693                       | (587,693)                  | -                   | -                   |
| Total revenue, support, and gains                      | <u>1,826,724</u>              | <u>(200,476)</u>           | <u>1,626,248</u>    | <u>1,468,589</u>    |
| Expenses and losses                                    |                               |                            |                     |                     |
| Eparchial program                                      | 1,232,560                     | -                          | 1,232,560           | 1,057,520           |
| Chancery   | 342,050                       | -                          | 342,050             | 230,637             |
| Stewardship office                                     | 135,000                       | -                          | 135,000             | 135,000             |
| Total expenses   | <u>1,709,610</u>              | <u>-</u>                   | <u>1,709,610</u>    | <u>1,423,157</u>    |
| Changes in net assets before other items               | <u>117,114</u>                | <u>(200,476)</u>           | <u>(83,362)</u>     | <u>45,432</u>       |
| Other items  |                               |                            |                     |                     |
| Investment income                                      | 702,729                       | -                          | 702,729             | 550,208             |
| Interest income on interest-bearing loans              | 7,917                         | -                          | 7,917               | -                   |
| Interest income on noninterest-bearing loans           | 9,335                         | -                          | 9,335               | 11,096              |
| Contribution of interest on non-interest-bearing loans | (9,335)                       | -                          | (9,335)             | (11,096)            |
| Interest expense, Heart of Jesus                       | (24,140)                      | -                          | (24,140)            | (33,581)            |
| Depreciation and amortization, Heart of Jesus          | (49,038)                      | -                          | (49,038)            | (49,038)            |
| Change in net assets                                   | 754,582                       | (200,476)                  | 554,106             | 513,021             |
| Net assets, beginning of year                          | <u>8,725,126</u>              | <u>280,493</u>             | <u>9,005,619</u>    | <u>8,492,598</u>    |
| Net assets, end of year                                | <u>\$ 9,479,708</u>           | <u>\$ 80,017</u>           | <u>\$ 9,559,725</u> | <u>\$ 9,005,619</u> |

See notes to financial statements

**LEHMAN FLYNN VOLLARO PLLC**  
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

4

Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn  
Statement of Functional Expenses  
Year Ended December 31, 2021

|                               | Program<br>Eparchial<br>Program | Administrative<br>Chancery | Fundraising<br>Stewardship<br>Office | Total               | 2020 Total          |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Clergy salaries               | \$ 67,200                       | \$ 16,800                  | \$ -                                 | \$ 84,000           | \$ 84,000           |
| Lay salaries                  | 48,738                          | 12,185                     | -                                    | 60,923              | 61,763              |
| Payroll taxes                 | 8,833                           | 2,208                      | -                                    | 11,041              | 16,075              |
| Benefits                      | 16,524                          | 4,131                      | -                                    | 20,655              | 7,619               |
| Vocations                     | 70,370                          | -                          | -                                    | 70,370              | 79,924              |
| Grants                        | 222,920                         | -                          | -                                    | 222,920             | 208,700             |
| Bishop appeal disbursements   | 168,585                         | -                          | -                                    | 168,585             | 178,675             |
| Donations                     | 182,703                         | -                          | -                                    | 182,703             | 60,445              |
| Clergy support                | 4,773                           | -                          | -                                    | 4,773               | 23,616              |
| Religious expenses            | 15,929                          | -                          | -                                    | 15,929              | 3,166               |
| Rent                          | 96,000                          | 24,000                     | -                                    | 120,000             | 120,000             |
| Professional expenses         | 5,877                           | 193,366                    | -                                    | 199,243             | 115,794             |
| Conferences                   | 23,979                          | -                          | -                                    | 23,979              | 7,450               |
| Stewardship expenses          | -                               | -                          | 135,000                              | 135,000             | 135,000             |
| Travel                        | 24,507                          | -                          | -                                    | 24,507              | 23,386              |
| Household                     | 27,875                          | 6,969                      | -                                    | 34,844              | 29,689              |
| Office                        | 34,626                          | 8,657                      | -                                    | 43,283              | 43,500              |
| Insurance                     | -                               | 22,291                     | -                                    | 22,291              | 26,348              |
| Maintenance and repairs       | 58,574                          | 14,644                     | -                                    | 73,218              | 29,557              |
| Utilities                     | 12,304                          | 3,076                      | -                                    | 15,380              | 13,609              |
| Telephone                     | 9,402                           | 2,351                      | -                                    | 11,753              | 13,085              |
| Publications                  | 39,723                          | -                          | -                                    | 39,723              | 42,584              |
| Depreciation and amortization | 71,164                          | 17,791                     | -                                    | 88,955              | 88,475              |
| Other                         | 21,954                          | 13,581                     | -                                    | 35,535              | 10,697              |
| Total expenses by function    | <u>\$ 1,232,560</u>             | <u>\$ 342,050</u>          | <u>\$ 135,000</u>                    | <u>\$ 1,709,610</u> | <u>\$ 1,423,157</u> |

See notes to financial statements

**LEHMAN FLYNN VOLLARO PLLC**  
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

6

## Catechists – Passing on the Faith

by Sister Marla Marie Lucas, MSCCL

The sisters and I, with assistance from both teen and adult volunteers, have just completed hosting two summer Maronite Bible Camps. One was in St. Anthony Church in Lawrence, MA, and the other was offered at St. Anthony of the Desert in Fall River, MA. We were able to reach over 100 children, bringing them to Jesus in a high-spirited week of adventure! I have always found that summer bible camps are one of the best tools for passing on the faith to our youth.

