



The Maronite Voice

A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA



Volume VIII

Issue No. XI

December 2012

Christmas 2012

The Incarnation of Christ Is the Foundation of Human Life

HE shall be the one of PEACE.

Micah 5:5, NRSV



The fruits of the Incarnation of Christ are first of all Mercy to us in our mortal nature. For by Christ coming in the flesh, God showed us the way to Eternal life in baptism in the Holy Spirit and water, and he planted in us Immortality through the Holy Eucharist and the sacraments. Another fruit is love: Love is the extension and the visible sign of the Divine Nature that is enshrined in our weak nature of sinful people. Through the virtue of love, human beings can experience the joy of forgiveness, the joy of existence and the joy of pro-creation that at the end they will realize in them the Divine Nature of God.

My dear brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ, truly the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ from the Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit is the foundation and origin of our human life. God in his Divine Wisdom, Love and Mercy, has willed to anticipate Life Eternal in our mortal bodies through the Incarnation of His Only Begotten Son.

In fact, everyone searches to live. Life is the goal, the objective, and the dream of every human being. In fact, all living creatures aspire to life, aim not to die, and desire immortality. This is why Saint John the Evangelist in the prologue of his gospel writes: “*In Avto Xowi in, Kai E Xowi To Fost Ton Anthropon*” «In Him was life, and the life was the light of men» (John 1: 4).

In fact, the Incarnation of Christ and His Birth in the flesh are the guaranty for both our redemption in the flesh and the pre-tasting of the resurrection of the flesh as well as of the spirit. Therefore, the divine Mystery of Incarnation, through the Birth of Christ, once that is revealed to us in the flesh, became the foundation of Christian existence, ethics and human dignity. It is because of Christ who became flesh, that humanity acquires the sacred discipline of how to treat human bodies as the living temples of the Holy Spirit, as the image of God.

Without the Incarnation of Christ, God would have remained an idea, a principle, a Law, a program that, even though universally accepted, still never could have been achieved nor realized until God the Word became flesh and entered our history: “*Et Verbum Caro Factum Est. Et Habitavit In Nobis,*” «KAI O LOGOS SARX EGENETO KAI ESKINOSEN EN UMIN» “ and the Word became flesh, and lived among us” (John 1: 14). (Continues on page 20)

Schedule of Bishop Robert Shaheen

December 9, 2012

Special Youth Liturgy, Saint Louis, Mo.

December 13, 2012

Lecture, Bellville, Ill.

December 14, 2012

Retreat for student group, Maronite Heritage Institute. Saint Louis, Mo.

December 24, 2012

Solemn Divine Liturgy of the Birth of Christ at 10:00 p.m. at St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

December 26, 2012

Congratulation to the Mother of God, Saint Louis, Mo.

January 5 - 6, 2013

Pastoral Visit to Saint Maron, Minneapolis, Minn.

January 12 - 13, 2013

Parish visit and Confirmation, Norman, Oklahoma. ☐

The Maronite Voice

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The Maronite Voice, (ISSN 1080-9880) the official newsletter of the Maronite Eparchies in the U.S.A. (Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles and Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn), is published monthly.

Send all changes of address, news, pictures and personal correspondence to *The Maronite Voice* at the above captioned address. Subscription rates are \$20.00 per year. Advertising rates are available upon request.

Publishers

- Most Reverend Bishop Robert Joseph Shaheen
- Most Reverend Bishop Gregory John Mansour

Editor Msgr. George M. Sebaali

Consultor Fr. Abdallah Zaidan, M.L.M.

Editing and proofreading

Mary Shaia

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Printed in Richmond, Virginia.

Maronite Convention 2013

Sts. Peter and Paul Maronite Church

Tampa, Florida

July 3 - 7, 2013

For more information contact the NAM office at (914) 964-3070 or visit www.Namnews.org



Eparchial Condolences

Rose Youssef Baz, the mother of Msgr. Louis Baz, Pastor of Saint Maron Church, Detroit, Mich., died on November 16, 2012 in Ghazir, Lebanon. She was preceded in death by her husband Youssef. Mrs. Baz is survived by her children: Francois, Msgr. Louis, Adiba Maarkech, and Najat Bassil. She was the niece of Blessed Jacques Haddad. Condolences may be sent to Msgr. Louis Baz, 11466 Kercheval-St. Jean, Detroit, MI 48214.

Bishop Robert Shaheen along with the clergy and faithful of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon extend their heartfelt sympathy and the promise of our prayers to Msgr. Baz and his family.

May the Lord God grant Rose eternal rest in His Kingdom and consolation to her family and loved ones.

Deacon Joseph Stephens of St. Elias Maronite Church in Birmingham, Alabama, where he served as a deacon for the last twelve years, passed away on Saturday, November 10, 2012. Deacon Stephens is survived by his wife of forty years, Jenny; two children, Joseph and Valarie; and two grandchildren Kaleigh and Emma. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to the family at: 2530 Redstart Lane, Birmingham, AL 35226.

Bishop Robert Shaheen along with the clergy and faithful of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon extend their heartfelt sympathy and the promise of our prayers to Deacon Stephens' family.

May the Lord God grant Deacon Joseph eternal rest in His Kingdom and consolation to his family and loved ones.

Marie Awad, the mother of Msgr. Assad Awad (retired), passed away this summer in Lebanon. She was nearly 100 years old. She was predeceased by her husband and two sons and a daughter. In addition to Monsignor Awad, she is survived by another son Mounir, who lives in Youngstown, Ohio, as well as four other sons and a daughter in Lebanon. Condolences may be sent to Monsignor Assad Awad, whose telephone number is (508) 615-2668 or to his brother Mounir's address: Dr. Mounir Awad, 7995 Cedar Park Drive, Canfield, OH 44406. Also, Monsignor Awad's telephone number in Lebanon will be 011-961-6-53-00-66.

Bishop Gregory Mansour along with the clergy and faithful of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn extend their heartfelt sympathy and the promise of our prayers to Msgr. Awad and his family.

May the Lord God grant Marie eternal rest in His Kingdom and consolation to her family and loved ones. ☐

Fall River, Massachusetts 100th Year Anniversary and Pastor's 40th Anniversary



Among those attending the recent Liturgy celebrating the 100th anniversary of St. Anthony of the Desert Parish in Fall River and the Pastor Chorbishop Joseph F. Kaddo's 40th anniversary of his priesthood were, from left: Deacon Andre Nasser, Subdeacon Brian Dunn, Father Thomas Lopes, Chorbishop Joseph Lahoud, Bishop Gregory J. Mansour, Chorbishop Kaddo, Bishop Nicholas Samra, Msgr. Peter Azar, Msgr. Michael O'Gorman, and Deacon Donald Massoud. (Photo by Dave Jolivet, *The Anchor*, Fall River, Mass.)

by Subdeacon Brian Dunn

On the weekend of October 6 - 7, 2012, Bishop Gregory J. Mansour of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn made a Pastoral Visit to St. Anthony of the Desert Church in Fall River, Mass., to join Chorbishop Joseph F. Kaddo, Pastor, and the parishioners in marking the parish's anniversary of 101+ years of its founding. Bishop Gregory also came to join in the "surprise" celebration of Chorbishop Kaddo's 40th anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood.

On Saturday evening, a private dinner gathering was held at the Venus De Milo Banquet Facility in Swansea, Mass., for more than twenty-five priests, Deacons Andre Nasser and Donald Massoud, Subdeacon Brian Dunn and the Maronite Sisters to celebrate Chorbishop Kaddo's anniversary. Bishop Nicholas J. Samra of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church of the Eparchy of Newton, who was a classmate of Chorbishop Kaddo's while studying at the Melkite-Greek Catholic Seminary in Methuen, Mass., also attended.

Bishop Gregory was interviewed by *The Anchor*, the Newspaper for the Diocese of Fall River, and told them: "I've known him all of my thirty years as a priest. Chorbishop Kaddo is a priest's priest. He believes in the priesthood and he takes the time to be close to priests. That's a beautiful quality." Bishop Mansour also mentioned that in late 1996, following the retirement of the late Archbishop Francis M. Zayek and the announcement of his successor, Bishop Stephen Hector Doueih, "Chorbishop Kaddo had the world on his shoulders. He was selected to shepherd the Brooklyn Eparchy for three months until Bishop Doueih's Enthronement. It was a great responsibility. It takes its toll. He had a great reputation. That's why he was selected." Chorbishop Kaddo is well respected in the Maronite Catholic community in both Eparchies in the United States.

After his Ordination to the Priesthood in 1972,

Chorbishop Kaddo was assigned to his home parish, St. Ann Church, Troy, N.Y., for one year. In October of 1973, he was sent to establish a parish in Miami, Florida. Then in 1975, he was sent to Waterbury, Conn., to establish a parish and remained there for twenty-two years. There he built the current church, bought a new home for a rectory and completed plans for the building of the church hall/classrooms. During his tenure as Pastor at Our Lady of Lebanon in Waterbury, he also worked in the Chancery in Brooklyn, N.Y., as Assistant Chancellor, Episcopal Vicar for Priests from 1992 - 1997. In 1997, he was named Vicar General / Chancellor for Bishop Stephen H. Doueih. In 2004 when Bishop Doueih retired and Bishop Gregory Mansour became the new Bishop, Chorbishop Kaddo was assigned as Pastor of St. Anthony of the Desert Church. During his tenure in Fall River, the existing church was completely renovated and a new addition was constructed to create a new sacristy, restrooms and storage areas. The St. Sharbel Parish Center was also renovated with updated CCD classrooms and a hall.

St. Anthony of the Desert Church began in 1911 when Rev. Gabriel Korkemaz of Boston purchased a small wooden cottage on Jenks Street in Fall River and converted it into a church. The first Lebanese families arrived in the early 1900s. In 1929 a second church property was purchased in the city's Flint section at Quequechan and Alden streets. With the intelligence, love, and guidance of Chorbishop Eid a new Church was constructed. Unfortunately a fire heavily damaged the church on July 2, 1971. Within a few years construction began on a new Church on the corner of North Eastern Avenue and Locust Street. In October 1975, the modern brick building was dedicated and has since been the home for worship and socializing for the Maronite Catholic community in the greater Fall River area.

Many years ago when the late Chorbishop Norman Ferris was Pastor of St. Anthony of the Desert, he and his brother,

the late Monsour "Monte" Ferris, his family and the parishioners were called upon to help with the needs of the Seminarians. They responded generously, creating the Order of Saint Sharbel. The Order provides financial assistance toward educating the seminarians of the Brooklyn Eparchy as well as the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon.

Even though there were two Bishops in attendance, Chorbishop Kaddo was the main celebrant at the liturgy in honor of his 40th Anniversary to the Priesthood. The Liturgy was well attended by parishioners and there was standing room only. After the entrance into the sanctuary and the opening prayers of the liturgy, Chorbishop addressed the Parish with the word "Wow." He was very happy with the attendance at the celebration.

After liturgy a luncheon, attended by 340 parishioners, family and friends, was held in the St. Sharbel Parish Center. The Blessed Mother Guild made all the preparations for the luncheon. Mr. Robert Karam was the Master of Ceremonies. Msgr. Peter Azar, Pastor of St. Anthony Maronite Church in Lawrence, Mass., gave the Benediction. There were a few speakers during the event: Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop Nicholas Samra and Ms. Theresa Galib, President of the Blessed Mother Guild, Mrs. Gladys Assad and Ms. Anne Turley who presented and read the history of St. Anthony of the Desert.

There was also a presentation by Bishop Mansour, Deacons Andre Nasser and Donald Massoud and Subdeacon Brian Dunn. A framed Papal Blessing was read and presented to Chorbishop Kaddo and the parishioners of St. Anthony of the Desert honoring its 100th Anniversary which actually was celebrated in October 2011, on the occasion of the visit of Patriarch Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai. The second part of the presentation was another Papal blessing honoring Chorbishop Kaddo's 40th anniversary of priestly Ordination. It was read and presented to Chorbishop Kaddo by Bishop Mansour. The third part of the presentation was a more personal gift to Chorbishop Kaddo: a new blue vestment. After receiving the gifts, Chorbishop Kaddo addressed the packed hall.

At the end of the Anniversary celebration, the children of the parish, led by Thomas Khoury and his two daughters, Jahnna and Giulia, danced the traditional *dabke*. Traditional Arabic music was provided by Adam Khoury, Charlene Khoury, Charlie Murray and Debbie Ganem. □

Eparchy of Saint Maron *Christmas Directives*

Christmas Novena

His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour has asked that the Maronite Christmas Novena be celebrated in all the parishes of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn from December 15 to December 23, 2012, inclusive.

Christmas Eve Liturgy

It is not the custom of the Maronite Church to celebrate Christmas before midnight. However, the Chancery Office is fully aware that in many areas the Christmas Eve Liturgy (around 5:00 p.m.) is very popular. Pastors are urged to do all they can to maintain the Midnight tradition if at all possible. □

Fayetteville, North Carolina *Subdeacon Ordination*



On Veterans Day, Sunday, November 11, 2012, a Vietnam Veteran, Ronald Foster, was ordained to the Minor Orders of Cantor, Lector, and Subdeacon by the imposition of hands by Chorbishop Michael G. Thomas, Vicar General of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, at St. Michael the Archangel Maronite Church, Fayetteville, N.C. The Rev. Samuel A. Najjar, Pastor, concelebrated and acted as Master of Ceremonies. Deacon Patrick Snyder of the Good Shepherd Parish in Hope Mills, N.C., a friend of the new subdeacon, assisted. □

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CALL FOR CURRENT PRICES

Troy, New York *Historic Move*

by Beverly Traa

On Sunday, December 2, 2012, the historic Saint Ann Maronite Catholic Church on 184 Fourth Street in Troy, N.Y., relocated to its new home in Watervliet, N.Y., following a morning Liturgy in Troy. Parishioners carried in procession the Church's relics, statues and other treasures to the new home located at 1919 Third Avenue in Watervliet.

In the historic perspective, although long awaited, it was a sincerely heartfelt departure for many in the Maronite Catholic community, especially for those whose history and roots go back more than a century to when the parish was formed in 1905. The current location has served the community since the winter of the years 1959 -1960, after a fire tragically destroyed the original location.

By 2004, it was apparent from the growth of the Saint Ann community in the Capital Region that a larger church and facility were required to fill its spiritual needs and continued growth. Led by the Pastor, Fr. Elie Kairouz, and with the endorsement of the Parish Council and the blessing of The Most Reverend Gregory John Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, the Ohio Street Methodist Episcopal Church in Watervliet, New York, was acquired.

Since 2010, Father Georges Bouchaaya as Pastor has continued, along with the parishioners, to meet the many challenges of the restoration, which were mainly due to the fact that the church, which was built in 1850, was not occupied for over forty years. Careful restoration of the exteriors and interiors of the church and the adjacent parish house, built in 1880, is nearly complete. They are of brick and lathe construction of the Greek revival style.

On December 2, this church, aka Third Avenue Methodist Church, became the official home to Saint Ann Maronite Catholic Church and honored a mandate of the deed that it may only be used as a church. The first Liturgy will be celebrated there on Sunday, December 9 at 10:00 a.m. by Father Bouchaaya. All are welcome to attend and enjoy a coffee reception following the Liturgy. Pontifical dedication of the church will take place next spring on a date to be announced.

This historic undertaking has required significant financial commitment and fundraising and the industrious work of skilled craftsmen and parish volunteers. In addition to the generosity of its parishioners and others, restoration grants were awarded by New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The latter's Sacred Sites Program is one of the country's oldest and one of the very few programs in the country dedicated to the preservation of historic religious properties.

The Parish of Saint Ann Maronite Catholic Church was established in 1905 on Havermans Avenue in Troy, N.Y., by Father Gabriel Korkemaz, who was visiting the Maronites in the Capital Region. The Parish of Saint Ann continues to grow under the guidance of Father Georges Bouchaaya, M.L.M. For more information visit <http://stann1905.com>. □

Brooklyn, New York *Hurricane Sandy*

by Salma T. Vahdat

Following the dictum of our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, "When, for love of God, we share our goods with our neighbor in need, we discover that the fullness of life comes from love and all is returned to us as a blessing in the form of peace, inner satisfaction and joy," the Community of Faith of Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn, N.Y., sprang into action to relieve the suffering of victims of Hurricane Sandy.

Spearheaded by the efforts of John Safi, past president of the Parish Council, Joseph Shaia, Jr., current president and Joseph Shaia, Sr., Cathedral Trustee, the call went out for donations of clothing, food, water and a myriad of other necessities to sustain friends and neighbors in the New York region so devastated by the killer storm. The response was overwhelming and included many trips by the two Josephs to pick up the donations and deliver them to Catholic Charities for distribution.

The people of New York are no strangers to tragedy as evidenced by the cohesiveness of the city following the demonic attack of September 11, 2001. As then, the city has marshaled all effort to assist the recuperation, both materially and spiritually, of those neighbors who have suffered such tremendous loss. The Cathedral Family is energized in its role of brotherly love. It is interesting to note that the Gospel just prior to the storm was the command of Our Lord to "clothe the naked, feed the hungry, comfort the sick." Members of Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral are following that admonition and in return are filled with love and compassion. Gibran Khalil Gibran has said: "God has placed in each soul an apostle to lead us upon the illumined path. Yet many seek life from without, unaware that it is within them." Our Community is on the path and will continue to be a part of the enormous restoration to come. □



Our warm personal greetings to you and your families as we celebrate the Incarnation of the Son of God. We are grateful for the support you have given us during the year.

May the Prince of Peace fill your hearts with His Love and Peace at Christmas and in the New Year.

From all of us here at The Maronite Voice, Merry Christmas and a Blessed and Joyful 2013.



Catholic Extension Offers Challenge Grants To Maronite Church!

In January 2012, Catholic Extension Society announced the creation of a Seminarian Endowment Challenge, in which Catholic Extension would award certain dioceses a matching grant toward the dioceses' endowments to pay part of the costs of seminarians. The dioceses would be selected after a competitive application process.

In March 2012, Catholic Extension Society announced that it had awarded the Eparchy of Saint Maron and the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon each a "one-for-two" matching grant in the Seminarian Endowment Challenge of \$25,000. Catholic Extension will give \$1 for every \$2 donated for the Seminarian Education Endowment. The practical effect of this is that every donation to the Endowment will be increased in value by 50%. Membership dues and donations would have to be received by December 31, 2012 to qualify.