We spend days and hours preparing themes, activities and lessons to reach the children. Although it is only a one-week camp, they learn and grow immensely. It is rewarding as a catechist to see children enthusiastically sing, dance, and pray! The mission of the catechist is to creatively evangelize and to pass on the faith in its integrity. This is no small task!

A beloved pastor I served with many years ago taught me that the greatest mission in the parish, after the sacramental service of the priest, is the catechist. He explained that the priest needed the work of a catechist to insure the passing on of the faith to the children and families in the parish. The catechists in that parish were valued, and the pastor made sure they knew it. He not only acknowledged and affirmed them, but he also invested in their on-going training and spiritual development.

Pope Francis often speaks of the valued mission of a catechist, stating that catechesis should not be understood as “an abstract communication of theoretical knowledge to be memorized as like mathematical or chemical formulas. It is rather the mystagogical experience of those who learn to encounter their brothers and sisters where they live and work, because they themselves have met Christ, who has called them to become missionary disciples.”

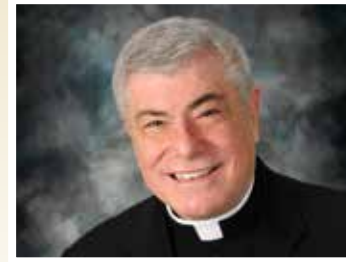
When we have met Christ, it calls us forth to then go out and tell others. How many times have you read in your parish bulletin or heard an announcement pleading for catechists, “we need religious education teachers...is there anybody out there who can help?” This year, prayerfully consider this ministry in your parish and step out in faith. Your love for Christ and his Body, the Church, will be your greatest and most needed asset; the rest can be easily learned as you go along.

Our Maronite Eparchies provide opportunities to assist you in this mission, reach out to your pastor and parish catechetical leader to find out more. ■





## From the Editor



Dear Friend,

*Weltanschauung*. This German word is a combination of *Welt* “world” + *Anschauung* “view.” Some of us take a simplistic, incorrect approach that there is a world and we all see it in the same way. We don’t.

Each of us looks at the world from a different perspective and creates our own opinion of it. This is our worldview. The worldview that we have determines whether we are happy, how we behave and the decisions we take.

A person with a pessimistic worldview perhaps sees the entire world or significant parts of it as the enemy that must be destroyed or at least defeated in order for us to be happy. A pessimistic worldview prevents us from trusting, from trying something new, from wanting to bring children into the world.

What creates our worldview? On numerous occasions — especially after a tragic school shooting — adults complain that the video games that the kids are playing affects them. They speculate that the violence in the video games desensitizes the young mind to violence, that the video games largely create a different, dark worldview in the life of the young person. I don’t know what to do about it, but I am inclined to agree with these observations.

Yet, let us apply this insight to a different age group, those of us who have CNN or Fox on the television from the moment we wake until we go to sleep. Do

we sincerely believe that this constant flow of “facts” and opinions has no effect on our perception of reality, on our worldview? Opinions often repeated become facts.

We strongly urge kids to turn off the video games and go out and play. Let’s take our own advice: **turn off the television, listen to some music, go for a walk, call a friend, or quietly pray.**

And then there is commercialism. Corporations are spending billions of dollars in advertising to change our worldview. They interrupt a program or sports event and shout at us that this model of car, these shoes, this drink will make people admire and even envy us. Some of us can’t afford such things. And we spend our money — our lives — critical of our own appearance, talents, families and status, thinking that others are so much better off. Envy creates a toxic worldview.

Most of us will defend our own worldview as *realistic* and that the rest of the world, or at least that part of society who disagree with us are simply wrong. Let’s be humble. Let’s listen to our neighbor. Or better yet, **adopt the worldview of Jesus and love our neighbor.** ■

In the fellowship of Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John D. Faris". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Chorbishop John D. Faris

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

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

## THE ORDER OF SAINT SHARBEL

PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING THE ORDER OF SAINT SHARBEL  
OR RENEWING YOUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP TODAY.  
(ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS RENEW JANUARY 1<sup>ST</sup> EACH YEAR.)

TO ENROLL OR RENEW AS AN ANNUAL MEMBER  
OR BECOME A PERPETUAL MEMBER  
GO TO: [www.orderstsharbel.org](http://www.orderstsharbel.org)



Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn  
109 Remsen Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
[saintmaron@yahoo.com](mailto:saintmaron@yahoo.com)

Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles  
1021 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Saint Louis, MO 63104  
[maroniteswest@yahoo.com](mailto:maroniteswest@yahoo.com)