The two Eparchies began to work in earnest with the Order of Saint Sharbel to meet the terms of the matching grant. It would mean enrolling ten new Perpetual Members (Perpetual Membership costs \$5,000) or receiving a comparable amount in donations. It would not be easy, so Bishop Gregory created a special committee of Order of Sharbel Officers and a few other key individuals to work on this. Bishop Shaheen looked to his Stewardship Advisory Council to help him achieve the goal.

The Eparchy of Saint Maron achieved its goal in September, and has raised \$83,755 to date. This has come

from enrolling eleven new Perpetual Members, ten new Annual Members and receiving an additional \$30,390 in donations.

The Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon is a little short of its goal still, having raised \$40,000 to date. An additional \$10,000 must be raised by the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon by December 31 to meet the goal.

If you have ever considered Perpetual Membership for yourself, or if you are looking for a special Christmas gift for a loved one, now is the time to act. Your Membership fee or donation must be received by December 31 to count towards the challenge.

Additional information can be found on the Order of St. Sharbel's website, www.orderstsharbel.org, or obtained by contacting any of the following people:

- Rosanne Solomon, President of the Order (rosannesolomon@gmail.com)
- Wanda Elkourie, Vice President, Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon (welkourie@charter.net)
- Bernadette Shalhoub, Vice President, Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn (bbshalhoub@aol.com)
- John Kurey, Stewardship Director, Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn and the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon (718-237-9913 or saintmaron@yahoo.com). □



Effective Ways You Can Help Your Eparchy!

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

Planned Giving: Consider Your Legacy

This is a creative way to support the Church. Planned giving can involve contributing through your will, insurance policy, or retirement assets. Also, it can be a way to make a donation and to provide yourself with a steady source of income; a charitable remainder trust is one example of this.

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

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

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

"I give and bequeath to the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, located in St. Louis, Missouri, _____% of the residue of my estate [or: the sum of \$_____]."

Tax-Smart Giving of Appreciated Stock or other Assets

The gift of an asset such as common stock or mutual fund shares is a smart way to make a contribution and receive maximum tax benefits based on the value of the asset. Gifts of other appreciated assets such as land, antiques, and homes, can also be utilized as potential gifts with valuable tax benefits. Gifts of these assets should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

For more information on any or all of these options, please contact Stewardship Director John F. Kurey, Esq., MBA, at 718-237-9913 or 314-231-1021; or by e-mail at johnkurey@yahoo.com or at maroniteswest@yahoo.com. □

THE ORDER OF SAINT SHARBEL

Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn Perpetual Members

- ★Attorney Richard Attea - North Boston, N.Y.
(formerly an Annual Member)
- ★Mr. Raymond Bedwick - Wilkes-Barre, Penn.
(formerly an Annual Member)
- ★Mrs. Shirley Ellis - Jamaica Plain, Mass.
- ★Dr. Stephanie Fowler - Torrington, Conn.
(formerly an Annual Member)
- ★Mr. Arthur Gabriel - Uniontown, Penn.
- ★Mrs. Lydia Gordon - Brooklyn, N.Y.
(formerly an Annual Member)
- ★Mrs. Faith Jarvis - Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.
- ★Mr. Robert Karam - Fall River, Mass.
(formerly an Annual Member)
- ★James W. Nickman, Jr. - Uniontown, Penn.
(formerly an Annual Member)
- ★Saint George Ladies Guild - Uniontown, Penn.
(formerly an Annual Member)
- ★Mrs. Ann Turley - Fall River, Mass.
(formerly an Annual Member)

Annual Members

- ★Mrs. Therese Abouzeid - Jamaica Plain, Mass.
- ★Mr. Albert Barakat - Jamaica Plain, Mass.
- ★Mr. Hanna (John) Kaspar - Wilkes-Barre, Penn.
- ★Mrs. Lily Koury - Fall River, Mass.
- ★Mrs. Sandra Koury - Fall River, Mass.
- ★Mrs. Margaret Sarofeen - Jamaica Plain, Mass.
- ★Mr. Richard Wickett - Greenville, S.C.
- ★Mr. Jack Yacu - Greenville, S.C.
- ★Mrs. Huda Abdula Yacu - Greenville, S.C.
- ★Mrs. Georgette Yamin - Fall River, Mass.

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 or write to:

Eparchy of Saint Maron
Order of Saint Sharbel
109 Remsen Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201
Or

Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon
Order of Saint Sharbel
1021 South 10th Street
St. Louis, MO 63104

Fort Lauderdale, Florida Order of Saint Sharbel Weekend Retreat

The Order of Saint Sharbel will hold its winter retreat on January 18 - 20, 2013 at the Sheraton Fort Lauderdale Beach Hotel, 1140 Seabreeze Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33316 www.sheratonftlauderdalebeach.com, Phone Number 1(888) 627-7109.

Friday's Schedule

5 - 6 p.m. Arrival, check-in and registration
6 - 7 p.m. Welcome gathering and *Ramsho* in Point Room
7 p.m. Dinner

Saturday's Schedule

9 - 10 a.m. Breakfast in the "A" Conference Room
10 - 10:30 a.m. Prayer Service in the Point Conference Room
10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Conference in the Point Room
Noon Lunch Served at Hotel
1 - 5 p.m. Guest outing, Offsite activities
5 - 6 p.m. Divine Liturgy in the Point Room
6:15 p.m. Reception (with cash bar)
7 p.m. Dinner at Hotel

Sunday's Schedule

11 a.m. Divine Liturgy at Heart of Jesus Maronite Church (*transportation provided from hotel to Church*)
Noon Lunch at Parish Hall.

For more information, please contact Rosanne C. Solomon, President, at rosannesolomon@gmail.com, or Bernadette Shalhoub at 561-346-4831. ☐



the Deadline is... Deadline for next month's issue of The Maronite Voice is December 26, 2012.

The Maronite Voice is the official Newsletter of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon and of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn.

Send all changes of address, news, pictures and personal correspondence to:

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Pictures must be original. Digital pictures must be in "JPG" format and in high resolution. The Maronite Voice is also available online, in PDF format, at www.stmaron.org. ☐

Easton, Pennsylvania Vacation Bible School



From July 16 - 20, 2012, children of Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Easton, Penn., participated in the 6th Annual Vacation Bible School program. This year's theme was "God's Promises on Adventure Island." Forty children between the ages of 5 and 12 attended and learned about some of God's promises: protection, compassion, provisions, and salvation. Children created crafts, played games, and ate snacks, all specific to the day's lesson. They even visited the police station to learn about the equipment and facilities police officers use to protect us. □

Uniontown, Pennsylvania Retreat to St. Anthony's Chapel of the Saints

by Dr. Mabel George Howard

Recently, the Ladies Guild of St. George Maronite Catholic Church in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, organized a parish religious retreat to St. Anthony's Chapel in Pittsburgh. St. Anthony's Chapel enshrines a vast collection of over 5,000 religious relics of saints, the second largest in the world next to the Vatican. A parishioner of St. Anthony's led the group on an informative tour of the chapel, explaining the background of its founder, its construction, and the precious contents within its walls.

Born to a wealthy Belgian family, Father Suitbert Mollinger, a missionary priest in Western Pennsylvania, envisioned the building of St. Anthony's Chapel. Known as priest, doctor, and healer, Father Mollinger donated his personal fortune to acquire relics from Europe. He used his inheritance to build the chapel, dedicated on June 13, 1883, the Feast of St. Anthony. As Father Mollinger's vision, this sacred Chapel became home to a magnificent repertoire of beautiful reliquaries arranged in elaborately designed altar displays and secured wall cases adorned in gold. A few of these reliquaries include a tooth from St. Anthony of Padua, skulls of saints, a particle of bone from St. George, a thorn from the Crown of Thorns, a splinter from the True Cross, a

particle of fabric from the Virgin Mary's veil, and a piece of stone from the Holy Sepulcher. Surrounding the inside walls of the chapel are wood carved life-size Stations of the Cross. Fourteen stained glass windows situated above the Stations of the Cross portray various apostles and saints in their life's missions. Father Nadim Helou, Pastor of St. George Church, celebrated the Maronite Liturgy in the chapel for all to attend. To culminate the religious retreat, the St. George parishioners enjoyed a Middle Eastern dinner at Aladdin's Eatery in Pittsburgh. On a personal note, the splendid array of venerable relics, carvings and statues in St. Anthony's Chapel are overwhelming to those who visit. The St. George parishioners recommend St. Anthony's Chapel, designated a Historical Landmark by the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation, as a "must see" religious site. Visiting this amazing place of worship is an experience that will remain with you forever. □

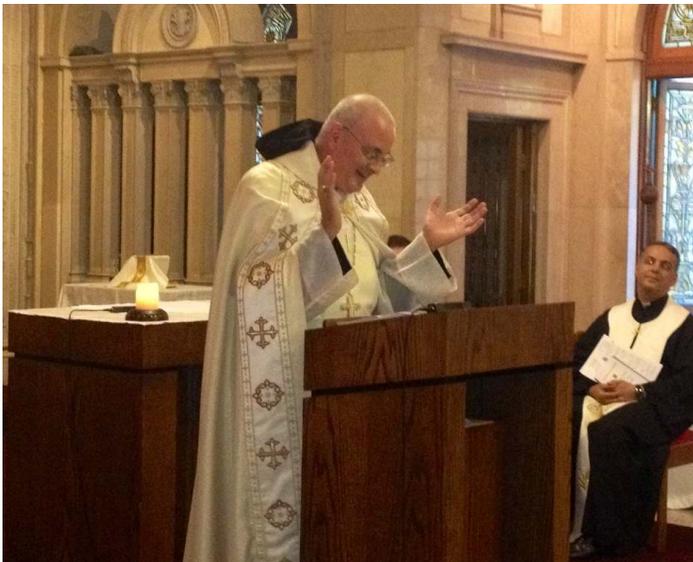
Priceless Gifts For Children No Batteries Needed

by Brother John Samaha, S.M.

After the batteries have long expired on other gifts, these intangible gifts will long endure. They are recommended by Catholic school teachers.

- ◆ **Time.** It shows them how much you mean to them.
- ◆ **Love.** Nothing is more important than love.
- ◆ **Sense of justice.** This includes fidelity to relationships and responsibilities.
- ◆ **Laughter and joy.** Happiness nurtures. Morality is a byproduct of growing up with laughter and joy.
- ◆ **Celebration.** Find something special to do each month as well as mark special occasions.
- ◆ **Spirituality.** Show the importance of prayer and Sunday worship.
- ◆ **Forgiveness and healing.** Never let children go to sleep without being forgiven for a wrong, or healing a hurt.
- ◆ **Truth.** Help them to be truthful and honest. Insist on this.
- ◆ **Respect.** Respect the property of others. Give the example.
- ◆ **Books.** Urge children to read, and read aloud with them.
- ◆ **Optimism.** Embrace a sense of possibility. Encourage faith in one's ability to impact others positively and meaningfully, to make changes for the better.
- ◆ **Gratitude.** By word and example teach them to say "Thank you." Encourage them to thank God for all their blessings. Remind them to speak and to write a word of thanks to their elders and peers who do good things for them. □

Manhattan, New York A New Maronite Mission



Bishop Gregory Mansour celebrates the inaugural Divine Liturgy for the Maronite Mission in Manhattan, N.Y.

by Mrs. Denise El Chaar

On Sunday, September 9, 2012, the newly founded Maronite Mission of Manhattan celebrated an inaugural Liturgy with Bishop Gregory Mansour. The Liturgy was an enormous success with a high turn out of Maronite faithful from Manhattan and the surrounding areas.

The new Mission was created earlier this summer by Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, with pastoral care assigned to Father Jean Younes, of Saint Anthony Church in Danbury, Connecticut. The goal is to serve the spiritual needs of all Eastern Christian families in Manhattan. The new Mission was fortunate to partner with Regis High School, a Jesuit private school, and holds Divine Liturgy once a month in the school's Chapel located at 55 East 84th Street (between Park Avenue and Madison Avenue). The Mission has also started a religious education program for the many children of the congregation. The creation of this Mission was met with great enthusiasm from the Maronite community in Manhattan who have turned out in large numbers to support Bishop Gregory, Father Jean Younes and the new Mission.

The next Liturgy is scheduled for Sunday, December 16, 2012, at 5p.m. There will also be a Liturgy on Christmas Day and on the Epiphany of the Lord in January. A liturgical schedule can be found at the Mission's website: www.maronitemissionofmanhattan.com. □



Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

December 2, 2012

Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

December 7 - 9, 2012

Pastoral Visit to Our Lady of Purgatory Maronite Church, New Bedford, Mass.

December 8, 2012

11:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy and reception of the first vows of Sister Therese Maria Touma of The Maronite Servants of Christ the Light, St. Anthony of the Desert Church, Fall River, Mass.

December 10 - 11, 2012

Board of Trustees at Catholic University, Washington, D.C.

December 16, 2012

Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

December 19, 2012

St. Ann Maronite Church, Troy, N.Y., Christmas Novena and Visit

December 24 - 25, 2012

Christmas Liturgies, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

December 29 - 30, 2012

Visit to Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Miami, Fla.

January 5 - 6, 2013

Dedication of Heart of Jesus Maronite Church, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

January 12 - 13, 2013

Pastoral Visit to Saints Peter and Paul, Tampa, Fla.

January 14 - 18, 2013

Annual Clergy Retreat, North Palm Beach, Fla.

January 18 - 19, 2013

Order of Saint Sharbel Retreat, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

January 20, 2013

Pastoral Visit to Mary Mother of the Light Maronite Mission, West Palm Beach, Fla. □

What is the World's Fastest Growing Religion?

The answer from Philip Jenkins, a noted Baylor University scholar specializing in religious history, may come as a surprise. Islam is on the rise in the West, but elsewhere in the world the greatest growth is in Christianity. He concludes: When I am asked about the world's fastest growing religion, then, I answer unequivocally: Islam. Or, Christianity outside Europe. □ *(CWNews, November 13, 2012)*

A Window On The History Of Our Catechisms Valuing Our U.S. Catechism

by Brother John M. Samaha, S.M.

The Year of Faith proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI for 2012 - 2013 invites us to appreciate more deeply and use more effectively the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults.

On October 11, 1992, Blessed John Paul II published his apostolic exhortation *The Deposit of Faith (Fidei Depositum)* to promulgate the new Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC). He chose that date to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, source of the CCC's inspiration.

John Paul II explained in *The Deposit of Faith* (IV, n. 4) that the CCC "is meant to encourage and assist in the writing of new local catechisms, which take into account various situations and cultures, while carefully preserving the unity of faith and fidelity to Catholic doctrine." He envisioned the Catechism of the Catholic Church as a solid and authentic reference text for teaching Catholic doctrine and particularly for preparing local catechisms. The bishops of the United States followed his direction and in June 2000 commissioned a national adult catechism.

Origin of the Word

Prior to describing the content and approach of these catechisms, it is helpful to examine the various meanings attached to the term "catechism" throughout past history. Long before the invention of the printing press in 1450, learning was passed on primarily by word of mouth. Learning was an oral and aural experience. "Catechism" comes from an ancient Greek verb that means "to echo." A teaching would be explained or recited and the listener would be asked to "echo" it, or repeat it until it was learned. This method of learning reached back to ancient times. Even before the establishment of the Church, Jewish teachers in the Old Testament era had taught the Scriptures by asking the learner to repeat verses again and again. This was a common method of teaching and learning.

With the development of the printing press the speak-and-echo method of catechesis was adapted to a question-and-answer approach that could be set in print. The Church adopted this system, and it was successful. This is evident in the influence of the catechisms authored by St. Peter Canisius (d. 1597) and St. Robert Bellarmine (d. 1621).

On a deeper and more personal level, both catechist and catechized were expected to interiorize the truth being studied and "echo" it in their personal lives by the faithful living of the lesson. It is with this intent that the late Cardinal John Wright chose as his episcopal motto *Resonare Jesum. Echo Jesus!*

The Roman Catechism - 1566

The bishops assembled for the Council of Trent in 1563 called for a compilation and publication of a printed catechism to include a comprehensive and systematic presentation of Catholic teachings. Pope St. Pius V saw to its completion, and the work was published in 1566 as the Roman Catechism. This valuable instructional tool became the sourcebook for local catechisms for centuries until its last edition in 1978.

The Baltimore Catechism - 1884

For Catholics in the U.S.A. the word catechism meant the Baltimore Catechism until the time of the Second Vatican Council. This catechism resulted from the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884 when the bishops of the United States decided to publish a national catechism. It contained 421 questions and answers in thirty-seven chapters, and became the basic religious education text for many decades for countless millions of youth and adults.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church - 1992

With the dawn of the Second Vatican Council, Blessed John XXIII articulated a vision for the council fathers that charged them to present more effectively the deposit of faith and to make it more accessible to the Christian faithful and all people of good will in the contemporary world.

The benefits of a new universal catechism eventually captured the attention of the council fathers, who recognized the significant growth, new insights, and challenges faced by the Church and by society since the Council of Trent. In 1985 a synod of bishops convened in Rome to mark the twentieth anniversary of Vatican II's conclusion. The proposal for a new catechism was affirmed, and preparations began for a new reference book for the catechisms that would be produced for various parts of the world. The result was the Catechism of the Catholic Church released in 1992, and a revised edition appeared in 1997.

The CCC is organized in four parts that treat the creed, the sacraments, morality, and prayer. The United States Catholic Catechism for Adults follows the same order. The content reflects the Apostolic Tradition, Scripture, and the Magisterium as well as the heritage of the Doctors, Fathers, and saints of the Church, while illuminating contemporary situations and questions.

The objective of the CCC is to guide the lifelong call to holiness and everlasting life by witnessing to Christ, the Church, and God's Kingdom of salvation, love, justice, mercy, and peace in the world.

The CCC is addressed not only to bishops, priests, teachers, and writers, but is meant for all the faithful and is offered to everyone who wants to know what the Catholic Church teaches.

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults - 2006

The United States Catholic Catechism for Adults is an adaptation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church intended for Latin and Eastern Catholics of the USA. However, the Eastern Churches may develop their own catechisms to highlight their own traditions.

This edition follows the same order of the CCC. It is helpful in reflecting the sacramental language, practice, and discipline of the Eastern Churches to the level necessary to provide basic information to Latin Catholic about the Eastern Churches.

The unique and appealing structure of each chapter of the U.S. catechism joins a story about living the faith with a particular teaching, then includes sidebars and doctrinal statements, relates the teaching to the culture, offers questions for discussion and hints for prayer.

In this Year of Faith make the effort to become better acquainted with the CCC and the U.S. Catechism. You will find these books interesting, instructive, and inspiring. □

Salvation: The Approach of the Eastern Fathers

You will no longer be called Forsaken, but you shall be called My Delight” - Isaiah 62:4.

by Fr. David A. Fisher

Eastern patristic thought eventually came to reject any form of theology that tried to identify the Christian God with the impersonal monotheistic ideas of Plato or Aristotle. In the spirit of the Old Testament religion from which Christianity was born, God is a personal being. “The God of whom the Church has experience is the God who reveals Himself in history as personal existence, as distinctiveness and freedom.”¹ The very nature of God is personhood, and personhood is grounded in relationship, in love. “When the Christian revelation declares that ‘God is love’ (1 John 4:16), it is not referring to one among many properties of God’s ‘behavior,’ but to what God is as the fullness of Trinitarian and personal communion.”²

The only way to exist as ‘person’ is through love; without

love a person becomes a ‘thing,’ which is a negation of the person. The Holy Trinity is eternal love between the Persons, and love can only exist where there is freedom; therefore the Holy Trinity realizes freedom on the level of eternity.

What of humanity made in the image and likeness of God? Here we return again to the question of morality and the desire for salvation, to be made whole. The key to understanding salvation, is found in creation: “The reason for this is that human existence derives its being from the fact of divine love...humanity was created...to become a partaker in the freedom of love which is true life.”³ To be made in the ‘image of God’ means true freedom of being – love.

The thought of the Eastern Fathers may be understood in this way: If the ontology of the person is grounded in God’s way of being or God’s mode of existence which we might call relational, communion, or love, how is salvation achieved, how is the ‘tragedy of death’ overcome? Here we see the genius of the patristic thinkers, for if they had been content to equate the Christian belief in resurrection with the Platonic idea of the immortality of the soul, then the concept of the person as unique, unrepeatable and of ultimate value would have been lost. “The life of God is eternal because it is personal, that is to say, it is realized as an expression of free communion, as love. Life and love are identified in the person: the person does not die only because it is loved and loves.”⁴

Jesus Christ is therefore the alpha and omega of history, the one who reveals to the human person what it means to be ‘saved’ and not ‘lost’ through God’s outpouring of love. The grace of God therefore is the Father’s Holy Spirit who achieves in us that ‘metanoia’ or transformation spoken of by the first Christians, a transformation from a biological to a communal person on the level of eternal being. When our Lord cries out from the Holy Cross, “Eli, Eli, la’ma sabachtha-ni?” that is, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me” (Matthew, 27:46)? He utters the cry of the human race before him, ‘lost’ and defeated in their attempt to be ‘religious’ to find immortality. Unlike any other human however, Jesus is the God-Man the one eternally loved by the Father and by the power of the Father’s love, which is the Holy Spirit, he defeats death in his resurrection.

Jesus Christ is the New Adam. What He is by nature, the eternal Son of the Father, we become by the grace which is the Holy Spirit, his eternal sons and daughters, in whom He delights. □

About the Author

Father David A. Fisher is the Pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Maronite Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. He is also an Adjunct Professor in Philosophy, Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio.

¹ Yannaras, Christos, *The Freedom of Morality*, SVS Press, Crestwood, New York, reprinted 1996. p.14.

² Ibid., p.18.

³ Ibid., p.19.

⁴ Zizioulas, John, *Being As Communion*, SVS Press, Crestwood, New York, 1985. p.49.

Discovering the Love of My Life!

by Sister Therese Maria Touma, MSCL

It is a great joy to share with you my journey of faith and how I came to develop a life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ, the love of my life! I was born and raised in Sydney, Australia. Both of my parents are of Lebanese descent. My dad is from North Lebanon and my mom was born in Sydney. I was blessed to be raised in our Maronite faith and traditions.



In high school, I started to ask questions, seeking answers to what the point of my existence was? We get up, eat, go to school, work, eat, sleep, and the cycle goes on? Deep down I was yearning to understand my purpose in life, and to find a deeper fulfillment in who I was. So I started to attend weekly Bible discussion at our parish, hoping to find some answers. At home, I began reading the Gospels to discover more about the attractive person of Jesus and his teachings. I found Christ's Words to be nourishing and also challenging at the same time, as I discovered I had to change (let go of my pride and selfishness) to be more like Jesus who in contrast is humble, compassionate, and forgiving. I also started to put my faith into action and get more involved in serving at our parish.

In college my thirst to learn more about my faith grew so in my free time I read the lives of many interesting saints. One saint that very much captivated me was St. Therese the Little Flower. Her book the "Story of the Soul" totally inspired me and I believe helped form my spirituality of simplicity, trust and child-like confidence in God's infinite love and mercy. At the age of twenty, a significant event led me to realize my desire to be "all for Jesus." I attended the 2005 ADORE Eucharistic Conference in Sydney. I recall coming home from the conference crying tears of joy. I had experienced more intimately God's awesome love for me. I was overwhelmed with gratitude to God for his unconditional love and goodness in my life. My mom thought something was wrong with me. This was also the first time I told her of my desire of becoming a religious sister and loving Jesus totally by giving him back the gift of my life. At this point, my mom was not happy with this desire of mine as she wanted me to pursue my accounting career, get married and provide the many grandchildren.

After completing my business degree I was offered an excellent position in commercial accounting. Six months into my job I handed in my resignation; I was dissatisfied in such a competitive, empty and materialistic career. I decided to discern my vocation in Lebanon with the missionary sisters

of St. Therese. I stayed with them, observing their way of life for five months. My experience with the Sisters gave me a greater love and appreciation for the Maronite Liturgy, Spirituality and teaching of the faith. However, this was not where God was calling me to serve Him, so I returned to Australia in 2006 with an openness to serve God as a sister. I continued to discern my vocation through prayer, ongoing faith formation and spiritual direction. I studied Secondary Education while working at the Religious Education Office. In 2008, a friend wrote to me about the new community of the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light and encouraged me to visit their website. I did visit the website and found myself drawn to the charism. I saw it to be a much needed and vital mission in our universal Church. The mission of the Maronite Servants is a beautiful call to service as spiritual mothers working alongside our priests. As consecrated women, we pray for, sacrifice, and lead our people to Christ the Light, the true joy and treasure of our lives!

God's ways and timing are amazing. I contacted Mother Marla Marie and came for a six week "come and see" visit to Boston. After my enjoyable and fruitful visit, I applied to join the community and entered as a postulant in 2010. I am very excited to be taking this step as I publicly give my life to Jesus in service to his people, and to be sharing the gifts of His love and life in community. We are praying that many young women will join us in this beautiful life and mission, maybe some young ladies reading this.

I, personally, am joyful because Jesus, who is truth, goodness and beauty, is the center and love of my life! I challenge you to make him the center of your life. You won't regret it! If you would like more information about our community please visit our website www.maroniteservants.org and blog RadiateHisLight.blogspot.com and watch our video. □



Life Matters: Responding To Unplanned Pregnancy

by Margaret H. (Peggy) Hartshorn, Ph.D.
Reprinted with permission of USCCB

Ana had changed her mind. At the last moment she got up from the abortionist's table and walked out, knowing that her decision to spare her child's life also meant that she'd be deserted by her boyfriend and her parents. Ana felt scared and alone. Searching desperately for help, she found a small pregnancy help center with a volunteer named Grace who provided ongoing love and support during this lonely and difficult time. This kind of love and support is offered again and again in over 3,700 pregnancy help centers, medical clinics, and related ministries (including pro-life social services, maternity homes, and nonprofit adoption agencies) in the United States.

Some of these organizations were formed in the late 1960s, when a handful of states began to decriminalize abortion under narrow circumstances. After the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion for any reason, the number of pregnancy centers multiplied dramatically. Since then, hundreds of thousands of volunteers have served unselfishly in this grassroots effort. Currently, over 70,000 people are actively assisting in pregnancy help centers in the United States. Among them are medical personnel, social workers, counselors, teachers, homemakers, young people, business people, and clergy. This continued, selfless outpouring of kindness is truly a movement of compassion.

Heartbeat International hosts an online Worldwide Directory (heartbeatinternational.org) of resources in the United States and the nearly 2,000 additional ones around the world. Option Line (optionline.org, 1-800-712-HELP) connects people in need with life-saving help, 7 days per week, in both English and Spanish. Pro-life pregnancy centers and related ministries operate on limited budgets - but with no limits on love - in responding to the wounded and suffering, just as the Good Samaritan did.

Now contrast this free, generous, life-affirming, and multi-faceted response of Catholics and other Christians with the response offered by the abortion industry. We respond to the "crisis" with love for both the mother and child, doing all that we can to eliminate the crisis, while the abortion industry offers to eliminate the child. And by taking the life of a child, the industry answers a short-term challenge (continuing the pregnancy through birth and adoption placement, for example) by creating what can become a life-long crisis for the child's mother, father, and others involved in the decision. Many of the parents and grandparents of aborted children now seek counseling to cope with their grief and remorse. Many have endured their anxiety and self-loathing for decades.

Planned Parenthood's own figures illustrate the industry's response to crisis pregnancy better than any words can. In 2010, the country's largest abortion provider performed 329,445 abortions. It referred exactly 841 women to adoption agencies. That works out to 392 abortions for every adoption

referral. Planned Parenthood's "prenatal clients" have steadily declined over the years, so much so that they now report "prenatal services" rather than clients. This makes it impossible to track how few pregnant women they see through a full-term pregnancy, but it is generally estimated that between 91 and 97 percent of pregnant women who go to Planned Parenthood end up having an abortion.

For most industries, it's the bottom line that really matters. Abortions represented over 51% of Planned Parenthood's clinic income (even though they calculate abortion as a mere 3% of services provided). And we as taxpayers are providing most of the rest of their income, as 46.5 percent of their revenues (\$487 million in 2010) come from government grants and Medicaid, Title X and similar funding.



Relying only on charitable donations, the Christ-centered response of a pregnancy center is able to accomplish much even beyond saving a child's life, a child who is created in God's image and likeness and is destined for eternal life. No small thing! The daily work and ministry of the pregnancy center also channels God's love to the child's parents and family, bringing about an opportunity for evangelization, healing, restoration, better parenting, more marriages and adoptions, and, in the long term, healthier families.

And, while pregnancy center work transforms our clients, it also transforms those of us who minister to them. One of the bonuses of our work is that our faith, love, and dependence on the Lord grow daily. We marvel as he takes our small efforts and turns them into miracles of lives saved and transformed for the better.

Whatever happened to Ana, whose story began this reflection?

Twenty-five years after Ana made the courageous decision to walk away from the abortion facility, her grown son is now a great source of pride to both Ana and her husband. In the intervening years, Ana and her husband started a whole network of pregnancy help centers and related ministries. Ana's brave decision and the loving response of Grace, the pregnancy center volunteer, have helped transform the lives of already two generations of other women and families in need.

Blessed Pope John Paul II acknowledged the vital work of pregnancy help centers, stating:

Newborn life is also served by centers of assistance and homes or centers where new life receives a welcome. Thanks to the work of such centers, many unmarried mothers and

couples in difficulty discover new hope and find assistance and support in overcoming hardship and the fear of accepting a newly conceived life (The Gospel of Life [Evangelium Vitae], no. 88).

In his Encyclical letter *God is Love (Deus Caritas Est)*, Pope Benedict XVI invites all of us to bring God's love into the world through such acts of charity:

Faith, which sees the love of God revealed in the pierced heart of Jesus on the Cross, gives rise to love. Love is the light - and in the end, the only light - that can always illuminate the world grown dim and give us the courage needed to keep living and working. ... To experience love and in this way to cause the light of God to enter into the world - this is the invitation I would like to extend (no. 39).

There are so many mothers and unborn children in need of this kind of loving response today. Sharing your time, talent and love can impact generations. It will most certainly impact eternity. ☐

Margaret H. (Peggy) Hartshorn, Ph.D., and her husband Mike became active in the pro-life movement in 1973, housed the first of many pregnant girls in 1975, and started a pregnancy center in Columbus, Ohio, in 1981. Peggy became President of Heartbeat International in 1993. Names used in this article have been changed.

To volunteer or support a pregnancy center, contact your diocesan Respect Life Office or Heartbeat International to locate pregnancy centers near you.

Importance of Sunday in the Lives of Christians

Below is the statement of The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation on the importance of Sunday in the lives of Christians at its October 25 - 27, 2012, meeting at St. Paul's College in Washington, D.C. Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond of New Orleans and Metropolitan Methodios of Boston jointly chaired the meeting.

Recovering the theological significance of Sunday is fundamental to rebalancing our lives. As Orthodox and Catholics, we share a theological view of Sunday and so our purpose in this statement is four-fold: to offer a caring response to what is not just a human, but also a theological question; to add a little more volume to the growing chorus of Christian voices trying to be heard in the din of our non-stop worklife; to offer brief reflections in hopes of drawing attention to the fuller expositions elsewhere; and to reinforce the ecumenical consensus by speaking as Orthodox and Catholics with one voice.

For Christians, Sunday, the Lord's Day, is a special day consecrated to the service and worship of God. It is a unique Christian festival. It is "the day the Lord has made" (Ps. 117 (118):24). Its nature is holy and joyful. Sunday is the day on

which we believe God acted decisively to liberate the world from the tyranny of sin, death, and corruption through the Holy Resurrection of Jesus.

The primacy of Sunday is affirmed by the liturgical practice of the early church. St. Justin the Martyr writing around 150 AD notes that "it is on Sunday that we assemble because Sunday is the first day, the day on which God transformed darkness and matter and created the world and the day that Jesus Christ rose from the dead (First Apology, 67)." Sunday has always had a privileged position in the life of the Church as a day of worship and celebration. On Sunday the Church assembles to realize her eschatological fullness in the Eucharist by which the Kingdom and the endless Day of the Lord are revealed in time. It is the perpetual first day of the new creation, a day of rejoicing. It is a day for community, feasting and family gatherings.

As we look at our fellow Christians and our society, we observe that everyone is short of time and stressed. One reason is that many of us have forgotten the meaning of Sunday, and with it the practices that regularly renewed our relationships and lives. More and more Christian leaders see the effects of a 24/7 worklife and ask, "Where is the time of rest?" As members of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, gathered October 25-27, 2012, we add our combined voice to their call.

Our purpose here is not to replace or replicate their message; it is to underscore and point to it. Anyone who looks at the 1998 Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini (The Lord's Day)* of Pope John Paul II and its cascade of patristic quotations will see there is already a feast of food for thought on the meaning of Sunday. Anyone who reads the recent book *Sunday, Sabbath, and the Weekend* (2010, Edward O'Flaherty, ed.) will see there is also strong ecumenical consensus on the need to recover the meaning of Sunday-- not just for our souls, but for our bodies, our hearts, and our minds as well.

Sadly Sunday has become less of a day of worship and family and more like an ordinary work day. Shopping, sports, and work squeeze out the chance for a day of worship or rest in the Christian sense. By abandoning Sunday worship we lose out on the regenerative powers that flow out of the liturgical assembly. And when Sunday becomes detached from its theological significance, it becomes just part of a weekend and people can lose the chance to see transcendent meaning for themselves and their lives (*The Lord's Day*, 4).

Sunday is more than just the first day of the week. In our faith we see how it is the ultimate day of new beginnings: "It is Easter which returns week by week, celebrating Christ's victory over sin and death, the fulfillment in him of the first creation and the dawn of "the new creation" (cf. 2 Cor 5:17). It is the day which recalls in grateful adoration the world's first day and looks forward in active hope to "the last day," when Christ will come in glory (cf. Acts 1:11; 1 Th 4:13-17) and all things will be made new (cf. Rev 21:5, *The Lord's Day*, 1)."

Sunday even unlocks the mystery of time itself, for "...in commemorating the day of Christ's Resurrection not just once

Consistory For The Creation Of Cardinals

a year but every Sunday, the Church seeks to indicate to every generation the true fulcrum of history, to which the mystery of the world's origin and its final destiny leads (The Lord's Day, 2)." The Lord's Day is the day after the last day of the week and so it symbolizes eternity as well: what St. Augustine calls "a peace with no evening (Confessions 13:50)." St. Basil the Great in his Treatise on the Holy Spirit writes, "Sunday seems to be an image of the age to come... This day foreshadows the state which is to follow the present age: a day without sunset, nightfall or successor, an age which does not grow old or come to an end (On the Holy Spirit 26:77)."

The apostolic letter of Pope John Paul II calls it a day of joy, rest, and solidarity. Joy there is, because the disciples are always glad to see the Master. God scripturally established a day of rest as a gift to us, and rest there must be for every human person. Rest is built into our nature and also withdraws us "...from the sometimes excessively demanding cycle of earthly tasks in order to renew [our] awareness that everything is the work of God. There is a risk that the prodigious power over creation which God gives to man can lead him to forget that God is the Creator upon whom everything depends. It is all the more urgent to recognize this dependence in our own time, when science and technology have so incredibly increased the power which man exercises through his work. Finally, it should not be forgotten that even in our own day work is very oppressive for many people, either because of miserable working conditions and long hours — especially in the poorer regions of the world — or because of the persistence in economically more developed societies of too many cases of injustice and exploitation of man by man (The Lord's Day, 65,66)."

As members of the Consultation, we strongly urge both clergy and laity to work cooperatively within their communities to stress the importance of Sunday for worship and family. Foremost we call for all to render thanks to God and render love towards one another — and be willing to reserve time to do both — and avail ourselves of the riches of the Lord's Day. Appropriate authorities can be approached to schedule sports activities after 12 noon in order to give young athletes and their families the opportunity to worship on Sunday morning. We call for our children to live in a timescape that respects the God-given rhythm of the week.

"Yes, let us open our time to Christ, that he may cast light upon it and give it direction. He is the One who knows the secret of time and the secret of eternity, and he gives us "his day" as an ever new gift of his love. The rediscovery of this day is a grace which we must implore, not only so that we may live the demands of faith to the full, but also so that we may respond concretely to the deepest human yearnings. Time given to Christ is never time lost, but is rather time gained, so that our relationships and indeed our whole life may become more profoundly human (The Lord's Day, 7)."



On November 24, 2012, in St. Peter's Basilica Pope Benedict XVI celebrated an ordinary public consistory for the creation of six new cardinals: Archbishop Luis Tagle of Manila, Philippines; Maronite Patriarch Bechara Rai, Lebanon; U.S. Archbishop James M. Harvey; Head of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Archbishop Baselia Cleemis Thottunkal of India; Archbishop John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan of Nigeria; and Archbishop Ruben Salazar Gomez of Colombia. Following the new appointments the



His Beatitude Patriarch Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai

College of Cardinals will be composed of 211 members of whom 120, being under the age of eighty, are eligible to vote in a conclave for the election of a new Pope.

After the opening prayer and the proclamation of the Gospel, the Holy Father pronounced his homily, following which he solemnly pronounced the formula of creation of the new cardinals, their names and the diaconate or presbyteral order to which they have been assigned. The new cardinals then recited the Creed and swore their faithfulness and obedience to the Pope and his successors.

Each new cardinal then knelt before the Pope to receive his biretta. The Pope said "you must be ready to conduct yourselves with fortitude, even to the shedding of your blood, for the increase of the Christian faith, for the peace and well-being of the people of God." He then also consigned to them a ring, saying, "Know that with the love of the Prince of the Apostles your love for the Church is reinforced," and he assigned to each one a titular or diaconate church in Rome as a sign of their participation in the Holy Father's pastoral care of Rome. The Pope then handed over the Bull of Creation as cardinal, assigned the title or diaconate and exchanged an embrace of peace with the new members of the College of Cardinals. The cardinals also exchanged such a sign among themselves. The rite concluded with the Prayer of the Faithful, the recitation of the Our Father and the final blessing.

During his homily at the consistory Mass, Pope Benedict focused on the meaning of the word "catholic," a word, he said, "which indicates an essential feature of the Church and her mission."

"What makes the Church catholic is the fact that Christ in his saving mission embraces all humanity. While during his earthly life Jesus' mission was limited to the Jewish people, 'to the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Mt 15:24), from the beginning it was meant to bring the light of the Gospel to all peoples and lead all nations into the kingdom of God." □

Tampa, Florida Second Annual Festival



by Sarah Maroun

On November 3- 4, 2012, Sts. Peter and Paul Maronite Catholic Mission, Tampa, Florida, proudly represented its Lebanese roots by hosting the Second Annual Lebanese and Mediterranean Festival. Over the course of two days the church backyard and parking lot were transformed into a high quality restaurant, a performance stage, a kid-friendly playground, as well as a vendor market and booths. More than five hundred people attended the event, which featured Lebanese delicacies such as *falafel* sandwiches, Lebanese sweets, handmade appetizers such as grape leaves and spinach pies as well as pita bread.

It wouldn't be a complete Lebanese and Mediterranean festival without the folkloric *Dabke* dance. The young children and MYO groups, led by the MYA group, practiced and performed the *Dabke* routine while wearing the red, white, and green colors of the Lebanese flag. The performances were then followed by a continuous Lebanese and Mediterranean music mix that kept the crowd in dance mode.

Over ten games of various challenge levels were strategically set up along with a bounce house for children of all ages. All games were staffed by parishioner volunteers so parents were able to browse and enjoy the various booths set up by sponsor vendors. Creative and interactive booths such as the picture booth allowed the guests to dress in a folkloric Lebanese outfit and take memorable photos.

While food, music, and games are a great way to spend a day, Sts. Peter and Paul felt that it would not be a complete introduction to our heritage without the spiritual tours and introduction of our Maronite Church and Catholic traditions. Periodic, scheduled tours of the Church, led by Mr. Georges Saade, were made available to all interested in learning about our Christianity and religious roots. The program was a great success that gained the interest of many of our diverse guests.

As a reminder, Sts. Peter & Paul Mission continues its preparation to host the 50th Annual Maronite Convention of the National Apostolate of Maronites (NAM). The

Convention will be held at the Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel & Marina, 700 South Florida Avenue, Tampa, Fla. 33602.

For more information on the NAM Convention 2013, and all of NAM's programs and events, please visit www.namnews.org or call (914) 964-3070 or email nam@namnews.org. For more information from the host parish, call (813) 886-7413 or email peterpaultampa@gmail.com. □

Jack G. Shaheen 2013 Mass Communications Scholarships

Purpose: To honor Arab-American students who excel in media studies

Amount: \$1,000

Eligibility:

College students classified as a junior, senior, or enrolled in graduate school for the 2013 - 2014 academic year majoring in journalism, radio, television, and/or film. Applicants must have a minimum of 3.0 GPA and be a U.S. citizen of Arab heritage.

Applicants please submit the following items to the ADC Research Institute:

- ★ A one page statement explaining your goals and stating that: you are a U.S. citizen; you are of Arab heritage; and why you merit the scholarship
- ★ Two original signed letters of recommendation from Mass Communications professors
- ★ Copies of your articles, videos, films, etc. (These items will not be returned to you.)
- ★ Official academic transcripts including your GPA
- ★ Your permanent home address, phone number, e-mail address, and phone number during the school year

The deadline is April 3, 2013 Note: Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted. Submit all materials to:

Jack G. Shaheen Mass Communications Scholarship
ADC Research Institute
1732 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20007

For further details, call 202-244-2990, or email organizing@ADC.org. Awards will be presented in June 2013 during ADC's National Convention in Washington, D.C. □



Buffalo, New York Annual Open House



by Debbie Tartick

With the Pastor, Fr. Elie Kairouz, and Debbie Tartick, Director of Religious Education, St. John Maron Church in Williamsville [Buffalo], N.Y., celebrated its first Annual Religious Education Open House on Sunday, October 28, 2012. More than seventy children along with their parents were in attendance to celebrate St. John Maron's Parish. During the event, parents had the opportunity to visit their child's class where the children worked on various projects honoring their parish family. Each child colored a nametag and attached it to a big church display, which is representative of their faith and participation in St. John Maron Church. Afterwards, cider and donuts were served.

The teachers and Fr. Elie acknowledged and thanked the parents who made the commitment to attend the open house to show their dedication to the church and to their child's continuing education in the Maronite faith. The Religious Education Program at St. John Maron is devoted to connecting the parents and children in religious and social activities, bringing the families and community together to rejoice and commemorate the gift of family. □

Danbury, Connecticut Celebrating Long Life

by Lila Shaker

St. Anthony Parish, Danbury, Conn., gathered together November 25, 2012, in a joyous atmosphere to celebrate the recognition of four of its members who have reached the age of 97 and over. Fr. Jean Younes, Pastor, was proud to have Bishop Robert Shaheen of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon bestow four Papal blessings to honor: Sadie Gabriel, 99 (who will reach 100 on January 6, 2013); Eva Asmar, 98, born February 17, 1914; Edna Michael (Bishop Shaheen's aunt), 97, born December 23, 1915; and Mamie Jowdy, 97, born December 23, 1915. It is amazing that Edna and Mamie were born the same day and year!

St. Anthony held this special day to bring attention to the accomplishments of Sadie, Eva, Edna and Mamie as wives, mothers, aunts, and sisters among their families, and as citizens to the Danbury community and members to St. Anthony Parish. It was heartwarming inside the Church as the *Ave Maria* was sung and the parishioners and friends held tears back to give thanks to these four ladies who have given so much.



Subdeacon George Jabbour (left), Bishop Robert Shaheen and Fr. Jean Younes.

A brunch in the Church Hall and a movie showing the lives of these four ladies followed the Divine Liturgy. Tom Saadi gave these women recognition from the City of Danbury and introduced a surprise visitor, Senator Blumenthal, who gave them another plaque. Everyone was overwhelmed with the spirit of prayer and joy as they formed a line at the buffet table with Middle Eastern foods.

Fr. Jean Younes gave thanks to the people who worked hard to make it a success. An extra final tribute was the lighting of the birthday cakes. □

Tulsa, Oklahoma Bishop's Visit



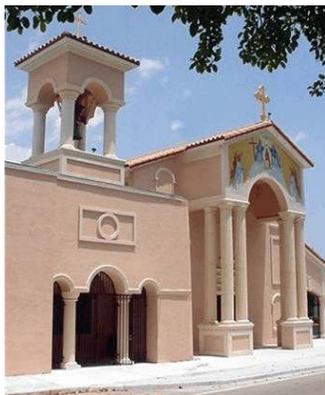
Bishop Edward J. Slattery of the Diocese of Tulsa presided at the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, October 28, 2012, at St. Thérèse Maronite Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Fr. Elias Abi Sarkis, Pastor, was the main celebrant and Father John V. Choorackunnel, C.M.I. concelebrated. Bishop Slattery gave the homily on the Last Judgment passage from the Gospel of Matthew (chapter 25).

In his introduction of the Bishop, Father Elias praised Bishop Slattery as a longtime and true friend of the Maronite Church who has helped him since he came to found the Tulsa Parish. In September Bishop Slattery accompanied Father Elias to Lebanon for the Papal Visit. □

Maronite Churches in Florida

The cold, snowy and dark days of winter will soon be upon our brothers and sisters who live in the north, and many of you seek refuge in the warmth of Florida during these months. Whether you are a “snowbird” escaping for a few weeks or a few months, a retiree moving permanently, or you are simply just moving to Florida, there is a chance you can find a Maronite Church not too far away. Over the past few decades the growth of the Maronite Church has been dramatic. There are now six Maronite Churches in Florida, and Bishop Gregory Mansour will consecrate the latest one - Heart of Jesus - on January 7, 2013. So please, when you are in Florida for whatever reason, take time to join with other Maronites in celebrating the Divine Liturgy at one of our churches.

Miami



Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Church

2055 Coral Way
Miami, FL 33145
Rev. Elie Mikhael, Pastor
Tel. 305-856-7449
Liturgical Schedule
Weekday Liturgy: 12:00 noon
Saturday Liturgy: 6:00 p.m. (in Spanish)
Sunday Liturgy: 11:00 a.m. (in English and Arabic)
Holy Days of Obligation: 8:00 p.m.
Website: www.ololmiami.org

West Palm Beach

Mary Mother of the Light Maronite Mission

4891 Lake Worth Rd.
Greenacres, FL 33463
Subdeacon Dennis Somerville
Tel. 561-433-8831
Email: mmolchurch@gmail.com
Liturgical Schedule
Sunday Liturgy: 11:00 a.m.
Holy Days of Obligation: 7:15 p.m.
Website: www.MaryMotherofLight.org



Orlando



St. Jude Maronite Church

5555 Dr. Phillips Boulevard
Orlando, FL 32819
Rev. Bassam Saade, Pastor
Subdeacon Jack Manhire, Ph.D.
Tel. 407-363-7405
Liturgical Schedule
Holy Days of Obligation at 12:00 noon

Saturday Liturgy: 5:00 p.m.
Sunday Liturgy: 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
Website: <http://saintjudechurch.org>

Tampa

Mission of Saints Peter and Paul

6201 Sheldon Road
Tampa, FL 33615-3115
Rev. Peter Boulos, Administrator
Tel. 813-886-7413
Fax 813-885-6346

Liturgical Schedule

Sunday Liturgy: 11:30 a.m.
Holy Days of Obligation: 7:00 p.m.
Email: Maronitetampa@yahoo.com
Website: www.maronitetampa.com



Jacksonville



Saint Maron Maronite Mission

7032 Bowden Road
Jacksonville, FL 32216
Rev. Elie Abi-Chedid, Pastor
Deacon Elias Shami
Tel. 904-448-0203
Email: frchedid@hotmail.com

St. Maron Church under construction.

Liturgical Schedule

Weekday Liturgy: 7:00 p.m.
Sunday Liturgy: 11:15 a.m.

Holy Days of Obligation: 7:00 p.m.
Website: www.stmaronjax.org

Fort Lauderdale

Heart of Jesus Maronite Church

1800 N. E. 6th Court
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33304
Chorbishop Michael Thomas, Administrator
Deacon John Jarvis

Liturgical Schedule

Weekday Liturgy: 12:00 noon

Saturday 4:00 p.m. (English);

Sunday 11:00 a.m. (Arabic, English);

Holy Days of Obligation: Vigil Mass at 7:30 p.m. and Holy Day at 12:00 p.m.

Email: heartofjesusfl@gmail.com; Website: heartofjesus.org





JOIN THE ORDER OF ST. SHARBEL



HELP US EDUCATE MEN TO SERVE AT OUR ALTARS IN THE FUTURE



DEACON GEORGE HAJJ was born and raised in Maad, Lebanon, where he studied archaeology. He lived for seven years in Michigan, where he studied business management. George is currently completing a degree in theology at the Catholic University of America.



DEACON ALAA ISSA, originally from Tartous Syria, completed studies in philosophy and theology in Lebanon, and served as a subdeacon in the Maronite Churches of Syria. Alaa is currently studying at the Catholic University of America.



SUBDEACON GABRIEL GUBASH was born and raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota. After a career in civil engineering, Gabe entered the Maronite Seminary where he is studying theology at the Catholic University of America.



SUBDEACON ALEXANDER JOSEPH is a native of Easton, Pennsylvania. After a career in law enforcement and business, Alex entered the Maronite Seminary and is studying at the Catholic University of America.



SUBDEACON ELIAS KHALIL, from Hrajel Lebanon, completed his theological studies in Lebanon. After a career in education, Elias entered the Maronite Seminary in Washington, DC, where he is focusing his attention on pastoral studies for the Maronite parishes in the United States.



SUBDEACON RAYMOND KHALLOUF, a composer, musician and friend to many, is in his last year of theology and pastoral preparations at Karm Sadde Seminary in northern Lebanon. He will be ordained to the priesthood, God willing, in the spring of 2013.



DR. CHRIS FABER, from Austin, Texas had a career in dental medicine and performed charitable medical care in South America. Chris was introduced to the Maronite Church through Our Lady's Parish in Austin, Texas. He is studying for the priesthood at the Maronite Seminary in Washington, DC.



MR. ALEX HARB, from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, entered the Maronite seminary shortly after finishing high school. He studied at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in St. Louis, MO, and in Lebanon where he enhanced his knowledge of the Arabic language. He is currently studying at the Catholic University of America.



MR. ANTOINE KAIROUZ, of Nabha, Lebanon, served as an aviation mechanic with the Lebanese Army. He entered the seminary in Lebanon and received his degree in theology. He is currently studying English at the Catholic University of America.



MR. PAUL JOSEPH MASSOUD, the youngest of four children, was born and raised in Flint, Michigan. A former student of business and arts, and teacher of various arts, Paul held jobs in marketing, advertising and in the medical field before entering the Maronite Seminary in 2012.



MR. AARON SANDBOTHE, a native of North Carolina, graduated from the University of South Carolina Upstate with a degree in Political Science. He discovered the Maronite Church when Saint Rafka's Mission was rapidly growing in Greenville, South Carolina. Aaron is studying at the Catholic University of America.

THE ORDER OF SAINT SHARBEL aims to promote the growth and preserve the traditions of the Maronite Church in the United States by:

- ✓ Providing financing for educating seminarians
- ✓ Providing retirement benefits for our retired clergy, when possible.

JOIN NOW, your donation will go twice as far!

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| Membership: | <input type="checkbox"/> Perpetual \$5,000 or <input type="checkbox"/> Annual \$500 |

Please Remit to:
Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, South 10th Street., St. Louis, Mo 63104
or
Eparchy of St. Maron, 109 Remsen St., Brooklyn, NY 11201.

JOIN THE ORDER TODAY TO ENSURE THE FUTURE OF THE MARONITE CHURCH IN THE USA.
For more information, contact John Kurya at 718-237-8813 or saintmaron@ushbc.com

Christmas 2012

Continued from page 1

My dear friends, Christ's passion, death, and resurrection are the three faced events for the same Christological reality of salvation. With them the mystery of Redemption by the Son of God was achieved. However, the immaculate birth of Christ in the flesh remains nonetheless the main sign of authenticity that our redemption happened in history, that God entered human history and therefore our history became called the History of Salvation. Consequently it was the principle of the Incarnation of Christ that made it possible and that led to the divinization of our human nature. With this, the Incarnation of Christ is the perfect realization of the "*Amanou- Moryo*" called "*Emmanuel*," the "*Lord with Us*" as "*Yeshou*," "*Jesus*," the Savior.

This is the message of Christianity at Christmas: God becomes man in the flesh. After over two thousand years of Christianity such a reality has remained always effective and present sacramentally each time in the Holy Eucharist when we celebrate the Divine Liturgy called the Mass. In fact, the birth of the Lord is the leading principle of exchange and transformation between death in human nature and life in the divine nature of the Redeemer Christ; From the falling and degrading humanity under the effect of sin into the Glorious Divinity in the perfect humanity of Christ; from the condemnation in the flesh to the resurrection of the bodies just in the image of the resurrected Lord. All this happen in the Holy Eucharist which is the most important liturgical event that is crucial to our human transference from mortals to Immortals, from sinful to justified, forgiven and holy, from captives by sin to the freedom of the children of God.

Finally, it is with great honor and sacred dignity that at this point I like to greet my priests and laity in our Diocese of Our Lady of Lebanon, USA. I thank you all, for because of your unity to my ministry as your bishop, and your endurance and perseverance in living the life of the sacraments, especially

the Holy Eucharist, the form of Christ in a sacramental way, is taking over our bodies and souls and is turning us all into the incarnated image of Christ called his Mystical Body: the Church. I encourage you all in the Year of Faith to practice charity, penance, seek reconciliation, Divine Wisdom, Mercy and Love. For through these virtues, our Diocese, both clergy and laity, will remain always identical to its wanted and destined Divine Nature as the incarnation of the continual operating presence of the Lord, who saves the world and is living in the midst of his flock.

At the end, I cannot encourage you enough to treat one another with kindness and to abide with your priests, and with your families and friends, in harmony and in unity. I can only pray that you, being cognizant enough of the existential and essential changes that Christ can bring to us with His Birth, we will be the transforming agents just like new apostles, ambassadors and messengers of God for the entire world that keeps resisting the gift of salvation given to us in the Good News of Christ's Birth.

I can only ask you to be aware of the choices you make these days. For united and faithful to our Church, we can truly live in the light and be the light of the World. And if God forbids we were conquered by bad desires and governed by hatred and divisions, by sin and evil, the wrath of God might come to save the remaining faithful in the world, to put an end to conflict, and to ensure that life goes on, in the way God willed it even when we try to empty life from its real purpose and from its true destination: to be with God.

This is our program: to Adore the Holy Name of God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen. Merry Christmas to all in this year of 2012, and Happy New Year for the upcoming 2013.

Yours in Christ,

+Robert J. Shaheen, D.D.
Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, U.S.A.